'The Role of Myth and Representation in the Origins of Colonialism'

by

Kenneth Crotty

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF M.LITT.
DEPARTMENT OF MODERN HISTORY,
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND,
MAYNOOTH.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: Professor R.V. Comerford
Supervisor of Research: Dr. Filipe R. de Meneses

July, 2004

For Noreen Fitzpatrick

Thanks & Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Plates

Plate 1: 'The Great Magnificence of Prester John, Lord o Greater India & Ethiopia'. p. 166.

Source: Denison Ross, E., 'Prester John and the Empire of Ethiopia', in Arthur Percival Newton, (ed.), *Travels and Travellers of the Middle Ages*, (London, 2003).

Plate 2: First Page of the first printed edition of Prester John's Letter in Latin *c*1480. p. 167.

Source: Silverberg, Robert, *The Realm of Prester John*, (London, 1990).

Plate 3: 'An Abridgement of the Medieval Letter of Prester John' *c* 1511. p. 168.

Source: Eden, R., *The First Three English books on America*, Arber, E., (ed.), (Birmingham, 1885).

The years will come, in the succession of the ages, when the Ocean will loose the bonds by which we have been confined, when an immense land shall lie revealed, and Thetys shall disclose new worlds... [1]

Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Medea,*
Act II, Scene iii,
Lines 375 - 379.

Introduction

This work is an historical examination of how the 'Other', currently the field of much current postcolonial study and discussion, came to arrive at its current social and cultural location within Europe in 1600, when originally it was a conceptualised inversion of common identity denoting a sacred state in the mythology of ancient Greece. Thus, the primary aim of this thesis is the exploration of those changes in original European ideas of identity that what would later become the legitimisation for the operations of colonialism and imperialism. This arrival and interpretation was, in the first instance, caused by the impact of both the resurgence of classical and ancient learning and the ensuing European voyages of discovery. In a Europe that still held the Bible as a source for all authoritive knowledge and was, therefore, in the midst of a deeply introspective re-examination and reinterpretation of itself via the cultural changes that the Renaissance and later Humanism both engendered and enabled, these factors acting in conjunction catalysed and stimulated the development of a newer psychological construction of 'self'-hood. These were necessary transformations in an age where the individual and his role in society, and society itself, were under intense pressure to change as a result of Europe's new curiousity and changing worldview. It was this change in the idea of the 'self' that also resulted in a necessary and ensuing development of the original 'Other' in prototype form in the time period 1400 to 1500. I have chosen to explore this topic through the Portuguese search for a Christian ally against a pervasive

---

[1] Kingery, Hugh MacMaster, (Trans. & Ed.), *Three Tragedies of Seneca, Hercules Furens, Troades & Medea, with Introduction and Notes*, (Oklahoma, 1966), p. 284.

Islamic threat. That quest has come to be known in history as the search for 'the Prester John', my reason being that in the subsequent attempts at identification and location of the Prester John Europe was forced to combine classical and ancient learning with reinterpretations of the Bible and whatever 'new' geographical information was being brought back into Europe by travellers, merchants, soldiers and pilgrims. In short, it was within the remit of this search that Europe first had to learn to separate contemporary and verified facts from ancient and revered myths and fictions, and in historically examining that search a broader and deeper interpretation of the changes that Europe was undergoing is available.

It is not my intention, however, to 'simply' map out those authors and legends by which these notions were imbibed when other, far more qualified, writers have already done so and are included in the text. Furthermore, tracing this movement through purely literary means would be by no means 'simple'. It would be an immense undertaking, and one that would be open to certain criticisms, the first being: how could all of that information be examined and cohesively compressed into one single study of this size? I do not believe that it could, nor do I believe that an examination of that nature would not be open to another vitally important criticism: exactly how were these ideas of 'otherness' imbibed and from what point did they then become developed into the forms later used in the service of conquest? The problem here would be one of suggested intent, rendering the study a pointless and fatuous exercise. I suggest that a possible answer to these more expansive issues would lie not within that area, but within the remit of dissemination. How did a socially necessary construction of the 'self' and 'Other' come to be publicly known and accepted in Europe? If we accept that notions and ideas of 'otherness' were originally the product of classical antiquity and were available for interpretation in Europe at the time of the voyages of discovery, what we are in pursuit of is the vehicle of transmission by which these details were first imbibed and then came to broader public exposure and acceptance. That vehicle is the developing national theatre

of Europe in the 1600s. Theatre of any age can and does act as a mirror for both identifications, and also acts as a vehicle for transmission of those ideas unto a larger audience, but in the Europe of 1500 to 1600 theatre developed from a presentation of the purely religious to a secular forum capable of the deep psychological exploration of social concerns and identifications. This development, however, is in reality a return to the original function of theatre; it is not a departure. It only *seems* a departure because, in the rise of Christianity, this function was repressed.

To the Greeks the 'Other' was not necessarily a negative entity; it was an aspirational state, one that was represented in both their mythology and their drama. Even with the first presentation of a negative 'Other' in Aeschylus' *The Persians* of 472 B.C., that presentation comes in the form of the only tragedy whose subject matter is not taken from mythology but from recent history, the Greek victory at the battle of Salamis. Furthermore, although the work does celebrate that victory, the ideas prevalent in the work are of exploration, inversion and alternation, not simply in terms of Greek superiority. Theatre in a highly developed form has been a socially important forum for voicing issues of self-identification in many cultures since its inception by its earliest known practitioners. In the hands of Greek dramatists theatre became a mechanism for the exploration of both alien and familiar concepts and ideas. In order to establish social understandings and relationships with these concepts and ideas, they had to be first identified and then represented, and it is through this construction of representations that theatre establishes ideas of social identification and alienation. Any representation, be it allegorical or metaphorical, denotes the establishment of a relationship between the represented unknown, that is the 'Other', and the represented known, 'the self'. The 'self', being a construction that the audience can identify with, takes on the role of relating to the unknown on their behalf. The outcome of this viewed relationship between representations is what the audience examines for itself upon the play's end, but the relationship has been established in a space

authorised by power structures. In theatre, these established relationships can very often denote views already held but not yet textually authorised. Thus, theatre's real power lies in its ability to textually authorise in a social and communal setting beyond the purely individual; a play is firstly written to be read, then read to be spoken, and finally spoken to be heard.

Furthermore, in order to survive, all of the above must at very least possess the potential for broad public appeal and support. In regard to the power structures under which it operates, it must also not be in a situation to threaten lest support be withdrawn; because regardless of how militant or critical theatre is, it is also dependent upon the support of established authorities. Therefore, theatre is a socially acceptable vehicle for the transmission and dissemination of notions, concepts and ideas of both 'self'-ness, 'other'-ness, and the establishment of relationships between both these concepts and the power structures under which they must exist. In essence it is a social forum for the exploration of change and the voicing of concerns about that change. Greek tragedies explore notions and social issues that are still in occurrence today: the role of the individual in society; how an individual can exist socially in a community while still maintaining his rights; when should authority be resisted or overthrown? Perhaps the most important question of all is one that recurs frequently in Greek tragedy, where does authority lie? Is it moral and does it therefore lie with 'the gods'? Is it purely judicial and does it therefore lie with kings, rulers and overlords? Or does the remit of political authority rest within the responsibility of the individual?

The most pertinent point may be that, originally, the asking of these very questions was a mechanism for social exploration, for in Greek an inquiry: is a *Historia*. It both illustrated and questioned whatever behaviour the Greeks deemed necessary for a cohesive community. This is because even in the act of criticising a power structure's faults that structure is still recognised; in the act of exploring the 'self' and the 'not-self' within the community, the choice of

inclusion and exclusion is still in discussion within an accepted framework; both parties are still seen as valid. Their role in the community may be open to change and alteration, but they are still recognised as being potentially within that social structure. With the changeover to Christianity, however, theatre developed a less positive aspect in regard to these inherent discussions and debates. Being so reflective of that which had given it life for all of that time, those pagan cultures and myths, it could only be seen as a threat to these new behavioural expectations.

What mattered to the new Christian regime was the gathering of support for its tenets, and the discrediting and dismantling of pagan superstitions and rituals, those same beliefs and activities that gave civic support to its predecessor. Christianity, however, by being inculcated into a power structure that had been in existence for quite some time, the Roman Empire, saw itself (as Europe later did) as the inheritor of all ancient knowledge and the highest point of culture. These new Church Fathers knew all too well the power of theatre and its importance in voicing ideas of both social challenge and integration. This is because Roman 'religion' was in practice a state religion; there was no real separation between the secular and the religious; social activities very often acted as both, and theatre, by its nature, is a social activity. The ritual of Roman religion died with the advent of Christianity, and consequently the content of theatre was required to change; hence the movement away from what at this time was an incredibly rich canon of stories, myths legends and histories, to the use of Bible stories as the only valid source for early dramatic activity.

This massive cultural shift from pagan to Christian was an undertaking that changed not only the world, but also how people physically viewed and heard about the world and their role and function within it. The Late Roman Empire was an age in which books were expensive possessions usually copied at the behest of someone wealthy and at the hand of a scribe. Levels of literacy were not necessarily high (although nowhere near as low as the centuries that

followed), and so the collapse of all of the above into basically one (as yet undecided) canon was quite drastic. Even those who could or had read those pagan authors of antiquity were now forbidden to do so. The cultures that preceded Christianity thrived on exploration, but not worshipping the same gods as the Greeks or the Romans was never an issue with either. The Romans especially were quite happy to allow the worship of non-Roman gods as long as Roman superiority was not challenged, and various gods, now fully identified with ancient Greece, were originally introductions from other cultures. Christianity, however, does not conquer, it converts. When the literary riches of antiquity were reduced to precisely that, antiquity, ancient theatre was now occupied and peopled by what was seen to be un-presentable and heretic.

The broader ramifications of this move, while possibly appearing as the original separation of church and state, was in reality the replacement *by* church *of* state. Constantine's conversion simply recognised an already obvious fact, Rome had converted to Christianity a long time before he did[2]. In order to preserve unity Rome became Christian, and theatre lost its critical faculty to voice those ideas of resistance that had made it so vital. Criticism, however, is usually the territory of literary and oral art forms in ancient times as well as the present; it is still tacit support, an agreement to operate within the status quo. It is usually, if not always, the forbidden, unvoiced and illicit criticism that denotes social collapse and disorder. By placing the performance outside of the church and making it purely an act of festivity and worship instead of an act capable of constructive criticism, drama was also being placed metaphorically 'outside' the church. Furthermore, upon the advent of this change, the ability of drama to address cross-cultural and cross community representations was severely curtailed if not abandoned outright. In a world where people learned orally, this was to prove the birth of an insularity that would be hard to shake. In this newer Bible-based identification the audience became bound, wittingly, willingly or otherwise, in the spoken form of a newer textual authorisation that precluded

---

[2] Martin Goodman, *The Roman World: 44 BC – AD 180*, (London, 1997), pp 315 – 317.

both disobedience and conceptualisations of 'Others', with denials of salvation. This authorisation was necessary so that the equally new social relationships could be established, but by allowing festive theatre to stay in the community what was also allowed stay, was a vehicle for transmission still capable of voicing criticism and establishing relationships with unauthorised representations of 'Others'. What the public was watching was still capable of producing different views and social criticisms, all that was required to do so was an audience and new stories to tell. A requirement that perfectly illustrates just how ingrained theatre was in the life of medieval Europe.

The advent or birth of the earliest Humanist thinking in Europe and the ensuing thirst for knowledge, when crossed with the reintroduction of ancient works from classical antiquity provided both of these; the former because they existed in a world where theatre and festive drama were of paramount importance in the civic and church calendars, and the latter because of the ensuing rediscovery of ancient texts necessary to early European expansion and exploration. The growth in the theatre of the time rests upon this latent ability to voice criticisms of those structures that had enabled, recognised and supported it. In the post Renaissance development of theatre in Europe, and specifically in Spain and England, what seems evident is the power of theatre to present models for social and personal identification and alienation beyond the approval of authority but ones that had to be acceptable in order to gain public support. In this sense theatre is much more telling of the realities of history than literature, or even the contemporary history of those times.

The long processional movement of the telling of simple Bible stories to the development of the secular stages of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries clearly underlines both the role and importance of theatre in civic life and the power of Roman Catholicism in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Reformation. Through this constant reproduction for civic festivity, theatre developed an incredibly important role in the communication of civic identity;

the ideas and characterisations presented were not in a position to become a threat to authority. Yet, with the reintroduction of classical knowledge into Europe, the realisation of the role and power that had been available to theatre could not be far behind. In the blurring of the lines between the secular and the religious, the conformist and the resistant, we can observe medieval theatre in its truest form. It was a sphere for the interpretation and reassignment of those facets of necessary social control, but one that operated by co-opting both for its own ends. Theatrical drama, as opposed to the medieval passion or fools play, by its very nature represents an established space between power structures, illustrating the affects that those structures have upon those who live both within and without their structural confines. Theatre's power at this point in time still lies in the construction of representations that are not necessarily approved of by either civic or church authority but would be seen to be so by the community at large. In a Europe where new ideas flooded the public perception, theatre was in a position to offer representations beyond the scope of the purely literary or didactic. It could construct ideas of both the 'self' and 'Other' that were seen as acceptable to the public because the public simply could not disagree or challenge these constructions. It believed in what it was presented with because in general it no longer knew what was actually true. Thus, the only constructed representations readily available to enable the necessary reestablishment of the 'self and the 'Other', in a society obfuscated by fable and isolation for so long, were actually the desired manifestations of the unsure in an unsure world, and in the course of public dissemination these ideas, unfortunately, became a 'truth' in a world that no longer knew what truth was.

In regard to the interrelationship between individuals and the cultural and structural movements within which they appear, I would like to provide a quote taken from a more recent examination of the problems of agency within human behaviour. According to M. Emirbayer and J. Goodwin, 'There remains the question as to how structures of all types, cultural as well as societal, interrelate with social action itself and with the very potential for human agency. These

questions require that we consider in turn, the influence that cultural and societal formations have upon social actors, and the transformative impact that social actors, for their own part, have upon cultural and societal structures'. The importance of theatre when understood in relation to this quote can hardly be overstated. Theatre of any given time, by its very nature, is constructed, but both the characters and situations used, in order to be recogniseable and successful, must appeal to an audience of its peers. Therefore, while theatre and drama are willful and populist constructions and not truly historic in detail, they do represent a deep insight into a culture's view of both itself and those it chooses to place outside itself, and it is in this regard that I see postcolonial studies and cultural criticism to be currently in examination and pursuit of the same subject, but from different perspectives. Theatre acts as a validating vehicle for transmitted cultural learning and representations of constructed and designed information; it produces a distorted but imbibed idea of the 'Other' within any given time frame. In the 1600s, this process can be seen spreading across Europe via different operational models, all, however, using the same mechanism: evolving representational theatrical cultures, but different plays and different playwrights. The importance of these socially voiced constructions lies in its history as a medium: how it survived the long march from long before the medieval mummers and Renaissance liturgical plays, to the political violence of the Jacobean and Elizabethan Drama, and the attempts at post conquest self identification in Spain a journey that I will discuss in more detail in the ensuing chapters. Thus, in the two plays I have chosen, Shakespeare's Caliban represents an identification of 'Other' in an England on the very edge of that foreign settlement that would denote the arrival of colonialism and imperialism, and Lope de Vega's Columbus an idealised self in a Spain on the edge of colonial and imperial collapse.

It is in this regard that I have decided to treat the two plays that I specifically examine, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1609) and Lope de Vega's *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus* (1600) as source

documents. I believe that both plays are vitally important because of their originality; both are the first attempts in each country at theatrical displays of historically based social and cultural constructions of imagery related to the New World. These chapters will entail an examination of what I have entitled the 'Construction of Caliban', an examination of the relationship between the character Caliban and the theatre-going public of England in the 1600s. There will then be an examination which I have entitled 'Dreams of Columbus', of how Columbus is portrayed in Lope de Vega's work and how the display of that construction correlates to the works on which that play is based. My objective here is not just to illustrate the untruth of Lope's Columbus in comparison with the reality of the Admiral of the Ocean Sea, a feat that, again, many better qualified authors have undertaken, but to attempt to explore Lope's idealisation and examine what those of the Iberian peninsula in the 1600s thought of both their country's activities in the New World, and hence, themselves. I am aware of the volume of material available on this subject, and of the numerous academic fields encompassed, and this is why I have chosen to attempt to restrict my discussion to these specific cases.

In a work such as *The Tempest*, just where exactly the audience identification lies concerning Prospero and Caliban is fairly obvious. Even if the audience did not or could not identify with Prospero, and their sympathies did manage to briefly lie with Caliban; the chance that they would identify with him on anything more than an oppositional level are, I would strongly suggest, very remote. Thus, in this, the earliest example of colonial theatre, characterisation quite simply provides a 'self' and 'other', a binary object / subject relationship that, perhaps, unintentionally illustrated where the path of overseas expansion would take England for the foreseeable future. At very least Prospero would provide a positive model for anyone wishing to pursue the domination of another race. Columbus in this regard has proved to be a more difficult matter to examine. As mentioned previously, the difference between the historically constructed Columbus and the 'real' Columbus alone has produced an enormous

volume of literature, but placing this construction within his cultural context, in order to extrapolate a better understanding of those times is the work of history. Prospero, because of his higher learning, social status or situation, was recogniseable to his audience; he was still familiar within their world. What they did not identify with, because they could not, was of course Caliban, they could only identify against him. He was what they were not, nor would wish to be. The importance here lies in what this drama spoke of, with and through: new constructions and ideas of identity. The roots of these new, represented forms of identification of the 'self', the 'Other' and their relationship with society, are reflected in the characters and language developed by the theatre of the time. It voiced both the common and not so common concerns of English people at that time, but drama, being an act of construction, is always dependent upon the identification or non-identification of the audience with the constructed characters that speak these concerns; in doing so these characters enable both identification and identity; and in examining those, we examine the facets in history that gave birth to them.

In this reestablishment of relationships via representation, then, the role of the 'Other' was as an anti-identification, the 'what we are not' necessary for the re-evaluation of that establishment of the 'we are' within a rapidly changing world and society. I must stress that I am in no way suggesting that historic reestablishments simply end, in what I believe postmodernist discourse overtly simplifies, in the term 'representations'. These forces affected and enabled this ensuing search for, and development of, newer psychological and social identities on many levels, and evidence in relation to this can be found in the characters constructed by those playwrights working at the time. These constructed representations display the deep psychological changes that were inherent in the growth of forces such as Humanism, its precedents and antecedents. Even if only taken as evidence of changes in relationships between the individual and society, they still show that the onset of these social forces, moreover, that they did have a very real effect upon commonly held ideas of

power and the individual's relationship to it. These changes caused new connections to develop and old connections to be reinterpreted, but they did so in order to reacquire very real and necessary social, political, religious and civic realities and needs. The most notable effect of these changes was the establishment of a believed superiority in relation to race, culture and religion, a belief that would, in the centuries that followed, would be used to enable domination and foreign expansion.

In what I believe to be a truly insightful book entitled *Exterminate All The Brutes*, Sven Lindqvist traces the development and use of science and scientific information and the dissemination of the same in the service of colonialism and imperialism. Although I would in no way compare Lindqvist's work to this thesis, upon reflection the aim of this work has been, perhaps, to trace the use of dramatic representations and theatre to achieve the same aims in support of the same goal. While the journey of Homer's blessed Ethiopians from their original positive role in *The Iliad* to those famous closing lines in Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* used in Lindqvist's title, would not be possible within the remit of a thesis such as this, what I have attempted to show is that their passage is one built upon constructed representations popularly disseminated in a vehicle that had traditionally been used for exactly those purposes, dramatic theatre. It must be remembered that in the shift from oral to print culture, theatre, with its roots firmly entrenched in the didacts and narpets of traditional religion, was an incredibly potent vehicle; one that we today, perhaps, underestimate by exposure to our own understandings of that medium. Furthermore, the period and sources under examination here, represent in microcosm a massive attempt at cultural reification on behalf of the western world.

In short, beyond any theoretical arguments about the validity of literary constructions as historical artifacts, the constructions presented here deserve examination. The search for Prester John deserves historical examination in order to break down the myth of an isolated European island lost in the darkness

of unknowing Europe waiting for the blinding light of revelation that we have the dubbed the Renaissance, or Humanism, in order to allow innocents an understanding of the world beyond its frontiers. Caliban and Columbus as theatrical constructions also deserve this form of examination because they are the first identifications resulting directly from European exposure to that unknown, and thus, are the first attempts at making the unknown known and amenable to judgement in the eyes of pre-colonial and imperial Europe. They are the very beginnings of that which Edward Said writes of in regard to the construction of the Orient in the western mind; constructions so that recognition of it and domination over it be enabled. In short, these three characters, none of which are in truth anything more than constructions *of* the western world *by* the western world *for* the western world, mark the very spot at which both postcolonial discourse and literary history are, to this day, attempting to occupy in order to address their own point of examination with validity. They are the very beginnings of the European process by which exclusion and domination of other peoples was begun. They are the very first occasions of the 'Other'.

If Europe owes its political existence to the Roman Empire and its spiritual unity to the Catholic Church, it is indebted for its intellectual culture to a third factor, the Classical Tradition, which is also one of the fundamental elements that have gone to the making of the European unity[1].

Christopher Dawson, *Christianity and European Culture.*

The Other

The ancient Greek writers can and have been examined within the context of falsity throughout history. It was, after all, originally the Roman writer Lucan who christened Herodotus the 'father of lies'. In regard to the effects that their writings consequently had upon the European voyages of discovery, however, we must remember that the differing areas of Greek ethnological, anthropological, geographical and historical writing were not divided into specific and separate lines of enquiry. Those terms themselves, upon their construction in Greek thought, definitely did not possess the meanings that we give them today. We must also remember that *historia* meant only 'inquiry' to the Greeks, and that the logical conclusion of their attempts at understanding an unexplored world was the construction of an acceptable framework in which to contain the unknown. They were simply analysing the world and its possible constituents through theoretical supposition. That is the gift that Greek thought *did* give to the world, beyond any suggestion of how their writings were interpreted and put into service of other needs or discourses via the resurgence of interest in classical antiquity in Europe. What the reintroduction and reinterpretation of those texts came to mean in both Renaissance and post-Renaissance Europe, however, was that European discoverers transmitted these classically (and later on biblically) *mis*-informed, but now culturally modified, ideas of whatever they had discovered upon their voyages back to a Europe in the midst of a deeply rooted re-examination and interpretation of itself in almost

---

[1] Gerald J. Russello, (ed.), *Christianity and European Culture, Selections from the Work of Christopher Dawson*, (USA, 1998), p. 152.

every aspect: religious, social, political and economic. Whatever their aim or ideal, what these voyagers succeeded in was the exposure of those ideas to a Europe that was in the process of re examining its very idea of itself in an intense and introspective way: 'The descriptions of foreign and often non – Christian peoples that circulated in Europe at the time of the discoveries, in the form of travel narratives, chronicles, and various other types of reports, had been shaped by the cultural inheritance and the social strategies of the original observers' [2]. The information acquired may have been new, but the framework through which it was interpreted was one of pure tradition because no other framework was available at the time. The arrival of this new information is, in essence, what forced that framework to be changed.

The result of this transmission was that these mixed and modified ideas were now not only based both in misinformation on either side of the Atlantic, but were also affected by Biblical notions that were undergoing a dramatic change in Europe resulting from the rise of print and literacy. Courtesy of Renaissance thinking and the ensuing Reformation, a largely if not wholly oral tradition was being slowly replaced by a literary one. This process, when further catalysed by the discovery of America enabled the actual birth of operational colonialism as we now know or recognise it. The very root of the process by which a foreign, alien or different 'Other' is objectified in order to serve the legitimation of colonial or imperial need begins here; it is at this point that those notions of 'blessed' and 'sacred' 'Others' of classical Greek and Roman writings become the colonial, imperial and objectified 'Other' that we are now exposed to in the writings of modern post-colonialist theory and discussion. It was within this framework that these first images of 'otherness' would later be reconstructed as a given truth and were allowed to flourish and, thus, become ingrained in the European mindset. This massive shift in the western world's

---

[2] Joan-Pau Rubies, 'Hugo Grotius Dissertation on the Origin of the American Peoples and the Use of Comparative methods', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xxv, no.2, (Apr. – June, 1991), pp 222.

psychological framework is what allowed these new interpretations to be possible, viable and ascertainable to post 1492 Europe. Thus, the post-colonial 'Other' as an idea originally arrived in Europe in what 'historians term the early modern period and literary scholars call the Renaissance',[3] via the medieval epoch and the ensuing rediscovery and reading of Classical authors from both Greece and Rome. R.R. Bolgar has traced this rediscovery of ancient texts and their ensuing passage across Europe via translation as far back as 1954 in his book *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries*[4]. The further development of this 'Other' can be historically observed in the processes by which the European exploration and discovery that ended in the discovery of the New World was originally motivated by the search for a Christian ally in Africa against the encroaching Islamic world. These details are known to history as the search for 'Prester John'. The voyages of discovery required the possibility that the unknown be placed within a framework for interpretation, and ancient and classical knowledge, originally sought only as an aid to purely geographical explorations, provided this framework. In the ensuing age whatever specifically uninformed or strange ideas the Greeks had acquired via their pre-Alexandrian cultural writings and 'Geographers'[5] of the 'Other' (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Sallust, Tacitus, Herodotus, Strabo, Pliny etc.) were translated through flawed, or at very least deeply reinterpreted, Roman models of Empire[6], and from there imbibed by Europe.

This Greek notion of unknown peoples upon the periphery of the world, however, was originally based in the writings of both Homer and the details found in Greek mythology. Even upon development by later classical writers it

---

[3] R. Beadle, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, (Cambridge, 1994), Preface, p. xiii.
[4] R.R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries*, (Cambridge, 1954), see especially Chapter I, *'The Character of Classical Heritage'*, pp 13 – 26 & Chapter VIII, *'The end of the Renaissance and the Appearance of New Patterns in Classical Education and Scholarship'*, pp 302-317.
[5] See Page DuBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, (Ann Arbor, 1982), pp 49 – 50, Francois Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, (Berkeley, 1988), pp 213 – 216 & James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought*, (Princeton, 1992), pp 45 - 50.
[6] See William V. Spanos, 'Culture and Colonisation: The Imperial Imperatives of the Centred Circle', in *Boundary 2*, xxiii, no.1, (Spring, 1996), pp 135 – 137.

was still little more than a purely allegorical representation of deeply stereotypical ideas and inversions of Greek self-identification. According to Francois Hartog in his 1988 book *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, the role and necessity of the 'Other' in self-identification is a naturally occurring phenomenon[7], and it is vital that we recognise this fact in regard to an understanding of both ancient Greek culture, and by default, the role of that culture in the development of our own historical outlook. The role of the 'Other' in any society is always based upon that self-identification in general; it is the 'them' against which the 'us' is measured and, and, as such, is a creation worthy of examination in any age. The first transmission of notions of the 'Other' from ancient Greek to later Roman Empire, however, is not a simple matter in either transmission or translation. A perfect example of this would be that even in the later stages of the Roman Empire the idea of 'blessed races' that dwelt upon the peripheries of the known world was still a very important identificational aspect in how the Romans understood themselves as both individuals and as a society. The reality of the situation was that as the Romans explored the world through the expansion of their empire they pushed these blessed or sacred 'others' further and further into the realms of fantasy simply because it was impossible to locate them. It was, however, that search itself that preserved the importance of the idea of a 'blessed' or 'sacred' 'Other' as a mirror by which the Romans judged their own culture and its values. This Roman 'Other' was just as powerful a tool for projection against, and comparison with, the self as the Greek one. The truly important difference was that the Romans were in a position to seek further afield for it; but when they could not locate it, the 'Other' went back to the same place from which the Greeks had originally conjured it from, mythology. Upon Europe's Renaissance and the ensuing discovery of America, however, (and perhaps more importantly, Africa's discovery of Europe), these ideas of 'otherness', and the role that those ideas had taken shape through Europe's

---

[7] Francois Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus*, (1988), pp 213 – 220.

4

reading of those ancient works, became the template upon which ideas and ideals of the unknown where then modeled.

This chapter will examine how these formational elements of European social and cultural notions of 'Otherness' were disseminated through Europe, while at the same time examining those formational elements themselves. Specifically, this operates upon two lines of enquiry and understanding; firstly, the resurgence of the classical tradition characteristic of Europe in the period 1400 to 1600, and secondly, the prevalence and importance of the Bible as a source for ancient knowledge and interpretation within the same period. I will engage both of these subjects through the search for the aforementioned Prester John, because it was that search that originally provoked the voyages of discovery, and thus enabled that impact to first occur. In observing how 'Prester John' came to be seen as a real and sought-after personage, when he was in fact a social and cultural construction, we find parallels in the same way that ancient authors constructed blessed and sacred 'Others' as a reflection of both their own societal aspirations and inversions. The development of a myth surrounding 'the Prester John' was Europe's first true exploration of this process of societal aspiration and inversion, and, as such, is an important starting point for this discussion.

Furthermore, beyond the remit of purely literary texts and in an age where literacy was only beginning to flourish, the passage of these developing ideas of societal aspiration and inversion are ascertainable if we look at specific characterisations within the developing national drama of Spain and England *c*1600. In the construction of these characterisations European theatre of the period imbibed the role of identification of both the 'self' and the 'Other' that had been fermenting in the popular consciousness since the voyages of discovery began, and in doing so took on that same role that the drama of

ancient Greece and Rome had embraced originally. Thus, in examining these characterisations we can garner a deeper interpretation of those ideas of identification of 'self' and 'Other' as they occurred in Europe at that time.

A brief example serves to demonstrate just how interconnected Spain, England, public opinion, politics and the theatre could be within the 1600s. On 6 August 1624 Thomas Middleton's play '*A Game at Chesse*' was performed in London. A veritable satire upon the times, it was heavily influenced by the works of Thomas Scott, John Gee and other anti-Spanish polemicists. A letter of protest from the then Spanish Ambassador Don Carlos Coloma to the Duke of Olivares on the 20th of the same month reads: "The last act ended with a long, obstinate struggle between all the whites and the blacks, and in it he who acted the Prince of Wales heartily beat and kicked the 'Count of Gondomar' into Hell, which consisted of a great hole and hideous figures. All these people come out of the theatre so inflamed against Spain that, as a few Catholics who went secretly to see the play, my person would not have been safe in the streets"[8]. Beyond any discussion of theory or the validity of cultural criticism versus new historicism, theatrical history, like any history, does sometime provide the precise evidence that we require to develop a deeper understanding of history. In doing so it may remind us of exactly what history can be about: very real events reflecting very real social and political realities in time, but situated in the strangest of places in record. According to Natalie Zemon Davies, Hayden White once said that the world does not just '"present itself to perception in the form of well made stories, with central subjects, proper beginnings, middles and ends"'[9], but occasionally, that is precisely what history does. Theatre, when using history and historic detail as its basis, does precisely this.

---

[8] "It was of great benefit to see the first production since 1624 of the play in the gardens of Trinity College, Oxford in June 1971", as quoted in Colin Steele, *English Interpreters of the Iberian New World from Purchas to Stevens, a Biographical study 1603 – 1726*, (Oxford, 1975), p. 37 n.
[9] Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth Century France*, (Stanford, 1987), Intro. p. 3.

These designed notions of 'otherness' are specifically worthy of examination because of their popular acceptance by a large group of people within the framework of an emerging forum for entertainment that must be seen as representational because of the recognition and involvement in that emerging forum at the time, either in the process of censorship or endorsement, by authority. In order to develop a sociological definition of that relationship while at the same time expressing recognition that people in society are not simply programmed by whatever belief is espoused by those authorities under which they live, I would agree with the following authors when they say that: 'the international polity is populated by human subjects capable of choosing and devising actions and interactions with one another. Though generally organised into collective actors (such as nation states, international organisations and so forth), human subjects are both the constituents and agents of such actors'[10]. That is to say that human understandings, beliefs and values have a hand in the creation and evolution of international and national systems via cultural interaction, thus, while material and material forces also play their part in this respect 'these forces are themselves affected both by subjects and subjectivity'[11].

These forces are illustrated within the theatre of any given culture, and deserve specific examination in an age where theatre held importance as a form for the voicing of ideas of social identification. It is later, however, when those beliefs are put into the creation and evolution of international systems that exploitation is allowed to occur; it is allowed to occur because, once culturally established, no offense can be spoken of if those who are treated unequally are already socially constructed in the minds of the public as less than equal. The justifications of both colonialism and imperialism were originally only

---

[10] John S. Dryzek, Margaret L. Clark, & Garry McKenzie, 'Subject and System in International Interaction', in *International Organization*, xxxxiii, no. 3, (Summer, 1989), p. 475.
[11] Ibid. p. 475.

exploitative international systems, but justifications that, when allowed to progress unchecked, evolved beyond the wildest dreams of the original tellers of those European tall tales of discovery and other peoples. In the hands of a new post discoveries Europe, this would lead to much more than the simple matter of misinformation being inseparable from pure truth. The fact is that beyond any original intention, it is the 'teaching' and 'telling' within the international system of colonialism that makes a subject of the 'self' and an object of the 'Other', and once the binary oppositional and constructed relationship between both is set in place, exploitation follows. Myths, and especially socially accepted myths are extremely powerful in what they enable, and we will take a look at an example of just how powerful a myth can be below.

In order to explain precisely why I have chosen to be so specific in my supporting evidence I must provide an exploration of exactly how complex Europe's relation to itself, the world and the 'Other' was in constructed image and representation even before America had been discovered. It is necessary to develop the idea of just how inextricably linked the two ideas of Classical and Biblical antiquity could become in the time period in question, especially in relation to European discoverers and conquerors in general. Our incursion however must begin beyond 1492. Luis Weckmann claims that there was no waning of the Middle Ages in Spain as there was during the fourteenth and fifteenth Centuries in the rest of Europe, and that this fact should really not surprise anyone. Due to her almost constant state of warfare, Spain was forced to remain in isolation apart from the rest of Europe 'Spain realised later than anyone else the flowering of her medieval civilization. Columbus, the first link between the Old World and the New, stands in a clearer light, perhaps, if we envisage him not so much as the first of the modern explorers but as the last of the great medieval travellers'[12]. In the same article he then goes on to show how

---

[12] Luis Weckmann, 'The Middle Ages in the Conquest of America', in *Speculum*, xxvi, no. 1, (Jan., 1951), pp 130 – 141.

those first New World travellers lived in a 'medieval world [that] was surrounded by a realm of fable'[13].

They did live in a world of fable, quite literally. The two biggest influences that shaped their worldview, classic antiquity and the Bible, were only beginning to be informed by the observed reality of physical space, place and time, the birth of rationalism and empiricism in their truest sense. The image of the world that they had imbibed, courtesy of the reintroduction of classical authors in Europe, was wonderfully expansive and imaginative, but ultimately inherently flawed and false. However, perhaps the simple truth at the heart of the European Colonialism and Imperialism that we now examine was the unfailing belief in the superiority of those cultural references that were handed down to from this time. If that is the case then perhaps the only true awareness that can now occur is that truth that we hear from those who have been subjected and made 'Other'. It meant that they believed in the possibility of Amazons, dog-headed men, monsters and giants, as no one had yet told them that these things could not exist. This imbibed worldview distorted and confused their own inability to understand and fully comprehend those individuals and civilizations that they had actually found, especially in relation to themselves. Fact and myth simply did not share the relationship they share today, there was not the surplus of evidence to evince decisive dismissal. Furthermore, the movement toward monophonic print culture meant that it was the power of the written word, misinformed or otherwise, that was the weapon that conquered the New World in thought, act and deed[14], a factor I will discuss in the third chapter of this thesis. In this shift of cultures from oral to textual, and when the truth lay outside the boundaries of the known, myth could be an incredibly powerful force. Here is a myth that caused history to be written.

---

[13] Ibid. p. 132.
[14] See David Lederer, 'The Mirror: Critical Self –reflection and the Psychological Origins of European World Domination', in Gosman, Vanderjat & Veenstra, (eds.), *The Propagation of Power in the Medieval West, Selected proceedings of the International Conference Groningen 20 –23 November 1996*, (Groningen, 1996), p. 408.

Prester John

Zeus went yesterday to Ocean, to feast with the blameless Ethiopians, and all the gods went with him[15].

In 1165 a letter was forwarded to the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa from the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Comnenus. The name given upon the letter was 'Prester John'[16]. From the twelfth century until well after the discovery of America, Prester John was an established part of the European pattern of thought. 'As a potential ally in the rear of the Moslem foe he not only figured in plans for the later crusades but also had a place in European ideas of world strategy. By entering the calculations of both Henry the Navigator and Columbus, he helped to inspire the greatest of geographical discoveries. Still later, amid conditions that had ceased to be medieval, he was a factor in the hopes and plans of Emperor Charles V'[17]. This was no small effect for a person who never existed. In the letter, whose real author remains unknown[18], Prester John claimed to be a sovereign king of a fabulously wealthy Christian kingdom located in 'India'[19]. That he was, or would be, taken to be a real personage at various times is beyond doubt, and here is how we know: 'Although Prester John's letter had not been addressed to Pope Alexander III, it was he who, after a lapse of twelve years, chose to answer it'[20]. In 1177, when the recent Lombard League victory over Frederick Barbarossa at Legano had so greatly improved the papal position in Europe, Alexander, from the Venetian Rialto, penned or

---

[15] Martin Hammond, (ed. & trans.), *The Iliad of Homer*, (London, 1987), p. 13.

[16] For both further details of availability of both Ms. versions and a transcript of the famous letter in translation see Appendix I.

[17] Charles E. Nowell, 'The Historical Prester John', in *Speculum*, xxviii, no. 3, (July, 1953), pp 435 – 445.

[18] Umberto Eco, (W. Weaver, trans.), *Baudolino*, (New York, 2002), p. 120.

[19] Benjamin Braude, 'The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., liv, no. 1, (Jan, 1997), p. 105.

[20] Charles E. Nowell, 'The Historical Prester John', (1953), p. 445.

dictated his reply'[21]. The Pope's message in general was complimentary, but it strongly urged the Prester to embrace the true, Roman, faith (it was presumed that he was Nestorian in belief and therefore a Christian heretic) and asked that 'henceforth he should not to boast so much of his own power and magnificence. Alexander then selected as his messenger a physician named Phillip who once before had traveled in the East. Phillip presumably departed, but nothing is known of his search for Prester John or of the fate of the Pope's letter'[22].

Without wishing to oversimplify the point, Prester John eventually became associated with Ethiopia, so much so that when the Portuguese began to explore Africa, it was he whom they were in search of. What matters is that Prester John was what Europe of the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries wanted to find; the reality or unreality of his existence did not, in that sense, really matter. L.N. Gumilev points to the fact that the Prester John legend, and especially the association of that name with Nestorianism, actually began nowhere near Ethiopia. According to Gumilev 'the cause of the rumour (that began the Prester John myth) was an actual event: the defeat of the forces of the Seljuk sultan Sanjar by the levies of the central Asian tribes, united under the Khitan Gurkhan Ye-lü Dashion the plain of Katwan in 1141'[23]. Furthermore, he also goes on to make the point that faced with the reality of a nomadic people simply defending their way of life against overwhelming odds in opposition to an inspirational myth, the myth was of more service to Catholic and Orthodox Europe. 'It was not difficult to obtain adequate information. Caravans regularly passed from China to Baghdad and then to Constantinople. Muslim merchants reached Siberia: Nestorian ones held the trade between Central Asia and China in their hands. An exchange of information was possible, but the quick and practical Europeans showed no interest in it. They were up to their necks in their own

---

[21] James Hastings, (ed.), *Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics, Vols. I – XIII*, (Edinburgh, 1926-1976), p. 273, see also, Appendix I.
[22] Charles E. Nowell, 'The Historical Prester John', (1953), p. 445.
[23] L.N. Gumilev, *Searches for an Imaginary Kingdom: The Legend of the Kingdom of Prester John*, (R.E.F. Smith, trans.), (Cambridge, 1987), p. 6.

squabbles'[24]. The 'Aksumite Empire [of Ethiopia] was well known to the Greek and Roman worlds, to the Byzantines, the Persians and the Arabs. Vague knowledge of it extended as far as China. But in Medieval Europe it was forgotten'[25]. It was far easier for Europe to cast Prester John's kingdom into an unknown, rather than a known sphere. His association with Ethiopia had much more to do with aspirational than actual knowledge. Europe wanted Prester John to be a Christian king and hero; they needed him to be an embattled noble of the Cross, not a desert wanderer. The writings of E. Denison Ross suggest that it may be from this need that the legend further developed toward Africa: 'The following considerations may be advanced; firstly that the origin of the name John as applied to a priest-king is to be found in the Amharic language; secondly that Marco Polo as known to the Portuguese, did possibly locate part of Prester John's kingdom in Ethiopia; thirdly that Abyssinian envoys in the fifteenth century tried to invent an etymology in order to please the Portuguese; and fourthly, that the Portuguese were never able to reconcile the name with the generally accepted legend, except by supposing Ethiopia to be all that remained of Prester John's vast empire.'[26] Surviving Portuguese travel writing supports this idea[27]. What the search led to, however, was the reality of European exploration of the unknown, in psychological as well as geographical terms. 'Prince Henry the Navigator, who initiated the first wave of activity on the [African] continent, seems to have set his official sights as much on finding Christian allies, and the great Christian Emperor Prester John, as on making quick profits'[28]. The result, according to Emily Bartels, was that Portugal's entrance into the gold and slave trades fostered interest in Africa that grew by

---

[24] Ibid. p. 103.

[25] Paul B. Henze, *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia*, (London, 2000), p. 22.

[26] E. Denison Ross, 'Prester John and the Empire of Ethiopia', in Arthur Percival Newton, (ed.), *Travels and Travellers of the Middle Ages*, (London, 2003), p. 184.

[27] See C.F. Beckingham & G.W.B. Huntingford, (eds.) *The Prestor John of the Indies, A True Revelation of the Land of Prester John: being the narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Ethiopia in 1520, Written by Fr. Francisco Alvarez, The translation of Lord Stanley of Alderley*, (1818), (Cambridge, 1961) and R.S. Whiteway, (trans. & ed.), *The Portuguese expedition to Abyssinia in 1541 – 1543, as narrated by Castanhoso*, (London, 1902), both of which are based on the works issued by the Hakluyt Society, (2nd. Ser., nos. 114 – 118).

[28] Emily C. Bartels, 'Othello and Africa: Postcolonialism Reconsidered', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, iv, no. 1, (Jan., 1997), p. 51.

what it fed on and resulted 'not only in trading posts but also in prosperous sugar plantations on the island of São Tomé, just off Africa's western coast'[29]. The search for the Prester John also led, indirectly, to the presence of other European powers in Africa after the decline of Portuguese expansion. However, certain basic facets of the history of the time must be understood. Nowell in his article suggests that the Arab conquest of Egypt and the Sudan isolated the actual Christian kingdom of Ethiopia, which had been Christianised by the fourth century AD, from the rest of Europe. Therefore, an exaggerated notion of Ethiopia, lacking any true geographical orientation, but deeply dependant on ideas of religious identity gradually took shape in the western mind, until finally 'it emerged in concrete, if imaginary, form in the Prester John letter'[30].

However, while establishing exactly how isolated from the rest of Europe those areas conquered by Islam really were may be no simple matter, there is evidence apart from Gumilev's. In his 1958 article 'The Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment, (1750 to1821)'[31], Raphael Demos suggests that Islamic territories were not as isolated from the same ideas and ideals that informed the Renaissance in mainland Europe. According to Demos, ' the average reader may be surprised to learn that during the presumably Dark Ages of the Turkish Conquest, (1453 to 1821), scholarship, education, intellectual enquiry and professional philosophy were cultivated to a notable degree'[32]. The simple truth of the matter is that Europe was not a series of isolated pockets of differentiated development on the intellectual or any other level. The history of the Crusades would put forward the idea of religiously isolated and divided sub-sections in Europe, Christian on one side and Muslim on the other; but that idea simply does not stand up to examination. Furthermore, in regard to Islamic conquest and Christian responses to it Paul Henze's book Layers of Time: A History of

---

[29] Ibid. p. 51.
[30] Charles E. Nowell, 'The Historical Prester John', (1953), p. 437.
[31] Raphael Demos, 'The Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment (1750 – 1821)', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xix, no. 4, (Oct, 1958), pp 523 – 541.
[32] Ibid. p. 523.

Ethiopia[33] would suggest that the clash between religious communities was not just a simple matter of a European encroachment, both religions vied constantly with each other in attempts at expansion, resulting in a struggle that was usually addressed purely in religious terms. What the expansion of Ottoman controlled territory meant was that exposure of differing religions to each other was commonplace, nor had this been a recent development. It should be remembered that it was the very presence of Islam that allowed the reintroduction of ancient learning to begin in the first place. As J.D. Fage says: 'The Islamic civilisation had made more of the intellectual heritage of the ancient civilisations than Europeans had been able to do. The Muslim occupation of lands like Sicily and the Iberian Peninsula provided opportunities for Europeans to rediscover ancient Greek philosophy and to partake of the subsequent advances in science and mathematics made in the Islamic world'[34]. What Fage perhaps neglects to point out, is that it was the toleration of other religions that also allowed the translation of ancient and classical documents through various languages to occur in the first place. Indeed it was with the mixture of 'the compass, the astrolabe, and the astronomic knowledge and expertise of the Muslims, [that] it became possible to construct representations of this wider world which were more accurate, positive and comprehensive than the schematic mappae mundi of the high Middle Ages'[35]. The only European presence truly discernible in the exploration and discovery voyages of the 1400s was that of the aggression and flair of the Portuguese, but what the Iberian peninsula at this point was drawing on in terms of ancient knowledge was that between the Christian, Jewish and Muslim populations, all of which were living under the system of convivencia, that is accepted coexistence within the Iberian peninsula, there were very few documents that could not be interpreted, translated and made available to the peninsula at large.

---

[33] Henze, *Layers of Time*, (London, 2000), pp 20-22.
[34] J.D. Fage, *A History of Africa*, (3rd. Ed.), (London, 1995), p. 216.
[35] Ibid. p. 216.

Therefore, if we again take Weckmann's comment that the Crusades, and thus the Middle Ages, never truly ceased in Spain[36], and give it the full range of interpretation, certain fundamental differences between most of Europe, on the one hand and Spain and Portugal, on the other come to light. These differences are very important to our understanding of the development of the 'Other' within Europe, a factor which I will be discussing in chapter three of this thesis, but for the moment they are far more important to our understanding of how and why explorations began in the first place. In short they are the true effects of the Crusades upon Europe, because what crusading at its most basic level required was travel. However, 'that it was southern Europeans, rather than members of the Muslim world, who so usefully capitalised on the skills and knowledge that were available by the fourteenth century, may be explained by the fact that by this time the initiative in trade and navigation in the Mediterranean had passed to the Italian entrepeneurs and seamen whose first major maritime ventures had been to transport the Crusaders to the Levant'[37]. An important point here may well be that at a crucial and early point in time, European travel and expansion became interlinked with ideas of both religion and conversion; or more specifically the identification of the Christian European 'self' and the foreign 'Other'. In the face of a growing European demand, this situation tended to be exacerbated by the fact that 'one particular group of Italians, the Venetians, partly because of their traditional ties with Byzantium and partly because of close relations established with the Egyptian Mamluks, ended by earning the lion's share of that most lucrative trade: the trade destined for the ports of the eastern Mediterranean. 'Their competitors became increasingly confined to the less lucrative trade of the Maghrib west of Tripoli or to intermittent ventures into the Black Sea'[38], crusading and commercialism are seemingly never unrelated. Furthermore, by the middle of the thirteenth century, 'Christian Iberians had had more than four centuries of experience of aggressive warfare

---

[36] Luis Weckmann, 'The Middle Ages in the Conquest of America', (1951), pp 130 – 135 & Benjamin Braude, 'The Sons of Noah', (1997), p. 105.
[37] J.D. Fage, *A History of Africa*, (1995), p. 217.
[38] Ibid. p. 217

15

against Muslim powers. Their Crusade for the Reconquest of their peninsula had produced very different results from the splendid but ultimately futile Crusades in the Levant. In the first place it had been successful'[39]. What this meant was that it would be an independent Portugal, well exposed to the focus and rigours necessary for prolonged warfare, royally directed and used to the Atlantic Coast that would first start to cross its own abilities with those of its enemy: 'It was Portugal which first fully grasped the possibilities of combining Italian capital and commercial and technical skills with Iberian Atlantic experience, (and boats), in one strong national enterprise under royal direction'[40]. Thus, Portugal and the Iberian Peninsula knew the Islamic 'Other' very well c1400. Even if those who fought to reclaim territory were or were not truly motivated by religion, commerce and expansion were an important factor in this Reconquest.

In regard to our own times it must be remembered that the very reintroduction of Classical learning poses a problem to the actualities of written history. Renaissance Europeans, 'fancying themselves to be the true heirs of antique civilisation, such writers cast the Turks in the role of barbarians, the counterpart of the old foes of Greece and Rome. As *barbaroi* the Turks were regarded as cruel, of savage habits, and the enemies of culture, of which the Italians were the self appointed protectors'[41]. But as Robert Lee Wolff would suggest, Europe at the time of the Crusades was not perhaps as easily divided into polar opposites as one may be led to assume[42]. Furthermore, after the last Crusade for Nicopolis, 'the western European princes found that they were too busy with conflicts against their own Christian neighbours or their own people,

---

[39] Ibid. p. 219.
[40] Ibid. p. 220.
[41] R.H. Schwoebel, 'Coexistence, Conversion and the Crusade against the Turks', *Studies in the Renaissance*, xii, (1965), pp 164 - 165.
[42] Robert Lee Wolff, 'Mortgage and Redemption of an Emperor's Son: Castile and the Latin Empire of Constantinople', *Speculum*, xxix, no. 1, (Jan, 1954), p. 45.

and that the Turks as an army were too frightening and 'evil' to contend with'[43]. That separate parts of the known world were divided into very different religious regions is obvious, but it was never truly a case that Europe had never been exposed to alternatives of itself. It was simply that with the discovery of firstly Africa and then the New World that Europe's vision and understanding of itself had to be reinterpreted. In the words of Joan-Pau Rubies, 'the problem with America was that the general scheme had to be changed in a very different way if the Universalist theory, that is the theory of a shared and common biblical descent with Europe as the highest point of civilisation, was to be preserved'[44].

In a book from 1944, Elaine Sanceau traces the Portuguese in their policies of exploration from Prince Henry the Navigator's passage to Ceuta during the reign of his father King João I, to the arrival of an Abyssinian emissary to Portugal in 1512[45]. Prince 'Henry the Navigator' and his brothers (he was the third of five sons[46]) were born into a rejuvenated Portugal which had just survived the fight for its own life. As she says, 'for men of the Iberian Peninsula, a good cause was never far to seek. Their kingdoms were the buffer states of Christendom against the Moslem hordes outside the pale. Close to their gates still raged a holy war, which had known intervals of truce, but never peace, during six hundred years'[47]. The book is a ripping tale of daring and adventure. Battles, espionage and political alliances abound; in short it is a great story. Sanceau supplies the historical details of which emissaries were sent out to find Prester John and by what route, over land and sea. She also draws an image of the world as it would have appeared to those Europeans to whom exploration meant freedom from the hunger and poverty of not knowing what

---

[43] Kelly DeVries, 'The lack of a western European military response to the ottoman invasions of eastern Europe from Nicopolis (1396) to Mohacs (1526)', *The Journal of Military History*, lxiii, no. 3, (Jul. 1999), p. 555.
[44] Joan-Pau Rubies, 'Hugo Grotius Dissertation on the Origin of the American Peoples', (1991), p. 228.
[45] Elaine Sanceau, *The Land of Prester John; A Chronicle of Portuguese Exploration*, (New York, 1944), p. 34.
[46] Peter Russell, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator', a Life*, (Yale, 2001), Appendix I, 'Genealogical Table', p. xii.
[47] Op.cit, p. 6.

actually lay beyond the known, and she even takes time to imagine how the illustrious Prester John was seen within the worldview of Christian Europe. 'There was no king on earth like Prester John. His robes were washed in fire and woven by the salamander. He lived in an enchanted palace in the mountains, and in front of it a magic mirror stood where he could see his dominions at a glance. Seven Kings waited constantly on Prester John, as well as sixty dukes, three hundred and sixty counts and knights and noblemen beyond compute'[48]. Sanceau explains how the quest for him was handed down in time and line, 'When Dom Henrique died, in 1460, the problems that he had set himself were still mostly unsolved'[49]. She also takes time to attempt to enliven her subject matter, 'Dom João II of Portugal was no stargazing mystic. Chasing shadows did not in the least appeal to that brisk and Machiavellian monarch. If he sent messengers into the blue, it was that he felt certain that they would find substance at their journey's end'[50]. Even though her work is open to derision for its romanticism, it still manages to encapsulate just how important seeking a Christian ally within Africa must have been to those who occupied the borderlands between the two religious dominions. It may also be closer to the reality of how Portugal saw the actual quest at the time; any cynicism on our part in regard to Sanceau may be more illustrative of how hard it is for us to see their world as they did.

Professor David Birmingham offers a far more modern interpretation in his book *Portugal and Africa*. He chronicles the exploration and conquest of Africa as a six stage affair, consisting of an escape from chronic poverty and food shortages, a wine based venture, an attempt to start a colonial textile industry, a plantation economy experiment, West African gold mining, until finally 'in Angola, the Portuguese made their one and only attempt to create a colony on

---

[48] Ibid. p. 5.
[49] Ibid. p. 13.
[50] Ibid. p. 13.

terra firma and among native inhabitants'[51]. Prester John is simply not mentioned, why? Has Prester John become unimportant as an historical examination? Especially given the fact that he did actually historically exist in the sense that he did exert an influence on the course of European history, albeit in a seemingly absentee role[52]? Within the confines of the history versus cultural criticism debate, how valid is Prester John historically if his supposed existence did exert a vast influence on European history, but he was not actually a real person? If we recognise him as the 'off-stage' agent that still managed to enforce the 'onstage action', is he as important as those characters that we do see in the play of history? If so, than the importance and power of myth as a valid item for historical study is established. Is Elaine Sanceau, by virtue of her romanticisation of the world that allowed that myth to become believed, not committing the very act that we are examining here, i.e. 'Othering' the 'Paynim horde at the gate'?[53] This is a relevant point. Our worldview is built on empirically observed and proven reality, but that is the only difference between us and those historical characters that we are discussing here. We have the facts and it is on those facts that we base our understandings. What if we did not have all of the facts, would we be any less sure of our construction of the world and how we see that construction? There is no inherent contradiction in accepting both the Prester John myth as the main motivation behind Portuguese exploration, and the fact that that same exploration likewise became, eventually, a colonial venture. There is no inherent contradiction here between original intent and outcome.

It is important to remember with regard to the overall pursuit that it was the resurgence of classical knowledge that began the movement toward empiric observation and rational objectivity by which we now operate. We must remember that no fault lies in European attempts to ascertain the truth of the

---

[51] David Birmingham, *Portugal and Africa*, (London, 1999), pp 1-3.

[52] Charles E. Nowell, 'The Historical Prester John', (1953), p. 445.

[53] Elaine Sanceau, *The Land of Prester John*, (1944), Intro. p. xi.

origins of the inhabitants of the New World, even if that attempt was made by what would appear to us as incredible means. To them it was a very important matter; the informational 'point' that they began to theorise from was as valid to them as our empiric understanding of rational truth is to us. It is not the case that economic motives were not as vitally important to the Portuguese as the designation of allies, but Africa was well known to Europe even before the search for the good Prester had taken off. 'African princes, kings and dignitaries from below the Sahara had made their way to European capitals for centuries. Knowledge of black Africans had been present in the Mediterranean world since antiquity, but Western Europe's knowledge of Black Africa broadened when Crusaders brought back word of kingdoms of black Christians who dwelt beyond the boundaries of the Islamic world.'[54]. In this manner Africa and America are far from dissimilar. The exploration of ideas of 'otherness' that would eventually lead to the full-scale colonisation of Africa can be originally seen developing in European attitudes to, and activities in, the New World. To quote Bartels again, 'Why then was Africa which was much older and closer to England, conceptually left in the dark? Why did its fabled gold not produce a Columbus or a transatlantic gold rush?'[55] Doubtless because with the discovery of Africa, Europe was simply not strong enough to engage Africa in the manner that it would the New World, the exploration of Africa was, as we have seen, built in part upon a search for an ally against a pervasive Islamic threat. Apart from seeking Prester John, however, the Portuguese also wished to expand economically, beyond any discussion of the pureness of their original intent it was simply more viable for them to explore Africa while in pursuit of trade, and hopefully, profit: 'Part of what drew the Portuguese and after them, the English, to Africa was that it was already 'civilised', that it had several internal networks of trade already in place (including slavery) long before any Europeans arrived. The Portuguese were, after all, looking for a quick fix of profit, and the easiest way to get it was to tap into established lines of exchange'.[56] Furthermore, their

---

[54] David Northrup, *Africa's Discovery of Europe, 1450 – 1850*, (Oxford, 2002), p. 1.

[55] Kelly DeVries, 'The lack of a Western Military Response' (1999), p. 50.

[56] Emily C. Bartels, 'Othello and Africa, Postcolonialism Reconsidered', (1997), p. 58.

knowledge of Africa at this time was still incomplete, and if conquest was in the air the Portuguese did not at this time have the strength or the numbers to pursue it[57]. However, it was this original exposure to and subsequent development of slavery in Africa that enabled the necessary psychological change in approach to 'other' peoples and religions to occur.

Bartels' point of departure for this discussion is the idea of race difference inherent in teaching Shakespeare's *Othello*. Bartels believes that within the play Othello's colour does not make him an outsider within the world of Venice. The characters within the play that do cast aspersions and comments upon his origin and background specifically do so in a manner that places *them* outside of societal behaviour, and thus, posit *him* on the inside of that society. In short he is not so strange within 'civil society' at all: Europe knew well that Africans could be Christian as well as Muslim. They knew well that kingdoms existed just like their own in Africa, since envoys had been sent throughout the ages. In regard to Prester John and the Crusades there is one more piece to the puzzle. Contacts between Ethiopia and Europe were not the stuff of myth. 'These contacts hinged on two important phenomena: the first was the profound devotion which many Ethiopian religious leaders had towards making the hazardous Pilgrimage to the Holy Land; and the second was the development of the literary legend about Prester John of the Indies and its various proliferations'[58]. Where this devotion to pilgrimage eventually led was the establishment of a permanent site in both Jerusalem and Bethlehem 'where the pilgrims could reside and worship. From then onwards a regular flow of Ethiopian pilgrims seem to have visited the Holy Land'[59]. It also meant that by the fourteenth century onwards there was a small but permanent Ethiopian and Christian presence in and around the areas of the Nile Valley, 'at the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, in Jerusalem and

---

[57] A.J.R. Russell-Wood, 'Iberian Expansion and the Issue of Black Slavery: Changing Portuguese Attitudes 1440 – 1770', *The American Historical Review*, lxxxiii, no. 1, (Feb., 1978), p. 29.
[58] J.D. Fage, & R. Oliver, (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Africa, Vol. 3: From c1050 to c1600*, (Cambridge, 1997), p. 178.
[59] Ibid. p. 178.

other places in the Holy land, as well as in Armenia and the island of Cyprus further North'[60]. It was a hazardous and arduous journey to the Holy Land, especially from Ethiopia, so it should come as no real surprise that some people stayed on in areas *en route*. Certainly what it does suggest, is that the reality beyond the myth was not that hard to locate in Europe at an early point in time.

The truth of the Prester John myth is, again, that Europe wanted Prester John to be real. After a certain point in time it was obvious that he could not be so, after a century or so even as magical a creation as he must have passed on. But in a twelfth century Europe that was losing the battle of the Crusades in the Mediterranean, he was the promise of release. At the same time, however, the Solomon kings of Ethiopia had begun to pose as the protectors of the Coptic Christians in Egypt[61], resulting in tensions between Egypt and Ethiopia. Ethiopia was also already fighting wars on her home front in the Muslim areas of her interior[62]. As a result, Europe saw these Ethiopian actions as part of their own Crusades, and hailed the Solomonic kings as Christian heroes. 'The first message of congratulation on record was sent in 1400 by King Henry IV of England, who addressed his letter to the 'King of Abyssinia Prester John'[63]. To those European rulers at the time, the good Prester John was perhaps not as far fetched an idea as he may seem to us. Europe had been exposed to the Islamic 'Other' throughout the Crusades. The Prester John myth is important to examine, it was a major factor in early Portuguese attempts at exploration, but only in conjunction with those more material needs, that Birmingham speaks of. It cannot be written off or simply written of as a simple piece of semi-medieval romanticism. Even if the use of classical, geographical and biblical readings and extrapolations that went into the creation of this myth can be seen as wholly

---

[60] Ibid. p. 178.
[61] Ibid. p. 179.
[62] Ibid. p. 179.
[63] F.C. Hingeston, *Royal and Historical Letters during the Reign of Henry IV, King of England and of France & Lord of Ireland, Vol. I*, (London, 1860), pp 419- 422.

unreliable or at very least selective, it must be remembered that it was still the only information available to most of Europe at the time.

Those that did not have so much Classical misinformation, however, did have Biblical misinformation; indeed, they usually had both. The most damaging views of all were, again, those views that led to conclusions based not entirely in either source but in the lucid and empirical development that Renaissance and Humanist thinking made possible. For example, while serving as ambassador to Queen Christina of Sweden in Richelieu's Paris, the Dutch scholar Hugo Grotius, (1583 to1643), published a short Latin treatise on the origins of the American Indians. It should be no real surprise that in the flowering of Europe this would be of some concern to people. Grotius, however, is interesting as an examination in this regard as he is associated usually with the political and human developmental side of Northern Humanism writ large. His *Of the Law of War and* Peace of 1634, a work concerned primarily with the idea of Natural Law, is usually seen as his most salient donation to modernity. Grotius was an educated, informed and aware thinker; a humanist interested in the rights and freedoms of the individual and how those rights and freedoms can co-exist with a political structure or state without infringement or conflict. It must be understood that ideas on natural law became incredibly important after the discovery of the Americas for those reasons stated above, again, simply for the fact that if a common origin could not be found for all of mankind, then the Universalist scheme was wrong. If the Universalist scheme was wrong then Europe could not so easily be construed as the highest point of civilisation and culture.

Grotius posited the Amerindians as being an ancient and mythical tribe known in Classical Antiquity as the Scythians. This conclusion he arrived at after much empirical thought and informed reading, but how could he have

arrived at any other when the world that he inhabited viewed the true source of knowledge as being the Classics, the Bible or both? Any discussion of Grotius' dissertation proves that the psychological attitudes of merchants, conquerors, missionaries and ambassadors, as expressed in many differing literary genres, constituted an initial mediation between the non-European societies and their representations in the cultural discourse of the European Renaissance; when read, re-edited and re-elaborated in different European countries, however, such interpretations usually underwent further transformations. As Rubiés so succinctly says: 'more elaborate thought is no guarantee of better conclusions, since it is as easy to manipulate with complex arguments as it is to deceive with simple ones'[64]. The identification of the 'self' in society is as easily informed by well-worded arguments as by common practice, and in an age where empiricism flourished, new ideas of self-hood where perhaps bound to become even more complex.

In relation to the overall discussion, 'It has long been recognised that Shakespeare borrowed from Montaigne. Gonzalo's Utopian vision in *The Tempest* (Act II; Scene I; Lines 142-76[65]) is indebted to a passage in Florio's translation of Montaigne's famous essay *Of the Cannibals*[66]. Furthermore, 'when the old Courtier Gonzalo envisions the utopian commonwealth he would build if he could rule Prospero's, [i.e. Caliban's], island, [he is echoing Montaigne's assertion that], the existence of the Brazilian cannibals surpass in happiness not only the mythical Golden Age, but the ideal politics projected by Lycurgus and Plato, who were unable to imagine a society with so little artifice and human solder, that is, without the invention of human culture'[67]. Montaigne's famous quote in his essay, 'we may call these people barbarians, in

[64] Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Hugo Grotius Dissertation on the Origins of the American Peoples', (1991), pp 223 - 243.
[65] Frank Kermode, (ed.), *William Shakespeare's The Tempest*, (London, 1954), p. 51.
[66] A. Kirsch, 'Virtue, Vice and Compassion in Montaigne and *The Tempest*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, xxxvii, no.2, (Spring, 1997), p. 337.
[67] David Quint, *Montaigne and the Quality of Mercy, Ethical and Political themes in the Essais*, (Princeton, 1998), p. 75.

respect to the rules of reason, but not in respect to ourselves, who surpass them in every kind of barbarity'[68], is relevant here. Natural Law from this point in time on became a very influential point for political development, but what it represented at this point in time was the culmination of Europe's identification of its civilised 'self' against a barbaric 'Other'. Montaigne's essays, beyond any discussion of the Catholic Eucharist of transubstantiation, and beyond any discussion of compassion for one's fellow man, simply recognised this fact. When Montaigne wrote, 'the very words that signify lying, treachery, dissimulation, avarice, envy, belittling pardon-unheard of'[69], he was identifying one world against another, and the noble savage against the savage noble. 'Montaigne's thought represents a crucial step in an essentially dialectical process in which modern humanism developed from Renaissance humanism. The term *humanism* does not occur in Renaissance documents, but *humanist* does, and in late fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy clearly denotes the professional teacher or student of the *studia humanitatis*, the humanities'[70]. Montaigne's writings, and especially *Of the Cannibals*, may tell us more about France than Brazil, but it also informs us that 'in the perspective of the historical development of humanism, one can see that much of what he says represents either natural endpoints of various strands of humanist thought or, in some cases, a pulling of humanism back to what had been its initial implications'.[71] Humanism, by its very nature as a movement, was an attempt to identify the 'self' beyond the confines of a belief in the preordained absolute. In that search for self, the 'Other' played a vital part, and that 'Other' was supplied by the integration of various strands of interpretation of reports on the subject of non-European and New World peoples. The quest for the Prester John, while being very much based in the actual necessity of finding an ally against Islam, also represents an attempt to integrate notions of difference with ideas of similarity; an attempt at self-assurance that the 'Other' was perhaps not so different at all.

---

[68] D.M Frame, *The Complete Works of Montaigne, Essays, Travel Journal, Letters*, (London, 1957), p. 157.
[69] Op.cit (1998), p. 75.
[70] George M. Logan, 'The Relation of Montaigne to Renaissance Humanism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xxxvi, no. 4, (Oct.-Dec., 1975), p. 613.
[71] Ibid. p. 613.

According to Rubiés it is possible to make four points that are relevant to the understanding of the development of the human sciences in early modern Europe. Firstly, that there was 'an important step between the observations of travellers abroad and the theoretical elaboration of the same observations by scholars in Europe'[72]. Those learned scholars at home would, only naturally, attempt to ascertain or establish links with both ancient and Bible scholarship. Secondly, that the process of definition involved in both the acts of observation and description, and in the elaboration of explanatory theories of human history and social behaviour, 'were two kinds of relatively independent acts of interpretation with political implications'[73]. This may seem obvious, but it must be remembered that it was with this process in mind that the Greeks had begun their 'ethnographies'[74], the importance lying in the fact that two processes map on to one another exactly; it is essentially observation that leads to the identification of the 'self and the 'not-self' or 'Other'. Thirdly, the use of comparative methods and critical skills and the construction of all-encompassing theories 'did not necessarily mean more accurate and convincing ideas than those of the merchants and mercenaries compelled to give an immediate response to an external situation on the basis of everyday language, inherited ideas and cultural clichés'[75]. In a world where empiric observation was not yet in authority, the differentiation between lucid, informed and educated opinions and simple travellers tales simply did not occur; most people did not care for the difference between the two, they had never been told that it was important. Finally, the lack of success of any particular attempt to build such sophisticated theories as Grotius' cannot be explained by reference to the particular concepts and assumptions of the age or even by reference to those of a

---

[72] Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Hugo Grotius Dissertation on the Origins of the American Peoples', (1991), pp 223 – 224.

[73] Ibid. pp 223 -224.

[74] See Francois Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus*, (1988), Ch. 1, 'A Rhetoric of Otherness', pp 1- 33.

[75] Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Hugo Grotius Dissertation on the Origins of the American Peoples', (1991), pp 223 - 243.

more narrowly defined socio-cultural milieu, because these concepts could be used in a number of different ways and the assumptions could be always revised. Rather, 'the degree of systematicity in the use of critical skills depended on a purposive act of selection as well as on physical capacity and cultural training'[76]. While this too seems correct, it should also be said that the opinions of the educated classes must have in no small way added authority to whatever view of the 'Other' was being given birth to at this point in time. Montaigne, beyond all due praise to his compassion and insight was still basically doing exactly as Grotius had done. In attempting to legitimate the existence of 'cannibals', he was still viewing those strange new others through the lens of humanist thought, and humanist thought, by its very nature, stemmed from those classical authors that Grotius had read before him. Montaigne, just like those who helped develop what we now observe as humanist thought, was also wrong in his observations of the origins of those indigenous peoples. The vital difference was his understanding of the importance of examining those peoples in comparison with the barbarity of the Europe that he lived in.

Europe no longer knew who it was in relation to itself because of a newly discovered 'Other' that had to be identified, classified, systemised and objectified. Long before that term itself became a literary identification or function in any overtly simplistic binary oppositional relationship developed in the course of latter day thinking, it was still a very necessary abstraction in the identification of the 'self'. It had been since the days of Classical Antiquity. The only difference in the timeframe under scrutiny here was that those classical and biblical models were a reference point in a culture that viewed itself as being the inheritor of Culture writ large. Furthermore, there were now real 'Others' out there that made the dismissal of fantastic notions impossible. For European understandings of the 'self' and the role of that 'self' in society, it was a double bind; the credulity of whatever evidence was being sent back to Europe was

---

[76] Ibid. p. 244.

testing the belief of all, but whether this information was true or not, it still had to be processed in some manner. Empirically the Bible and the classical authors could or could not be correct, but if they were not, then what now was? Who was to say what reality was? Was it the ancient classical written word of Pliny and Herodotus, the reports of Mandeville's armchair traveller, or the genealogy lists of the Old Testament? Europe's culture was still very much in one sense monocultural. It depended totally on its own inherent understanding of itself as had been handed down from feudal and medieval times; and as we shall see in the following chapters that cultural understanding was imbibed, preserved presented in the theatre of a later age. The reinstatement of Classical learning did not necessarily change the way that learning was in itself viewed. Europe was the high point of culture simply because it declared itself to be so in opposition to that which it did not know, could not comprehend and dare not surrender to. Europe believed, or at least that is what it wanted to believe, that beyond its own culture there was simply nothing but ignorance, but in the pursuit of Prester John and the ensuing 'discovery' of Africa this belief had begun to be truly examined and challenged, but it could not be admitted; perhaps that would have necessitated the admission of the Islamic world as an equal, or worst yet a superior.

In an examination that unintentionally explores the shift from Islamic enemy to European 'Other', Benjamin Braude in an article entitled 'The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods'[77] examines what has come to be known as 'The Curse of Ham'[78]. In the *Book of Genesis*, Chapters 9 and 10, Noah's son, Ham, sees his father naked and laughs at him, encouraging his brothers to do the same. For this act, Ham's children are cursed by Noah to be servants; Chapter 9; Verse 25: 'and he said "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto

---

[77] Benjamin Braude, 'The Sons of Noah', (1997), pp 140 –142.
[78] See also, Marvin Perry & F.M. Schweitzer, *Anti-Semitism, Myth and Hate from Antiquity to the Present*, (New York, 2002), pp 247, 248 & 299.

his brethren'[79]. The details change over time, however; the version quoted below is the authorized King James version. In other versions, all of which Braude covers in his article, the curse is such that Ham's children will 'dwell in darkness', that is, Ham and his descendants were punished by 'being given a black skin'[80]. Braude is in essence examining the roots of anti-Semitism and racism, but in his own words he refuses to enter what he terms the 'Origins debate'[81]. In his self-declared avoidance of that debate, however, Braude proceeds to ask exactly how and when did the discovery of the New World actually begin to affect Europe; and in answering he maintains the importance of European exposure to Africa as a forerunner to the onset of the process of 'Othering'[82]. The two are usually, oddly enough, seen as being unrelated, and with this I do not agree. Braude's judgement on discussions of both the original question of how racism and anti-Semitism began in America and the debated answer is that 'both are faulty because they arbitrarily divide space and time. They privilege the discovery of America over that of Africa, which must be seen as intimately related parts of the same process.'[83]. Africa was the forerunner in the 'Othering' process, but it could be fitted into the Universalist scheme. The original 'Ethiopians' in Homer were a blessed race that dwells beyond the known world and with whom the Olympian gods choose to dine when they tire of the war at the gates of Troy and the ensuing hubris of man[84]. They are the oldest mention of a blessed 'Other' in literature, and courtesy of Renaissance and classical learning, the oldest known to Europe. The alternative method for fitting them into the scheme is that which Braude is writing upon, the Biblical notion of the 'Curse of Ham', and it is here that Braude makes, in my opinion, the crucial point. 'The task must begin with the Biblical story. The difficulty arises from what is meant by "the Bible". The problem is not the textual issues raised by the higher critics but the subtler problem raised by the fact that the

---

[79] *The First Book of Moses Called Genesis, The Authorized King James Version*, (Edinburgh, 1998), p. 19.
[80] Benjamin Braude, 'The Sons of Noah', (1997), p. 103.
[81] Ibid. p. 104.
[82] Ibid. p. 105.
[83] Ibid. p. 104.
[84] Nigel Hammond, *The Iliad of Homer*, (1987), pp 13 & 370.

29

Bible, like America and Africa as we know them, was also discovered and invented in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The notion of a fixed, widely available, integral biblical text representing the Word of God speaking directly to mankind, (I use the word advisedly) with little or no gloss, no mediation, and little benefit of tradition was an invention of Johannes Guttenberg and Martin Luther'[85]. He also adds the point that 'much attention has been lavished, deservedly, on the technical achievements involved in perfecting movable type. Not as much has been given to the fact that what Guttenberg printed was, arguably, even more revolutionary than how he printed it'[86].

The issues at stake here are quite simple and easy to examine. The idea of a common 'Noachic' or biblical origin for everyone did not need to be challenged upon the 'discovery' of Africa. The Prester John myth in this sense operates in two distinct ways. It can be seen to both reaffirm the alien-ness of the heathen Islamic 'Other, and at the same time reaffirm the 'truth' of the Christian 'self', a singular origin for everyone regardless of ethnic origin. 'As a result of Europe's explorations and the doubling of the known world, the sphere through which this unity could in theory then be traced was greater than it had ever been'[87]. Needless to say, it did not last. However, previous to the development of a singular bible, 'Scripture, to the extent that it was accessible in a world in which literacy was limited was entered through the gateway of traditional exegesis diffused through a variety of other media, to a great degree oral and visual, the Bible itself was rarely accessible.'[88]. When Alexander the Great conquered half of the known world, the effect in Greece was felt for a hundred years, and in Europe, for centuries. Not because of all of what he had seen, but because of all that he had not seen; more pertinently the absence of all that he had been told would be there to greet him upon his arrival. Greece also

---

[85] Op. cit p. 105.
[86] Ibid. p. 106.
[87] Ibid. p. 106.
[88] Ibid. p. 106.

depended on its ancient knowledge, a knowledge that had originally been supplied by Homer and the theoretical supposition that we spoke of above. Unfortunately, it was also a knowledge that the Alexandrian campaigns proved wrong. Thus, the conflict within Greek culture that the Greek geographers were trying to resolve was simply the impact of proven fact upon fantasy. They were trying to rehabilitate Homer, and thus it is with the original Hellenic enlightenment that Greece began to reify its own culture. In attempting to do so, however, that culture was transferred from an orally based tradition to a written one, removing it from its own source of strength, its interactional ability to absorb and remain attuned to the actualities of Greek culture as it occurred, or as Bolgar says: 'The inordinate sweep of Alexander's conquests was the original cause which first dissociated literature from contemporary culture in the Greek speaking world. But single upheavals, however notable, are rarely sufficient to achieve long lasting results and the survival of that dissociation was due to another influence: Rome'[89]. Europe, in discovering the New World was about to observe the same fate. It would seem that the victory of knowledge is usually at the defeat of belief. As Braude says it 'by definition an oral tradition is particularly subject to regular manipulation in response to the political needs of the moment. Although the Bible was not in the conventional sense an oral tradition in the Middle Ages, it nonetheless bore many of the aspects oral indeterminacy'[90].

Conclusion

The problem with the movement of polyphony to monophony is that authority must be reassumed somewhere along the line, and that resumption of authority must itself be then textually authorised. We live in an age where authorisation occurs by written and textual processes; we have done so for

---

[89] R.R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage*, (1954), p. 21.
[90] Benjamin Braude, 'The Sons of Noah', (1997), p. 107.

centuries. In an age where authorisation could not occur in that manner, however, the advent of a new form of communicated authorisation was bound to require a drastic reinterpretation of authority itself. With the advent of the printed Bible, the 'new' authority in Europe was the ability to print more and sell at a cheaper price; the glossed Geneva Bible was 'a poor imitation of the far richer medieval tradition'.[91] Thus the new authority in Europe was seemingly the rise of proto capitalism, but there is also a more critical interpretation available here. What was actually occurring within Europe upon the discovery of the New World was much more ominous, since information and action are inextricably linked. What prompted the original search for Prester John was an actual and genuine need, a Christian ally against Islam in a time of European uncertainty. Yet the result of the search was exposure to an un-designed 'Other' - the reality of Africa[92], which in turn led to the reality of the 'Other' in the New World. The fantasy world of classical writing and the books of origin in the Bible had been proved equally as incapable in the act of supplying the much needed interpretational framework necessary for the restructuring of the psychological identification upon which the European worldview rested. In the attempt at explanation, the full rigours of empiricism and objective reasoning had been used against ancient authorship, but now it would seem that a monophonic answer was required, not an interpretative one.

The Universalist ideas of classical and Biblical knowledge were not really challenged by this process, there was still enough 'unknown' around; those 'Others' that were found needed only to be 're-interpreted' into the universalist scheme, 'black' people still occurred within the remit of ancient and biblical knowledge after all. It was upon the discovery of America, however, that things began to go awry, not because Amerindians could not be fixed into place in either biblical or classical knowledge, but because that knowledge had been

---

[91] Ibid. p. 107.
[92] Emily C. Bartels, 'Othello and Africa', (1997), p. 58.

proved unreliable and was very speedily becoming outdated. It could, however, be relied upon to frame the relationship between those discovered natives and their discoverers in an unequal dialogue that would last for centuries and always work to the benefit of Europeans: the psychological geography of the unknown was being mapped in tandem with the coasts of Africa and the South America. Thus, with the reintroduction of classical learning, the spread of literacy and print culture, especially in regard to the Bible, and the growth of empiric enquiry certain changes occurred in regard to both exploration and discovery. With a singular explanation and justification of why someone had a black skin (a curse, a defense of slavery, 'a servant of servants shall thou be') empiric enquiry into a fixed textuality could be enjoined to allow for the trespass of biblical rules and to enable domination and subjugation. In the pursuit of all of the ensuing arguments, however, both Classical scholarship and the Bible simply failed to provide answers, even to those of Grotius' caliber of enquiry. But if those ancient sources had failed to provide an answer they had been seen to be capable of providing embellished discursions on the superiority and inferiority of one person over another, in conjunction with geographical projections of where God had decided that his people should prosper and hail from. More importantly perhaps, the suggestion had been made that this newly discovered earth belonged to those who could map it, invade it and declare themselves superior to those who occupied it.

The reintroduction of classical learning that humanism eschewed was not in reality that strange to Christianity, it was originally Christianity that had displaced paganism while at the same time embracing its core social elements in order to imbibe authority. It is indeed difficult for us to realise the extent of our debt, for the classical tradition has become so much a part of Western culture 'that we are no longer fully conscious of its influence on our minds'[93]. It was originally the conversion to Christianity that diminished the scope of Hellenic

---

[93] Gerald J. Russello, *Christianity and European Culture*, (ed.), (1998), p. 153.

culture as it was transmitted through Rome. 'The classical tradition is, in fact, nothing else than Hellenism, and perhaps the greatest of all the services that Rome rendered to civilisation was is to be found in her masterly adaptation of that classical tradition to the needs of the Western mind and the forms of Western speech, so that the Latin language became not only a perfect vehicle for the expression of thought but also an ark which carried the seed of Hellenic culture through the deluge of barbarism'[94]. The work quoted here is that of Christopher Dawson, and as you may have noted, is much more strongly Catholic than Christian in its outlook. A good counterpoint to it would be either Andrew Wheatcroft's *Infidels*[95] or F.E. Peters' *The Monotheists*[96] as both trace the journey of Christianity through a possibly less positivist appraisal.

What we should remember, however, is that before the 'deluge of barbarism' that Dawson speaks of, the 'Other' was both an inversion and an aspirational state for both Greek and Roman culture. It was with the advent of Christianity that the light of learning originally diminished in Europe, not necessarily the march of Islam. Indeed it was via the passage of Islam that classical knowledge was preserved, as pagan writers did not tend to suffer the same destruction as they did under Christianity[97]. Thus, the return of the classical tradition to Europe was not so much resurgence as reassertion. For with the collapse of orally transmitted understandings of information as fundamental for self-conception and understandings of unity as scripture, the movement toward the written word misplaced mankind in to a world no longer understood in fellowship. Quite suddenly, everyone was alone. This necessitated the reestablishment of relationships to both authority and community. The responsibility of this task would eventually come to fruition in the collapse of

[94] Ibid. p. 153.
[95] A. Wheatcroft, *Infidels, the Conflict between Christianity and Islam, 638 - 2002*, (London, 2003).
[96] Francis Edward Peters, *The Monotheist: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Conflict and Competition*, (Princeton, 2003).
[97] Raphael Demos, 'The Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment', (1958), pp 523 – 525.

34

power structures, a collapse that would be in tandem with the discovery of America. On a societal level, what this meant primarily, however, was the reestablishment of the societal 'self', and the first step in the process of that establishment is the establishment of the 'not-self', the 'Other'. The next chapter examines that establishment. While this chapter may have had to deal with broad sweeps of time and occurrence in order to validate this point, in the next chapter we will examine this thesis in specifics. We have now examined the roots of the collapse of that societal 'self', but now we turn to the specifics of its reestablishment in England in the origins of colonialism. This is because, this was the point upon which that blessed and sacred 'Other that we addressed above becomes constructed as the negative, inverted 'Other' of the postcolonial literature of later times. I now plan to show how the construction was achieved and can be traced and understood through the European theatres of 1600s.

GONZALO. 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 foison, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people.

Shakespeare, *The Tempest*,
Act II, Scene i.

Ritual and Resistance

In this section I will briefly demonstrate the roots and function of theatre in its earliest forms throughout Europe. I will then examine the transformation of performance in England from a quasi-feudal socioeconomic based ritual, into the rich cultural force that we can examine as the historic artifacts of today. I wish to underscore the importance and social function of theatre and theatrically based religious ritual in Europe, and illustrate how, what was originally a force for social cohesion in pre-Reformation times became, upon the advent of the Enlightenment and Reformation, a medium capable of voicing varying degrees of social resistance in England. As a result theatre also took on the role of exploring self-identification and, thus, the identification of 'Other' in both European and English society in particular. Furthermore, that theatre acted as a vehicle for the transmission of those various notions of 'Otherness' imbibed from both classical antiquity and biblical sources, both of which had been drawn into the formation of post-Renaissance attempts at ascertaining a common thread in the origins of humanity, to those who would go on to begin English settlement in the New World.

To proceed, however, we must again turn to the Iberian Peninsula for a moment. According to Melveena McKendrick in Spain as, in the rest of Europe, it was the sixteenth century that saw the emergence of the theatre as we would

still recognise it today, the theatre understood as performances by professional players before a public audience in a secular setting. In spite of distinctive characteristics these national theatres, which sprang up in response to complex social and cultural circumstances, 'shared for the most part a common heritage and common origins'.[1] It must be remembered that in the beginning plays and public performances were not secular. Theatre began in, 'the very heart of the Catholic Church. Finding its basis in the symbolic nature of the service of the Mass, this new drama developed out of a desire on the part of the clergy to place the salient facts of Christ's life more realistically before the congregations'.[2] It must also be remembered that this resurgence of classical thought and reading understated a massive reinterpretation of what those plays were originally intended, as forms of praise and worship. This is important because, as discussed in the introduction 'approximately a thousand years separated the first primitive emergence of drama in Athens with the final collapse of the Roman civilisation[3]. For almost exactly a thousand years the Greek and Roman theatres were forgotten, 'until once again the classical tradition, rescued from obscurity, demonstrated its enduring creative strength'.[4] The classical tradition may have rescued the achievements of ancient theatre from the mists of time, but it also grafted theatre onto a lively social tradition that had been a mainstay of entertainment and civic interaction for that period, in between medieval and feudal celebrations were based in performance. In a world were literacy was not widespread and were oral tradition provided information, the medieval passion play alone was how many people learned bible stories, if nothing else. Thus, as a representational form, dramatic theatre in Europe only became truly secularised with the re-introduction of classical ideas, and that secularisation can also be seen as indicative of a major cultural shift away from that oral tradition.

---

[1] Melveena McKendrick, *Theatre in Spain 1490 – 1700*, (Cambridge, 1989), p. 7.
[2] Nicoll Allardyce, *The Development of the Theatre: A Study of Theatrical Art from the Beginnings to the Present Day*, (London, 1966), p. 49.
[3] Ibid. p.48.
[4] Ibid. p. 48.

As Twycross and Carpenter have demonstrated, the salient point is that originally medieval plays were not written for theatres. They were put on in city streets, churches, playing fields, college halls and private houses, and they exploited these different venues, each in their own distinctive way. One of theatres' strengths was clearly the way in which it acknowledged and engaged its audience. 'There was no such thing as casual theatregoing; each of these plays was the centerpiece of a special occasion for a close-knit community'.[5] Given the free nature of its audience, the power of theatre as an occasion for the creation of communal understandings of the civic self and its place in the order and structure of communal living was always available as a vehicle capable of communicating both conformist and resistant ideals. Therefore, what the resurging classical tradition fused with was the fact that, 'when Christians no longer had to make their devotions in private, habits of public worship created many of the conditions from which drama might develop'[6]. When it came to this, street performances fused with religious drama and acts of worship. Thus, 'the practice of masquerades and mumming, so popular at New Year and Shrovetide, proved firmly enough entrenched in medieval society to survive the prohibitions of the church and state as effectively as it had already deflected the hostility of Christian missionaries in earlier centuries. It simply changed its skin like a snake, and re-emerged in new guises, both civic and aristocratic.'[7] What theatre has proven itself to be in historic terms is a multi-faceted process, capable of infiltrating all aspects of secular and religious medieval and post-medieval life. The church originated the idea with the public mass, but in order to resist the more pagan elements of tradition the church, and hence the state, had to either imbibe these traditions or surpass them with its own public performances in order to rival their success.

---

[5] Meg Twycross & Sarah Carpenter, *Masks and Masking in Medieval and early Tudor England*, (Ashgate, 2002), p. 37.
[6] William Tydeman, *The Theatre in the Middle Ages, Western European Stage Conditions, c 800 – 1576*, (Cambridge, 1978), p. 32.
[7] Glynne Wickham, *The Medieval Theatre*, (Cambridge, 1987), p. 161.

In relation to this point Glynne Wickham puts forward a fascinating idea[8], that the social control that was implemented by marriage in the early modern period was open to resistance within the sphere of Mumming and the Masque. In a world were marriages were a major factor in economic achievement, and where absentee husbandry was very common, the idea of an organised and socially acceptable vehicle for the trespassing of social boundaries within the public sphere was not only very possible and popular, but also very necessary. The idea then of the Masquerade and the activities of minstrels and troubadours, while at one level 'merely' representing the romanticisation of adultery, can be taken as being representative of an institutionalisation of what would have been an incredibly serious offence in the medieval world. In doing so it also represents the idea of an established form of resistance to social control. Or, in Wickham's own words, 'I would myself go as far as to say that as the nucleus of drama within the Christian worship was song, so in the secular environment of social recreation, the nucleus of dramatic entertainment was dance.'[9] Both of these nuclei, however, occur within the social sphere. In the building of this tradition the social element was the overriding necessity, be that social occasion religious or secular.

Therefore, in the blurring of the lines between the secular and the religious, the conformist and the resistant, we can observe medieval theatre in its truest form. It was a sphere for the interpretation and reassignment of those facets necessary to social control, but one that operated by co-opting both for its own ends. *Theatre*, as opposed to simple *Performance* (i.e. the medieval passion or fools play) by its very nature represents an established space between power structures. It can be seen as an attempt at illustrating the affects that those structures have upon those who live both within and without their structural confines. In resisting it, the Roman Catholic church, being the oldest power

---

[8] Ibid. p. 162.
[9] Ibid. p. 160.

structure in Europe, along with the developing secular authorities of the time, would have at very least had the unenvious task of restricting a necessary method for the release of social tensions. They then had to enforce that restriction at their own detriment, driving the practice underground, as theatre is a ritually based communal enactment, but one that cannot be as easily stamped out. To practice another religion in opposition to Christianity is not the same as indulging the social cohesion of tradition at the price of the purity of that Christianity. One is heresy, the other is merely laxity of faith, and quite allowable since all public ritual by its nature can be said to stem from the need to release social tensions in a publicly ordered form that can be both observed, supervised and participated in to an extent. The only viable possibility was acceptance of this new form of entertainment. At least then it could be vetted for the exclusion of any ideas and ideals that may have gone against the established order.

In regard to English drama, William Tydeman makes the point that, Medieval English theatre 'is an expression which possesses more the virtues of custom and convenience than those of strict descriptive accuracy. Of its three components the least satisfactory is the undoubtedly the first, (that is, it was not actually in English), and it is with good justification that many prefer to speak of early English theatre since the major genres of dramatic composition that came into being during the later medieval period, cycles of biblical drama, (or mystery plays), moralities and saints plays, all sustained a vigorous life until well into the sixteenth century, often into its later half[10]. 'Medieval' drama, then, continued as a potent cultural force through many decades of what historians call the 'Early Modern period' and literary scholars 'the Renaissance'.[11] If we shift this discussion to England in the time after the Reformation had changed the world, and especially England, we find theatre in a surprisingly strong position. As

[10] R. Beadle, (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, Introduction by William Tydeman, (Cambridge, 1994), Intro. p. xiii.
[11] Ibid. p. xiii.

Palliser has noted, 'in popular speech the "age of Elizabeth" and the "age of Shakespeare" are almost synonymous, but that is a distortion and a half-truth at best[12]. The writers whose greatness is attested both by their contemporaries and by our judgement in posterity were really late Elizabethan and Jacobean. 'Shakespeare himself wrote his plays between about 1591 and 1613; and Shakespeare was only one of a very distinguished company'[13].

What led to this golden age of theatre in a country whose drama, according to Tydeman, was so very limited in its original medieval form? It is clear that theatre became a sphere of resistance to a movement that specifically attempted, and succeeded for a time, to do what the church of medieval and post medieval Europe had chosen in their wisdom not to, to ban theatre outright. The particular flavour that the Reformation took on in England was the turning point for drama. Theatre seemed to flourish especially upon Puritan calls for its abandonment, calls so vitriolic at times that they succeeded in closing the theatres in the 1640s. This might seem strange given the fact that what actually transformed English theatre was the same force that led to Puritanism in the first instance: Humanism. To quote Palliser again, 'popular culture in Tudor England has been much less studied than learned culture' [however] 'any division of Tudor culture into 'literary' and 'popular' is too simple. Gentry and clergy participated in popular festivals and rituals: a considerable minority of humble folk had access to books and could read if not write; and there were various levels of both literary and popular culture'.[14] Theatre, by virtue of being able to appear as all things to all men, could be seen as a medium amenable to both high and low culture. The village festival was just as much a theatrical performance as a play by Shakespeare or one of his peers. Alternatively, A.L. Rowse asserts that, 'underneath the chops and changes there was more continuity than might

---

[12] D.M. Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth 1547 – 1603*, (London, 1983), p. 372.
[13] Ibid. p. 372.
[14] Ibid. p. 353.

be supposed from reading history in terms of political narrative'.[15] It is far too easy to see the separation from Rome as being a finite end to a finite situation, but even movements as strong as Humanism and the Reformation can only change ways of life, not totally end them. Humanism, that original force that began so much of these changes, did not simply disappear from England after the Royal Divorce; rather it 'retreated to incubate the classrooms of England and to re-emerge in the generation of Spenser, Marlowe and Shakespeare'[16].

Humanism may have retreated to the classroom in regard to education, but it was protestantised in all other regards. 'It is of course now obvious that the execution of More and Fisher did not bring about the collapse of the humanist movement in England during the middle third of the sixteenth century'[17]. For English humanism the period following the death of More and Fisher was simply a time of change. Perhaps the most important thing that happened to the humanist movement in the later 1530s was that it underwent, to a great extent, 'a process of Protestantisation, with the humanists assuming a new and more active role'[18]. Indeed it was 'the shift from the early Erasmian humanism of More and Fisher to the growing Protestant Humanism of the late 1530s that gave the official religious Reformation in England its distinctive flavour'[19]. In regard to the very word 'Humanist' in England especially, 'the first explicit definitions of the words *humanist* and *humanitian* come early in the seventeenth century, and neither of them seems to follow on closely from sixteenth century usage'[20]. The idea of Humanism was only just defining itself in England, and, like the Reformation, it would take on distinctively English overtones upon its arrival. To bring Humanism writ large back to its Italian origins and at the same time

---

[15] A.L. Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth*, (Hampshire, 1950), p. 439.

[16] Paul Dean, 'Tudor Humanism and the Roman Past: A Background to Shakespeare', *Renaissance Quarterly*, xli, no. 1, (Spring, 1988), pp 84 – 111.

[17] John K. Yost, 'Taverner's use of Erasmus and the Protestantisation of English Humanism', *Renaissance Quarterly*, xxiii, no. 3, (Autumn, 1970), pp 266 – 277.

[18] Ibid. p. 275.

[19] Ibid, p. 276.

[20] Michael Pincombe, 'Some Sixteenth Century records of the words Humanist and Humanitian', *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, xliv, no., 173, (Feb. 1993), pp 1 – 15.

illustrate just how quickly a social movement could impact upon England requires us to understand just how suddenly Italian culture and manners became popular in Tudor England. After Chaucer's surprising discovery and translation of Italian literature, it was nearly two centuries before another translation from the Italian was published in England. 'This was the *Certayne Psalmes* (1549) of Thomas Wyatt taken from a work by Aratino. In the same decade royalty took up the new interest'[21]. It is also not generally realised how late it arrived: 'The tardiness with which the influence of Italian Renaissance Humanism made itself felt in Fifteenth Century England is notorious. Englishmen seem to have been blandly unconscious of the new historicism until the time of Erasmus'[22].

The ideas of both classical and northern Humanism may have arrived late but their impact would be tremendous, especially in regard to that shift that the Renaissance announced, from orally transmitted understandings of communal and self-identificational texts to the development of a personal and literary relationship with those texts themselves, especially the Bible. The movement toward a reading of classical material by the literate of this time was not a uniformly positive one. For example 'in 1543 Henry VIII permitted the passage of an act that forbade Bible reading to women and members of the lower social strata'[23]. Thomas More, for his part, blamed Luther for the German Peasants Revolt of 1525: 'It was one thing to discuss the possibility of a communistic society in a language that few can read, but any expansion of the readership raised the spectre of widespread disorder and revolt'[24]. It was quite alright for Thomas More to write of Utopian ideas as long as talk of it stayed within those certain learned circles who would actively resist it.

---

[21] George B. Parks, 'The Genesis of Tudor Interest in Italian', *PMLA*, lxxvii, no. 5, (Dec., 1962), pp 529 – 535.
[22] Paul Dean, 'Tudor Humanism and the Roman Past', (1988), pp 84 – 111.
[23] David Weill Baker, 'Topical Utopias: Radicalising Humanism in Sixteenth Century England', *Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900*, xxxvi, no. 1, (Winter, 1996), pp 1 – 30.
[24] Ibid, p. 3.

I place these details within this discussion because in the words of Weimann 'in the Sixteenth Century a deep crisis of authority is accompanied, in widely different types of discourse, by the need for authoritising changing modes of and aims in representation involving, in the theatre and the pamphlet, new elements of congruity as well as incongruity between what is representing and what represented[25]. In the sphere of political representation, 'the element of non-identity between the two is so obvious that the case for (in) congruity need hardly be argued'[26]: thus the collapse of representations both *to* and *of* in regard to both the individual and the power structures under which he or she lived. This collapse, originally due to uncertainty about the role function and location of authority, was exacerbated by a rapidly growing distance between the imbibed personal understanding of the 'self's' place in the English world. Furthermore, whatever proximity had originally existed between the individual and society was even further eroded by the arrival of both Humanism and the Reformation. This is partly because the Bible, in contrast with post-typographical culture, was only truly present to medieval culture in a largely oral mode. Cultures assimilated the biblical word, not verbatim, but as 'oral culture typically assimilates a message, thematically and formulaically, tribally rather than individually. With the Reformation comes an insistence on *scriptura*, on what is written, - and only what is written'[27]. Suddenly the responsibility for understanding the word of God, quite possibly the most important thing in any man or woman's life, was a matter of personal belief and attention, not just communal attendance at a ritualised performance.

In England at this time there was also the matter of the monarchical attachment and persecution of religion, depending on which religion the

[25] Robert Weimann, 'History and the Issue of Authority in Representation: The Elizabethan Theatre and the Reformation', *New Literary History*, xvii, no. 3, (Spring, 1986), pp 449 – 476.
[26] Ibid. p. 476.
[27] Michael O'Connell, 'The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm, Anti-Theaticalism, and the Image of the Elizabethan Theatre', *English Literary History*, lii, no. 2, (Summer, 1985), pp 279 – 310.

monarch happened to ascribe to. It is possible to argue that, precisely because of the fits and starts preceding its mid-Tudor crises and the return to the throne of a Catholic queen, the Reformation in England must have had a particularly subversive effect on deep-seated assumptions as to the traditional ways and sanctions of authority. For example, 'a child born in 1533, the year when Elizabeth was born, had, if his family were conformist, subscribed to five different versions of the Christian religion by the time he was twenty-six'[28]. English tradition, it would seem, had become a tradition of change, especially religious change. Furthermore, what also arrives with the Reformation is the change of the mass sermon. Worship to the Puritans, was a serious business and not something to be seen as an entertainment. How could this be otherwise, when it was no longer based solely in communal interpretations, and when the relationship between man and God was now personal and only to be understood from the word not the pulpit? Beyond the confines of the mass, what this meant for the Biblical drama, that ship upon which theatre of all sorts had managed to sail across half of Europe since the tenth century at least, was that while the opposition to secular drama was confined by and large to the left wing of the Reformation in England- the party that would evolve toward Puritanism- the opposition to religious drama was official policy. 'In nearly all cases the new wine of the English Reformation was successfully decanted into the old bottles of the Catholic past. But in the case of the biblical drama the bottle was decisively smashed and the pieces successfully hidden away for several centuries'[29].

To clarify the point, theatre in England, even in the form of biblical drama, had been a staple mainstay of both social and civil interaction and possible social transgression since medieval times. Its connection with the sociopolitical identity and continuous reinterpretation of that same identity was extremely

---

[28] Robert Weimann, 'History and the Issue of Authority in Representation', (1986), p. 452.
[29] Michael O'Connell, 'The Idolatrous Eye', (1985), pp 287 & 281.

important. When religious division did become an issue in England, the removal of biblical drama (that is, festive theatre) meant a further degradation of the social binding that medieval life and oral transmission of the Bible had enabled for quite some time. Not only was the average English person now alone in a no longer public interpretational relationship with whatever form of worship he believed in, but he was also in a position whereupon the social positing of that relationship within the larger field of communal activity was under attack. The relationship between himself and his fellows, the authorities under which he lived, and his faith had to be re-established in both reality and in representation in a sphere where the establishment of social identity was a matter of both growing change and disconcerting uncertainty. As Michael Weimann says, 'in the crucial years around 1525 the climax of the German Peasants Revolt, the previous monopoly of the Church in controlling Scripture was transformed into every man's Protestant freedom to write, read, and think about the Bible himself. The new evangelical sources of spiritual authority are disassociated from office ritual and confession'[30]. In England, what this meant in the matter of community was pressure to not only conform but to be seen to conform. Contrary to what is widely supposed the Puritans were not occupied with the next world, their concern rested very much with this one and with the interminable struggle to reach the standard of conduct they set themselves. Their concern was 'unswervingly, excruciatingly ethical. Even intellectual curiousity was not to be approved: it was apt to encourage the sin of pride'.[31] Furthermore, there was no exclusion or limit to this phenomenon. With regard to its class affiliations, there are writers who speak of this process as a purely middle class manifestation. Others, seeing it solely in terms of aristocratic patronage, suppose the exact opposite. In fact, the centre of this change 'is to be found in the middle class, all its leading spirits were middle class men. In so far as it gave birth to a way of life, that was capable of being shared in by people of all classes; in so far

---

[30] Robert Weimann, 'History and the Issue of Authority in Representation', (1986), p. 460.
[31] A.L. Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth*, (1950), p. 537.

46

as it was a system of ideas and ideals, by people of all kinds who were capable of apprehending them'.[32]

Not everyone in England was Puritan, but Protestantism began as an all embracing and inclusive phenomenon. With a Puritan strain of Protestantism in an aggressive and assertive position within English life, especially during the reign of Elizabeth, behaviour not only had to *be* exemplary, but also had to be *seen to be* exemplary. Attendance of the theatre was too close to an occasion of sin in the eyes of the Puritan left. Attacks against theatre can be traced back in history as far as Aristotle, the idea being that theatre (and art in general) is a misrepresentation. It is a *version* of the truth and can therefore be said to be in *opposition* to the truth. It is merely *mimesis*, an imitation of reality, and far too close to being a both a lie and a source of corruption for those who wish to live truthfully. Beyond Aristotle, however, or any ensuing dogmatic manifestations of resistance to theatre, there is always the latent possibility of theatre (and literary art in particular) posing a threat to power structures by showing an alternative to them. This 'what could be' is what Puritanism found troubling, especially since what had enabled their own existence was built on just that, a vast social change based originally upon the reestablishment of both relationships and representations to the written and publicly disseminated word. Any interpretation so personal was bound to cause complications in a society that had spent so long in both communal listening and interpretation, and the establishment of identity via that mechanism. Having spent so long in trying to establish an authority in a country that seemed permanently prone to its collapse, the depth of their distrust can, perhaps, be appreciated and better understood.

As Walter Cohen so succinctly puts it, the reading of the Bible was indeed designed to cultivate interiority, but it inevitably led to conflicting

---

[32] Ibid. p. 519.

interpretations in regard to personal religion. 'It led to an anarchy of individual consciences, and conflict with society as well. These unintended consequences parallel not only various Renaissance motifs, but also the psychological complexity that distinguishes the treatment of character in Elizabethan drama and is particularly striking in their famous soliloquies'[33]. It would seem that the word is, again, every bit as unreliable as that which it was chosen to replace, 'the link here between the two enemies, Catholic and Reformer, is Humanism'[34], i.e. that original reintroduction of the 'word', or at least of someone's personal ability to judge that word for him or herself, across Europe. In trying to ascertain and establish something that could or would not change, and with all the ensuing psychological discomfort, in the end the Reformation in England left its mark upon history with the soliloquies of the stage. It left us with constructed characters who were both empowered and ennobled enough to seek answers to those same questions that everyone wished to ask, but that the Puritans were afraid someone would.

Construction and Performance

In this section I intend to look briefly at English dramatic theatre's subsequent development in order to extrapolate a broader understanding of those forces that helped shape the pre-colonial English 'self', and from there, the prototype of the postcolonial 'Other': Shakespeare's character Caliban from *The Tempest*. I believe that an examination of plays from shortly before and just after 1600 suggest a certain marked mentality in both the construction of these dramatic characters and in the mindset of the audience to which they were presented. What is examined in this section are certain recurring ideas that I believe to be evident in regard to those dramatic constructions of the English 'self', upon which, and in opposition to, Caliban was constructed. The other plays that I have

---

[33] Walter Cohen, *Drama of a Nation, Public Theatre in Renaissance England and Spain*, (Ithaca, 1985), p. 147.
[34] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare*, (Chicago, 1980), p. 109.

chosen to briefly use in support of this examination are Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, (or *The Gentle Craft*), - 'As it was acted before the queens most excellent Majestie on New Yeares day at night last, 1600',[35] Ian Webster's *The Malcontent*, 'augmented by Marston, 1604'[36]; and *Women Beware Women*, c1623, printed in 1657[37] by Thomas Middleton. I believe that this examination will shed light on certain similarities between these works and their more famous colonial Shakespearean counterpart. I believe that these other works and their various characters, contextualise *The Tempest* in regard to Elizabethan England's understanding of herself.

It must be remembered, however, that comedy and tragedy at this point in time do not possess either the same delineated quality that they had in ancient Greece and Rome, or that they possess today. One perfect example would be Marston's *The Malcontent*, which 'was variously described contemporaneously as a satire by Marston in his prologue to "the reader"- and also later in the century by Gerard Langbaine, as a history by Condell in his "Induction", and as an *Eterlude...Tragiecomdeia* in the entry in the *London Stationers' Register*. Critics have since added the labels, comedy, revenge comedy, and revenge tragedy,'[38] but the most pertinent point may be that what the audiences of the time found both tragic and comic, are not the same as they would be to a modern audience. Also, while monarchical reigns can be fitted into time periods and, thus, plays written within that time frame can be delineated and labeled Elizabethan, Jacobean, Carolingian etc, it must be remembered that styles of writing and influence upon the same never truly fit that simple design. Art, and especially literary art, develops by accruing layers of work and influence, not simply by time and age. Furthermore, while we are within the moment of the Virginian colonisation, our examination must be Janus-headed by the nature of

[35] A.K. McIlwraith, (ed.), *Five Elizabethan Comedies*, (OUP, 1973), p. 72.

[36] A.H. Gomme, (ed), *Jacobean Tragedies*, (OUP, 1969), p. 3.

[37] Ibid. p. 307

[38] Larry S. Champion, 'The Malcontent and the Shape of Elizabethan – Jacobean Comedy', *Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900*, xxv, no. 2, (Spring, 1985), pp 361 – 379.

the medium I have chosen to use, my reasoning being that theatre at any given moment represents more than those simple 'representations' discussed in the introduction.

The constructions inherent in these dramas do not specifically denote intentions toward a colonialist future, but they are very much based on an occurring redefinition caused as much by the movement away from the past as the passage toward the future. All dramatic characters are by their very nature constructions, whether social actors or agents in history are or are not also constructed is somewhat irrelevant as an argument. They are constructed in that they are just as influenced, motivated and directed by the culture, events and power structures that they live within, and in the fact that our understanding of them in history also lies within the remit of our textual relationship with them. Thus an examination of the 'real' motivation of those social actors is possible via the inter-relationship between them and their dramatic counterparts. Briefly, what that interrelationship entails in the dramas presented here is conspiracy and conflict, and while it must be said that dramatic theatre in any form requires conflict in order for resolution to be a fulcrum of operation, in these works especially, conflict takes on a specifically identificational role.

It must be understood that the Tudor morality plays used a rich and widely understood iconography presented in a very straightforward manner, and that when we turn with these visual conventions from the mid-sixteenth century moralities to the mature tragedies of the Elizabethan commercial stage, we find that 'this visual rhetoric does not radically or profoundly change, as we might expect with the shift from moral allegory to mimetic drama'[39]. In other words, the movement of theatre from the religious to the secular discussed above

---

[39] Huston Dichl, 'Inversion, Parody and Irony: The Visual Rhetoric of Renaissance English Tragedy', *Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900*, xxii, no. 2, (Spring, 1982), pp 198 & 200.

denotes a need for the reconstruction of symbolic interactionalism, but one that must still hold as its base the original point of departure in order to be interpreted and understood. 'In the Tudor morality plays these visual icons are straightforward. In later Renaissance tragedy, these icons carry the same ethical and moral associations, but in this case the associations are put in ironic, parodic and inverted contexts'.[40] As a result, we have on the part of the viewer a systematic interpretation built on inherent ideas carried over from a previous social operation: the morality plays and their ensuing their medieval roots.

With regard to this detail Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* is important for several reasons. The play conflates two annual celebrations that would have been deeply familiar to Dekker's London audiences: Shrove Tuesday and Accession Day, and it has recently been suggested that for an Elizabethan audience this additional layer of festivity would have been understood as an allusion to Elizabeth's Accession Day, (17 November), an annual celebration of monarch, state and religion which, by 1599, would have been a familiar feature of the urban festive calendar.[41] Furthermore, Elizabeth's Accession Day proved remarkably successful as a propagandist instrument, most likely because 'it fulfilled the psychic needs of a population whose festive traditions had been eroded by the Reformation'.[42] In regard to accusations of sectarianism on behalf of Dekker, the anti Catholic element in the play is purely for the purpose of self-identification. Catholics in late Elizabethan London were by far in the minority; and according to Larry Champion that anti - Catholic dimension of Dekker's work would seem to be more in the manner of 'simple reinforcement, perhaps even intensification of the audiences firmly held views than an active negotiation of current social conflicts'.[43] The play is a work based on the reaffirmation of social cohesion of the social 'self', against the 'Other', even if

---

[40] Ibid. p. 209.
[41] Marta Straznicky, 'The End(s) of Discord in The Shoemaker's Holiday', *Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900*, xxxvi, no. 2, (Spring, 1996), pp 357 – 372.
[42] Ibid. p. 359.
[43] Ibid. p. 363.

that 'Other' poses no real or inherent threat. The power of Catholicism, however, is just one of the bogeys that would seem to haunt the post Reformation English psyche, whether we are dealing here with England's relationship with her continental neighbours or not. The difference is, of course, that in Dekker's play the conspiracy and conflict elements are tied into a larger grouping of ideas on class, culture and religion within the London audience. In Webster's *The Malcontent,* however, the conflict and conspiracy is perhaps enlightening of more personal and possibly internalised preoccupations and understandings. It would also seem to be a more generic work in terms of this period's fascination with *revengers* in tragedy.

The Malcontent is set in Genoa, and English drama at this time has no problem with setting the scene in foreign climes, or filling those scenes with foreign people, a topic that we will touch upon in chapter three. Marston for his part makes apology for this in the preface. In his prelude to the play *To the Reader* he says that 'it was my care to write so far from reasonable offence, that even strangers, in whose estate I laid my scene, should not from thence draw any disgrace to any, dead or living'.[44] Given both the activities and language of Malevole, the play's main protagonist, this should not surprise us. The play is a serious of intrigues, deceptions and conspiracies. From the start we learn that 'Malevole is the rightful Duke of Genoa, and that he lost power only because he ruled without the use of "devious instruments of state".[45] The play's main theme is the reclamation of his power and authority, or more pointedly, what will Malevole *not* do in order to regain his position. In relation to the audience, while his recovery of state may provide appeal to the sensitive individual in the audience, Malevole's language is far from sensitive:

---

[44] A.H. Gomme, (ed.), *Jacobean Tragedies,* (1969), p. 7.
[45] Larry S. Champion, 'The Malcontent and the Shape of Elizabethan – Jacobean Comedy', (1985), p. 371.

Malevole: 'Thinkest I'll sustain my self by flattering thee, because thou art a prince? I had rather follow a drunkard and live by licking up his vomit, than by servile flattery'.
Pietro: 'Yet great men ha done't'.
Malevole: 'Great slaves fear better than love, born naturally for a coal basket, though the common usher of prince's presence, fortune, hath blindly given them better place.
I am vow'd to be thy affliction'[46].
(Act IV. Sc. v., Lines 64 – 71).

Malevole, just like all other revengers, is both politically and personally dislocated. However, unlike Prospero he hides his true identity and protects his severely bruised ego through a fictive pose by which he lashes out at what he perceives to be a pervasively corrupt and blatantly unfair society. Furthermore, he does so with the appeal of a 'Machiavel capable of totally subordinating all moral sensitivity to self achievement at any cost and in doing so delighting in the opportunity to share with the viewer the methods by which he manipulates others to accomplish his goals'.[47] His goal is also that of relocation to his proper place in society and while the difference between he and Prospero is one of purely moral continence: they are not worlds apart in terms of their positioning regard to society. Furthermore, while *The Malcontent* is not as dark as the anonymous *Revenger's Tragedy* of 1607, it obviously does share certain psychological elements with it. 'The world to this malcontent is "perfect" only in "extreme calamity", (Act IV, Sc. iv, Lines 30 –31)[48], and the image patterns are sufficiently trenchant to lead at least one critic to observe, "they express a major assumption of Calvinist ideology, the seemingly inalterable depravity of man".[49] They also, however, express very succinct ideas, the first being that the only way to redress injustice is by the breaking of ethical, social and moral codes, and the other being that in foreign countries, that is how power is both established and maintained. While the latter idea may be, again, a form of self-realisation, that is that foreign peoples are beyond moral operation, it may also

---

[46] A.H. Gomme, *Jacobean Tragedies*, p. 57.

[47] Op.cit. p. 366.

[48] Op.cit. pp 142-143.

[49] Ibid. p. 369.

be taken as an address, albeit in displacement, of the *realpolitik* of English life at the time. Marston's statement in his prologue would suggest that this is so. If it is, then any notion of people being 'othered' or 'alien' simply because of their foreign origin is not truly valid. Marston, either in address of that situation, or in assigning immoral behaviour to foreign nations, still does so in order to entertain an indigenous English audience. Therefore, the sudden growth and popularity of revengers in English drama at this time would tend not to suggest an identification with these revengers as simply foreign, but with the circumstances from which they arise and are seen to operate: powerlessness turned into victory by the use of unauthorised resistance in some form. Regardless of whether one does or does not agree with this idea of projection and displacement in Marston's work, however, what is far more pertinent to our discussion, is the suggestion that this idea, that the only to way redress a wrong is by stealth and movement outside of the social bounds of morality and moral behaviour. An idea that becomes increasingly pertinent at this time, and therefore that the birth of the *revenger* in tragedy suggests a growing sense of displacement and conflict within English life.   To put it simply, if no one could identify with these characters and their methods, in a tradition that was so heavily built upon symbolic and stock roles then why did they become so popular so suddenly?

Brownell Salomon, in address of Marston, argues that 'the social, political and ecclesiastical chasms which separated Puritanism from the Established Church did not include a mutually held theology. G. R. Cragg explains that 'the conflict with the Puritans was not at the outset an attack on their theology'. …'the leaders of the Elizabethan church were Calvinists almost to a man'. Calvinist premises, then, were not at the time confined to Puritan theology alone, but enjoyed wide Protestant acceptance.[50] That theological position was quite clear, it echoed Augustine but was not quite so explicit: 'Man's libido is

---

[50] Brownell Salomon, 'The Theological Basis of Imagery and Structure in The Malcontent', *Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900*, xiv, no. 2, (Spring, 1974), p. 273.

the touchstone of sinfulness: "Whatsoever is in man, even from the understanding to the will, from the soul to the flesh, is corrupted and stuffed full with cupiscence: For lust never utterly dieth and is quenched in men, untill [it is] by death delivered out of the bodie of death".[51] This is an important point; there is no Puritan theatre or drama to examine. It would seem, however, that the distance between the English Puritans and their fellow countrymen was perhaps not so great in certain matters, and while we may not be able to look for the social formulation of the Puritan 'self' and 'not-self', by looking at the popular theatre of the times we can look for their contemporaries notions of the same. Indeed we should, it is the majority that we wish to examine, those that did attend the theatre, those that were entertained by these quests for revenge, or at very least by stories of release from a state of powerlessness.

According to Katharine Eisaman Maus, 'traditionally the material of comedy, cuckoldry and the fear of cuckoldry becomes a theme of tragedy in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries' [52]. She looks deeply at the psychology at work within the drama of the time and finds that voyeurism is prevalent, but especially the voyeurism of the cuckolded. However, the relationship and similarity between the cuckold's voyeurism and theatrical spectatorship is not merely a formal affair, more interesting and complex connections suggest themselves in the light of the English Renaissance conception of theatrical experience, 'as that conception emerges from the many attacks upon the defenses of the stage published during the period'.[53] Once again, the issues here are continence, betrayal, authority and power; the individual is expected to adhere to a specifically rigid code of conduct to prevent his own fall into the betrayal of the inner authority. He is also expected to be his brothers' keeper in this matter; it is, after all, with his brother that his wife will

---

[51] Ibid. p. 279.
[52] Katharine Eisaman Maus, 'Horns of Dilemma: Jealousy, Gender, and Spectatorship in English Renaissance Drama', *ELH*, liv, no. 3, (Autumn, 1987), p.561.
[53] Ibid. p. 566.

betray him. Furthermore, she is the only one that he truly can be seen to have authority over, her betrayal of him announces the end of his power, both personal and social. Certain other factors are important here. 'Again and again the Elizabethan anti theatrical writers hurl the charge of idolatry against the stage. The charge is a strange one, for the drama of the period is what we would recognise as secular, and having nothing obvious to do with worship – and hence with the false worship of idolatry'.[54] Perhaps what may be closer to the truth of their objections is that 'a predominant metaphor for the practice of the theatre in Shakespeare's age was prostitution, an image the professional actor, playwright and theatre owner helped to define and were defined by and to which they responded with ambivalence',[55] to pretend to be is, after all, to lie. Beyond their ambivalence, however, was the simple fact that 'as Steven Mullaney has pointed out in *The Place of Stage*, the theatre and prostitution occupied the same place in London: outside the city, in the Liberties that housed 'marginal spectacles' ranging from 'hospitals and brothels to madhouses, scaffolds of execution, prisons and lazar houses'. This locale indicates the status of the theatre in the culture: it is something kept apart, a 'distrusted alien that threatens the civil, moral and social order',[56] but as David Leverenz remarks 'Puritans saw themselves in what they hated'.[57] The insularity of the Puritan mindset had replaced idolatry with logolatry. Now the word and only the word was valid, and keeping faith with validity was the only hope of salvation given the sinful nature of man. Was this, then, a case of insularity borne of necessity? Was this then a manifestation of the need to have identifications for both the 'self' and the self in community? Given the evidence, I believe that it is in fact an attempt at redefining and empowering the self in an age where that definition was not as it once had been.

---

[54] Michael O'Connell, 'The Idolatous Eye', (1985), p. 279.
[55] Josephine Lenz, 'Base Trade: Theatre as Prostitution', *English Literary History, (ELH)*, lx, no. 4, (Winter, 1993), pp 833 –855.
[56] Ibid. p. 835.
[57] David Leverenz, *The Language of Puritan Feeling: An Exploration in Literature, Psychology and Social History*, (New Brunswick, 1980), p. 24.

Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women* is from a slightly later date, c1623[58], and my reason for choosing to view this play is again to display the ideas of power relationships and the reaffirmation of the 'self' and the 'Other' within the time period. Here, however, we deal with the omnipresent 'Other' in society: woman. The play revolves around the idea of sexuality as transaction, with a husband using his wife's sexuality to gain benefit, specifically his benefit. As Anthony Dawson posits, '*Women Beware Women* examines the pressures of sexual power in a quite startling way. At its centre stands a rape, presented not as a brutal motive for revenge, as in *Titus Andronicus*, nor simply as way of impelling one element of the plot, as in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, but as an emblem of hierarchy, and an image of the domination that characterizes most of the play's relationships'.[59] Possibly in keeping with Marston's motive above, the play is set in Florence. In regard to the overall plot, however, sexual exchange is seen in purely economic terms: the woman is to trade her body for wealth, honour and protection:

'Bianca: 'Why should you seek, sir,
To take away what you could never give?
Duke: But I give better in exchange: wealth, honour;
She that is fortunate in a Duke's favour
Lights on a tree that bears all women's wishes'
(Act II, Sc. ii, Line 365 – 369)[60].

Furthermore, 'there is nothing specifically remarkable in this: it is the standard fare of Jacobean drama, and reflects the dominant social practice.[61] Again, the idea that pervades is one of powerlessness. Bianca does what she does in the pursuit of social advancement, ostensibly for the sake of her husband, but in doing so she breaks and betrays society's rules in pursuit of

---

[58] A.H. Gomme, (ed.), *Jacobean Tragedies*, (1969), p. 308.
[59] Anthony B. Dawson, 'Women Beware Women and the Economy of Rape', *Studies in English Literature 1500 – 1900*, xxvii, no.2, (Spring, 1987), pp 303 – 320.
[60] Op.cit. p. 347.
[61] Ibid. p. 309.

society's operation, an act by which she specifically must not be allowed to profit. The dramatic departure for Middleton, however, is that 'what is new in his plays is not so much the sexual situations as the ability of the women to reflect on them in general terms, and the natural way in which exploitation by men is shown as contributing to aggressiveness or deceit in women'.[62] Regardless of Middleton's modernisation of the role of women in Jacobean tragedy, what the play actually entails is again conflict, conspiracy, and the pursuit of power for either its own ends or in order to redress societal dislocation. It is within that pursuit in Middleton's work that our heroine is betrayed by another woman into a life of 'courtesanship'. When she dies at the play's end the point would seem to be at what price will chastity and sexual continence be sold or exchanged, and if it is, what is the reward?[63] In regard to betrayal and moral continence (here represented through sexual fidelity), there is a difference. While in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* the identification against Roman Catholicism can be seen an almost natural occurrence in regard to self-identification and social advancement, and in *The Malcontent* characters like Malevole will comically not only allow an audience to witness how conspiracy and unethical activity can be used to revenge a wrong, but show them how: 'Keep your face constant, let no sudden passion speak in your eyes', (Act V Sc. Iv, Lines 136 – 137)[64], Bianca for her part represents a different end, but one of the same strand of thought. She does as the other characters do, but she cannot be allowed to prosper by her treason, not specifically because her actions are sexually treasonous, but because she is a woman, and therefore property[65]. Her non-complicity in the original scheme that leads her into betrayal is unimportant

---

[62] Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre*, (CUP, 1980), p. 194.

[63] For a fuller discussion see also, Richard A. Levin, 'If Women Should Beware Women, Bianca Should Beware Mother', *Studies in English Literature*, 1500-1900, xxxvii, No. 2, (Spring, 1997), pp 371-389 & Charles A. Hallett, 'The Psychological Drama of Women Beware Women', *Studies in English Literature*, *1500-1900*, xii, no 2, (Spring, 1972), pp 375-389.

[64] A.H. Gomme, (ed.), *Jacobean Tragedies*, (1969), p. 73.

[65] For example, in England at the time, if a husband killed his wife or a servant, under law he was accused of murder, but if they dispatched him, they were charged with treason, they were his subjects. See Frances E. Dolan, 'The Subordinate's Plot: Petty Treason and the Forms of Domestic Rebellion', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xliii, no. 3, (Autumn, 1992), pp. 317 – 340.

in the eyes of the author, as is the fact that an opportunity for her husband's social advancement was originally the starting point for her actions.

What all of the above plays have in common is that they are about power, the identification of it as a group, the reclamation of it as an individual and the betrayal of it by the self. What makes *Women Beware Women* so important for examination in our discussion is that it moves the representation of these ideas of self-identification and holding true to that identification in purely sexual and moral terms. Furthermore, in using a female character to explore these issues, Middleton allows us to observe power relations at a deeper level: Bianca's failure to maintain her chastity and sexual continence, even if done in that same pursuit as her male counterparts, must not be allowed to succeed. The fact that she is that she, through her actions, becomes powerless, not empowered. Furthermore, that she was instructed into this course of action by what can be construed as the *realpolitiik* of society itself in the form of her mother is beside the point. She has failed to stay true, and the ultimate price for her failure is death. She, at this time in English drama, is the 'Other', a threat to the status quo, and in her treason the status quo is not reaffirmed it is fundamentally challenged and broken. Bianca does not enjoy the same sneaking admiration that her mail counterparts engender, her betrayal is simply too much to be allowed.

> Cardinal: 'Two king's on one throne cannot sit together,
> But one must need's down for his title's wrong;
> So where lust reigns that prince cannot reign long.
> (Act V. Sc. II, Lines 220 – End)[66].

In regard to both the redress of powerlessness, and presence of deception in the above titles, in *The Tempest*, when Miranda learns of her noble origins for the first time, she asks Prospero "Sir are you not my father?" To which he

---

[66] Ibid. p. 398.

replies "Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and / she said thou was't my daughter", (Act I. Sc. ii, 55 –60)[67]. In an age before blood tests, no man could be absolutely certain of paternity. While these lines may be taken in the light of irony, they can also be taken as evidence of those fears lurking in the psyche of that which both European and English society was both built upon and had been ruled by for centuries: patriarchy. Given the content of those works presented above, and the presence of *The Tempest* within that context, the idea does not seem far-fetched. Even if Shakespeare is being simply ironic, within the above quote he has still managed to touch upon a common point in both this play and Middleton's, at this time women were property. Furthermore, in regard to the overall idea of women as property, it should be remembered that in *The Tempest* Miranda, unsullied by any eyes but Prospero's, can be easily seen as the main device by which his return to civil society is enabled, courtesy of her betrothal into marriage:

' Prospero:This cell's my court: here have I few attendants,
And subjects none abroad: pray you look in.
My dukedom since you have given me again,
I will requite you with as good a thing;
At least bring forth a wonder, to content ye
As much as my dukedom'[68]

It is after all this betrothal to marriage that seals the restoration of civil order to the distorted world of Caliban's Island, both figuratively and dramatically:

'Gonzalo: O Rejoice beyond a common joy! And set it down
With gold on lasting pillars: in one voyage
Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis,
Ans Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife
Where he himself was lost, Prospero to his dukedom
In a poor isle, and all of us ourselves
Where no man was his own.'[69]

---

[67] Frank Kermode, (Ed.), *William Shakespeare's The Tempest*, (London, 1954), p 12.
[68] Ibid. p. 123.

To keep with this exploration of these pervasive ideas of power and betrayal, although it is obvious from the outset that Caliban's rebellion in *The Tempest* has no real chance to succeed, its eventual eruption at the betrothal masque would seem to suggest a certain symbolism when taken in relation to all of the above. Furthermore, while it can also be seen as one of the few, if not the only time that Prospero is seen to react to events, suggesting that he is not entirely in control:

'Prospero: [Aside] I had forgot that foul conspiracy
Of the beast Caliban and his confederates
Against my life: the minute of their plot
Is almost come.'[70]

As we are continually made aware of throughout the play, Prospero is in control of the situation; this is, after all Prospero's play. That the 'Other' Caliban is attempting a doomed and foolish rebellion with the aid of Stephano and Trinculo should come as no real surprise. It would seem that our sympathies are given to Caliban only for them to be withdrawn at this act of possible violence, but what are we to make of Stephano and Trinculo? Within the play are they not 'othered' in the same way as Caliban, and perhaps those revenging characters discussed above? The answer is both yes and no: yes in regard to the fact that they are made different from those other Europeans in the play and no in that a serious difference would appear to lie in both their motivation and in the resolution of their situation. Both of them, just like Caliban are pardoned and 'claimed' at the end of the play[71], and restored to their respective positions but they have never really been removed from them, and their restoration is at the convenience and behest of others:

[69] Ibid. p. 125, (Act V, Sc. I, Lines 206 – 212).
[70] Ibid. p. 103, (Act IV, Sc. I Lines 139 – 141).
[71] Ibid. p. 131, (Act V, sc. I, Lines 271 –298).

Prospero: Take with you your companions; as you look
To have my pardon, trim it handsomely'[72].

Furthermore, in those tragedies featuring revengers discussed above the motivation is always one of social relocation and re-attainment of position. However, this pursuit is what those characters share with Prospero, not Caliban and definitely not Stephano and Trinculo. The difference between those revenger characters and Prospero is that they will pursue their reinstatement regardless of the means by which that re-attainment of position occurs. The difference however is that it is by their unethical methods they resolve an unethical occurrence, they are entitled to use these means due to the unfairness of their original treatment. Trinculo and Stephano have not been treated in this way and therefore cannot be allowed to profit by claiming that which they are not entitled to: Caliban's island. Caliban cannot be resolved back into that which he never was and never will be: a part of civil society, and he also cannot, of course, be allowed to succeed, because Prospero's art (European Civilisation) must always be capable of defeating Caliban and his mothers' magic (native savagery). Furthermore, it is specifically through this constructed dramatic resolution that *The Tempest* becomes open to not only the accusations of being a colonial play; but by virtue of making rule of the island an office to be sought after, taken and held by some form of force, of being a representation of the prevalence of conflict and conspiracy in the pursuit of power in Elizabethan England.

In 'Conquering Islands: Contextualising *The Tempest*' Barbara Fuchs makes the point that the 'critical privileging of America as the primary context of colonialism for the play obscures the very real presence of the Ottoman threat in the Mediterranean in the early seventeenth century and elides the violent English colonial adventures in Ireland, which paved the way for plantation in

---

[72] Ibid. p. 131, Lines 291-292.

Virginia.[73] In the evidence that she provides in support of her argument she spends some time discussing the fact that the only garment given to Caliban by Shakespeare is not remotely associated with the New World, it is associated with rain, and especially Ireland: Caliban wears a cloak[74]. This is the 'gaberdine' that Trinculo shelters under in Act II, Sc. ii:

'Trinculo: Alas, the storm is come again! My best
way is to creep under his gaberdine; there is no
open shelter hereabouts: misery acquaints a man
with strange bedfellows. I will here shroud till the
dregs of the storm be past'[75].

In doing so Trinculo 'unwittingly becomes monstrous in Stephano's eyes'[76] and Fuchs goes on to say that 'Given England's anxiety over distinguishing savage from civilised, islander from Coloniser in Ireland, it is possible to read this episode in Shakespeare's text as one of the indices of the colonial adventure. [77] While I do agree with her interpretation I feel that the more salient point may be that, in joining Caliban under his cloak, and in 'supporting' Stephano, Shakespeare makes both of these Europeans a threat to both the stability that civil society and all it stands for enable, and the colonial venture itself. Shakespeare may be indeed referring to Ireland, but it may be more pertinent to interpret both this scene and the ensuing 'rebellion' in a quite different light. Stephano and Trinculo, in their support for Caliban's scheme and in the ease by which they are distracted from it can be seen to be personifying both those fears of deception discussed above in their most worrying form and colonialism in its ugliest. It should be remembered that it is at this point in time that the 'Spanish black legend' becomes popular in England, and Trinculo and

---

[73] Barbara Fuchs, "Conquering Islands: Contextualising The Tempest', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xlviii, no. 1, (Spring, 1997), p. 45.
[74] Ibid. p. 48.
[75] Frank Kermode, (Ed.), *The Tempest*, (London, 1954),(Act II, Sc. ii, Lines 38 – 42), p. 63.
[76] Op.cit. p. 48.
[77] Ibid. p. 48.

Stephano in both their drinking and behaviour towards each other, and especially Caliban, can be seen to represent those worst excesses that Spain was regularly accused of in her New World territories[78]. Frances E. Dolan, however, makes the point that in this rebellion, Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano represent a common enough discourse: the fear of both petty rebellion and high treason, but one aided by the conspiracy of the familiar[79]. According to Dolan, Caliban is technically committing both high and low treason, as he is not only Prospero's household 'slave'[80], and it is specifically through this intimacy that he knows of any weaknesses that he may have, but also his only subject[81]. Furthermore, while Caliban's rebellion has no real chance to succeed, it does possess the ability to interfere with the betrothal masque, and thus, the success of Prospero's relocation and reclamation of his dukedom: 'Caliban's plot does threaten to derail Prospero's elaborate schemes to regain his dukedom, marry off his daughter, and punish / educate his usurping brother'[82]. The danger posed by Stephano and Trinculo in this rebellion, is that they have just as much right to take the island as Prospero has, indeed it is by offering them Prospero's hold over the island that Caliban gets them to aid him in the first place in line 56 of Act III, Scene ii: 'Thou shall be Lord of it, and I'll serve thee'. Indeed, this scene under the cloak can quite easily be seen as a Shakespearean play upon both the political ideas of commonwealth prevalent at the time, the Spanish black legend and as a simple indication that Trinculo and Caliban are none too dissimilar. The fear then is not one of Caliban's retaking his island, but in a degradation of Prospero's claim to the same occurring via the equation of all of [the] Europeans to Prospero when he is now so different. Shakespeare is making the point that Prospero is now 'fit' to rule the island; Trinculo and Stephano are shown by their conduct not to be, and therefore must not be deemed to have as equal a claim to the island. While I agree with those critics who see class

---

[78] Passim, Hanke, Lewis, The Spanish struggle for justice in the Conquest of America, (Boston, 1965).

[79] Frances E. Dolan, 'The Subordinate('s) Plot: Petty Treason and the Forms of Domestic Rebellion", in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xliii, no. 3, (Autumn, 1992), pp 317 - 340.

[80] Frank Kermode, (Ed.), *The Tempest*, (London, 1954),(Act I, Sc. ii, Line 315), p. 29.

[81] Ibid. (Act I, Sc. ii, Line 343), p.30.

[82] Op.cit. p. 320.

conflict in *The Tempest*[83] and especially in the idea that when left to their own devices the jester and the butler would seize power, power that by their very position in life they are considered as being unworthy to wield.[84] Trinculo and Stephano are present in *The Tempest* in order to further clarify the right of Prospero's 'good' colonialism over Caliban as opposed to either his own or any other unfit rule. According to Shakespeare, Prospero possesses this right to rule because he has to in order to both return himself and Miranda to civil society and to redress the wrongs done upon them. Caliban's enslavement is an unfortunate by product of their living needs upon the island:

'Prospero: But, as 'tis,
We cannot miss him: he does make our fire,
Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices,
That profit us. What, ho! slave! Caliban!
Thou earth, thou! Speak'[85].

A by-product that would be commonly experienced by those Virginian colonists in the none too distant future[86]. Trinculo and Stephano's would be rule has no validation beyond the ability to simply take control by violence. However, whereas Prospero succeeds in this venture by virtue of his high art, they are only capable of taking control by the more traditional role discussed above, unethical activity:

'Stephano: Monster, I will kill this man: his daughter and I
will be king and queen, - save our graces-, and
Trinculo and thyself, shall be viceroys: Dost thou
Like the plot, Trinculo?
Trinculo: Excellent.[87]'

---

[83] S. Brown, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth Century England*, (Cambridge, 1981), p. 85.
[84] Ann Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge, 1981), p. 9.
[85] Frank Kermode, (Ed.), *The Tempest*, (London, 1954),(Act I, Sc. ii, Lines 312 – 316), p. 29.
[86] Frances E. Dolan, 'The Subordinate('s) Plot', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xliii, no. 3. (Autumn, 1992), p. 325.
[87] Ibid. (Act III, Sc. ii, Lines 104 – 108), p. 83.

What we witness both here in the conspiracies to seize rule in *The Tempest*, in the redress of wrongs via unethical an immoral behaviour in the *Shoemaker's Holiday*, *The Malcontent* and the other revengers plays; in the punishment of Bianca in *Women Beware Women* is the pursuit of authority within the societal 'self' when authority writ large has been seen to be an uncertain and collapsible affair, one unworthy of trust within living memory or just beyond it. Furthermore, once that authority is found within the 'self' it must be yielded to at any price. We also know from history that these changes and this search for security and right would continue. Therefore theatre, secular or otherwise, when it comes into play, is seen as a challenge to that inner authority. As Weimann sees it the sixteenth century, was a time of tension as well as overlapping cross pollination between the traditional sanctions of the authority of church and state and how those new modes of religious and theatrical were authorised. It was in the course of this dichotomy that the gaps between the exercise of power and the inscription of 'authority became wider, just as the links between them became flexible and potentially more effective through a greater amount of mediation'.[88] With the advent of the printing press, however, and with the development of larger public playhouses, these forces of representation 'gained a degree of institutionalisation (and, partly, independence) which made it possible to not only to involve a much larger section of the population but to establish a new cultural space for dialogic and performative activities'.[89] The Puritan and anti-theatricals hated drama because they believed that it had taken up the social space that Catholicism had occupied and that had been destroyed with the Reformation. As government scrutiny of theatre very much suggested, they were right: it had. According to Walter Cohen, following the Catholic Rebellion of the North in 1569, Elizabeth was forced to complete what had begun forty years earlier, when the break with Rome first necessitated, 'from the Tudor's point of view, constant scrutiny and

---

[88] Robert Weimann, 'History and the Issue of Authority in Representation', (1986), pp 458 & 470
[89] Ibid. pp 458 & 470.

ever increasing censorship of an obviously Catholic dramatic tradition' was very much necessary. [90] In the pursuit of both scrutiny and censorship the government, intentionally or otherwise, also protected and institutionalized theatre, thus providing legitimating protection for the posing of an oppositional discourse to that of the Puritans.

The battle lines, according to the Puritans, had been very much drawn. O'Connell says that 'The Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre was not a neutral cultural institution, - the attacks upon its beginnings and its fate in 1642 make this amply clear'[91]. It was seen by an influential part of the Puritan intellectual elite as an antagonist and competitor of the progressive religious culture. Theatre was not worship, but as a cultural institution, 'its roots lay deep in the centuries in which it had performed a religious function'.[92] It provided the possibility of an alternative view of church, state and individual where none were sought but all were desperately needed. It was outside of the city gates, along with the criminals, the insane and the morally incontinent, it was what the Puritan mindset feared most, a reflection of their fellow countrymen and, thus, themselves. At this time English Protestant texts of all sorts associated the political external enemies, both the Pope and the Ottoman Sultan, with those demonic internal enemies, Satan or the Antichrist. According to Protestant ideology, the Devil, the Pope, and the Turk all desired to "convert" good Protestant souls to a state of damnation, and this desire to do so 'was frequently figured as a sexual sensual temptation of virtue, accompanied by a wrathful passion for power'.[93] In part, the idea of conversion that both terrified and titillated Shakespeare's audience was a fear of the loss of essence and identity in a world that must have seemed full of instability and injustice on many levels. To clarify the point, in a world where both truth and falsity could so easily

---

[90] Walter Cohen, *Drama of a Nation*, (1985), p. 127.

[91] Michael O'Connell, 'The Idolatrous Eye', (1985), p. 307

[92] Ibid. p. 307.

[93] Daniel J. Vitkus, 'Turning Turk in Othello: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xlviii, no. 2, (Summer, 1997), pp 145 – 176.

coexist, who could be trusted? Surely the most pertinent example of this lack of trust, this new found awareness of the ease with which one could both deceive and be deceived are these ideas about betrayal in the drama of the English Renaissance that we have seen above.

This change from displacement to exploration and display of moral continence acquires its true importance if viewed in the context of the first English colonial settlements. The interaction between observation and morality is just one of the topics that arise in Ronald Takaki's '*The Tempest* in the Wilderness: The Racialisation of Savagery'. In this article he traces the history of the Virginian settlement from its very beginnings until its violent climax. He goes in detail into the treatment and responses of the native Indians, a task for which I am ultimately grateful and for which I have no desire to repeat. He does say, however, that the English settler's process of dehumanising the Indians developed a peculiarly strange dimension in relation to New England: the colonists associated the Indians with the ultimate source of moral betrayal, the Devil. They personified something fearful within Puritan society itself; just like that 'born devil' Caliban, the Indians 'failed to control their appetites, to create boundaries separating mind from body'[94]. They represented what English men and women in America thought that they were not and, more importantly, what they must absolutely not become. As exiles living in the wilderness far from "civilisation", the English 'used their negative images of Indians to delineate the moral requirements they had set up for themselves'.[95] The Indian possession of a vastly different moral agenda was to the Puritans, displayed in immoral behaviour, and was an illustration that Native peoples did not, and were not, capable of possessing the same humanity as themselves. The theatre in England posed a threat because through the use of what the Puritans would deem lies and liars it could persuade Christian souls from the path of truth and redemption,

---

[94] Ronald Takaki, 'The Tempest in the Wilderness: The Racialisation of Savagery', *The Journal of American History*, lxxix, no. 3, (Dec., 1992), p. 907.
[95] Ibid. p. 907 & 909.

hence the virulent anti-theatricality of some Puritans toward actors and playwrights. The theatre was a construction designed to beguile and lead the unwary into temptation; but it was all artifice and illusion, the Native was not. The behavioural example that he set was not merely designed to beguile and tempt, it was the manifestation of a moral inability and a spiritual inferiority. To the Puritans the Amerindian was their antithesis. While John Gillies suggests that in *The Tempest* the Shakespearean motifs of temperance and fruitfulness would in no way seem strange within the discourse and literature that surrounded the Virginia plantations. In 1594, when Raleigh successfully petitioned Elizabeth to allow him to rename as 'Virginia' an indeterminate area of North America then known as 'Wingandacoa', the christening was more than a simple gesture of deference to his monarch. According to Gillies it was more even than a shrewd promotional move, 'for it created a potent figure, and therewith a way of imaginatively possessing an area that was virtually unknown but for its Indian name and compass coordinates'[96]. Furthermore, this new figure enabled a direct link between actual and moral geography, '"Virginia" was a "beautiful daughter of the creation…whose virgin soil was never yet polluted by Spanish lust".[97] Here, we have a perfect example of the real importance of representations, 'names' and 'naming', becoming the mechanism by which authorising and textual realities become historical facts. Wingandacoa now became Raleigh's 'Virginia', what had been originally a harsh and unbecoming landscape was now a pure and unadulterated virgin territory, a territory simply waiting for the possession and control of the worthy; and dispossession from the savage and immoral.

To name something anew requires a new practice for correlation with it. Caliban was just such a construction and representation. Beyond what both Takaki and Fuchs have said above, his importance does not revolve around

---

[96] John Gillies, 'Shakespeare's Virginian Masque', *English Literary History*, liii, no. 4, (Winter, 1986), p. 676.
[97] Ibid. p. 677.

whether Shakespeare made him in the image of the Native Irish the American Indian or the Bermudan. That is only another detail that can, and has been, examined and proved time and time again to be available for reinterpretation within a certain framework, that framework being anyone that the English had actually come into contact with before 1610. Given the above discussion, however, it must be said that those authors who refuse to see Caliban as anything but a denizen of the New World choose to deny the very obvious fact that whatever colonial performance was played in America, was rehearsed in Ireland[98]. What is of much more importance, I believe, is that in that renaming and construction there is an inherent deconstruction and the reconstruction of the identity of the English 'self'. Caliban as a 'born devil' capable of licentious sensuality and sexual transgression, laziness, drunkenness and idleness, planting no crop but lying idly by while nature feeds him is, of course, a construction based on lies and Utopian half truths, but again these have been examined[99] and can be seen to be simply a source for constructions. Demonizing the American native can be seen in the light of shrewd manouvering on the part of those trying to encourage the Virginia settlement, but there is much more at play here. That simple a motive cannot explain all that occurred, however, where the real importance in the construction of Caliban truly lies is in his first movement upon the English stage, and the history that surrounded that movement.

Caliban and Prospero

In 1609 an English ship called the *Sea Venture*, part of a small fleet, occupied with settlers, prospectors and, most importantly, 'all the colonial officers',[100] and bound for the new Virginia colony of Jamestown in the New World, ran into a storm of some magnitude during the course of their voyage.

---

[98] For a fuller argument see Barbara Fuchs, 'Conquering Islands: Contextualising The Tempest' in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xlviii, no. 1, (Spring, 1997), pp. 45 – 62.
[99] Arthur O. Lovejoy & George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, (Baltimore, 1935), *passim*.
[100] Ann Meredith Skura, 'Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in The Tempest', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xl, no. 1, (Spring, 1989), pp 42 – 69.

This particular ship was separated from its fellows, and all occupants were presumed lost at sea. A small incident, no doubt, in the ebb and tide of history, but, miraculously, the survivors of the ship were found one year later living on an island off the coast of the Bermudas. Believed originally to be demonically dangerous, the Bermudas now proved to be providentially mild and fruitful [101]. The financier of the small fleet was Sir George Somers, and one of his 'men' was William Strachey wrote an 'open letter[102]' to various friends and those interested in seafaring in general about what had occurred, and it is from this letter that we have the main history of what happened to the *Sea Venture*.[103] Amongst the mass of records of English sailings to the New World during that time, and especially within the 'settling' of Virginia, this is possibly just another small detail in history. In the following year of 1610, however, Shakespeare's final play *The Tempest* was staged in what is now academically termed 'late Elizabethan and early Jacobean' London. The epilogue of *The Tempest* is usually seen to be Shakespeare's goodbye to the stage in the guise of Prospero's surrendering of his books in order to accept his return to civil society.[104] Shakespeare, however, is always open to interpretation. Even if taken as simply a literary artifact, the root of the plays composition lies firmly within the remit of history, and thus, so does its validity within the broader discussion here. Shakespeare's works are loaded with 'others' of various types: Othello, Shylock and even Hamlet can all be seen and examined in this light. The 'Other' in *The Tempest*, however, is Caliban. As previously discussed, whereas all of those Shakespearean 'others' are based in the known, or at very least in the familiar, Caliban is the first complete construction of the 'Other' of colonial origin; and in examining the construction of Caliban, we see further into the relationship

---

[101] Ibid. p. 43.

[102] An open letter: a pamphlet.

[103] J.M. Nosworthy, 'The Narrative Sources of The Tempest', (1948), p. 286.

[104] For those possibly unfamiliar with the plot, Prospero had been a ruler who neglected his civil duties to concentrate on the research of magic. Unfortunately for Prospero in turning his back on his responsibilities as a ruler, he did not perceive the onset of his own overthrow and exile at sea with his daughter Miranda. Upon landing on an uncharted island both he and his daughter are safe. The islands only inhabitant is Caliban, and where Caliban and Prospero meet, the academic debate begins.

between the English 'self' discussed above, and this new, alien and foreign 'Other'.

In relation to the history of the times, it was long ago pointed out that William Thomas's *Historie of Italie*, of which there were editions in 1549 and 1561, supplies 'not only the incidents but some of the names of the characters. Prospero Adorno became the Duke of Milan's lieutenant in Genoa, that his relations with Ferdinand, King of Naples, led to his deposition that Genoa later accepted Milanese rule once more and received Antonio Adorno as governor. Thomas also relates how Charles VIII of France attempted to depose Alonzo, King of Naples, how by his marriage, Alonzo united the houses of Naples and Milan, and how he renounced his estate to his son Ferdinand, loaded his treasures, and sailed to Sicily, where he deposed himself to study, solitariness and religion'[105]. Nosworthy, using contemporary pamphlets of the time as source material, claimed as far back as 1948 that, 'it has long been established that Shakespeare was directly indebted to contemporary pamphlet literature dealing with the wreck of Sir George Somer's fleet. His borrowings from William Strachey's letter, Sylvester Jourdain's *Discovery of the Bermudas*, and *The True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie of Virginia*, are obvious, and he clearly found them rich mines of circumstantial detail',[106] but later historical research has led to possibly further and closer associations between Shakespeare and people like both Strachey and Somers. Early historic readings of the play by Sidney Lee, Morton Luce, and Charles Mills Gayley would have Shakespeare as having acquired liberal views from men of the Virginia company, but later commentaries would not seem to support this assertion, especially Kermode, Bullough and Smith in the periods 1960 to 1970. Unfortunately, the more recent discussion of the play in the context of colonialism, race relations and cultural history seems now to be totally dominated by the schism between New

---

[105] J.M. Nosworthy, 'The Narrative Sources of The Tempest', (1948), p. 282.
[106] Ibid. p. 286.

Historicism and Cultural Criticism. Yet, even if we are not in a position to know how involved in the world of colonial settlement the playwright was, Shakespeare 'would seem to have these documents in mind'.[107] Lastly, the other roots that have been allegedly ascertained beneath the language, syntax and content of the play vary from Homer and Virgil to St. Augustine[108] and Montaigne[109]. Nosworthy, for his part places special importance upon 'the poets of Greece and Rome'[110]. The idea here is that in the syntax of the language that Shakespeare uses, we can see traces of his influences, and they would appear to be those authors specifically well known to humanist thought. Shakespeare, however, was the royal playwright, many of his works were specifically about monarchs and written for a royal audience. He was also well acquainted with the Puritans, being a playwright, how could he not be?

That the storyline of *The Tempest* contains both classical and at the same time important historical roots should not come as any real surprise; the story of shipwreck, enchantment, the triumph of justice over evil or wrongdoing etc. are the basic fare of epic and heroic saga from the earliest times. The historical importance of the storyline, however, rests in its ability to be studied as an amalgamation of the factors pertaining to both the discussion above and the last chapter. Shakespeare's England was obviously exposed to the classics from both Greece and Rome, even if only in translation. Even if we take as our only evidence those examples given above of the syntax of St. Augustine and the compassion of Montaigne in translation, this would still suggest a literary culture with access to both translations and interpretations of many different forms of literary artifact. As we discussed in the last section, European learning

---

[107] Charles Frey, 'The Tempest and the New World', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xxx, no. 1, (Winter, 1979), pp 29 – 41.

[108] James Walter, 'From Tempest to Epilogue: Augustine's Allegory in Shakespeare's Drama', *PMLA*, xcviii, no. 1., (January, 1983), pp 60 – 76.

[109] Gonzalo's Utopian vision in Act II, Scene i of *The Tempest*, (quoted above), is indebted to a passage in Florio's translation of Montaigne's essay, "Of the Cannibals"; see Arthur Kirsch, 'Virtue, Vice, and Compassion in Montaigne and *The Tempest*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900*, xxxvii, no. 2, (Spring, 1997), pp 337 – 352.

[110] J.M. Nosworthy, 'The Narrative Sources of The Tempest', (1948), p. 287.

was steeped in both classical and biblical storytelling. The bigger question here is, of course, what happened to Humanism in England, since the translation of classical texts and their ensuing transmission through Europe was the very essence of that movement, and we know the answer. Those Humanitarian forces that enabled the English Reformation in producing Puritanism also enabled the production of a theatre that came to see itself in resistance to that ideology. We have examined how the original socially binding telling of biblical stories in passion plays had become a cultural force examining power structures and men and women's relationship with them, and how that very literary examination posed a threat to those new power structures and to the self-identity that necessarily accompanied it. 'Telling stories', for want of a better phrase, in London at this time seems to have been a fairly convoluted affair, according to Curtis Breight in his 1996 book *Surveillance, Militarism and Drama in the Elizabethan Era.* Elizabeth, Breight claims, having no standing army to speak of, mastered a system of foreign and domestic espionage, creating a culture of informers that induced widespread paranoia. Furthermore, it complimented this system with a material and ideological remilitarization of England that 'culminated in extensive wars dominating Elizabeth's last two decades, wars that functioned to dispose of newly manufactured 'deviants.' Modern historiography has largely ignored or distorted surveillance and militarism.'[111] The outcome of these last two decades would, of course lead to regicide and revolution, that which is usually examined historiographically in relation to conspiracies and control. Moreover, to add even more layers to the interpretation, during this time *The Tempest*, 'is constructed as a series of conspiracies, and as such it can be inserted into a vast discourse of treason that became an increasingly central response to difficult social problems in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean London. The audience is allowed to see that conspiracy is often a fiction, or a construct: a real yet wholly containable piece of social theatre. The play can thus be viewed within a sphere of oppositional

---

[111] Ibid. p. 5.

74

discourse that arose against official the discourse in this period',[112]and Breight is quite correct here, the play is full of conspiracy and control. It can be seen as a play within a play, within a play, with Prospero, of course, as the puppet master of every other character. In *The Tempest*, the most specifically unified piece of drama that Shakespeare wrote, Prospero controls the original shipwreck courtesy of Ariel and is the guiding hand behind all of the actions of the play. As we saw above, even the supposed rebellion of Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo is never seriously provided with the wherewithal to be seen as a real threat, but it can be seen very clearly as conspiracy within a conspiracy.

Breight believes *The Tempest* to be a *masque manqué* of political awareness presented to a public hardened by both the recent war with Spain, and the excesses of a now developed governmental organ of obfuscation and disinformation.[113] England at this time also possessed a population who were also keenly aware of the dangers of internal strife, rebellion and repression. 'In 1549 a wave of rebellions had swept across England, including numerous instances of class strife in Cornwall and most explicitly, Norfolk. Royal forces led by John Dudley ultimately crushed the uprising, but sixteenth century accounts of, and responses to, the rebellion suggest that the rebels saw themselves as allies of the government'[114]. Breight's point is that London in 1610 was both politically aware and active in the discourse of both political identification and resistance, hence the conspiratorial psychology[115] that he speaks of. He goes on to claim that official discourse on treason had been perfected during the years of Cromwellian hegemony by humanists such as Richard Morrison, but after 1540 it was not extensively deployed as a propagandistic tool of political government until the 1580's. He views the

---

[112] Curtis Breight, '"Treason doth never prosper": "The Tempest", and the discourse of treason', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xli, no. 1, (Spring, 1990), pp 1-28.
[113] Ibid. p. 3.
[114] David Weil Baker, 'Topical Utopias: Radicalizing Humanism in Sixteenth Century England', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900*, xxxvi, no. 1, (Winter, 1996), p. 8.
[115]Ibid. p. 8, Curtis Breight takes the original phrase from, - Lacey Baldwin Smith's, *Treason in Tudor England: Politics and Paranoia*, (Princeton, 1986), p. 88.

deposed Prospero and his daughter as the politically 'disappeared' of their day, and suggests that this would have been the message given to an audience caught in the grip of international upheaval and war, religious paranoia, (both against the counter-reformation Catholic and the puritanical sect Protestant), and finally the quite recent discovery of an entirely New World of promise waiting for those who could afford to leave England. Under that developing proto – state, however, the power to leave could also be seen as an act that could be manufactured as possibly disloyal or even treasonable, especially if failure was the result: the regime often found a way to manufacture treason in situations where it often did not exist.[116] What England wanted was successful emigration; success was nowhere to be seen in those first attempts at the settlement of Virginia[117]. While what we have examined above would suggest the internalisation of disempowerment by the average citizen, Breight's writing would suggest that this was not simply an answer to the demands of Puritanism and religious inconsistency on behalf of the English throne. If that internal 'self' had been forced into re-construction by the change and pace of the times, what of this New World that had been found? How would these unknowns be constructed in the mindset of those who left England for Virginia? It surely must have been of some importance to both the common and not so common alike since it was no easy thing to actually settle Virginia[118].

Shakespeare was, after all, the first playwright of his time to write a play in the English language, with colonialism as its theme, and thus, along with Nosworthy and Breight, this is where all of the academic discussion on the sources of *The Tempest* [119] comes from. The main problem arises with Shakespeare's 'change of Classical form'. All Epic heroes are stranded in strange lands of one form or another and at one time or another. In Aeneas' case,

---

[116] Ibid. p. 9.
[117] Ronald Takaki, 'The Tempest in the Wilderness',(1992), pp 892 -912.
[118] Ibid. p. 892.
[119] For suggestions of a possible German predecessor, *Die Schöne Sidea*, see Henry David Gray, 'The Sources of The Tempest', *Modern Language Notes*, xxxv, no.6, (Jun., 1920), pp 321-330.

however, he is dealing with an equal in class and stature, a possible wife, Dido of Carthage. The same Dido commits suicide with grief, (after cursing all of his descendants), upon his departure to fulfill his destiny and father the Roman nation in Book IV. Virgil used Epic verse as a template to reconstruct the origins of the Roman nation as the survivors of Troy under the auspices of the Augustan 'restoration' of 'Roman morals *c*19BC. Odysseus for his part is stranded on the island Ogygia with the witch Calypso before the gods order her to free him and allow him to continue his journey home, but she is neither mortal nor native to the island. Unlike the epic heroes of the *Aeneid* and the *Odyssey*, however, Prospero comes to an inhabited island and takes control of it. Both Ariel and Caliban are already there. Caliban also tells us in lines 330 to 345 that his mother the sorceress Sycorax was there before he was, and that upon his shipwreck Prospero came to know the island through his guidance:

> Caliban: This island is mine, by Sycorax my mother,
> Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first,
> Thou stroks't me and made much of me; woulds't give me,
> Water with berries in't; and teach me how,
> To name the bigger light, and how the less,
> That burn by day and night: and then I lov'd thee,
> And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle.
> The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile:
> Curs'd be that I did so! All the charms
> Of Sycorax, toads beetles, bats light on you!
> For I am all the subjects that you have,
> Which was first mine own King: and here you sty me,
> In this hard rock, whiles you do keep me from
> The rest of the island.[120]

In Prospero's demands of Ariel we find out that Sycorax, pregnant with Caliban, was banished and exiled on the island from Algiers.

Prospero: 'I must once in a month recount what thou hast been,

---

[120] Frank Kermode, (Ed.), *The Tempest*, (London, 1954), Act I, Sc ii, p. 31.

Which thou forget'st. This damned witch Sycorax,
For mischief's manifold and sorceries terrible,
To enter human hearing, from Argier,
Thou know'st, was banished: for one thing she did,
They would not take her life. Is not this true?[121]

It was she who originally brought Ariel to the island but then she imprisoned him for not obeying her will:

Prospero: 'This blue ey'd hag was hither brought with child,
And here was left by t' sailors, Thou, my slave,
As thou report'st thyself, was then her servant,
And for thou was't a spirit too delicate,
To act her earthy and abhorred commands,
Refusing her grand hests she did confine thee,
By help of her more potent ministers,
And in her most unmitigable rage,
Into a cloven pine'. [122]

Prospero frees Ariel from the prison that Sycorax placed him in but then proceeds to force him to do his will upon promise of manumission. Furthermore, once Caliban has shown him the island, he forces him to live upon a reservation, his defence of this act being that Caliban had posed a sexual threat to Miranda's virginity:

Prospero: 'Thou most lying slave,
Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have us'd thee, Filth as thou art,
with human care; and lodg'd thee,
In mine own cell, till thou dids't seek to violate,
The honour of my child.
Caliban: 'Oh ho, oh ho! Would't had been done!
Thou dids't prevent me; I had people else
This isle with Calibans.' [123]

[121] Ibid. Act I, Scene ii, lines 265 – 270, p. 27.
[122] Ibid. Act I, Scene ii, lines 270 – 285, pp 27 – 28.
[123] Ibid. Act I, Scene ii, lines 330 – 355, pp 31 – 32.

Despite Shakespeare's intentions, all of this is, of course, a dichotomy. If Prospero takes control of the island simply because he can and must, he delegitimises his own position. It was he who was once deposed, and the defence of those who deposed him was that he had neglected his office in order to study his books; they also based their reasoning in necessity. The difference in reasoning, his actions versus the safeguarding of Miranda's chastity, does not alter this fact. Nor, as we discussed above, does the method by which he both takes and maintains control by force of his 'art' as opposed to Caliban's mother's 'magic' or Stephano and Trinculo's threat of violence. The notion that resides in the acceptance by citizens of the legitimate rule of Law and Order, beyond the simple triumph of the strong over the weak, is the very basis for those ideas of Natural Law that we addressed earlier. Prospero, and, by virtue of being his creator, Shakespeare, takes over the island illegitimately, and maintains it under force of threat. To address legitimacy in the words of Deborah Willis, 'Caliban can claim the title of King of the island by inheritance; Prospero's claim rests solely on superior virtue and fitness for rule.[124] Prospero's withdrawal from office showed him to be incapable of rule, Caliban's claim to legitimacy is at least as powerful as Prospero's own'.[125] So, in order for the audience to sympathise with Prospero's possibly unjust take over, there must be a defence of something important, (in this case Miranda's virginity), for Prospero to have a defensible position as an usurper. He must be seen to be under threat from 'savagery'. Furthermore, the facts and details of how both Prospero and Miranda came to physically arrive upon the island are in this sense only important if we recognize the sociopolitical subtext of the play, that is, they would seem to suggest that he was a rightful ruler before intrigues deposed him, and that according to that subtext he is therefore entitled to take control of the island by power and force in order to survive in resistance to the savagery that Caliban's proprietorship represents. The only real difference in regard to his actions, that is, how those actions are not 'colonial' or 'imperial', is that he was

---

[124] Deborah Willis, 'Shakespeare's Tempest and the Discourse of Colonialism', *Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900*, xxix, no. 2, (Spring, 1989), pp 277 – 289.
[125] Ibid. p. 284.

shipwrecked there after being put out to drift and die by those who deposed him. This, however, is the crux of the argument for two specific reasons. Prospero, as a representative, or representation, of 'law and order' or 'civil society', has no choice in the matter; he must take control in order to survive, but this would also suggest that he is entitled to take control of the island in order to civilise it. His shipwrecked state does not release him from the accusation of being the world's first colonialist in print. Just as those who prompted the play's construction were really shipwrecked, European exploration was never a known venture. Shipwreck or not, those who did arrive in strange climes and places used the same understanding to proceed with colonial and imperial processes. The 'difference' is actually not a difference at all. Choosing to land somewhere and being shipwrecked somewhere may be very different beginnings, but they very much led to the same result, the assumption of control by virtue of ability. The justification of that ability is what Shakespeare is exploring, and it is therefore unimportant to discuss if his exploration is intentional or not.

Even when Prospero leaves at the play's end, (the Epilogue that we touched on above), to return to civilisation, Caliban is not freed by the exit of the interlopers. If he is changed it is because he is colonised:

Caliban: 'O Setebos, these be brave spirits indeed!
How fine my master is!'[126].

He is not what he was before the Prospero and his cohorts entered his paradise. Even if we follow the line of argument that, 'We have no external evidence that Seventeenth Century audiences thought the play referred to the New World. In an age were real voyages were read allegorically, the status of allegorical voyages like Prospero's can be doubly ambiguous, especially in a play like *The Tempest*, which provides an encyclopedic context for Prospero's experience,

---

[126] Frank Kermode, (Ed.), *The Tempest*, (London, 1954), Act V, Scene i, lines 260 to 265, p. 129

presenting it in terms of an extraordinary range of classical, biblical and romantic exiles, discoveries and confrontations'[127]. Nevertheless, we can still take from the play certain specifics beyond the intention of its author, whether he was associated with the Virginian colonists or not.

The fact remains that the audience of Shakespeare's time, regardless of class, was every bit as capable of reading or viewing the play as a political 'act' with or without the intentions of Shakespeare, for they were just as steeped in exposure to Classical and Biblical texts as romantic ones. The specific importance of theatre here lies in its ability to act as a medium for refining and honing notions and socially important ideas in relation to a wider audience. Not all of those witnessing Shakespeare's performances may have been as well read and versed as he and his peers were, but surely it would be facetious to suggest that they had simply no template for interpretation of the storyline, or perhaps more importantly, for images of the unknown or 'Other'. If they were aware to any degree of either the historic or classical roots of *The Tempest*, then their views of 'otherness' would be refined and brought to bear through that lens. Even if they did not have any point of reference at all for the construction of Caliban, Shakespeare was providing one for them. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they were just as capable as the author of either accepting this construction of 'otherness' or of constructing one themselves in disagreement or opposition to it. Regardless of how they either imbibed or constructed an image of the 'Other', the important point is that they did so, with Shakespeare's help. Moreover, let us not forget, that they did so with royal approval[128].

The simpler and binary view of this colonised Caliban would rest on the need for a model of 'otherness', that was now a popular 'fiction' in a world that

---

[127] M. A. Skura, 'Discourse and the Individual', (1989), p. 48.
[128] John Gillies, 'Shakespeare's Virginian Masque', (1986), pp 673-707.

had no 'fact' to compare it too. Yet, that is quite simply not the case. The timing of that first performance could almost be theatrical. *The Tempest* came after the English invasion of Ireland but before the colonisation of Virginia. It came after John Smith's arrival in the New World but just before the beginning of the tobacco economy. In that historical moment, the English were encountering 'Other' peoples and 'delineating the boundary between civilisation and savagery. As Daniel Vitkus has shown, the threat of a growing Ottoman power was pervasive even in England[129]. Furthermore, England had a turbulent relationship with those who had historically stood on the boundaries of the defence of both Europe and Christendom. Spain posed a plausible threat to England at the time; conflict between the two was never far from consideration. The social constructions of the English 'self' in regard to foreign 'others' was one built within the remit of conquest domination; and was 'dynamically developing in three sites, Ireland, Virginia and New England'[130]. Thus, the real departure in regards to Caliban is a 'socio political one. It does not necessarily matter whether Caliban was American Indian or not[131], he was simply an attempt to place form upon the unknown. Therefore, in the construction of Caliban we see what England wished to see.

Conclusion

Shakespeare was the most successful English playwright of the Seventeenth Century. His popularity lay in part in the availability of his work as a source for entertainment. 'Reading' Shakespeare was a later pheonomenon. In his lifetime, the playwright had the potential for two audiences, both the literate and illiterate. His audience did not specifically require one class or another to be

---

[129] Daniel J. Vitkus, 'Turning Turk in Othello', (1997), pp 145 – 148.

[130] Ronald Takaki, '*The Tempest* in the Wilderness', (1992), pp 892 -912.

[131] Alden T. Vaughan, 'Shakespeare's Indian: The Americanisation of Caliban', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xxxix, no. 2, (Summer, 1998), pp 137 – 153, Vaughan explains the process by which Caliban came to be representative of the American Indian.

in attendance[132]. Therefore the success of his plays cannot be said to simply depend on one particular 'class' within civil society, he had exposure to a mixed audience as all popular art does. The importance here lies in the fact that the actions of Prospero would be prophetic in the years following, as the real conquest of New England especially had begun in earnest. So, while I do not agree with all that Breight alludes to in his book, I believe his views to be of some significance in regard to any examination of the era in question, and especially to the development of England's proto colonialism. While Elizabethan England has been displayed in history with the Virgin Queen struggling to spread English hopes in a New World against the impositions of an absolutist and Catholic Spain, that picture simply does not stand up to scrutiny. Even if England was not developing the proto surveillance state of almost Foucauldian thought that Breight alludes to, without social control on some level, Elizabeth would simply not have survived as a monarch, and England's forays into America would not have survived as a proto colonial venture. Or as Breight succinctly puts it, 'The Elizabethan myth was at least partially manufactured by historians seeking to promote the American myth in the 1950s. Some historians would subtly imply that Elizabethan England was a stepping stone in the evolution of Western democracy.'[133]

Elizabethan England was no more a stepping-stone in the evolution of American or Western democracy than altruistic concerns about the evils of trans-Atlantic slavery were for the evolution of its abolishment, but they can be presented as such in order to attempt a teleological and binary reading of a historical processionalism that supports modern day Western notions of its own altruistic ability and direction. It would not be cynical to point out that Eric William's reading of the truth of the matter in *Capitalism and Slavery* was not

---

[132] Theodore B. Leinwand, 'Shakespeare and the Middling Sort', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xliv, no. 3, (Autumn, 1993), pp 284 – 303.
[133] Curtis Breight, "Treason doth never prosper", (1990), pp 1-28.

universally embraced upon its publication.[134]Similarly, various authors who chose and have recently chosen to address the actualities of how and why slaveholding simply ceased to function as an economic source of revenue, and thus ceased to be plausible as a legitimate occupation of popular practice were, and still are, usually sidelined into the remit of postcolonial studies, as opposed to popular history.[135]   It should also be kept in mind that the end of the 'othering' process that we discuss here is basically the discrimination that will enable colonialism, a discrimination fully intertwined with historical views of slavery in all its forms. Apart from Eric Williams, the impact of the writings of both Eugene Genovese[136] and C.L.R. James[137] were written upon how slave labour was used to build the economy of Europe and was eventually outlawed, not because of issues of freedom, but because slavery ceased to be a viable economic process. The strength of both authors derived from the simple fact that good history writing aims to tell the truth, regardless of how unpalatable that may be to those reading from a strictly western tradition. Discussing the postcolonial 'Other' of recent determining is surely an attempt to come to terms with that issue. In the construction of Caliban what we are really witnessing is the empowerment of Prospero, or perhaps more pointedly, the re-empowering of those who could potentially be the settlers of Virginia, those people who would actually have to go into the 'wilderness' alone and not become 'savages'[138].

I do not suggest that Shakespeare was simply propagandising for either the monarch under which he wrote the play, or for people like Strachey and Somers who had fiscal interests in seeing the Virginian expeditions flourish. What I, however, would suggest is that Shakespeare was simply doing what all playwrights, and all literary artists, do, synthesizing history and culture into a

---

[134] Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, (North Carolina, 1994), *passim*.
[135] For a full discussion see Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848*, (London, 1988), and Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, (Boston, 1974), *passim*.
[136] Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, (New York, 1976).
[137] C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins*, (New York, 1989).
[138] Ronald Takaki, '*The Tempest* in the Wilderness', (1992), pp 892 –912.

uniform and constructed artifact in order to entertain and gain success. In order to do so, however, that work must be capable of reflecting the values, beliefs, operations and psychological processes that underlie the very fullness of that culture from which it springs. We, however, have the advantage of hindsight; we know the history of both Colonialism and Postcolonialism, and we know where the dehumanisation, and the objectification of native peoples led. What I have attempted to examine here, however, is the process by which the objectification that is first necessary for that process to begin occurs. It is a belief that must be written into cultural understandings and operations in order to function. In a time before science had replaced faith, these notions had to originally occur through the process of art and then be fostered into the written discourse of those power structures under which that art operated. This process, as much in the past as in the present, is how the 'subject' becomes 'object': through discourse.

An important point to note here is that when Miranda says that Caliban repaid her kindness with an attempt upon her chastity in lines 355 to 364 of Act I Scene ii:

> 'Miranda: Abhorred slave,
> Which any print of goodness will not take,
> Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,
> Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
> One thing or another: when thou didst not, savage,
> Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
> A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes
> With words that made them known. But thy vile race,
> Thou dids't learn, had that in't which good natures
> Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou
> Deservedly confin'd into this rock,
> Who hads't deserv'd more than a prison'[139].

---

[139] Frank Kermode, (Ed.), *The Tempest*, (London, 1954),(Act I, Sc. ii, Lines 355 – 364), p. 33

One of the most important parts of the process by which the subjugated are kept in subjection is that they are forced to learn the language of the occupier. It can be seen as the ultimate attempt to force acceptance of the domination by an alien cultural force. It is not enough for them to address the conqueror as a conqueror, they must also address him or her through a definition that the conqueror has both designated suitable and forced them to learn. Furthermore, Miranda in teaching Caliban language is showing him how to objectify: 'taught thee each hour, One thing or another' in the exact same way that he is objectified. His response, therefore, is totally natural:

'Caliban: 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'[140].

And it should also be remembered that accusation that 'proper' language was beyond the ability of certain races was often the very reason given to both force them to speak the language of the coloniser, and accept accusations of being of lesser ability[141]. That Caliban was taught and is able to speak is a double-edged sword, does it make him more or less human? Similarly, in attempting to rape Miranda, perhaps the ultimate moral displacement of the colonial rape that had occurred in Ireland and was about to occur in the New World, Caliban is not shown to be beyond moral ability or recognition of his acts. It must be remembered, however, that if he is beyond moral operation then he cannot be expected to know right from wrong, and as we saw above accusations of moral ineptitude were regularly leveled at conquered peoples in order to verify the right to both colonise and treat the colonised as being less than equal,. If, however, Caliban is fully or even partly capable of understanding both his actions and situation; a possibility that lines 132 – 141 in Act III Scene

---

[140] Frank Kermode, (Ed.), *The Tempest*, (London, 1954),(Act I, Sc. ii, Lines 365 – 367), p. 33.
[141] Barbara Fuchs, "Conquering Islands: Contextualising The Tempest', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xlviii, no. 1, (Spring, 1997), p. 45.

ii suggest: 'The clouds methought would open, and show riches, ready to drop upon me; that when I wak'd, I cried to dream again', then the colonial reasoning that he is simply a monster becomes invalid. Just like Prospero's claim to the rule of the island, what that claim entails in the treatment of Caliban is also a dichotomy. Within the play, time and time again the audience is directed to sympathise with Caliban only to see him behave unethically; but the very reason why our sympathies are so evoked is because if the audience is maintained in a state of uncertainty about his 'humanity', then he as a character can be allowed stay in subjugation for his own protection and development. A simple retelling of the oldest colonial argument known 'it's for his own good': the veritable and original white man's burden. Caliban cannot be allowed to be made 'self'; he is required to be 'Other' so that he can be morally inferior, so that he can be the mirror through which that developing European / English 'self' can be seen. Or in the words of Fuchs 'here the duplicitous logic of colonialist ideology is exposed: if one explanation for Caliban's subjection doesn't work, a more essentialist one will be found. Language is more useful than Caliban knows'[142].

In the Virginia settlement, the Puritans were the most aggressive in their dealings with the natives. They had reconstructed a 'self' that the Native American threatened by representing the 'Other', that which they must not become. Those who were not of Puritan leanings, while being possibly construed as being 'less' aggressive also had a reconstructed 'self', but thanks to their reconstructed culture, replete with theatre, they did have the 'Other', a savage, uncivilized brute whom they had every right to control and dominate. From both sides of the oppositional discourse between these highly oppositional power structures, the Puritans with there anti-theatricalism and the unsure and reconstructed majority under this developing proto-state the message was the same, - the 'self' in binary and power opposition to the 'Other'. The reason that I have chosen to examine this phenomenon through theatre is specifically

---

[142] Ibid. p. 54.

because theatre operates and lies between power structures, it is the discourse of opposition that is always co-opted socially into the identification of the individual, be he or she for or against those very structures. Furthermore, *The Tempest* and Caliban and Prospero represent the perfect prototype for both the individuation and alienation upon which this discourse operates, and this is the discourse that from this point on would be so important in the development of both colonialism and imperialism. When Gonzalo makes his famous speech he is echoing that which had been sought so long by so many authors from ancient antiquity to that pre-colonial moment, and is still sought today, the perfect or Utopian, equality. An irony that I believe even a writer of Shakespeare's ability would take note of and possibly dwell upon is that in that search for the truest equality, what was in fact enabled, was the truest inequality.

That Shakespearean moment inherently visible in *The Tempest* is so powerful precisely because it is so colonially and historically accurate, with or without the author's intention to be so. What that moment suggests and echoes through the ages is a colonial moment that allows the objectification of the native of any culture for the benefit of 'civilisation', and it is that objectification that we examine here. When Prospero does burn his books and break his staff at the play's end, he does so in the full knowledge that the message that he, and thus, his creator, has imparted to the audience is twofold. Firstly that if needs be Prospero's 'art' is as stronger than native 'magic', and that magic, with all of the ensuing associations that proceed along with it, can be defeated by the art of the enlightened and Western mind. Perhaps more importantly, however, Prospero is also saying that he does not need to control the civil world through magic, because he already does so by way of membership. The world that he is returning to has no place for such notions; because the world that he is returning to needs nothing to control the 'alien' or the 'Other', either the 'Other' accepts its place in that world as Caliban has, or it simply no longer has a place to dwell. In short, just as Caliban must accept Prospero's superiority to both himself and

88

to his mother's art (Prospero has freed Ariel from her prison), and Prospero must renounce the island and exile in order to return home; the audience must accept the superiority of themselves and their society over this savage which they have been shown: Prospero over Caliban, and the first constructed example of the colonial 'self' over the 'Other'.

Columbus: For Castile and Léon has Columbus a New World found.

Don Ferdinand: It declares his honour and ours. Let us now baptise these primitive gifts and make sacrifices and prayers to God from the heart. Today Spain becomes Glorious because of the heroic victory, the glory belonging to Christ, the deed to Columbus, and the second world to Castile and Léon.

Columbus: And here, noble Senate, ends the history of the New World.

Lope de Vega, *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus.*
Act III, Final Scene.

Theatre and Tradition

In regard to the overall discussion, I would now like to demonstrate just how important a role religion had in early theatrical performance in medieval mainland Europe, and especially the Iberian Peninsula. I wish to briefly trace the roots of this theatre in order to illustrate how integral and unifying 'festival' was, and how that 'festival' developed from a much older religious based social activity into the comedia performances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Theatre in the Iberian Peninsula, as in England, became a civic space occurring between developing power structures. Furthermore, although reliant upon those structures and open to coercion by them, theatre was both socially informed and possessed with the ability to voice informed and resistant understandings and concerns, courtesy of its dependence as a medium upon interaction between author, actor and audience. In this instance, however, theatre developed in a very different way, and courtesy of this development was, even in later incarnations, much more strongly bound to its religious origins. To demonstrate perhaps exactly how far back the link between theatre and tradition in the Iberian homeland goes I would

like to quote William Shoemaker. According to Shoemaker dramatic or, at least, histrionic activity in Spain goes back to Visgothic and Roman times, its continuity being interrupted by the Moorish invasions only to be reestablished in the eleventh or twelfth centuries. According to Shoemaker: 'It has been conjectured that the twelfth century Castilian *Auto de los Reyes Magos*, of which only a fragmentary text survives, was played in a Toledan church. From the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso el Sabio (Alfonso X) it is clear that by the thirteenth century performances were taking place both inside and outside the church, and that *juegos et escarnio* (festival entertainments) were being played in the public square and streets. For the Corpus Christi celebrations of the fourteenth century plays on such religious subjects as the *sacrificio de Isaac* and the *sueño y venta de Jacob* were produced by priests in the open air'[1].

Shoemaker follows this by claiming that sufficient records from the fifteenth century remain to indicate that by this time the material aspects of staging had definitely become an important consideration. He illustrates various points to support his claim that theatre in the Iberian Peninsula has an incredibly long history, one that, perhaps even more so than in the rest of mainland Europe, was very much associated with the church. Moreover, that the movement of religious drama out of the churches and into the more civic arena occurred at a very early stage and that the construction of advanced stages and staging techniques developed in tandem.[2] While it may simply be that the climate of most of the Iberian Peninsula would be more amenable to outdoor performance, it would seem that religious theatre grew faster and more successfully there than anywhere else in Europe. The strength of

---

[1] William H. Shoemaker, *The Multiple Stage in Spain during the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, (Princeton, 1935), p. 11, (*n*).
[2] Nicoll Allardyce, *The Development of the Theatre: A Study of Theatrical Art from the Beginnings to the Present Day*, (London, 1966), p. 49.

Shoemaker's evidence lies in the fact that he specifically deals with the mechanics and construction of stages, lending support to the fact that, even if actual recorded 'plays' are quite scarce, the development of staging methods suggest that an advanced and developed form of presentation existed suggesting a high and regular public attendance quite some time before the latter day *corrales* were even thought of. 'A technique for writing and performing plays developed in Europe during the Middle Ages which required a multiple stage equipped with simultaneous settings'[3]. As the liturgical drama grew, the plays and the scenery became more complex, until the action in the play could occur in two or more places, and thus the stage decoration representing them needed to be set in its entirety before the action began. 'This technique included a great imaginative foreshortening of space, when Jerusalem and Nazareth, Paradise and Hell, or any two settings were separated by only a few feet'[4]. What this need for double presentation of locations would also indicate is the development of multiple or non-linear storylines; that is various 'acts' in order to advance the story, even if that story was still biblical. What this also illustrates is that these first 'plays', were very likely variations or interpretive variations on bible stories designed to do more than simply provide an oral demonstration of bible passages to a possibly largely illiterate crowd; a crowd who would also have heard mass and other religious rites through Latin, not their native or customary tongue. Therefore there was a necessary element of entertainment in these performances, which could denote that people attended because they wanted to attend, not simply because they were obliged to. This would suggest that the civic and social element of the performance was of equal importance as the religious. Just as in our previous discussion of England, medieval religious theatre was built upon the social customs that were quite possibly pre-Christian, in the

---

[3] Op. cit. p. 8.
[4] Ibid. p. 8.

same way that our modern holidays are nearly, if not all, originally Roman festivals.

N.D. Shergold, whose voluminous work on the history of Spanish theatre is still a masterpiece of reference, gives further support for this view. Shergold claims that the beginnings of medieval European drama are to be found in the tropes of Christmas and Easter, written to ornament the liturgy, and to be sung in churches. These tropes, which were widespread in both France, England and Germany by the year A.D. 1000 'came into Spain through Catalonia, where most examples have been found, and even in their earliest and simplest forms they contain a sufficient element of representation of 'characters' to deserve the name of 'play''[5]. In other words, there are constructed characters who are not in the original liturgical stories inserted to both further and simplify the plot or to simply entertain the audience. These characters give credence to the possibility for change inherent in the theatrical presentation of the traditional liturgical trope. Perhaps most importantly, this would again suggest a more social aspect, one built on communal attendance of social events. If religious mystery plays of some kind were being performed in Valencia by 1517, but can be dated to 1480 at the very earliest, then 'it is clear that the emergence of religious drama in Castile is roughly coincident with them'.[6]

Shergold's early emphasis upon the communal practice of religion takes on a more important connotation if we think of it in terms of the *Reconquista*. It is even more important to our discussion if we understand that the use of 'festival' and 'theatre' can be seen to be

---

[5] N.D. Shergold, *A History of the Spanish Stage from Medieval times until the end of the Seventeenth Century*, (O.U.P., 1967), p. 1.
[6] Ibid. p. 83.

moving into the civic sphere at this point in time, specifically as a force for social and communal establishment. 'Easter and Christmas plays, based on the older tradition of liturgical drama, were being written in the latter half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and about the same time we begin to come across Corpus Christi plays as well. At about the same period, or a little earlier, we find evidence of some kind of performance at Valladolid, where in 1498, *entremeses e juegos* ('floats' or 'performance carts' and 'sports') are mentioned as a customary part of the Corpus Christi festivities, and of the celebrations with which monarchs were welcomed to the city.'[7]This denotes the high level of social and civic involvement of performance and ritual theatre in this period. It would therefore be a mistake to make the assumption that ritual and performance, as opposed to their more developed offspring, 'theatre' and later, 'drama', were simply a religious matter performed in civic spaces. The importance of the Church in latter day Iberian drama may be rooted in this area, the local church, regularly staging performances in accordance with its calendar of religious festivities, would have become the mainstay of performance in that period, funding the development and organisation of costuming and staging if nothing else[8], and therefore become a socially and communally centralising force. This is because 'dramatic pageantry in the Middle Ages was used in secular as well as religious festivities, and generally centred on the celebrations marking the coronation of a king, or his visit to an important town, or on some other state occasion of note. Most examples are to be found in the fifteenth century, but the beginnings of it may be traced to earlier periods.'[9]

---

[7] Ibid. p. 83.
[8] William Shoemaker, *The Multiple Stage in Spain during the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, (1935), p. 11.
[9] N.D. Shergold, *A History of the Spanish Stage from Medieval times until the end of the Seventeenth Century*, (1967), p. 113.

In this period of history, the civic and social importance attached to the visits of monarchs can hardly be overstated, and the use of pageantry and performance to welcome their arrival marks the movement of theatre into the secular arena and away from a purely religious function. Even if at these festivities, the plays presented were religious, it is still at this point that theatre becomes a civic mechanism. It is not yet capable of voicing those resistant ideas discussed in the introduction, but it is still very much capable of being co-opted and employed in the dissemination and construction of ideas of identity. It may be pertinent to point out here that even if the Counter Reformation acted in Spain as a bulwark against the shift away from traditionalist values and beliefs, it also recognised that shift; it indicates that there was an awareness of what one should not read, and what one should not do. In short, even in resistance and opposition, the Counter Reformation gave the Reformation an importance in Spain that to most of the population it may never have warranted, and within our examination this anti identification pursues the same role as it did in England. The move away from religious 'ritual' into civic and festive 'performance' that theatre develops here, allows authorisation and establishment of new lines of communication from individuals to social groups, and thus, it is here that theatre itself first becomes a tradition. It is also at this point in Spain that what will later be termed 'drama' becomes enmeshed in the civic and secular spheres. This is because, although still religious in content, festive theatre from this point on becomes increasingly bound to these developing secular power structures. Although developing independence of a sort, as a result of the challenge provided by those developing intellectual movements within Europe of this time, theatre became a vehicle for the dissemination and communication of cultural information; but at this time theatre still only possesses religious, that is Catholic, information, to disseminate. In Spain this is of prime

importance if we are to understand what will become of both theatre and the ensuing identifications of later times.

Given these origins, it is hardly surprising that the use of allegory in the later comedias is usually seen to occur at the expense of characterisation. However, it must be said that while comedia characters may not possess the stature of King Lear, Hamlet and Volpone from which we could draw psychological understandings of the mindset of the audience, we do not necessarily need that level of characterisation in order to view and examine Spanish Golden Age comedia in general. Their entertainment lies in their congruence with, and conflation of, the past. It lies in the very fact that they hark back to a time before foreign exploration changed the face of Spain while at the same time both glorifying and bemoaning the fact that it did. Lope's Columbus, however, is a construction of some intention, that intention being to show that Spain's mission in the New World was not simply for gold and profit, even though the writing and production of the play alone would suggest that the contrary was perhaps more true. A cynical outlook would be that for so long all that had been done in the name of God was actually, both at home and abroad, done in the need for gold, and that now the realisation had come home, and it was Lope de Vega's intention to reevaluate history and reinstate that myth. What he hoped to achieve by this was the reevaluation and reinstatement of the 'self' in Spanish society.

As addressed in the previous chapter, whereas the English use of the 'Other' in drama was to reintegrate the 'self' into society upon the advent of international expansion and the onset of colonialism, the Spanish use of the 'Other' was in an attempt to identify and separate un-

Spanish or 'coercive' social elements and hold them in parenthesis. The Spanish 'self' was supposed to be given to the service of those powers that had originally given it identity, the church and the throne. This identity, however, would be seen to soon falter and require reinstatement in the work of Lope de Vega, and would then go on to be later imprisoned by that authority that had given it life in Calderón's work, especially in *La Aurora en Copacabana*. What had become of this Spanish 'self' was that it no longer had an integral relationship with its own expressed cultural history. The Spain that had given birth to the drama of the Golden Age was now looking to drama to return the favour. In this regard, criticisms that state that any look at Spanish and English drama simply illustrate a black and white Catholic / Protestant divide are unhelpful. I believe that, perhaps, too much has been made of this binary oppositional view of the good Catholic Spaniard. In a work called, *Metaphors of Conversion in Seventeenth Century Spanish Drama* Leslie Levin concludes that, 'The seventeenth century Spaniard was imbued with a religious sensibility that was an integral part of his secular life. The acceptance of God's grace and the exercise of man's free will, working in concert to ensure eternal life and unification with God, were fundamental to his Christian sensibility'.[10] Levin continues that, for the man or woman 'gone astray, repentance or conversion' were necessary to restore order in the moral and theological spheres of life, and that, 'the awareness of this spiritual sensibility was heightened by the pervasiveness of linguistic and non-linguistic symbols in language, art and religion. Metaphor was a key component of this language used to enhance meaning and embellish delivery. Three centuries after Spain's golden age of poetry and painting, the metaphor retains its vitality'[11].

---

[10] Leslie Levin, *Metaphors of Conversion in Seventeenth Century Spanish Drama*, (London, 1999), pp 125 - 126.
[11] Ibid. pp 125 &126.

Metaphor, just like symbolism, has a tendency to recur in art. It is by its nature an identificational device allowing the reader, viewer or audience member a deeper understanding and interpretation of the work being displayed. In short metaphor is almost a 'cultural shortcut' allowing and enabling a direct and involved relationship between art, artist and patron to be established, but in order for metaphor to work the patron is dependant upon certain necessities. He or she must possess a strongly developed awareness of both culture and history. Therefore, I believe Levin's statement, though well intentioned, to be an unfair generalisation in regard to how those of the Iberian Peninsula saw both the church and their relationship to it. Metaphor, just like drama, cannot survive without cultural interaction it is dependent upon recognisable representation. If the representation is not recognisable then the metaphor fails, as a relationship between meaning and patron cannot be established. While not every precise detail of the metaphor must be imbibed, at least some of it must in order for it to succeed in its aim of establishing a relationship. Thus metaphor is inherently a system of representation allowing a constant reestablishment of relationships, and that constant reestablishment has been a factor in religious imagery for centuries. The Catholic Church depended upon metaphor and allegorical imagery from its inception due to the fact that most of those who believed in its tenets were not literate, or at very least not read or write in Latin. The importance of orally based culture hinges upon this fact. It must be remembered that it was from the church that the drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries came, and in examining the growth of that drama it would seem to me that the strength that is inherent in the works of the Spanish stage point to a developed relationship with, and a deep awareness of, both power structures and the individuals relationship to them. These relationships were not transmitted by literary sources, art of all kinds, especially visual art and its ensuing uses of both metaphor and allegory were deeply present in the culture of Europe

before the arrival of literary text and print culture prove this. Religious theatre was an incredibly popular and longstanding feature of Iberian life, its move from a purely religious role into the field of secular and civic identity prove it further. Beyond matters of purely religious belief the original allegiance of people above the merely communal would have been a crossbreed of religious faith with support for whatever secular power was developing or locally established at the time, and this allegiance was not founded upon textual understandings.

Despite a wish on behalf of Castile and Léon to dominate other territories in the name of a unified throne 'Spain' did not exist in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Spanish Inquisition, however, did. Levin's approach to the ideas of conversion, and her underscoring of the importance of both linguistic and non-linguistic symbolism and metaphor in Spanish life, while genuinely stating an important point that few would seem to realise, oversimplifies the social realities and relationships of the Iberian world at the time. The Iberian Peninsula's intimate relationship with the Church must be understood if any truly valid interpretation of her history is to be attempted; but any nation, as bound up in its own singular relationship with God as Levine seems to suggest, that can still produce a work like Catalina Erauso's *Lieutenant Nun, memoir of a Basque transvestite in the New World* [12] in 1592 seems to me to be capable of far a more complex awareness of the social, secular and religious relationships that underscored it. The most important development in European literature at this time is the Picaresque hero[13]. Before the Picaro in Spanish literature there exists

---

[12] M. Stepto & G. Stepto, (Trans. & Eds.), Catalina de Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*, Foreword by Marjorie Garber, (Boston, 1996).
[13] J.R. Stamm, 'The use and types of humour in the Picaresque Novel', *Hispania*, xlii, no. 4, (Dec, 1949), pp 482 – 487, & Javier Herrero, 'Renaissance Poverty and Lazarillo's family: The birth of the Picaresque genre', *Publications of the Modern Language Assoc. of America*, lxiv, no. 5, (Oct, 1979), pp 876 – 886.

only two archetypes, the noble knight and the lonely shepherd, and both are constructs of power structuralism and would have been defended by the higher orders and classes. The message of literature before the Picaro is one of enforced obedience to a rigidly defined social system dressed in the clothes of honour. The very reason why the Picaro became such a popular literary representation is because of his ability to explore beyond the frame of his 'proper place' in society. He does not fit or belong because he is not supposed to; and usually does not want to. As a literary construction the Picaro speaks volumes in regard to the society that produced him or her, and the Picaro does not suggest a culture bound up in its religious beliefs. What it does suggest is a culture whose art was deeply understanding *of* and enmeshed *in* its relationships with power structures, the most important of which happened to be the Catholic Church. My reason for stating these details is because Spanish Golden Age drama, while possibly possessing the same generic root as its English and European neighbours, has a very different method of representing and reestablishing those relationships that it deems to be important. In short, the element of characterisation and the inherent internalisation of authority, both religious and secular, displayed in English drama, although seemingly absent in Spain, does not mean that the function of the plays are different, only the method by which that function is achieved.

Authors and Authority

If this is so, then the question is, why are they absent? If they are, how can we examine the same mechanisms of construction and representation as they occurred in the last chapter? To answer these questions we must briefly trace the history of Spanish Golden Age drama. Hugo Rennert says that 'so far as the representation of secular

dramas in Spain is concerned, we need go back no further than Lope de Rueda, who is, in fact the first professional actor-manager whose name has been preserved in the theatrical annals of Spain. To both him and to Torres Naharro, Lope de Vega, the great creator of the Spanish national drama, has ascribed the beginnings of the comedia'[14]. He does add that 'on the other hand, any discussion of the representations of the religious drama in the peninsula must necessarily revert to a much more remote period'[15]. The more remote period that Rennert is speaking of is, of course, that which we have addressed above. Upon the arrival of the latter-day actor managers such as Lope de Rueda and Torres Naharro, certain factors fell into place. Lope de Vega's *The New World discovered by Christopher Columbus* arrived into a world with a very developed cultural history in regard to all aspects of performance, staging, costuming, acting and attendance, but these plays were still religious in their inception, construction and delivery. Culturally this denotes a marked individuation. J.P.W. Crawford, however, differs in opinion from Rennert and writes that, 'in his famous *Loa de la Comedia* in which Augustín de Rojas outlines the early history of the drama, the honour of being the first Spanish dramatist is ascribed to Juan del Encina. His first two plays were presented on Christmas, 1492, in a hall of the Duke of Alba's palace'[16].

I choose to quote Crawford here because he would lend himself to an understanding that theatre at an early stage still possessed those civic overtones that we discussed above, - for example the greeting of kings and dignitaries- and that plays were presented under the patronage of nobility. This is an important point if we take it as perhaps a small step in the movement of theatre away from the religious and toward secular

---

[14] Hugo A. Rennert, *The Spanish Stage in the time of Lope de Vega*, (New York, 1963), p. 3.
[15] Ibid. p. 3.
[16] J.P.W. Crawford, *Spanish Drama Before Lope de Vega*, (O.U.P., 1937), pp 12 - 13.

authority. Upon the arrival of the Renaissance all theatre changes, and so too does its role in Spanish life. A common misconception regarding mythological plays of early modern Spanish literature is that such works begin to appear only in the late sixteenth century. These statements are simply not supported by the facts. According to Kidd 'the formative period of the Spanish theatre coincides with the fruition of the wider European Renaissance, and naturally looked to the classical tradition in seeking stories for dramatic adaptation'[17]. Spanish dramatists would also use this tradition for plot structures: 'In Spain, the early modern dramatists tended to take their myths from such Roman sources as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Seneca's tragedies. Seneca, in particular, being a native of what is now Córdoba, exercised a special fascination over Spaniards of the period, most of whose knowledge of Greek sources was filtered through conventional wisdom or Roman literature'[18]. It was, however, never simply a case of a select few authors taking ideas from Italianate plays, and it did not cease after the Siglo de Oro, 'the tales of classical mythology have captured the imagination of Spanish playwrights throughout the history of the peninsular theatre. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, plays that recreate the Greco-Roman myths can count among their authors such historically significant figures as Juan del Encina, Lope de Vega, Guillén de Castro, Tirso de Molina, Calderón de la Barca, and Juana Inés de la Cruz.'[19].

The effect of the Renaissance on Europe was immense, but in regard to Golden Age comedia in Spain, just as in England, it was the spark that began modern theatre. Daniel L. Heiple in an article entitled 'Versions of Christian Truth in Calderón's Orpheus *Autos*', traces what

---

[17] M. Kidd, *Stages of Desire: The mythological tradition in the Classical and Contemporary Spanish theatre*, (Pennsylvania, 1999), pp 19 & 20.
[18] Ibid. p. 7.
[19] Ibid. p. 3.

he sees as Christian allegorical values in the work of the other giant of Spanish Golden Age theatre, Calderón. While not speaking specifically beyond the confines of that author's work, he does say that the material available for religious allegories was somewhat limited and suggests that this is why Lope de Vega began a movement that Calderón followed of converting his popular *comedias* into sacred allegorical *autos sacramentales* (allegorical plays). Curiously enough, the plays which they chose to transform were not only their most popular plays, such as Calderón's *La vida es sueño*, but also plays 'that seem rather inappropriate, such as honour plays involving wife murder'.[20] On other occasions they chose to use, 'in spite of condemnations by patristic writers, classical mythologies as the plot for their allegorical dramas'[21]. The reality of the situation was that in the Iberian Peninsula all the necessaries for the production of theatre shows where available, what was in short supply, however, were authors, plots and storylines. The Renaissance supplied both of the latter while tradition and experience supplied the former.

On the growth of allegory it is important to note that causing an offence to the honour of patrons or even audience members may have been a serious concern at this time, hence the epidemic of wife slaughtering onstage. The wife is always killed for offending the honour code on some level, and her removal empahsises the reintegration of the individual into the society bound by honour. If the Renaissance had supplied a newer understanding to men and women of their identity and place in the world, it supplied much more in relation to Spanish theatre. It took it out of the purely religious sphere and made it independent, at least in context if not in content. What the 'Spain' of this era was is still

---

[20]Daniel L. Heiple, 'Versions of Christian Truth in Calderón's *Orpheus Autos*' in F.D. De Armas (ed.), *A star crossed Golden Age: Myth and the Spanish Comedia*, (London, 1998), p. 219.
[21]Ibid. p. 219.

a matter of some debate, but what we know that it was not would appear to be quite evident. If it was influenced, as all theatre of the time was, by those Italianate ideas sweeping Europe, and the ensuing reappearance of ideas of classical antiquity, those forces that shaped English characterisation did not act here. Its concern is with order, establishment and natural hierarchies, and the reestablishment of all three after some minor deviation would seem to be its stock in trade. In 1959 Alexander A. Parker published his seminal work, *The Approach to The Spanish Drama of the Golden Age*[22]. In this tiny volume he discussed what has been the stumbling block for many a critic of this form of theatre ever since. Firstly, 'the generic characteristic of the Spanish drama is, of course, the fact that it is essentially a drama of action and not of characterisation. It does not set out to portray rounded and complete characters...This does not mean that the characters are unimportant. What it does mean is that the dramatists are out to present, within a strict limitation of time, an action that is full of incident, they generally have no time to elaborate their characters and must confine their characterisation to brief touches. They left it to the audience and the actors to fill in, from these brief hints and touches, the psychology of characters[23]. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly for our discussion, it is not simply a matter of action being more important to an Iberian audience than characterisation: 'In Shakespearean drama, traditionally speaking, the towering "rounded" figures of Lear, Macbeth, Hamlet and others are among the greatest accomplishments'[24]. In Spanish drama, Parker argues, 'what counts more is elucidation of great moral principles. This is because Shakespeare's drama is Reformation / Protestant drama, Spain's is Counter Reformation / Catholic. In the former, focus falls on individual responsibility, in the latter on shared

---

[22] Alexander A. Parker, *The Approach to The Spanish Drama of the Golden Age*, (London, 1959), p. 5.
[23] Ibid. p. 5.
[24] Ibid. p. 5.

104

responsibility. In the former, individual character is magnified, in the latter, group beliefs are prominent'[25]. What Golden Age comedia normally stands accused of is continual collusion with and defence of the church and monarchy in the name of tradition when both were open to accusations of corruption and civic disregard, an accusation that stretches from Lope de Vega up to and beyond Calderón. However, this may not be as clear-cut a matter as it seems. As Margaret Wilson says, 'Elizabethan drama at its greatest, as the titles show, is often that of the individual soul: Hamlet, King Lear, Volpone, and Dr. Faustus. In the titles of Spanish plays, instead of single names of individuals we have *Fuenteovejuna*, the name of a whole village; *Perbáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña*, two names indicating a social relationship; *El Alcalde de Zalamea*, a title indicating a position in society; *El Príncipe constante* and *El burlador de Sevilla*; the viewpoint is always that of society'[26]. The difference is not simply that the individuation that occurs in Elizabethan drama does not take place in Spanish theatrical drama, but that the view and balance of society as a whole in Spanish drama is being placed in the same situation as the individual in its Elizabethan counterpart. The re-establishment (comedy) or non re-establishment (tragedy) of balance necessary to the plot is not confined to the individual and his place in a society of his peers; it occurs at the level of society to begin with, and it is the deviation from and reharmonisation with society that makes for its main plots. Spanish drama, furthermore, does not simply collude with power structures, the theatrical constructions of this time and after represent social changes just as much as its neighbours. The idea of divine right kingship does undergo a marked change in Golden Age drama, and these changes may be seen to reflect both increasing dissatisfaction with the Hapsburg monarchy in Spain, and the evolution of European political thought as a whole. In

---

[25] Ibid. p. 6.
[26] Margaret Wilson, *Spanish Drama of the Golden Age*, (Oxford, 1969), p. 50.

Lope de Vega's theatre the idea of divine right kingship is very strong; but in the drama of Calderón – during whose lifetime an English king would be beheaded by his subjects- 'Kings are not only far too fallible, whether they be historical figures like Henry VIII, (*la cisma de Inglaterra*) and Herod (*El mayor monstruo los cellos*), or fictional entities such as Basilio of *La vida es sueño*. The king is no longer the viceroy of God, the minister of divine justice among men. Kingship is wholly of this world, merely one of many parts which men are called to play on earth, one of the dreams from which they will awaken after death'[27].

Therefore, as a representational device for voicing social concerns the comedia does develop to the same point that Elizabethan drama, however, it simply does so in a very different way and at a much slower pace. The comedia is much more concerned with social integration than alienation, and its non-developmental approach to its characters displays this. When 'Others' appear they are exactly that, foreigners, non-Christians and enemies to the structure of social stability. English drama, in which the very questioning of the 'self' deploys the character as separate from his fellows, in order to either banish or reintroduce him or her from society, that is, to either make 'Other' or make 'self' of them, does so in order to give the character the chance to *revenge*, change or improve themselves and their lot in life. The characters themselves have not only the volition but also the ability to right themselves upon society or upon a person or both; some of the greatest tragedies actually occur because the character is given the opportunity to do so, but cannot or simply chooses not to. Comedia does not provide for this possibility, for to do so it would have to develop its characters and give them volition beyond their role and social status. The idea of tragedy occurs in the

---

[27] Ibid. p. 159.

106

comedias when the social relationship between individuals and institutions, represented in codes of behaviour like 'honour', become damaged beyond repair; when the social and multi personal binding necessary to produce unity comes undone. In general, the Golden Age comedia would seem to be a vehicle in which the action, and thus the ensuing restoration of harmony at the play's end, is always achieved at the price of characterisation, the role of the many outweighs the needs of the few. The plot and the final restoration of harmony in the final scene are basically the reestablishment of social order, and illustrate a seemingly marked difference between the Golden Age comedia and the Elizabethan / Jacobean / Carolingian drama that we ventured upon in the last chapter, but that does not mean that certain similarities at not at play. Both Levine and Parker above suggest that Spanish comedia relied upon the audience's developed understandings of semiotic yet firmly established and signified representations, just as in England.

The difference may truly lie in the fact that, as addressed above, the cultural archive from which these representations derive, the identification of civic life through the medium of religious practice, had not, as in England, been repeatedly challenged over time, dismantled and rebuilt. Regardless of the Reformation and Counter Reformation, religious authority in the Iberian Peninsula was as it had been for many centuries, identificational against 'others' and confirming of the 'self'. The external changes and ensuing English internalisation of religious authority that we discussed in the last chapter had simply not occurred in Spain. Authority was very much still an externalised ideal, one enforced by a society whose problem was as much an overriding resistance to change over far too long a period, as England's had been an overexposure to it in too short a space of time. If this is so then what would seem obvious is that the character development and portrayal

within the English plays, that is, the soliloquies, are specifically exercises that occur as a result of the collapse and reestablishment of order, be that order political, social or moral. A soliloquy is actually an external transmission of an internalised debate, allowing the audience more understanding of those details and offering and inviting opinions on the part of the audience in relation to the restoration, or non-restoration of dramatic harmony. A debate means conflict. The suggestion here would be that because there was no collapse and reestablishment of order, then the re-interpretation of both the 'self' and the 'Other' simply did not occur, but we can find traces of both within the comedias. If they are not constructed 'others' in relational opposition to their Spanish counterparts, then what are they? I would argue that even though Spain did not endure those repeated socio-political challenges to singular and multiple identities that England did, these characters are still built as binary oppositionals, they are 'othered' in the exact same way that Caliban is. The difference is that the 'others' in the Iberian Peninsula were very real. They were those minority peoples and races of this new Spain. They were the 'not selves' of the Catholic, post-Reformation and re-conquering Iberian Peninsula. What we see in the construction of Lope de Vega's Columbus is an idealised, Christian-inspired, and thus legitimately empowered, conqueror capable of textually authorising the expansion and ensuing conquest of the New World[28], an idealisation that was deeply schizophrenic at its very base as, being an Italian, Columbus's ethnic identity was always going to be an issue in a Spain,[29] just as the fact that it was the Portuguese who actually employed him originally.

---

[28] Pauline Moffitt-Watts, Prophecy and Discovery: On the spiritual origins of Christopher Columbus's "Enterprise of the Indies", *The American Historical Review*, xc, no. 1, (Feb, 1985), pp 73 – 102, & Patricia Seed, 'Taking Possession and Reading Texts: establishing the Authority of Overseas Empires', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, (3rd Ser.), xlix, no., 2, (April, 1992), pp. 183 – 209.

[29] W.E. Washburn, 'The meaning of "Discovery" in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', *The American Historical Review*, lxviii, no. 1., (Oct, 1962), pp 1 – 21.

Columbus and Conquest

I will now move on to Lope de Vega's characterization of Columbus in the play *El Nuevo Mundo Descubierto por Cristóbal Colón*[30]. There are three main points that I will discuss in the context of the play's relationship to history. Firstly, as stated, I will examine what I feel to be the most pertinent point of Lope's Columbus as a historical representation, Lope's use of Columbus to encompass and conflate Spain's relationship to overseas conquest both at the time of those voyages of discovery that resulted in the finding of the 'Indies'[31], and at the time of the play's writing in 1600[32]. Secondly, I will discuss briefly the portrayal of both the native and Moorish characters within the play, and from this elaborate upon the question of how the play relates to ideas of Spanish identity. Finally, I will examine the 'trial' or 'tribunal' scene in Act I. I believe that this scene is the most vitally important in the play, insofar as it encapsulates both the points above and further ideas that are pertinent to the play as a work of historical value in relation to Spain. The work is in essence Lope's theatrical deliberation on the questions that Spain in 1600 had never truly resolved. That is, given the history of Iberian expansion, by what right did they enter the New World, and given the behaviour of certain sections of Spanish society while they were there, was Spain justified in the conduct of her conquest? I will then argue that just as Shakespeare's Caliban was an attempt at a construction of 'otherness' in an England on the edge of colonial pursuit, Lope's Columbus was an attempt at a restoration of national identity and 'selfhood' in a time of colonial collapse and

---

[30] *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus.*
[31] The plays title is, of course, a contradiction in historic terms. Up until he died Columbus believed that he had found that which he had originally sought, ' the Indies', and not the New World of America.
[32] Robert M. Shannon, (trans. & ed.), *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus: A Critical and Bilingual Edition,* (New York, 2001), p. 28.

109

domestic uncertainty. In regard to the role of Columbus in history and theatre, if the importance of Shakespeare's Caliban in relation to European expansion lies in the fact that he was both the first European voicing of the 'Other' and a textual authorisation of a belief in the superiority of race, then it was through this act of construction that a new world of a different type and its inhabitants were introduced via the developing medium of drama. Caliban was a psychologically necessary construction for England in a rapidly changing Europe, a Europe in which her expansionist tendencies were about to enfold. It must be remembered that Caliban's first appearance is only a step away from England's full-scale entry into the empire building of the 1660s.

Bridget Orr's book *Empire on the English Stage, 1660 – 1714* is an examination of the English heterosexual fantasy and Utopian tendencies that appeared in both print and onstage at this time, and in doing so she traces the development of the 'Other', both foreign and female, through the early beginnings of England's proto-Empire. It is a well-written and important piece of work examining the proliferation and growth of ideas on race, religion and, most specifically gender at that time and how those ideas were transmitted through the medium of theatre. In short, it examines the growth of these forms in gender terms in England just after the Virginia settlement and the ensuing development of overseas ambitions. Orr says that in 1660, although Spain was still the dominant power in both Europe and beyond in regards to the New World, Spanish foreign conquest was seen to have failed. From 1660 to 1714, speculation centred on whether the Dutch, or later the French, were replacing the Spanish as the new aspirants to a new western Empire. According to Orr, 'The conventional wisdom was that the Spanish empire was too weak, depopulated, unskillful in governance and widely dispersed to function as an effective entity and late seventeenth century

geographers, historians and political analysts treated the Peninsular power as exemplary of the failure of an imperial state blessed by many advantages but brought down by ambition and intolerance'[33]. Orr goes on to address the development of a newer 'national' identity around the time of Elizabeth, and says that England defined herself very much in relation to Spanish overseas expansion[34]. In the Europe of the 1600s, Spain was seen as almost a perfect example of how not to operate in regard to the New World. Orr also points out that the English drama of the time took heed of this fact: 'The War of the Spanish Succession seemed to provoke an outburst of comedies with peninsular settings. Spain and Portugal offered Dryden and his fellow authors an attractive reservoir of exotic literary materials and heroic themes'.[35]

The reality of this international relationship was that although England or any other power in Europe could never actually hope to defeat Spain militarily, they could always be relied upon to outmanouvre her politically; overextended as she was. The New World had been conquered, but this conquest had led to the defeat of Spain in international politics. England's new tendency to see the Spanish in comic terms, however, still denoted the size and importance of the dominant role that Spain had played for so long in Europe. England and others may have identified themselves in opposition to Spain, but the fact is that they simply had no one else to identify against. The affairs of the Iberian Peninsula had dominated both Europe and the New World at a time when England's only aspiration was of national unity. Therefore, even if plots, locations and representational identities were being borrowed wholesale from Iberian sources, this was because 'Protestant

---

[33] Bridget Orr, *Empire on the English Stage, 1660 – 1714*, (Cambridge, 2001), p. 135.
[34] Ibid. p. 137.
[35] Ibid. p. 135.

England defined herself against absolutist, Catholic Spain.'[36] Orr also regards the work of English geographical writers of time such as Richard Hakluyt, Samuel Purchas and John Steven's work as a form of English Epic, compiling ideas of both travel and geography, all of which were borrowed heavily from Iberian sources via translation; while maintaining that Spain and Portugal, in turn, took their original ideas and developed their newer geographical knowledge, from ancient antiquity and classical sources. A point that Colin Steele makes repeatedly in his 1975 examination *English Interpreters of the Iberian New World from Purchas to Stevens, a Bibliographical study, 1603 – 1726* is that while those of the Iberian Peninsula sailed, explored and developed geographical information, the English developed an enthusiast's appetite for compendiums of these translations that would only later see fruition: 'The Elizabethan translations depended on a small body of enthusiasts and no ready made public existed for travel literature such as that which developed at the end of the Seventeenth Century…the physical climax of this output came in 1598 - 1600 with the second edition of Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*.'[37] Hakluyt's work coincided with the take-off of English colonisation in Virginia with which he was closely associated, and although the trend of the collector / explorer relationship continued to a lesser extent with Samuel Purchas (1577 - 1626), 'by the early Eighteenth Century translators such as John Stevens were far removed from the world of actual exploration'.[38] Furthermore, the translators that Elizabethan England produced other than Hakluyt were John Frampton and Thomas Nicholas, 'men who had both been imprisoned by the Spanish Inquisition'.[39]

---

[36] Ibid. p. 137.
[37] Colin Steele, *English Interpreters of the Iberian New World from Purchas to Stevens: A Biographical Study*, (Oxford, 1975), p 9
[38] Ibid. p 9.
[39] Ibid. p. 10.

Given the theatrical identifications of England's foreign neighbours, certain factors must be taken into account. Firstly, the power in Shakespeare's creation lay in the fact that, unlike Lope de Vega's Columbus, the English audience in general had no precedent for a comparison between fact and fiction. They had no way to tell if Caliban was a valid representation, but by being the product of the most successful, royal, playwright of his time, they knew that he was a textually authorised one. Secondly, while Caliban was a signal of a New World waiting for exploration, and in construction is very much contemporary with the spirit of those times, Columbus, as both a representation and as a real person, was the product of an incredibly complex history. Furthermore, in identifying and using Columbus in the way that he did, Lope conflated two timeframes in one, a common device within Spanish theatrical drama. This was not a hard task to accomplish, as Luis Weckmann says, 'Columbus stands in a clearer light if we envisage him not so much as the first of the modern explorers, but as the last of the great medieval travellers'.[40] Therefore, in pursuit of both de Vega's creation in *El Nuevo Mundo* and the real Columbus we are in the territory of both of the previous chapters, for Lope's representation of him is specifically built upon both, and in the construction of Columbus we see a Spain that, when identified through the figurehead of Columbus, was decidedly uneasy about both past glories and present difficulties[41].

---

[40] Luis Weckmann, 'The Middle Ages in the Conquest of America', (1951), p. 180.

[41] Unfamiliarity with this work is not at all uncommon as it is one of Lope's lesser-known and academically assessed works, especially in English. For a very brief synopsis, in Act I we see Columbus being refused by Portugal and told to go to Castille for support. As Ferdinand is occupied with the Reconquest and Granada, Henry VII is approached by Bartholomew Columbus, and also refuses. Granada falls (Mohammed surrenders), and Columbus' Imagination takes him to the 'Tribunal' chaired by Providence discussed here. Eventually Ferdinand and Isabella agree to the mission with the financial backing of Luis Santángel, the 'Comptroller of Finances.
Act II begins with Columbus' crew on the edge of mutiny, whereupon Friar Buyl intervenes and asks the crew to give him three more days. To this they agree, and land is indeed sighted. Upon landing, the Spaniards erect a cross on the beach. In this act we are also introduced to the natives. Columbus instructs his crew to dispose of their weapons and embrace the natives, which they do. We also find out that the natives are seemingly cannibals when Dulcanquellin tells Auté the

Lope had at his disposal various pieces from which to re- construct a Columbus for the audience of the 1600s. According to Robert Shannon, he 'used mythology, ancient history as well as chronicles of discovery to portray the hero as a saint living among men, a man endowed with superior intelligence whose divinely inspired imagination will bring about the salvation of the natives of America.'[42]The mixture suggested here between mythology and ancient history is important if taken in the light of the Europe that Columbus originally traveled from as discussed in Chapter One. Europe at that time was unsure where the boundary lay between fact and fable and embraced both in the exploration of the unknown. The chronicles of discovery that Shannon refers to here are of course the first part of Gonzalo Fernàndez de Oviedo's *Historia general y natural de las Indias* of 1535 and Francisco López de Gómara's *Historia de las Indias y conquista de México* of 1552, which to this day are still the most important sources in any discussion of the New World and are both influenced heavily in terms of construction upon the writings of both Pliny, Strabo and other ancient geographical authors. R.R. Bolgar, in the appendices to his 1954 *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries*, traces the path of translations of these ancient geographers through Europe, and in doing so makes it

immortal line, 'kill four of my fattest servants and serve them on the table roasted and garnished with wild delicacies', (Lines 2005 – 2008 of Shannon's trans.), but we hear nothing of this anywhere else in the play.
Act III, Columbus has returned to Spain leaving some of the Spaniards in the 'New World'. The Spaniards are astounded that the Indian women 'consider it dishonorable to deny the flesh', (Line 2305), and proceed to have sex with them. However, Terrazas gets involved with Tacuana who is betrothed to Duncanquellin. Rather than admit to him that he has slept with her, Terrazas tells him that she has been taken by his rival Tapirazú. Duncanquellin goes to fetch her, but along the way is confronted by Devil, his old god and told of Terrazas lies. Duncanquellin is furious and decides to massacre the Spanish. The Spaniards who have been taking the women are killed, but when the Indians try and uproot the cross that Columbus planted in Act I, it grows back again. The Indians convert because of this miracle, and Devil is defeated. The next scene is Ferdinand, Isabella and the Comptroller of Finances greeting Columbus on his return. Columbus is congratulated, honoured and the play ends with the lines above.
[42] Robert M. Shannon, *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus*, (2001), p. 47

clear that it was in the Iberian Peninsula especially that these geographical writers gained readership, bound as it was to Portuguese discovering.

The influence of these classical works are also found in the Iberian Epics that all Spanish plays dealing with the New World - *El Nuevo Mundo, Arauco Domado, El Brasil Restituido* and *La Aurora en Copacabana*, by Calderón amongst them - all have at their primary source. They are the Spanish and Chilean Epics *La Araucana* by Alonso de Ercilla, Pedro de Oña's *Arauco Domado*, both written *c*1590, and Álvarez de Toledo's *Purén Indómito*. In regard to Charles Maxwell-Lancaster and Paul T. Manchester's wish to pursue de Toledo's *Purén Indómito*[43] as the third part of their master translation, I choose to follow Frank Pierce's view that it is of a later construction[44] and while possibly being of value to both Lope in *Arauco Domado*, and to Calderón in his *La Aurora en Copacabana* of 1661, is of no real benefit to me in regard to understanding the roots of Lope's Columbus. Lope de Vega and his work, however, have no real peers to be compared with. The only other stage author of the same prominence as Lope to pursue the subject matter of the Spanish in the New World is Calderón, and he wrote later on in the century. *La Aurora en Copacabana* was written in 1661, published in 1672, and is again a conflation of times. It is, however, more an examination of Spain's relationship with her theatre than with her colonial possessions. According to Ezra S. Engling the play's 'Temporal setting spans over five and a half centuries...*La Aurora* should be appreciated not only as a cleverly conceived Calderónian synthesis, but also as a panorama of Spanish religious and secular theatre

---

[43] Charles Maxwell-Lancaster & Paul T. Manchester, (Trans.& Eds.), Pedro de Oña's *Arauco Tamed*, (New Mexico, 1948), p. 7.
[44] Frank Pierce, (ed. & trans.), *Alonso De Ercilla Y Zúñiga*, (Amsterdam, 1984), p. 112.

from medieval times to the end of the seventeenth century'.[45] Therefore, the New World as a source for Calderón in his *La Aurora en Copacabana* is, just like *El Nuevo Mundo*, more about Spain than the overseas possessions. Given the author, however, it is also more about Spain's relationship with authority than with the 'Other', and this type of historical allegory is another recurring familiar in the canon of the comedia. According to Engling, 'the most important theme in the play is religion but it is presented in association with other Calderónian concerns in new guises. These themes are fate, the relationship between individual rights and or social authority, ambition, love and art'[46]. In Calderón the idea of rebellion, resistance and imprisonment are never far away, and in relation to our discussion, he represents the occurrence of a break with, or a questioning of authority, in the form of Spanish Golden Age drama. What this work truly represents is 'a panorama of Spanish religious and secular theatre from medieval times to the end of the seventeenth century'[47]. Calderón as an author is also important in terms of theatrical representations that can be historically read, but he occurs at the other end of the process that I examine here. The Iberian Epics, however, are as telling of the times in which they were written as Lope's Columbus is, and as such are important to any analysis of both the play and its main protagonist. They are the writings of soldiers reared in the tradition of those original conquistadors and are as much representative of how Spain related to her past glories as Lope's plays are, especially *El Nuevo Mundo*.

Lope's Columbus, then, is a creation that differs greatly from the real personage in all but intention, and Lope's intention, according to

---

[45] Ezra S. Engling, (ed. & trans.), *La Aurora en Copacabana of Pedro Calderón de la Barca*, (London, 1994), pp 63 & 102.
[46] Ibid. P. 78.
[47] Ibid. p. 102.

Robert M. Shannon, is to rehabilitate him in the minds of the masses that had long forgotten those past glories[48]. While I do not plan simply to pursue a deconstruction of Lope's Columbus when a perfectly good one by the above author already exists,[49] in the developing Spanish theatre of the time, what we see are examinations of the socio-political constituents of Spain. The most important Spanish Golden Age comedias that relate directly to the discovery of the New World are those mentioned above and these plays, although representing history in quite different ways, represent it very much in Spanish terms. While *El Nuevo Mundo* was arguably constructed for the centennial celebrations of Columbus' voyage[50], *Arauco Domado* can be seen as a clarion call to a Spain very much in danger of cultural disintegration in the same way that Lope's 1625 *El Brasil Restituido* can. The latter work was written as a response to the retaking of Salvador de Bahia from the Dutch on April 1 of the same year as the canonization of Queen Isabella[51], and although Spain for once seemed unified in this assault, it was the last time that the chivalric and honourable Spain of previous glories would be mustered to defend its overseas possessions. Or in the words of Stuart Schwartz, 'within fifteen years the dream of an integrated Iberian monarchy and a unified empire would be in shambles, and Portugal had embarked upon her own independent course'.[52]

What interests me in the play *El Nuevo Mundo* is the attempt on Lope's part to legitimise Columbus's undertaking by proscribing to him

---

[48] Robert M. Shannon, *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus*, (2001), Intro. p. 41.

[49] See also, Ibid., *Visions of the New World in the drama of Lope de Vega*, (New York, 1989), Intro. p. 12, & Victor Dixon, 'Lope de Vega and America: The New World and Arauco Tamed', *Renaissance Studies*, vi, no. 3 – 4, (1993), pp. 249 – 269.

[50] Op.cit. *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus*, (2001), intro, p. 1.

[51] Stuart B. Schwartz, 'The Voyage of the Vassals: Royal Power, Noble Obligations, and Merchant Capital before the Portuguese Restoration of Independence, 1624 - 1640,' *The American Historical Review*, xcvi, no., 3, (Jun., 1991), p. 737.

[52] Ibid. p. 737.

a manifest destiny akin to a biblical figure[53], or more importantly to answer the question of why it should be of interest to a Spanish audience of the time. According to Patricia Seed, Columbus's son Ferdinand wrote that upon landing in the Indies, 'the admiral ...took possession of [the New World] in the name of the Catholic Sovereigns with appropriate words and ceremonies'.[54] In this article Seed illustrates an important point, one that previously would be possibly banished to the realm of postmodernist wordplay. According to her an incredibly fundamental difference existed between English and Spanish understandings and methods of taking possession of discovered territories. The Spanish, like those European powers who followed them, took possession in the form that had been handed down through Medieval times and Roman law, by act of word and ceremony. The English, on the other hand, by courtesy of the recent break with Rome, did not. 'Even as the conquest of the New World was often established by military means or by occupation, authority - that is the *right* to rule - was established by language and ceremony'.[55] Seed quite rightly points out that to this day authority is still established by the use of language and ceremony. She points out that upon arrest in America today, protection of an individual's civil rights under law is enshrined in a mechanism (the Miranda Act) which does not necessitate the individual is immediately understanding of what is happening. Suspects must be placed in a position where they are given the opportunity to recognise that their actions are possibly an offense so that they can be processed under due law.[56] In a historical context what this meant was that Spanish claims to territorial conquest, like any other Catholic European power, had to be ratified by the Pope in order to be legally recognised: 'Immediately after Columbus's return to Spain the monarchs sought

---

[53] Ibid. p. 41.
[54] Patricia Seed, 'Taking Possession and Reading Texts', (1992), p. 183.
[55] Ibid, p. 184.
[56] Ibid. p. 205.

formal legal authorisation for their title from the Pope. For much of the sixteenth century, the Spanish crown's right to rule the New World was embedded in the 1493 Donation of Pope Alexander VI'.[57]

What immediately followed this Donation was the Treaty of Torsedillas of 1494 which shared out the New World discoveries between Spain and Portugal,[58] but this fascination with the legality of possession would, as time rolled on and the Papacy weakened, led eventually to the infamous *Requirement*, a document that was *required* to be read out by the conquistadors, in the same way that those natives encountered by the Spanish were *required* to understand what was being stated; that if they recognised both King and Christ they were not to be harmed. The irony of course was that the chances of a native listener being able to understand why this document was being read aloud, or to understand Spanish, that is to basically realise just what was occurring were non-existent. Furthermore, as Lewis Hanke so succinctly puts it, the Requirement: 'Was read to trees and empty huts...Captains muttered its theological phrases into their beards on the edge of sleeping Indian villages, or even a league away before commencing the formal attack...Ship captains would sometimes have the document read from the deck as they approached an island, and at night would send out slaving expeditions, whose leaders would shout the traditional Castilian war cry "Santiago" rather than read the Requirement before they attacked'.[59] If, by chance the Indians did not respond immediately with a positive response then the Requirement was also quite specific in its declaration of intent:

---

[57] Ibid. pp 205 & 185.
[58] Kenneth Mills & William B. Taylor, (eds.), *Colonial Spanish America: A Documentary History*, (Delaware, 1998), p. 62.
[59] Lewis Hanke, *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America*, (Philadelphia, 1965), pp 33 & 34.

We shall take you and your wives and children and make slaves of them, and as such we will dispose of them as their Highness may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do all the harm and damage that we can, as to vassals who do not obey, and refuse to receive their lord, and resist and contradict him; and we protest that the deaths and losses that shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their highness, or ours, nor of these Cavaliers who come with us. And that we have said this to you and made this Requirement, we request the notary here present to give us his testimony in writing, and we ask the rest who are present that they should be witness to this Requirement.[60]

For English claims to be equally valid Elizabeth had to declare herself equal in stature and power by both ceremony and language, and because the Pope could not and would not recognise the role of the English monarch in a Papal Bull, legitimisation was given in a very different manner, by Letters Patent. According to Seed, 'the word "patent" comes form the Latin *patente*, signifying "open". Letters patent are open letters, as distinguished from letters close, private letters closed up or sealed. Letters patent came from a sovereign (or other person in authority) and were used to record an agreement, confer a right, title or property, or authorise or command something to be done'.[61] While both forms or recognition accredited the possibility of previous possession of new lands by Christian monarchs, according to Seed what this difference resulted in was the fact that: 'In making possession possible for Christian sovereigns, the letters patently tacitly acknowledge the legitimacy of dominion of other Christian, that is European, rulers while passing over in silence the potential legitimacy of the New World's inhabitants...All other sixteenth century patents-French, Spanish and Portuguese alike- insisted that legitimacy, the right to rule or even be

[60] Ibid. p. 33.
[61] Patricia Seed, 'Taking Possession and Reading Texts' (1992), p. 185.

present in the New World, was contingent on evangelizing the Natives'.[62]

What this essentially meant was that from the beginnings of their forays abroad the English were not in pursuit of anything other than 'land',[63] that is, the actual possession of territories for expansion and settlement. Evangelization was not part of their pervue, for those other European powers, evangelization, or at least the pretence of it, was crucial in order that their claim to territories be recognised by the Pope, and thus, the rest of Europe. Importance here lies in the fact that Columbus in the hands of Lope is almost a living saint who insists that the natives be treated respectfully; the true Columbus, however, may not have been very different. According to Pauline Moffitt-Watts, Columbus 'came to believe that he was predestined to fulfill a number of prophecies in preparation for the coming of the Antichrist and the end of the world. According to his calculations these events were not far off. This self-image is epitomized in the signature that Columbus adopted: Christoferens. It is an awkward latinization of his given name and means Christ-bearer'.[64]Moffitt-Watts goes on to illustrate that within the times that Columbus lived, these ideas were not considered strange. The inhabitants of the medieval world, and especially voyagers and explorers, tended to see themselves as having an undefined but divine role of some sort[65], and belief in the Apocalypse and the ensuing destruction of either Christendom or the Islamic world was also common, as was the belief that the evangelization of the whole world was an incredibly important step along that road. More importantly, 'Columbus's apocalyptic vision of the world and the special role that he

---

[62] Ibid. pp 187 & 188.
[63] Ibid. pp. 189.
[64] Pauline Moffitt-Watts, 'Prophecy and Discovery', (1985), p. 74.
[65] Ibid. pp 77 & 78.

was destined to play in to the Indies is to be achieved'.[66] Columbus saw himself as being sent by God to Christianise the New World in his time. In his personal spiritual beliefs conquest and conversion were concomitant, a fact that Lope de Vega recognised fully. Moffitt-Watts traces this neglected, but incredibly important, side of Columbus through historic literature, suggesting that it is only recently becoming understood and accepted[67]. Lope's portrayal of Columbus in this light can be seen as an attempt to recognise this fact and restore it to public attention. The unfolding of events that would presage the end of time was a major stimulus for his voyages. Moreover, his apocalypticism must be recognised as inseparable from his geography and cosmology if a balanced picture of the historical significance of his Enterprise is to be achieved. What must also be recognised is both the importance that this evangelizing role would take on in the history that was about to be written between Spain and the New World, and the ideas of identity that it would enable.

Ideas of Identity

According to Shannon, of all the plays written in the seventeenth century about the wars between the Araucanians of Chile and the Spaniards *El Nuevo Mundo* is the only one in which the Native is not portrayed in terms of the hostile savage [68]. The most important comment that he makes, however, is that even docile natives who do convert, will never be truly accepted. This is because social difference is simply not tolerated in the Golden Age theatre, the function of the 'Other', be they a Moor, Jewish, Black, an aggressive women, a gypsy, or an indigenous Americans, is to be 'symbolically saved and accepted into Spanish

---

[66] Ibid. p. 74.
[67] Ibid. pp 83 & 84.
[68] Robert M. Shannon, *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus*, (2001), p. 7.

society because they express the dominant discourse of the male Castilian Catholic. This is the *raison d'être* of the *alter* on the Golden Age Spanish stage: to recapture an identity which seventeenth century Spain believed it was losing: a sense of social, political, racial order and stability'.[69] For this purpose, in Golden Age comedias the most pertinent details are actually those details of history that the author has compressed through the act of dramaturgy into one cohesive vehicle for the public dissemination, and *El Nuevo Mundo*, while concerning with the truth of Columbus' evangelizing mission, is actually in address the broader issues of social and political violence, courtesy of its presented ideas of 'rebellion against established natural, religious and social order, social mobility and class distinction'.[70] As stated the comedia characters do not possess the constructed intricacies of their Elizabethan counterparts and are, therefore, not really open to examination in the same way that those of the last chapter were. This does not mean, however, that they do not represent the same aspects of alienation from, and reintegration to, society. It simply means that the starting point for an examination of those facets in Spanish drama cannot begin at the same point. This is because in Golden Age Comedia we are examining Spanish society's views of itself and of its past actions. Therefore, the 'Other' is almost incidental in this relationship; it is only an indicator by which the 'self' is to be located. While both the Native and Moorish characters in *El Nuevo Mundo* such as Dulcanquellín, Palca, Celín and Mohammed can be seen as little more than ciphers for the expression of the superiority of Spanish and Castilian Catholicism, they do represent a deeply troubled aspect in Iberian conquest. 'The Amerindian and African Other are also dramatized on the seventeenth century Spanish stage to argue against the mixture of races. In *El Nuevo Mundo* the

---

[69] Ibid. pp 19 & 3.
[70] Ibid. pp 19 & 3.

123

Spanish sailors who stay who remain on the island are all murdered due to their pursuit of indigenous women.'[71]

Therefore, despite the 'symbolic saving' that Shannon speaks of above, the 'Other' will not be tolerated if they threaten the purity of blood; and so he (or she) is displayed as licentious, barbaric or idolatrous. In this sense the Amerindian is seen as a threat just as much as the Moor or infidel is, and will be conquered by way of an inability to control their appetites: 'At the beginning of El Nuevo Mundo the castle warden Celín enters to announce that the Catholic Monarchs and their armies are at the gates of Granada. When Celín observes Mohammed the Moorish prince lying on the lap of a woman he rebukes him for his preoccupation with romance at the moment of an enemy attack'.[72]In doing so Lope is not only embracing a traditional Comedia position that castigated and ridiculed other races, especially blacks for their licentiousness,[73] he is also tying that identification in with the Spanish history of the Reconquest. He, through the character of Columbus, is in essence blurring the lines between the Christian Reconquest and conquest full stop. Within the play, it would seem that upon the fall of Granada in Act I, lines 845 - 860, even Allah loves Don Ferdinand,

> And you my generous lord, as a pious judge, pardon my delirium. Oh how Allah loves you. How much he is on your side. The tragic punishment of Spain by Rodrigo has been restored by you. I prostrate myself before you. Enter your city as its' king exiles himself to the greatest solitude that human patience has seen.[74]

---

[71] Robert M. Shannon, *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus*, (2001), p. 14.
[72] Ibid. p. 29.
[73] A.J.R. Russell-Wood, 'Iberian Expansion and the Issue of Black Slavery', (1978), p 39.
[74] Robert M. Shannon, *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus*, (2001), p. 121.

Therefore, in viewing the comedias through the lens of history we see that the Iberian Peninsula, both at the time of discovering the New World and of Lope's *El Nuevo Mundo*, had developed a deeply schizophrenic attitude to other races. What conquest actually meant in relation to the New World was not salvation and inclusion, but the placing in parenthesis of 'Others' and the development of exploitation. Furthermore, what it resulted in within the Iberian Peninsula was the recurring question, how could conquest be legitimately Christian when the engine that drove it was so obviously economic? According to A.J.R. Russell-Wood, this dichotomy was one that had haunted the Iberian Peninsula since the first Portuguese voyages of discovery. In an article entitled 'Iberian Expansion and the Issue of Black Slavery: Changing Portuguese Attitudes, 1440-1770' Russell-Wood traces the development of Portuguese slavery from 1444 right up to the eighteenth century. His main observation is that Portugal, had developed a way by which 'honour' became a social code of conduct, and made 'just' war in the name of Christianity defensible. Despite this code and its fundamentally militaristic and chivalric overtones, however, 'on August 8 1444 some 25 blacks were unloaded at Lagos. This event heralded a new era in the social, economic and ideological history of Portugal, and it's legacy was to survive the separation in 1822 of Portugal's largest and richest colony, Brazil'.[75] For Russell-Wood the nature of 'honour' was 'best described by the infante of Portugal, Dom Pedro (1392 – 1449), in his treatise *Tratado da Virtuosa Benfeitoria*, dedicated to the Virgin Mary and largely translated from Seneca's *De Beneficiis*. The quintessence of "honour" lay in disinterest. The nobleman in search of "honour" upheld spiritual values, morality and the purity of justice. He was the defender of the beliefs of the Catholic Church and the protector of the needy. These roles endowed the noble with a degree of spiritual grace denied to

---

[75] A.J.R. Russell-Wood, 'Iberian Expansion and the Issue of Black Slavery' (1978), p. 16.

all not of the same social rank and order. He gained not only the respect of men but also the gratitude of his sovereign'.[76]

While 'honour' may seem in this day and age to be an almost quaint concept, in the Iberian Peninsula at large, for a very long time it was very much the social glue that bound all things together, and it can also be seen to have denoted the point at which the social structure was very much hinged. As long as there was a perceived threat to Christendom a response could be mounted based in terms of broadly shared Christian ideals, beliefs and history, all tied into this one, slightly amorphous, ideal. When times changed, however, 'honour' seemed to have problems keeping in step. Russell-Wood seems correct when he says that the very first activity of Europe that can be seen in the light of actual conquest and colonialism, wore the clothes of honour: 'Whether God, gold, or greed provided the incentive for Portuguese expansion, the expedition against Ceuta in 1415 and the disastrous attack against Tangier in 1437 represented the first concerted offensives by Portuguese against Muslims beyond the frontiers of Europe. Enterprises such as these provided Portugal with a steady flow of Moorish slaves'.[77] Slavery was never solely a Portuguese operation, nor did it originate in ideal in the same manner as it operated in intent; but Portuguese exploration 'introduced three new elements into the slave trade: (1) discovery of conditions in the sub-Saharan region conducive to establishing a permanent slave mart; (2) enslavement of peoples with whom the Portuguese had no territorial dispute or religious rivalry: and (3) use of black slave labour in Portugal. Within a few decades the pattern of trade on the West African Coast was irrevocably altered. With the discovery of the Americas, slavery and the black man and woman became essential

---

[76] Ibid. p. 23.
[77] Ibid. p. 17.

parts of the checkered tapestry of European colonisation of the New World.'[78] Although this was never Portugal's original intention at the onset of discovery voyaging, it was the by-product of attempts at economic expansion. Slavery had existed in the African sub-continent since time beyond memory, but the Portuguese opening of a network by which slaves could now be taken and transported would change the face of three continents, and would leave an indelible scar upon the psychology of the Iberian mindset.

Russell-Wood goes on to make certain pertinent points in regard to this matter. Firstly, that every Portuguese historian of the time has trouble dealing with this dichotomy of 'just war' versus slavery[79], especially since the Catholic Church never actually condemned it[80]. Secondly, that by the sixteenth century the number of slaves, Muslim or otherwise, both bound or in manumission was so great that they had begun to appear as stock comic characters in the writings of the comedia authors[81]; and finally, that in response to this inherent problem, in the Iberian Peninsula 'Christ ceased to be a mystical entity: He took on the guise of a warrior God in whose service the distinction between good and evil became blurred,'[82]. This problematic puzzle was never truly solved in Portugal[83]. This massive change in religious identification toward a militant crusading Christ would also prove incredibly hard to shake, and although the ideological ramifications of expansion never took on the importance that they did in the later Spanish conquest of the New World, this may well have been because slavery was simply never addressed as such. Instead it was considered as a form of feudal

[78] Ibid. p. 18.
[79] Ibid. pp 24, & 28 – 38.
[80] Ibid. p. 27.
[81] Ibid. p. 19 & Thomas E. Case, 'The Significance of Morisco Speech in Lope's Plays', (1982), pp 594 – 596.
[82] Op.cit. p. 27.
[83] Ibid. p. 26 – 33.

patronage under the protection of Spanish nobility via their representatives in the New World,[84] and was described in a term lifted directly from the Middle Ages, *enconomienda*. 'The encomienda system itself, by placing a certain number of natives under the protection and guide of a Spaniard, could be considered feudalistic, because, conceived in the spirit of patronage, it was so characteristic of the feudal world.'[85]

Furthermore, the image of the 'Other' that occurs in the Iberian Epics and the Comedias, and especially in Lope's work, are testament to the non-resolution of this issue in the Iberian mindset, it was just as important when Lope was writing, as it had been when the Portuguese set sail originally. The slave trade became a massive economic matter within the Iberian Peninsula, but it could never be free from the accusation that it was a truly unjust practice in a society that for so long had inherited a culture informed and enriched by exposure to other races and to other religions, especially both Muslims and Jews. That transformation of Christ the saviour into a crusading Iberian Christian defending and expanding Christendom against the infidel foe, however, like the honour code upon which it was totally dependent, had been almost stretched to breaking point by exposure to the realities of slaving. 'Honour' as an ideal and a code for conduct, one that was, by shared ideals and beliefs, truly Iberian in character and not specifically 'Portuguese' or 'Spanish', could not cope with the realities of New World conquest, the activities of the Spanish Conquistadors reopened that wound that had never truly healed. That the people inhabiting the New World were pagan idolaters requiring conversion was unquestionable. However, the fact that they were prepared to fight against what was on one hand presented in the light of this traditional

---

[84] Kenneth Mills & William B. Taylor, *Colonial Spanish America: A Documentary History*, (1998), pp 102, 104 & 263,
[85] Luis Weckmann, 'The Middle Ages in the Conquest of America', (1951), p. 135.

crusade, and on the other, savage greed for gold, inhuman oppression and pure exploitation was bound to be divisive in a Spain exposed to differing accounts and attitudes toward the natives. Gonzalo Fernàndez de Oviedo's *Historia general y natural de las Indias* of 1535 and Francisco López de Gómara's *Historia de las Indias y conquista de México* of 1552 being the most obvious cases in point. We return here to the discussion of chapter one, in a world where fact and fiction were not clearly defined, who was to be believed?

It is in this regard that the literary manifestations of this unresolved problem, the very works that Lope used in writing *El Nuevo Mundo*, are so important in understanding the time in which they were written. Pedro De Oña wrote in opposition and in reply to what he saw as Alonso de Ercilla Y Zúñiga's betrayal of his homeland. Ercilla was a conquistador, who followed García Hurtado de Mendoza to Chile, and engaged in the campaign to subdue the recalcitrant Araucanian Indians. In his thirty-seven canto epic he describes the Araucanians as heroes and gives a sympathetic account of their way of life, describing their customs, tribal councils, rituals and modes of warfare. The Spaniards suffer by comparison. Pedro de Oña wrote the nineteen canto 'Arauco Domado', of some 16,000 lines, to redress Ercilla's injustice to the Spaniards and to Mendoza'[86]. Ercilla's work is of possibly more benefit to the actualities of history because of his attempt to describe the natives in less-than-savage light. Being epics, however, both books owe more to Homeric poetry than pure history. The Indians in 'Arauco Tamed' spoke of Greek heroes and discussed concepts that a Byzantine monk would be honoured to understand, but the overall aim was, of course, that of all epics to make the past glorious; to connect contemporary events with the oldest civilisation known to Europe at the time. In writing in Epic verse

---

[86] Charles Maxwell-Lancaster & Paul T. Manchester, *Arauco Tamed*, (1948), p. 14.

what was being written was almost less important than *how* it was being written and by whom. The Spanish in the New World saw themselves as inheritors of a world derived from the middle ages and still bound to and by its belief systems. Even the conflict that lies between the two authors is basically one of honour. Ercilla on one side gives gallant recognition of the bravery of ennobled 'savages'. De Oña on the other refuses to grant any concessions to an enemy of Spain. At one point in Ercilla' work a native warrior called Galvarino, despite being already cruelly mutilated by the Spaniards, says:

> Do not think that we refuse death, for our hope depends on it, but if we prolong our hateful life, it is to take greater vengeance on you; if we do not gain our just end, then we have trust in that sword that, directed against us, it will deprive you of the glory of being able to grant us life.[87]

While this quote says much more about Ercilla's view of soldierly conduct and gallantry than we can ever ascertain of the Araucanians', it still grants them recognition of 'valour' and 'honour'; in doing so it can be seen as a very real threat since it raises questions of how a pagan can possess either of these qualities. More importantly, if he can possess them, what becomes of the Crusader / Reconquest mentality and its ensuing divine right sanction from God to explore, enslave and expand in commerce with God on one's side? It must also be remembered that, 'from its first years, Ercilla's poem became the object of favourable notice and approval'.[88] It was met with a positive reception because of the fact that it was an epic that enabled notions of old world 'honour' by granting the indigenous 'enemy' as much recognition of ability and bravery as the Spaniards. In relation to Lope's portrayal of the Native characters, the quote above is not too dissimilar to the following lines spoken by Tapirazu, one of the native warriors:

---

[87] Frank Pierce, *Alonso De Ercilla Y Zúñiga*, (1984), p. 92.
[88] Ibid. p. 113.

Nothing is stronger than death. Daggers and arrows yield to it, and although your defense is great my resolve is greater…I arrived at the spot where I found the sacrifice of my honour to you. I tried to gather my men, but they were afraid and fearful. But I am not afraid. I stand before you prepared to die.[89]

Shannon compares the speech and activities between the epics and says that 'there are lines in the play that are clearly inspired by De Oña or Ercilla'.[90] In regards to Epic speech and writing, De Oña's is a better work, but it is much less flattering to the natives and much more confirming of both the rights of kings and the truths of conversion. Where De Oña paints the 'haughtiness' of the resistant natives as un-Christian and therefore doomed to failure,

The sum of all his discourse was the pledge, That 'twas alone his target and his goal, To have them recognise a living God, aspiring to redeem them with His blood, and have them each confess their vassaldom, submit their haughty necks upon the yoke, Of holy Phillip, king unparalleled, and the universal monarch of the world.[91]

Ercilla displays that same facet of their character in more noble terms,

This people hathe no feelinge of synne, to be Esteemed wise and valiant is the onelye practise of there Life, after death, they have no hopes or feares, nor any Conceypt off Imortalitie: In disposition of nature they are prowde, Contentious,furious,Cruell, bloodie, impatient, and addicted to warre, tall of stature, well formed, stronge Lymed, nimble, well breathed, valiant, and beyond measure patient in sufferinge, travayle, hunger, heate and Colld: They were

---

[89] Robert M. Shannon, *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus*, (2001), Act III, Sc. ii, Lines 1350-1380, p. 163.
[90] Ibid. p. 28.
[91] Charles Maxwell-Lancaster & Paul T. Manchester, *Arauco Tamed*, (1948), p. 72.

never Conquered by any nation, governed by any kinge, and by there neighbours much feared.[92]

These two epics suggest that the most obvious questions about Spain's cultural identity at the time would be those of history. What was it 'now' to be Spanish? Was Spain the multicultural society of convivencia began by Alfonso X, the Christian Crusading expansionist evangelizer of foreign lands of Saint Isabella or the failing and all too corrupt old man of Europe of Phillip III? What makes the 'savages' noble in one epic and 'barbaric' in another is still dependent upon the opinion of the author, but both still seem of the opinion that Spanish identity was one of militant Catholicism and conquest. The core of this new identity, the honourable pursuit of Christian expansion, however, was still sacrosanct. That was until Bartolomé de Las Casas decided that the Indians were as entitled to the love of Christ as anyone else and decided to, not only act accordingly, but to protest vociferously[93]. When Las Casas began his crusade in defence of those native peoples conquered by Spain, shortly after the first settlements of the New World, his premise for that defence was quite simple. He believed that if the idolatrous religions of those peoples could be explored and understood, then they could be more easily converted. If they did convert, then they should be entitled to the same equality under the law that was being established in Spain at the time[94]. The inherent problem with this outlook was that Las Casas' viewpoint did not allow for any of the ambiguities of 'honour ' that we have discussed above; ambiguities that could prove quite beneficial if the motive for conquest was purely one of profit. In saying that these people were capable of conversion if treated justly and given a Christian example to follow, he was viewing them as

[92] Frank Pierce, (ed.), *The Historie of Araucana, written in verse by Don Alonso de Ercilla, translated out of the Spanish into Englishe Prose almost to the Ende of the 16: Canto*, [Lambeth Palace Library, Ms. 668], *transcribed with introduction and notes*, (Manchester, 1964), pp 3 – 4.
[93] Nigel Griffen, (ed. & trans.), Bartolomé de Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, (Harmondsworth, 1992), Intro, p. viii.
[94] Lewis Hanke, *The Spanish Struggle for justice in the Conquest of America*, (1965), pp 54 – 72.

equals, and therefore they should be treated accordingly. This view, however, removed another ambiguity that had been practiced in the Iberian Peninsula for some time, although the two terms 'slave' and 'Moor' had ceased to be interchangeable in the Iberian Peninsula since the fifteenth century[95] upon their arrival at slaving stations, the prisoners of this 'conquest' mentality were baptised en masse and then sent into servitude. Therefore the idea was that enslavement was not an evil if conversion was provided along the way.

While from a modern perspective it would be easy to see this as a simple case of exploitation by a corrupt church inextricably linked with a fiscally troubled monarchy being challenged by a poor friar, those facts do not really hold together upon examination. Las Casas' uncle had sailed with the first Columbus voyage[96], and Las Casas had originally not only been a *cacique*,[97] he also did not, at first, oppose black slavery. It was only upon eyewitness observation of it that he came to oppose these things[98]. Spain at the time was being reconstructed in the image of the Reconquest, and since these native peoples were pagans, a quite logical extension of the line of thought that brought the Reconquest to life in the first place would not necessarily view them as possible cases for conversion. Even if they were baptised, would that make them acceptable Spanish subjects, or would they always be slaves by any other name? Gustavo Gutiérrez, a Christian biography of Las Casas says that, 'let us dispel on misconception from the outset. It is frequently said that Bartolomé de Las Casas was "ahead of his time", and that he employs a kind of modern language, one more familiar to us today, when he speaks of the rights of Indians to be different, when he defends

---

[95] A.J.R. Russell-Wood, 'Iberian Expansion and the Issue of Black Slavery', (1978), p. 22.
[96] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ*, (New York, 1993), pp 17-20.
[97] A New World landowner replete with native 'workers', that is indentured slaves.
[98] A.J.R. Russell-Wood, 'Iberian Expansion and the Issue of Black Slavery', (1978), p. 36.

133

what we call civil liberties, or when he manifests his sensitivity to the concrete, historical dimensions of faith. The intent, of course, is to eulogise a person of the sixteenth century - calling him modern because he thought as we do today'.[99]

Yet in doing so I believe that Gutiérrez misses the point; Las Casas did not think as we do today. He was not intent on the freedom of Indians to practice idolatry, he simply wanted those in the New World who converted to Christianity to be recognised under Spanish law and treated as they had been promised they would in both the Requirement and every other document issued from Spain; documents that, as we have seen in Seed's work were the very license for conquest. He wanted the Spanish throne to live up to that Christian mission that had been claimed as the source for overseas conquest and trade expansion in the hands of Portugal; the same Christian mission that was now being used as the reason for the conquest of the New World by Spain. What makes Las Casas stand out is that he was prepared to say what many others knew but could or would not. When he criticises historians and writers of the time[100], he is simply voicing what everyone knew but were unprepared to speak against, and both he and others' various dealings with the Inquisition prove this.[101] The dichotomy between the preaching of the gospels and the practices of economics was there for all to see. Las Casas is simply not a modern; he is a Christian who sees the world very much through the eyes of Medieval Christendom. That is exactly why he believes the Indians should be treated equally; his worldview is built on a time before economics placed the poison in the wine of the evangelizing mission. The difference is that he had the courage to openly

---

[99] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ*, (1993), p. 8.

[100] A.J.R. Russell-Wood, 'Iberian Expansion and the Issue of Black Slavery ', (1978), P. 29.

[101] Rolena Adorno 'Censorship and its evasion: Jeronimo and Bartolomé de Las Casas', *Hispania*, lxxv, no., 4, (Oct, 1992), pp 812 – 827.

134

pursue the matter with zeal and commitment, at a time when, as Lewis
Hanke points out, this was not an easily solved problem for the simple
fact that it was a national problem. There are many letters to the Spanish
Crown from those concerned with abuses of the natives in the New
World[102], the Spanish monarchy encouraged the voicing of these
concerns because the actions of the individual Spaniard represented the
monarch. In return, however, the monarch, was also supposed to
represent the grandeur and glory of Spain, and image built upon that
ideal of 'honour' that was seen to be lacking in every action taken in the
new World. He or she was meant to be a 'just' and 'noble' ruler, but,
given the state of Spanish finances in both the times of Columbus'
voyage, and the rapid rise of inflation in the 1600s acquiring a profit
from the overseas empire placed them in a no-win situation. Aside form
the traditional story of just how Isabella financed Columbus, (a detail
that Lope chose to, perhaps wisely, leave out of his play) 'the historian
who is confronted by the mass of printed and manuscript material
available on the struggle or views the colonial monuments in Spanish
America which remain to testify to the imperial grandeur that was Spain,
can easily see today that the crown and the nation were attempting to
achieve the impossible in the sixteenth century. As Spanish rulers the
kings sought imperial dominion, prestige and revenue; in short and the
fruits of conquest, which involves war. As heads of the church in
America they were urgently committed to the great enterprise of winning
the Indians to the faith, - which requires peace. The pursuit of this
double purpose made inevitable both a vacillitating royal policy and a
mighty conflict of ideas and men. It was the tragedy of the Indians that
the accomplishment of either of the two Spanish purposes necessitated

---

[102] See, 'Fray Pedro de Gante's Letter to Charles V, Mexico City, (1552)', 'Fray Juan Izquierdo's
Letter and Report to Charles V, Barcelona, (1552)', & 'José de Acosta on the Salvation of the
Indians, (1588)' in Kenneth Mills & William B. Taylor, *Colonial Spanish America: A
Documentary History*, (1998), pp 81, 101 & 115.

the overthrow of established Indian values and the disruption of the Indian cultures'.[103]

Furthermore, de Sepúlveda's defence of the status quo in the face of Las Casas' attacks on the encomienda system, that is, the use of the Aristotelian notion that some people are born to serve as slaves,[104] would not have been at all strange in those times. Aristotle was one of those ancient authors whose works heavily influenced the Church's teachings, and Aristotelian opinion, courtesy of both the influence of St. Augustine and the philosophical works of Thomas Aquinas, was sufficiently pertinent enough to be used to attack drama in the 1600s all over Europe[105]. Sepúlveda can, quite convincingly, be seen as simply doing his duty by King and Court: 'It was a bold step for Las Casas to engage such a scholar as Sepúlveda in learned combat, for this humanist, who stepped forward to give comfort to Spanish officials and conquistadors by proclaiming the conquest just, supporting this view with many learned references, possessed one of the best trained minds of his time and enjoyed great prestige at court. His contribution to knowledge was recognised in Spain, and on the eve of the battle he had just completed and published his translation of Aristotle's Poetics, which he considered his principle contribution to knowledge'.[106] It is easy to paint him as a tool of imperialism, but it should be remembered that Las Casas also used ancient sources for his arguments, 'the *Tears of the Indians* was only one of Las Casas writings, *A Short Account on the Destruction of the Indies* originally being an unabridged version of that text, and was probably intended to shock his contemporaries into listening to his

---

[103] Lewis Hanke, *The Spanish struggle for justice in the Conquest of America*, (1965), p. 173.
[104] Ibid. , *All Mankind is One: A Study of the Disputation Between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda on the Religious and Intellectual Capacity of the American Indians*, (Illinois, 1974), pp 11, 78 – 79, 101.
[105] M. Kidd, *Stages of Desire*, (1999), p.10.
[106] Lewis Hanke, *The Spanish Struggle for justice in the Conquest of America*, (1965), p. 114.

doctrinal statements, which were always based solidly on ancient and medieval political theory as well on Christian teachings'.[107]

It is in this reality of contradictions that Spain, in her thirst for both God and glory, consolidated this almost divided and divisive dialogue with the New World. While she said that she was operating for God and honour, her operators were speculating for gold and homesteads, and while Spain had a very open policy in regard to the voicing of concerns about the New World, she usually proved quite ineffective at dealing with those concerns. It would appear that it was in that mixture of Inquisition and *Reconquista* ideas and ideals that the new identity necessitated by Spain's unification was being forged, and naturally enough that identity would pull in opposite directions. Those at court could easily be of the opinion that what was done in the New World and elsewhere was 'just' as long as it maintained Spain as an Empire; Las Casas was dealing with the reality of it as he saw it in person. It was also not simply a case of Las Casas' Christian ideals being the source of his conviction. Plenty of those in the New World who did not oppose, and even openly assisted slavery where churchmen following orders from their superiors, and afraid to speak out or even receiving benefits from the trade[108]. The 1550 Disputation between these two men would be the one of the most important events in a controversy that divided Spain in the sixteenth century, and has bedeviled historical discussion since.[109]Therefore, at home, ideas of identity were just as prone to attempts at reorganisation and, concomitant bouts of schizophrenia. Although all of Europe had a Jewish presence at very

---

[107]Ibid. *All the Peoples of the World are Men*, (Minneapolis, 1970), p. 5.
[108] Ibid. pp 3 –17.
[109] Ibid. p. 9.

least[110], in terms of diasporic experience of other races Spain had an inheritance of somewhat different proportions. Occupied by consecutive waves of invaders from North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula remained under Muslim control for nearly seven centuries. Consequently, 'the people who, thus, entered Spanish history were no less part of its structure than the Christian and the Jewish population. They intermarried with them; they exchanged ideas and languages, so that the three religions developed side by side in the separate Spanish kingdoms.'[111] The Reconquest, however, changed all of this. The eventual Christian response took Saragossa in 1118, Córdoba in 1236, Valencia in 1238 and Seville in 1248 and, after a long interval, a ten-year war ended with the fall of Granada in 1492. In the words of Henry Kamen, 'the end of the kingdom of al-Andalus meant that the Muslims (known among Spaniards as Moors) ceased to exist as a nation, and became no more than a minority within a Christian country. In medieval times it was a society of uneasy coexistence (*convivencia*) increasingly threatened by the advancing Christian reconquest of lands that had been Muslim since the Moorish invasions of the eight centuries'[112]. In short, very little of what would become known as Spain was originally Spanish. If the Tudors in England did not inherit a country either bound for, or prone to, unification they at least did inherit one in which social differences on such a fundamental level did not exist. Ferdinand and Isabella inherited a land that had been 'reduced to political and financial chaos by dynastic and personal quarrels among the nobility. The primary task was therefore pacification'[113]in order to pursue unification. In Spain, 'the Reconquest meant the slow and systematic extension of Christian power

---

[110] For example, authors for whom there is little evidence to suggest that they ever left England's shores wrote both *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Jew of Malta*. Jewish characters were in no way unknown on the English stage in Elizabeth's time, see Dena Goldberg, 'Sacrifice in Marlowe's the Jew of Malta', *Studies in English Literature 1500 – 1900*, xxxii, no. 2, (Spring, 1992), pp. 233 – 245 & Walter Cohen, 'The Merchant of Venice and the Possibilities of Historical Criticism', *ELH*, xlix, no. 4, (Winter, 1982), pp 765 - 789.

[111] Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: An Historical Revision*, (London, 1997), pp. 1 &. 217.

[112] Ibid, pp 1 &. 217.

[113]Ibid. *The Spanish Inquisition*, (London, 1965), p. 3.

over all those lands that had been Muslim since the eight century, and so involved the clash of Christian and Muslim armies and societies'[114].

The use of religion as a political tool in regard to unification is, unfortunately, not new in the Europe that we know now. The Europe of today has more sectarian issues to contend with than simply the memory of the Shoah. The none-too-distant horrors of ethnic cleansing in Eastern Europe alone can provide examples of where and when the use of religious identification for both inclusion and exclusion can lead to sectarian acts of extreme violence. In the Europe that we discuss here, religious identification against those other monotheist religions was also not a new idea, its antecedents being both the Crusades and the original medieval Inquisition. In regard to the other minority in the Spain that Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabella wished to unite, their fate was sealed: they were outlawed in 1492. However, as Kamen so pointedly puts it, 'what Spain lost was neither wealth, for the Jews had not been rich, nor population, for few left, most converted. But Spaniards who reflected upon such things felt that the real loss was the failure of the crown to protect its own people. The crown turned its back on the plural society of the past, cut off an entire community that had been (as had the Muslims) an historic part of the nation'[115]. This act may be far less symbolic of a Spanish tendency toward xenophobia than it would at first seem, Ferdinand and Isabella allowed this to happen because they could not stop it. Stephen H. Haliczer writes that the traditional assumption that the Jewish expulsion from Spain was based on the political use of the popularity of resurgent Catholicism, and an ensuing anti-Semitism, are not true. 'The reign of Ferdinand and Isabella undoubtedly saw a considerable strengthening of the power and resources of the Spanish

---

[114] Ibid. p. 2.
[115] Ibid. *The Spanish Inquisition: An Historical Revision*, (1997), p. 27.

monarchy, but it may be argued that the Catholic sovereigns achieved this end not through the imposition of religious conformity but through a policy of alliance with the Castilian towns and their urban oligarchies...the edict of expulsion can only be understood and explained in the context of that alliance'.'[116]Haliczer lays the blame at the door of the Conversos, those who had originally converted to Christianity from Judaism, and makes some very important points along the way. According to that author unification was very much on the agenda for Ferdinand and Isabella, and while the Inquisition can be seen in that light as a tool of unification, that desire for unification must also be seen in terms of a Spanish reaction to the changes that were taking place in the broader spectrum of Europe. Under the convivencia Spain had been the earliest nation in Europe exposed to alternative races and religions. However, just like England, the changing times and the need to reestablish a viable communal identity seems to have been no easy matter. On the contrary, any attempt at a newer social identification would require much more than a simple break with the past, it required a total reestablishment of it, but this also necessitated a re-declaration of intent in regard to the New World, one that could only be achieved through that previously established religious identification discussed above. Therefore, while Haliczer's work underlines the actualities behind political movements within Spain, it also points to the incredible importance of identification through religion in Spain at the time. This new conquest, just like the Reconquest that had enabled it, had to be defined in terms of religion. The modernizing influences that were necessary in order to unify Spain and, thus, bring her into prominence in Europe, required that which Haliczer is in effect writing of; the development of a more reliable and effective infrastructure to help govern and control financial affairs in the growing towns and cities. The

[116] Stephen J. Haliczer, 'The Castilian Urban Patriciate and the Jewish Expulsions of 1480 – 1492', (1973), pp 35, 36 & 37

movement toward this goal however, necessitated a declaration of a new identity in an Iberian Peninsula that could not lose the one that it already possessed.

While it may have simply been the case that the presence of a Muslim population on what was Castilian soil kept the spirit of the Crusades alive[117], it would perhaps be more correct to place this ancient presence in historical context. According to Haliczer, the truth behind the expulsion was that those Jewish peoples in Spain who had originally converted to Christianity, the Conversos, having moved rapidly up the social ladder, now faced pressure from both Old and New Christian families, families who had originally occupied positions of minor nobility in those urban councils. This placed the Conversos in a position where they were under pressure from this urban Christian bourgeoisie. When pressure was placed in turn upon them in the guise of accusations of continuing Semitic practice, they in turn offloaded that pressure on those Jewish peoples who had not converted, and in doing so scapegoated them in order to maintain their own position. The 'Crown's extreme dependence on the urban governing class, of which the Conversos were such an important component, enabled Conversos city councilors and local officials to disregard Crown policy and implement anti-Semitic city ordinances. In this the Conversos were able to enlist the support of Old Christian elements in the urban oligarchy who were increasingly resentful of the special tax exemptions and immunities that the Jews enjoyed in time of war'.[118]Therefore, the Jewish expulsions do not simply illustrate a growing inability to accept other religions within the peninsula It does, however, denote a clash between what Spain had been in the past and that which the Crown now required it to be in order

---

[117] Luis Weckmann, 'The Middle Ages in the Conquest of America', (1951), pp 130 – 141.
[118] Op.cit p. 38.

141

to pursue internal unification for the purpose of maintaining both overseas ambitions and the ensuing, and necessary, economic remuneration in regard to the New World. The fact is that all of the above came to be identified through religious issues, heightening religious intolerance while at the same time requiring that the Crown pursue its desires through the medium of religious identification via the Spanish Inquisition.

While there is no room here for a larger investigation into what caused the emergence of the Spanish Inquisition, or its longevity as a cultural force within the Iberian Peninsula, it may be pertinent to point out that from the beginning: 'The Inquisition was meant by Ferdinand and Isabella to be under their control and not, like the medieval tribunal, under that of the Pope. Sixtus IV was surprisingly cooperative. The Inquisition was in every way an instrument of royal policy, and remained politically subject to the crown, but royal control did not make it an exclusively secular tribunal'[119]. It was also based totally on the original, for there was nothing else to base it on, the original being quite a novel way to ensure faith against heresy and superstition. On the subject of superstition, both Spain and the Golden Age dramas that she produced were steeped in its influence[120], but in regard to actually finding either heretics or witches the Spanish Inquisition seems not to have been too successful[121]. What the Inquisition did do was severely delay the possible advance of social movements both inside and outside of the peninsula, especially the Reformation. While Spain is not famous for its Humanist, or at very least humanitarian thought, in regard to its toleration and acceptance of other ways of life and practices of religion,

---

[119] Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: An Historical Revision*, (1997), p. 137.
[120]Mario N. Pavia, *Drama of the Siglo del Oro, a study of magic, witchcraft and other occult beliefs*, (New York, 1959), *passim*.
[121]Op.cit. pp 314 - 315.

it had been so for centuries. Indeed without this tolerance, any exchange of information for classical antiquity to the present would not have taken place. Jewish and Muslim scholars were partly if not totally responsible for the transfer and translation of many ancient documents[122]. Spain was not always known for such insularity. As Kamen points out, 'in the early dawn of the European Reformation many intellectuals in Spain were foremost in their support for change. At the 1520 Diet of Worms, when Luther had to defend himself publicly, 'everybody, especially the Spaniards, went to see him', admitted Humanist Juan de Vergara. 'At the beginning everybody agreed with him', Vergara went on, 'and even those who now write against him confess that at the beginning they were in favour of him'[123]. The intellectual challenges that were affecting the rest of Europe could quite easily be seen as a threat to social stability, indeed they proved themselves to be so, and were especially seen as such in a Spain dependent on the identification of the 'self' through religion. Furthermore, the rest of Europe was coming to a point where international political events were not encouraging of change or of freedom of expression, Spain was not alone in her evaluation of these facts, and only partly so in her reaction to them. Perhaps on an even more important note, 'the Inquisition helped to institutionalise the prejudices and attitudes that had previously been commonplace in society. Like all police forces that operate in secrecy and are not publicly accountable, it began to enjoy the arrogance of power. As the society of conflict developed, the Inquisition found itself at the centre of communal tensions. The people accepted it because its punishments were not directed against them but against the scapegoats and the marginalised: heretics, foreigners and deviants. Outside the crisis years of the mid-sixteenth century, few intellectuals felt threatened'[124].

---

[122] David Fintz Altabe, 'The significance of 1492 to the Jews and Muslims of Spain', *Hispania*, lxxv, no. 3, (Sep, 1992), pp 728 – 731.
[123] Ibid. p. 83.
[124] Ibid. p. 320.

Depending upon which author one chooses to read[125], the Inquisition may or may not have been a purely political tool chosen by Ferdinand and Isabella to unify a country by the force of a power that could not be challenged by either age old rivalries, insults against ancient honour, or political machinations disguised as such, but the simple fact is that whatever visage the Spanish Inquisition has come to possess in history was quite simply that painted upon it by those intellectual, racial and sectarian tensions that occupied the peninsula at the time. While very few of its actions cannot be seen through the lens of solid political practice, what the Inquisition did manage to achieve, intentionally or not, and regardless of the wishes and machinations of the Spanish Crown, was to make those who were Christian more Spanish than those who were not. In short, the identificational factors that we discussed in relation to England under Elizabeth were just as pertinent if not more so to the Iberian Peninsula and its separate kingdoms. Whereas in England, it was the modernizing forces of the Reformation and its ensuing effects upon religion that marked the development of a separate national identity, the opposite could be said of Spain. The only force truly capable of unifying Spain beyond feudal, territorial and honour claims was the Catholic religion.

In relation to the Spanish conquest of the New World this posed a problem in terms of both representation and identification. In the years leading up to the discovery of the New World the question had been one of the justification of slavery in the hands of the Portuguese; a question that had been answered in part by the use of both history and religion to reconstruct an identity built upon both. Slavery was acceptable because

---

[125] Kamen seems undecided on the matter in his 1997 conclusion.

it could be illustrated as operating within the ideals of Christian 'honour' and crusading to evangelize. Upon the discovery of the New World itself, however, the issue then became more complex, Spanish identity was now even more dependent on the purely religious, courtesy of the Spanish Inquisition. To be Spanish was to be Catholic, and although the ensuing expulsion of the Jews may have been caused by the convergence of very modern concerns, it also denoted a shift in mentality; it again validated those ideals that had enabled the Reconquest. Therefore, when lope wrote his play in 1600 the question was still unresolved, by what right did Spain conquer the New World, and the only answer that would suffice was that of evangelization. Furthermore, in relation to the play *El Nuevo Mundo*, while the allegorical device within the play, that is the 'trial' or 'tribunal' in Act I, can be seen quite simply as a method of exploring the history of the conquest without accusing anyone who, perhaps, had a family member present; at the same time it establishes and authorises the idea of Spain's right to conquest. It must also be seen as evidence of a deeply troubled relationship between Spain and her New World territories, as indeed, can the illustration of Columbus himself. Lope brings the Christianising mission back to the fore in an attempt to purify the present of 1600, with the proof of 1492. To him, Columbus was a Christian crusader, the heart of his undertaking was pure, and the ensuing degradation of that goal in the pursuit of purely economic motives by others in the following decades does not lessen this as a Spanish achievement. Thus, in lines 730 to 750 of the play, both the allegorical characters of Idolatry and Religion, under the judgement of a tribunal chaired by Providence, debate the motives and rights of the Spaniards. Their exchanges point to the prevalence of one question, what made Spain's invasion and possession of the New World right? The answer, of course, was Christian sanction, the responsibility to

evangelize, and the removal of the 'King of the Occident, - the Demon'[126]:

> Idolatry: After all the innumerable years that I have lived in the Indies, deceiving the people with my patent lies! And now you, Christian Religion, by means of this pauper [Columbus] want your faith to acquire it, although it is already mine? The devil resides in the Indies. I have given him dominion there.

> Religion: He who takes possession of land unjustly has no legal claim to it. It is well known that since the Redemption you have usurped my possession. I can verify it all. I have presented the Testament of Christ to his Church. She is the inheritor, as you have seen in this [testament].

> Idolatry: I know nothing of testaments.[127]

As to accusations of gold over God as the true pursuit of these new lands, lines 770 to 780 say:

> Idolatry: Do not allow her dear Providence, to do this injustice to me. The Spaniards are spurred on by avarice, and under the cloak of religion they seek the hidden treasure of silver and gold.

> Providence: God will be the judge of the intentions of the conquest. If He, through the bait of gold, wins back the souls of the natives, there is just cause for it in the heavens. And since it is the Christian Ferdinand who undertakes this enterprise, let all doubts cease.[128]

When the Demon enters he goes on to suggest through the pen of Lope that Spain's presence in the New World is divinely approved, because of his position as a Christian monarch.

> Demon: Oh blessed tribunal. Eternal Providence. Where are you sending Columbus, - to renew my woe? Do you not know that I

---

[126] Robert M. Shannon, *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus*, (2001), p. 117.
[127] Ibid. p 115.
[128] Ibid. p. 117.

have had my kingdom there for many years? Do not awaken Ferdinand. Let him occupy himself with his wars. Are you trying to show him the unknown lands now? Is it possible for you to be unjust?'[129]

The idea expressed here is one that had originally been written in treatise in the thirteenth century by Henry of Susa,[130] the Bishop of Ostia. Henry's view, conveniently enough for the Christian Europeans, was that before the birth of Christ, heathens and pagans had been entitled to their lands and customs. Once the Redemption had occurred, however, all of the Earth belonged to him, or more importantly to his vassals on Earth, hence the New World was the property of the Pope and consequently those who ruled by divine right. However, as addressed above, this sanction could only rest upon the conversion of heathens to Christianity. If they did convert, then they must be treated equally. However, the treatment of natives by the Spanish upon their entry into the New World led to resistance.

Conclusion

While in relation to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, the construction of Caliban illustrates the opposition between the 'self' and 'Other' through English eyes, it is with the construction of Columbus by Lope de Vega that this process first occurs and is most easily examined in the Iberian world. In viewing Columbus we are examining an equally necessary construction, deconstruction and ensuing reconstruction of a character that was all too amenable to public scrutiny. Furthermore, this, reinterpretation of such a known figure had to be endorsed or refuted via the approval or non-approval of that public, courtesy of theatre's ability to operate as a very direct and populist method for dissemination.

---

[129] Ibid. p. 117.
[130] A.J.R. Russell-Wood, 'Iberian Expansion and the Issue of Black Slavery', (1978), p. 38.

However, perhaps the simplest test of all good drama is simply how does it survive? The answer in theatrical terms, lies in the number and frequency of reproductions. If so, why do certain plays get reproduced and not others? The simplest answer is that if they manage to entertain, there must surely be some identification on the part of the audience that survives restaging time after time after time. Theatre's reason for existence is, after all, just as mercenary as colonialism's, as Lope de Vega said of himself in 1604, "If any one should cavil about my comedias and think that I wrote them for fame, undeceive him and tell him that I wrote them for money"[131]. Furthermore, 'from all that we know of Shakespeare, it is clear that his plays were also written for money, and that he had no further interest save the profit to be derived from them[132]'. However, while Shakespeare's works went on to achieve prominence and frequent reproduction, quite possibly due to Dryden's more colonially driven versions of *The Tempest* in the years that followed England's entry into foreign settlement[133], Lope's *El Nuevo Mundo* did not enjoy the same extended popularity or lifespan. In his defence, however, it must be said that his theatre was of the moment, and in that moment the audience approved en masse[134]. Both authors captured their specific moments and were thus successful, but their work seems to have been destined to follow their countries progress in regard to overseas expansion. Both authors are appealing in a way for legitimisation, but whereas Shakespeare's Prospero (especially in Dryden's hands) becomes a forerunner of the need to 'civilise' the 'barbarian', Lope's Columbus can be seen as an attempt at rewriting the actualities of history in an internationally challenged Spain. Lope's Columbus of 1600 is an attempt to reintegrate all of those disparate elements that originally allowed Spain toward unification, and from

---

[131] Hugo A. Rennert, *The Spanish Stage in the time of Lope de Vega*, (1963), p. 38.

[132] Ibid. p. 38

[133] Bridget Orr, *Empire on the English Stage, 1660 – 1714*, (Cambridge, 2001), p. 137.

[134] Melveena McKendrick, *Theatre in Spain, 1490 – 1700*, (Cambridge, 1989), Ch. 7, 'The Corrales and their audience', pp 178 - 184.

there, become an empire. Therefore, in examining Columbus as a construction of the Spanish 'self', what we find is an inability to forget the promises of the past in the poverty and uncertainty of the present. As a representation he encompasses all that Spain had culturally been exposed to; the long march from the convivencia reign of Alfonso X up to those attempts by Ferdinand and Isabella at unification and the ensuing discovery of the New World. We see the movement of Spain to the pinnacle of prominence when their young Flemish grandson succeeded Maximillian I as Holy Roman Emperor. The ensuing Golden Age of Charles V marked the zenith of Spain's involvement in the world outside, just as much as Charle's subsequent abdication to both Phillip II and Ferdinand would eventually come to mark a turn toward interiority and self-reflection, away from the world of Europe and foreign conquest. A deterioration that following his reign would become symbolised in the persons of the monarchs themselves: 'Phillip III (1598 - 1621) and his son Phillip IV (1621 - 1665) were but shadows of their predecessors and recognised this fact by handing over the reigns of government'.[135]Lope's Columbus is an attempt to find a 'self' in the world outside before shutting its doors to try and find it internally. Columbus, therefore, in Lope's hands is a conflation of two time frames. In history he represents the moment when the world was changed forever, and in the theatre of the Spanish Golden Age he is the moment upon which all of Spanish history can be seen to have turned, for good or ill.

---

[135] Ibid. p. 4.

Theory on a dramatic scale happens when it is both possible and necessary for it to do so - when the traditional rationales, which have silently underpinned our daily practices, stand in danger of being discredited, and neither either to be revised or discarded. Theory is just a practice forced into self-reflectiveness on account of certain grievous lumps it has encountered. Like small lumps on the neck it is a symptom that all is not well.[1]

Terry Eagleton, *The Significance of Theory.*

Conclusion

Given the origins and subsequent developments of the 'Other' and the 'self' in representation discussed in the preceding chapters, I feel that I must now answer the question, of what importance are these representations in the study of history? In answering I must stress that although this thesis is by no means exhaustive in its pursuit of the origins and subsequent development of the 'Other' through the pages of western European history, that was the exploration that I originally undertook. I quickly realised, however, that an examination of that nature, although bound to be truly fascinating in content, could never be contained in a work of this size. Therefore, what I have presented here is only one specific strand of that journey, and although that strand itself may be small in relation to that overall project, I would hope that in content it does point to the richness of material available for interpretation and extrapolation on the role and power of myth, representation and construction in the earliest colonial history.

In regard to the strand that I have examined, however, I must confess that it did not originally spring from either a mythological, theatrical or literary source. It came from a collusion of differing theories in history, those of Postcolonialism, Postmodernism (to an extent) and World Systems Analysis. The first because it is within this area that the 'Other' has come to prominence

---

[1] Terry Eagleton, *The Significance of Theory*, (Oxford, 1990), p. 26.

as a topic of discussion, the second because the tools needed for the deconstruction of the same in order to extrapolate a historical understanding occur here; and the latter because it is within this sphere that the economic forces that allowed colonialism and imperialism to begin are now beginning to be examined.

Writing on what he termed 'Colonial Governmentality', David Scott said in 1995 that 'what ought to be understood are the political rationalities of colonial power…what becomes important is not a "decentering" of Europe as such, but in fact a critical interrogation of the practices, modalities and projects through which the varied forms of Europe's insertion into the lives of the Colonised were constructed and organised'.[2] This paper was devoted to the denial of autonomy and agency of the colonised by the colonising and imperial 'West', and History's development towards the redress of this imbalance. He goes on to quote Edward Said and examines the pitfalls that may occur when historians begins to 'write back at the west'[3], a necessary exercise in the construction of alternative viewpoints from which to view history itself, but one that can also tend toward oversimplifying the complex problem of representation and authorisation within historical discourse. What this oversimplification can result in is just as damaging in the process of writing history as that which gave it life originally, accusations of myopia and Euroccentricism, and the ensuing denial of voice to the Colonised: that first objectification of the colonial subject that we discussed in the introduction.

Furthermore, World Systems Analysis theorists, Christopher Chase-Dunn and Peter Grimes amongst others, suggest that comparisons between the development of the European hegemony that enabled this Eurocentric history in the first place and other intersocietal systems that have been in existence for centuries beforehand are possible and must be understood to be a developing

---

[2] David Scott, 'Colonial Governmentality', in *Social Text*, xliii, (Autumn, 1995), p. 193.
[3] Ibid. p. 192.

cycle in the production and consumption of goods: 'it is the whole system that develops, not simply the societies that are its parts'.[4] However, Terry Boswell, points out that 'despite the historical importance of colonial conquest in creating global systems, colonisation has not been a central concern in world systems theory',[5] which does seem strange as the originator of world systems analysis itself, Imannuel Wallerstein, contends that 'earlier world systems tended periodically to turn into "world empires", in which the economic division of labour between the core and the peripheral regions became encompassed by a single political entity, and empire. Examples are ancient Rome and China'.[6]

In the present day, instead of economic tribute being paid directly from periphery to core, that tribute occurs in the lower labour costs entailed in economic production of an item of value in the periphery and the ensuing ability of that item to be a source of profit in the core. Therefore, the only difference is not necessarily in the way that tribute is transacted, but in the language by which this transaction is enabled and described in language and representation. This is because the value of labour in the periphery is cheaper then the same amount of labour in the core and, thus, the difference in location of that labour is the source point at which profit is originated. This point of difference in location, that is in essence, between people, and the ensuing difference in value accredited to them is also framed, of course, in language and representation. Therefore, in order to find that 'Other' of postcolonial literature in the present, I believe that we need not look too far. The writings of these theorists would lend itself to an understanding that the only change that has truly occurred in the relationship between hegemonous powers and their exploitation of weaker or less affluent states via the pursuit of economic tribute, is the way that this transactional relationship is represented in language.[7]

---

[4] Ibid. p. 389.
[5] Terry Boswell, 'Colonial Empires and the Capitalist World Economy: A Time Series Analysis of Colonisation, 1640-1960', *American Sociological Review*, xliv, (Apr., 1989), p. 180.
[6] Op.cit. p. 390.
[7] Christopher Chase-Dunn & Peter Grimes, 'World Systems Analysis', in *Annual Review of Sociology*, xxi, (1995), p. 393.

Exploring representations and their effects in history is not, as we have seen, a simple matter, and any discussion seeking to in any way address this denial that Scott speaks of above must at some point take a wide range of disciplines under its remit. In order for the construction of those representations to be historically explored, they must first be deconstructed; in order for them to be truly understood they must not be placed in parenthesis: rather they must be compared with the present and understood in the light of that which originally awarded them such inequality, economic expansion and the pursuit of profit at the expense of equality. Therefore, I believe that any examination of the origins of this inequality is vitally important, not only for these reasons but also for the pursuit of traditional history. These constructions are publicly desired and officially authorised manifestations of the times in which they exist. The three that I have chosen to examine here represent the outcomes of huge changes in the psychological processes of the cultural and social milieus from which they came. Therefore, I see the representations that I have examined in the three previous chapters as being the creations of pure history.

In examining 'the 'Other' and 'Prester John', we saw that this myth was created by the desire for the existence of a Christian ally in Africa in the minds of the Portuguese. It was the belief in the existence of Prester John when coupled with an interpreted mixture of classical and biblical information that became a movement strong enough to send the Portuguese on their way into global history. Prester John was the sum of all hopes in regard to Portuguese fears of the growing Islamic threat. The ensuing development of their voyages of discovery, and especially the beginnings of the slave trade, were not the intent of their original attempts at overseas expansion. Therefore, for history to be effected, the character effecting its direction need not be real. Prester John was a creation, an authorised representation of the unknown beyond European boundaries. He is the strongest of the three representations examined because it took a continent and at least a century to create him. As an offstage actor,

Prester John, and the power of myth and belief in Europe within his timeframe deserves more historical examination than can be given here; for someone who was at best only a half truth, he made a lot of history.

In the 'Construction of Caliban' I discussed the important role and history of medieval theatre and performance in the civic and social life of pre-Reformation England. I traced briefly how these elements developed from religious into secular drama while storing all of those post-medieval civic and social associations via semiotics, symbolism and language. I then explained how this drama then became catalysed upon the arrival of Humanist thought and influence, and upon its survival and subsequent transformation into the theatre of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, came to act as a vehicle for the transmission of new and developing psychological ideas and concerns regarding society and the individual's role and place within it. The historical importance of this 'new' dramatic theatre, however, does not simply lie in its ability to voice the fears and anxieties generated by the arrival of major changes in the way that people saw and thought about themselves and their role and function within the social milieu of a rapidly changing Europe. It also lies in the fact that the onset of massive changes in relation to authority, both religious and secular, necessitated the reestablishing of both new representations and representational methods and devices in regard to the relationships between the individual and power structures in that changing socio-political landscape. This is because for both those social agents and their relationships to be reinterpreted and reestablished, they first had to be represented, and theatre provides us with both publicly and power-structurally accepted representations. In an England on the verge of what would end in conquest and colonialism, the 'Othering' that was evident in the construction of Caliban was necessary to the psychological empowerment of that developing English social identity in order for social unity and overseas expansion to occur. Caliban as a representation was a necessary step upon the road to the equally subsequent and necessary disempowerment of other races in order for conquest and colonialism to begin.

154

In 'Dreams of Columbus' we saw that the reason why Columbus was constructed in the role of mythical Christian evangelist voyaging for the freedom and conversion of native peoples in the New World was that Spain at the time of writing could well be seen to have reached a point of moral as well as fiscal bankruptcy. All of the gold that came into Spain went directly to the rest of Europe to pay of those debts that international expansion had caused, but those who had taken that gold into Spain in the first place were open to accusations by their peers of exploitation and profiteering at the expense of their fellow countrymen. Lope, in writing Columbus in the way that he chose, may have simply been making the heart of the original mission pure in a hope that those who saw the play could leave perhaps believing that Spain was capable of more than its situation at the time would lend them to believe. Neither Fernández de Ovieda nor López de Gómara write of Columbus in such glowing or biblical terms. Furthermore, that this was an attempt by Lope to deal with a dichotomy that had never truly ceased to be of tantamount importance in the Iberian Peninsula: the origins and development of the slave trade, and the ensuing effect upon public belief in regard to exploitation of natives in the New World. In short, being a populist, Lope chose to rewrite history in the spirit of a true, honourable, unified and evangelizing Christian Spain, and in doing so we saw that he did not necessarily stray too far from how Columbus actually saw himself. In Golden Age comedia fashion he idealised the events of the discovery more than the character, but it is through the characterisation that we see his intent. The art form in which Lope chose to operate was, as shown, so originally and entirely immersed in a traditional Christian orthodoxy that in the process of becoming secular had maintained the forms of the religious but at the price of cooption to Ferdinand and Isabella's dreams of unification. Spanish Golden Age drama itself could not be freed from its own past and self-identification through religion, just as the past that Lope de Vega now celebrated could not.

Given these convergences between fact and theoretical supposition, history and the present and, most importantly, between historical facts and theatrical representational devices that conflate and elaborate those facts, the importance of examining these characters through the discipline of history cannot be understated. These characters may not possess the validity of their more real historical counterparts to some, but by being the products of separate social, political, religious, and economic aspirations, and by being publicly accepted and applauded while at the same time being textually authorised, they represent that which historical detail could only ever aspire to be: integrated manifestations of the culture and mood of times that changed the course of history itself. To answer that original question, why are representations in history important as a source for study, the answer is that they, of course, are just as socially and culturally constructed as their flesh-and-blood counterparts. Given the authorship by which they come into existence, however, they must appeal to the people of those times; indeed, their creation and survival is totally dependent upon that appeal. Therefore, the study of their role and function within the times in which they come to exist can tell us so much. These representations encapsulate the hopes, dreams and fears of those who cannot or do not write history, they are the approved voices of the past speaking to us, and if we choose to listen we may learn more about that approval, and about that past.

Appendix

This appendix has been added for two main reasons, the first being to illustrate the manuscript sources available for both the original fictitious Prester John Letter and Pope Alexander's reply, and the second to provide an authoritive and reliable English translation from Latin of the same. However, it must be said in regards to the Pope's role in this correspondence, references to his letter of reply are very scarce. Even his most celebrated biographer, Cardinal Boso, neglects to mention anything to do with the matter and this seems to also be the approach adopted in both biographies of him and later papal records. To compound matters further the *Calendar of Papal Registers &Letters Relating to Ireland and England Vol. I* begins at 1198[1], and thus, even if a copy of that letter was forwarded to the Irish church, it may now be held, possibly uncategorised, in private collection. On consulting 'Prester John' in the Encyclopedia Britannica, however, I found that Latin copies of the letter are 'preserved in the Cambridge and Paris Libraries'[2], and that same volume goes on to claim that English translations exist in the works of some of the better known early English Annalists Benedict of Peterborough, Roger Hovedon and Matthew Paris Although no further detail is provided a brief synopsis of the letter is also provided in the text[3], unlike later editions. These editions also give a much briefer bibliography, and begin with references to the work of Friedrich Zarncke, that is, - to the Prester John Letter itself and not copies of Alexander's reply.

In keeping with Alexander's letter for the moment, James Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion & Ethics* suggests that these letters, although lost in original, are also preserved in the English chronicles of perhaps lesser-known authors. According to Hastings 'the best text of the letter is that of J. Brompton in his '*Pagi, Critica Historico Chronologica* in Baronius' *Annales Ecclesiastici,*

---

[1] In the following papal reign of Innocent III.
[2] Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed., Vol. XXII, (Cambridge, 1911), p. 305.
[3] Ibid. p. 305.

Lettre Du Prêtre Jean'[17], had provided me, wittingly or not, with the only possible clue as to exactly where the fragment was really located. Without the reference to that French periodical, the fragment would have remained un-categorised in regard to its true nature[18], and I would never have found it. Furthermore, upon reading Mac Niocaill's brief article in order to verify the index source for the fragment I noted that his writing was in response to David Greene's earlier article in Celtica II, and that he, just like Greene viewed an English version of the letter, which had been translated into Dutch and printed in both languages in Antwerp by 'John of Dowesborowe' *c* 1511, as being a reliable and authoritive version. He also, like Greene, was using this English version for comparison with his own Gaelic translation[19]. This version, the one contained in R. Eden's *The First Three English books on America* of 1885 is available. It is housed in the Early Printed Books section of the Berkeley Library in Trinity College Dublin, and I have reproduced it here for comparison with the 'Egerton version' provided by Denison Ross.

To conclude, the Prester John Letter may appear as a rare oddity even in reference today, but the sheer volume of manuscript versions that Zarncke refers to, and the fact that this letter was translated into nearly every major language in Europe should perhaps provide some indication of the importance that it possessed both at the time of its reception and in the following centuries throughout Christendom. The translations provided here will hopefully illustrate the vastly different world that those discussed in the first chapter of this thesis lived in. It will also, hopefully, help us of this later age in achieving a better understanding of both their strange motivation and what may seem to us as

[17] Gearóid Mac Niocaill, 'Fragment d'une version da la Lettre Du Prêtre Jean' in Études Celtique, viii, (1958-1959), pp. 416 – 419.

[18] Many thanks to Siobhain Fitzpatrick and all the staff at the RIA. I neglected to include the reference to Mac Niocaill's article and where it was published in my original enquiry into the catalogue, and that is how this omission was discovered. There is now a reference placed within the catalogue upon the opposite page by Siobhain stating the true nature of the fragment. The importance of this fragment cannot be understated, the Welsh, Scots Gaelic and Irish Gaelic versions that both Mac Niocaill and Greene refer to are actually missing from older Latin manuscript versions.

[19] Op. cit. p. 417, 'pour faciliter les comparaisons, j'y annexe le texte original anglais, de E. Arber, *The First Three Enlish books on America*, (Birmingham, 1885), p xxxv'.

extreme gullibility in belief. I hope that anyone who wants to view the Prester John Letter for research purposes will find their way to this small article, and from here to understanding the incredible possibilities that this letter provided in a time gone by.

K.C.

strength of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, to his friend Emmanuel, Prince of Constantinople, greeting, wishing him health and the continued enjoyment of the Divine Favour.

" It hath been reported to our Majesty that thou holdest our Excellency in esteem, and that the knowledge of our highness has reached thee.

" Furthermore we have heard through our secretary that it was thy desire to send us some objects of art and interest, to gratify our righteous disposition. Being but human we take it in good part, and through our secretary we transmit to thee some of our articles. Now it is our desire and we will to know if thou holdest the true faith, and in all things adherest to our Lord Jesus Christ, for while we know that we are mortal, people regard thee as a god ; still we know that thou art mortal, and subject to human infirmities.

" If thou shouldst have any desire to come into the kingdom of our majesty, we will place thee in the highest and most dignified position in our household, and thou mayest abundantly partake of all that pertains to us. Shouldst thou desire to return, thou shalt go laden with treasures. If indeed thou desirest to know wherein consists our great power, then believe without hesitation, that I, Prester John, who reign supreme, surpass in virtue, riches and power all creatures under heaven. Seventy kings are our tributaries. I am a zealous Christian and universally protect the Christians of our empire, supporting them by our alms. We have determined to visit the sepulchre of our Lord with a very large army, in accordance with the glory of our majesty to humble and chastise the enemies of the cross of Christ and to exalt his blessed name.

" Honey flows in our land, and milk everywhere abounds. In one region there no poison exists and no noisy frog croaks, no scorpions are there, and no serpents creeping in the grass.

" No venomous reptiles can exist there or use there their deadly power. In one of the heathen provinces flows a river called the Indus, which, issuing from Paradise, extends its windings by various channels through all the province ; and in it are found emeralds, sapphires, carbuncles, topazes, chrysolites, onyxes, beryls, sardonyxes, and many other precious stones.

162

"Between the sandy sea and the aforesaid mountains, is a stone in a plain, of incredible medical virtue which cures Christians or Christian candidates of whatever infirmities afflict them, in this manner. There is in the stone a mussel-shaped cavity, in which the water is always four inches deep, and this is kept by two holy and reverend old men. These ask the new-comers whether they are Christians, or do desire to be so, and then if they desire the healing of the whole body, and if the answer is satisfactory, having laid aside their clothes they get into the shell; then if their profession is sincere, the water begins to increase and rises over their heads; this having taken place three times, the water returns to its usual height. Thus every one who enters, leaves it cured of whatsoever disease he had.

"For gold, silver, precious stones, animals of every kind and the number of our people, we believe there is not our equal under heaven. There are no poor among us; we receive all strangers and wayfarers; thieves and robbers find no place among us, neither adultery nor avarice. When we go to war, we have carried before us fourteen golden crosses ornamented with precious jewels, in the place of banners, and each of these is followed by ten thousand mounted troopers and a hundred thousand infantry; besides those who are charged with the care of the baggage, carriages and provisions.

"Flattery finds no place; there is no division among us; our people have abundance of wealth; our horses are few and wretched. We believe we have no equal in the abundance of riches and numbers of people. When we go out at ordinary times on horseback, our Majesty is preceded by a wooden cross, without decoration or gold or jewels, in order that we may always bear in mind the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also a golden vase full of earth to remind us that our body must return to its original substance—the earth. There is also a silver vase filled with gold borne before us, that all may understand that we are Lord of Lords. Our magnificence abounds in all wealth, and surpasses that of India.

"The palace in which our sublimity dwells, is after the pattern of that which the holy Thomas erected for the king Gundoforo, and resembles it in its various offices, and everything in the other parts of the edifice. The ceilings,

pillars and architraves are of rarest wood. The roof of the same palace indeed is of ebony, lest by any means it might be destroyed by fire or otherwise. At the extremities over the gables, are two golden apples in each of which are two carbuncles, that the gold may shine by day, and the carbuncles sparkle by night. The larger palace gates are of sardonyxes, inlaid with snakes' horn, so that nothing poisonous may enter. The others indeed are also of ebony. The windows are of crystal. The tables on which our courtiers eat are of gold and some of amethyst. The standards supporting the tables are some of ebony and some of amethyst. In front of the palace is the court in which our justice is accustomed to watch the combatants. The pavement is of onyx, in order that by virtue of the stones the courage of the combatants may be increased. In the aforesaid palace no light is used at night, but what is fed by balsam. The chamber in which our sublimity reposes is marvellously decorated with gold and stones of every kind.

"At our table, thirty thousand men, besides occasional visitors are daily entertained; and all there partake of our bounty whether it be for horses or other expenses. The table made of the most precious emeralds is supported by four amethyst pillars; by virtue of which stone, no person sitting at the table can become inebriated.
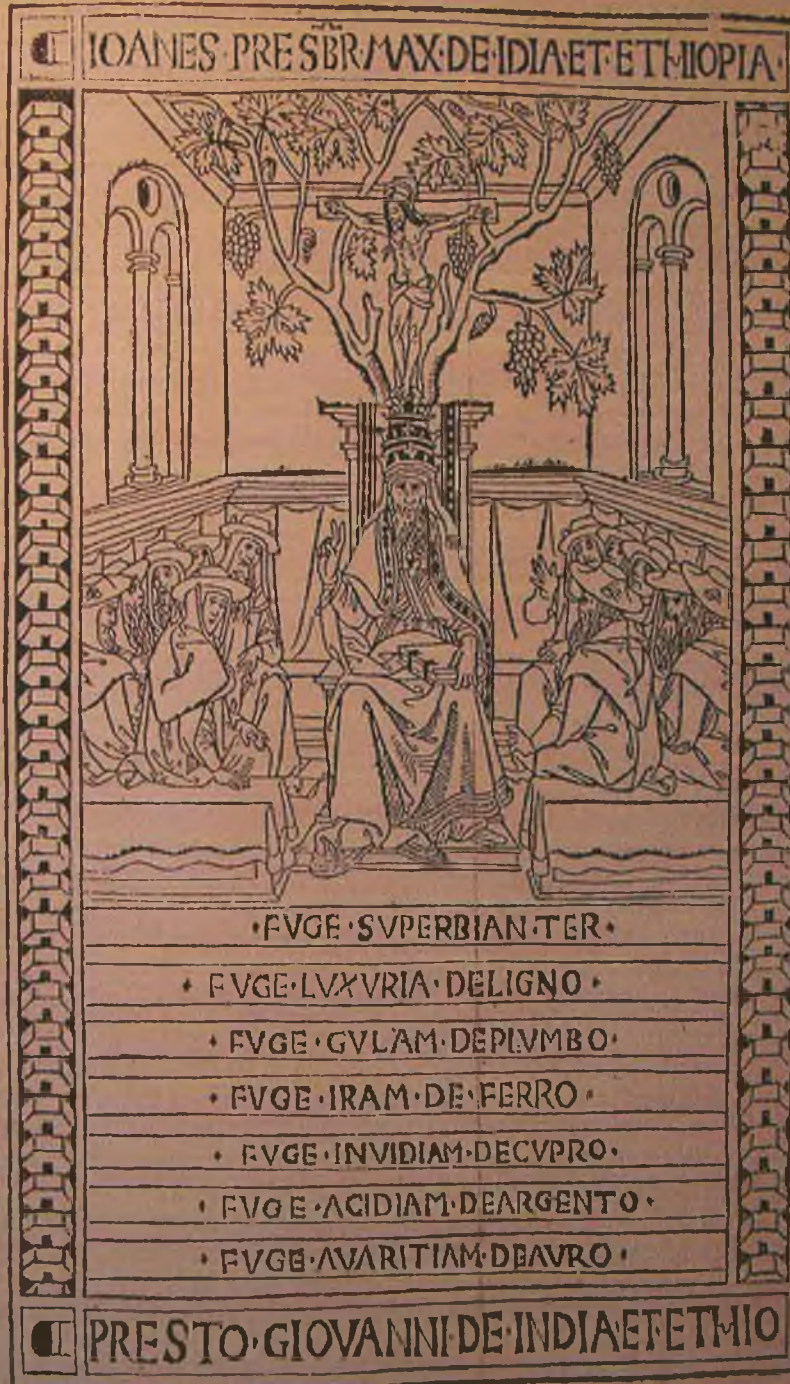
"Every month we are served in rotation by seven kings, sixty-two dukes, and two hundred and sixty-five counts and marquises, besides those who are sent on various missions in our interest.

"Twelve archbishops sit on our right at table to meals every day, and twenty bishops on our left. The Patriarch of St. Thomas, the Metropolitan of Samarcand, and the Bishop of Susa, where our glory resides and our imperial palace is, each in his turn is ever present with us.

"If again thou askest how it is that the Creator of all having made us the most superpotential and most glorious over all mortals—does not give us a higher dignity or more excellent name than that of Priest (Prester), let not thy wisdom be surprised on this account, for this is the reason. We have many ecclesiastics in our retinue of more dignified name and office in the Church, and of more considerable standing than ours in the divine service. For our house-

steward is a patriarch and king; our cup-bearer is an archbishop and king; our chamberlain is a bishop and king; our archimandrite, that is chief pastor or master of the horse, is a king and abbot. Whereof our highness has not seen it repugnant to call himself by the same name and to distinguish himself by the order of which our court is full. And if we have chosen to be called by a lower name and inferior rank, it springs from humility. If indeed you can number the stars of heaven and sands of the sea, then you may calculate the extent of our dominion and power."

Plate 1

CLagran Magnificenria del Prete Ianni Signore dellindia
Maggiore & della Ethiopia

IOANES·PRESBR·MAX·DE·IDIA·ET·ETHIOPIA

·FVGE·SVPERBIAN·TER·
· FVGE·LVXVRIA·DELIGNO·
· FVGE·GVLAM·DEPLVMBO·
· FVGE·IRAM·DE·FERRO·
· FVGE·INVIDIAM·DECVPRO·
· FVGE·ACIDIAM·DEARGENTO·
· FVGE·AVARITIAM·DEAVRO·

PRESTO·GIOVANNI·DE·INDIA·ET·ETHIO

THE GREAT MAGNIFICENCE OF PRESTER JOHN, LORD OF GREATER INDIA AND OF ETHIOPIA
Frontispiece to a popular Italian poem on Prester John written by Giuliano Dati (1445-1524), Bishop of Saint-Léon
in Calabria.
This poem, containing fifty-nine verses of eight lines, was printed in Florence at the end of the Fifteenth Century—
but bears no date.

Plate 2

1. First page of the first printed edition of Prester John's letter in Latin (c. 1480).

Plate 3.

[AN ABRIDGMENT OF THE MEDIÆVAL LEGEND OF PRESTER JOHN]

[This third Tract has a very large initial letter I, containing what appears to be a representation of Prester John, and of a Roman Catholic monk or pilgrim kneeling beneath him.]

Pope Iohn by ye grace of god the mooſte myghtyſte kynge a boue all kyngys of ye worlde gyue ſaluyte the Emperour of Rome. and alſo the kinge of France.

Oure wel belouyd frynde We late you vnderſtande and knowe of our lande And the maner of oure lyuinge and of our people beeſtes and fowles.

℘ And you ſaye that we beleue not in god and praye not to hym as you do. So late we you vnderſtande that we beleue in god the father. in god the ſonne. and in god the holy gooſte. The whyche be vnpartyble and one very god. and is all thynge myghty.

And alſo certefye yow with oure lettres ſealed and doo you knowelege of oure folke or people and of our lande. And yf there be ony thynge yat we kan doo for you. ſende vs worde and we ſhall it doo with good herte and wyll. And yf it pleaſe ony of you to come in oure lande we ſhall gyue theym gold and ſyluer to th[e]yr neceſſitie/ and make them great lordis. and gyue to them alſo lande and good[s] to lyue on. and do to [t]hem worſhyp and honor. For the goodnes that we haue herde ſay of you. And we do you knowledge that we haue the richeſte crowne of the worlde as of golde and ſyluer and of precyous ſtones in great multitude And we haue alſo vnder vs mighty. xlij. kingdomes and al good criſten people. and we kepe alſo the poure people with our almes alle that cometh be it ſtrenger or of oure owne people thorough the loue of almyghty god oure lorde Iheſu Criſte.

℘ Item Oure lande is parted in. iiij. For the landes of Indien/ there be two. and in that greteſt Indien is the body of ſeynt Thomas. And this ſame Indien is partiner of ye coſte of orient for it lyeth befyde a toure ye whych is called Iabell/ and it id [? *is*] not ſerre fro Babilonyen. And alſo that other parte of Indien is aboute Septentryon. and there is great plenty of wyne/ bredde and all maner of vytayle.

℘ Item alſo in our lande be gryſfons, and it is a great byrde and a mighty. for he wyll well cary in his neſte an oxe/ or an horſe for his yonge byrdes to ete. Alſo in Saxen is a towne whych is called Grounzwyk ther is one of the clawes yat which is well as great as an horn of an oxe.

[Here comes, in the original, at the side of the page, a woodcut of an elephant with a castle on its back.]

℘ In our lande be olyphantes/ dromedaries/ wylde oxes the whyche haue. vij. hornes. alſo Beeres and Lyons of dyuers colours/ as ye redd/ grene/ blacke/ and whitte

℘ Item and also be wylde aſſes the whych haue longe eeres/ and haue twoo ſmale hornes. &c.

N our lande be alſo fowles ye whyche that haue the mayſtery of all birdes of the worlde/ and haue a colour lyke ye fyer/ and his wingis kyt [? *cut*] lyke a raſour. and this byrdes ben called Ilerion. and in alle the worlde is no more than two. and they lyuen. iij. ſkore yere and thenne they laye eggis and ſytte vpon theym. xl. dayes and as ſone as they haue yonges they flee awaye/ fader and moder to the zee and ther they drowne theym ſelf. and alle tho byrdes yat come ayenſt them do them company to the zee. and as ſone as the[y] be drowned all the other byrdes tourne ayen to the neſte there they yonge byrdes ben lefte/ and gyue them mete and drinke to the tyme that the[y] can flee and nurter them ſelfe. &c.

℘ Yet ben there other byrdes the whyche ben called Tygris/ and they be ſo ſtronge that they wyll bere or cary in theyr neſte a man ſytting vpon an horſe all armyd fro the hede to ye fote.

[Here, at the side of the page, is the representation of a naked man with one eye in his forehead, and bearing a club.]

¶ Item In our lande is alſo a grete deſerte or foreſt therin dweleth people bothe men and wymmen the whyche haue nomore than one eye afore. and behinde they haue. iij. or. iiij. eyen

¶ Yet is in oure lande an other maner of people the whiche ete none other than rawe fleſhe. and they care not yſ it were of man or woman or of beeſtis and alſo the[y] care not of ther owne deth. and as ſone as there one of them dyeth the[y] ete theym all rawe/ both there one [? eeun] fader or moeder. And they ſaye yat mans fleyſhe is good and natur[a]ly to ete rawe/ for they ſaye that they doe it for parte of penaunce for there ſynnes. And they be alſo curſed of god/ and they be called Gog and Magog And of them be no more than one maner of people of this worlde and they ſhall be dyſtributed or parted thorough all the world whan Antechryſt ſhall come. and theſe ſame were the people or folke the whych they hadde put in pryſone or in holde the great kynge Alexander of Macedonien. But for all that he wente his way And of this people ſhalbe no iugement at the dredefull day of dome lyke the prophete ſayeth. ¶ *Neſcio quis, &c.*

But neuertheles thonder and lytenynge ſhall come fro heuen and bourne theym all in po[w]der And whan that we haue ony enemyes thanne gyue we theym lycence to put theym downe and ete them that be ayenſte vs and then make we them to tourne ageyne into there owne lande. For if they ſholde abyde longe with vs they ſhuld vndo vs all and ete vs lyke as they do there owne propre folke.

[Here, alſo at the ſide, is the pictorial repreſentation of the creature deſcribed in the next paragraph.]

¶ And yet is there another manere of people/ the whyche hath rownde ſete lyke an horſe/ and alſo they haue. iiij. ſharpe clawes behynde/ at there Heles. Wherewith they ſtrongely fyght that there is no manere thyng can ſtonde ayenſte them/ nether harnayſe/ yrone/ nor ſtele they paſſe all thorowth/ and this people gyue vnto vs great trybute. and they be alſo without dowte great labourers.

¶ Yet is there a nother ſmale lande in a parte of that ſame foreſt aforeſayde/ and it is. xlij [forty-two] dayes Iourneyes longe. And it is called Feminie the great. And in that ſame lande there be thre Quenes without all other landes/ thowe that holden there been of theſe quenes foreſayde And whan theſe quenes ſhall goo to felde/ then eche of them hath. iij. hondered. M. [300,000] wymen and all in harneyſe/ with out all the other women the whych that caray vytayle with carte horſe and alſo with olyfauntes. And theſe women be very manly in fytynge and hardy. ¶ And in this ſame lande may come

no men but. ix. dayes in the yere and no lenger/ and than they haue conuerſacion and felyſſhyp with the men and nomore of the hole yere. For if the men there woble abyde the women ſhulde them flee all.

¶ And this ſame lande is cloſed all aboute with a water called Cyphon comynge out of paradyſe And in this ſame lande may come no man without a great ſhyp or a great barke.

¶ *Of the people named Pygmies.*

[Here is a woodcut repreſenting the battle of the Pygmies and the ſtorks.]

And yet is there a nother ſmale lande and alſo another Ryuer called Pycooye that is. g. dayes iourneye longe/ and. vij. leode and this people of this forſayde lande be not great/ but they be lyke chyldren of. vij. yere of age and they haue horſes as great as a great dogge and they be good cryſtened folke and they haue no warre ayenſte noman/ But they haue warre ayenſte the fowles euery yere/ whan they ſhall haue in there frute and corne And than the kynge putteth on his harneyſe. and than they fyght ayenſte the byrdes. And than there be ſlayn on bothe partyes many on/ and alſo they be great labourers/ and whan the tylde is don than the byrdes flee a waye fro them.

[Here, at the ſide, is a circular woodcut of Sagittarius, evidently one of the ſigns of the Zodiac taken from ſome illuſtrated almanac.]

¶ Alſo in our lande been ye Sagittary. the whyche ben fro the myddel vpward lyke men/ and fro ye myddell donwarde ben they lyke the halfe neder parte of an horſe. and they bere bowes and arowes. And the[y] ſhute ſtronger than ony other nacyon of people.

¶ And in our lande be alſo vnicornes and they been of the manere with blacke and grene/ and theſe vnicornes flee many Lyons. and the Lyon fleeth the vnicorne with ſubtylnes. Whan the Vnicorne hath put hym to reſt at a tree/ and than cometh the Lyon and ronnyth aboute the tree and after hym than ronnyth the vnycorne and wolde fayne fley hym/ and than he ronnyth hym ſelfe into the tree with his horne ſo harde that he cannot pull it out a geyne. than commeth the Lyon and hath the maſtery vpon the vnicorne.

¶ Item there is a nother parte of a foreſt therin dwelleth another maner of folke and this people ben. xx. Cubettes of heythe. But they were in tyme paſte to be of the heyth of xl. Cubettes And they haue nat the pore to come out of that deſerte or foreſte and all is thorowe the myghte of almyghty god. For if they ſholde come out by there ſtrength and hardyneſſe the[y] wolde conquere all the worlde.

[Here, at the ſide, is a curious cut repreſenting the Phœnix burning.]

¶ Here begynnith of ye birde the whyche is called Fenix.

¶ In oure lande is alſo a byrde ye whyche is called Phenix and is ye fayreſt byrde of all ye world. and there is nomore than one in all ye cours of nature. and he lyueth C. [100] yere. and thenne flyeth he ſo hyghe that the ſonne ſett the fyre in his wynges/ and thenne cometh he don ayen to his neſt and there he burneth to p[o]udre and of the aſſhes comyth a worme/ and within. C [100] dayes after growyth there out another byrde as fayre as euer that other was.

¶ Item Alſo in our lande is plenty of wyne breddle/ fleſhe. All that is neceſſary for mannys body

¶ Item In our lande maye come none venyn beeſte on that one ſyde

¶ Item Betwene oore lande and the Turkes lande is a ryuer ronnynge and is called Sydon it commeth out of paradyſe of the erthe/ and is full of precyous ſtones.

¶ And alſo in oore lande ben ronnynge many ſmale riuers the whyche that come out of this forſayde riuer. and they alſo ben fulle of precyous ſtones. As Yſmaraddus Iaſpis Saphyrus Scobaſius Dyamant Topaſius/ Carbonkel. Rubin. and yet more other they whyche I not all can reherce.

¶ Alſo in oure lande groweth on herbe and is called Parmanabel/ and that ſame herbe is ſo myghty euer ſoo who that ſame herbe beryth a boute hym he may coniure the deuyll of helle and do hym ſaye what ſo euer he wyl axe of hym and therfore the deuyll dare not come in to our lande.

Item alſo in our lande growith pepper in foreſtis full of ſnakes and other venym beeſtes. and whan it is rype than ſende we for our folke and they put that fyre ther in/ and than they venym beeſlys flee awaye. than we gadder it and caryed to oure houſes and waſſhed in two or. iij. waters/ and than we dry it ayen/ and alſo it waxed black and good

¶ Item aboute this paſſage is a fonteyne or a conduyte/ ſo who of this watere drinked. ij. tymes he ſhall waxe yonge/ and alſo yf a man haue had a ſykenes. xxx. yere and drynked of thys ſame water he ſhall therof be hole and ſonde. And alſo as a man therof drinked hym ſemeth that he had occupyed the beſte mete and drinke of the worlde. and this ſame fonteyne is full of the grace of the holy gooſt. and who ſo we in this ſame water waſſhed his body he ſhall become yonge of. xxx. yere.

And ye ſhall knowe that I am haloweth in my moder wombe/ and I am old. v. C. lxij. [562] yere. and I haue me weſſhed. vi. tymes in that ſame water.

[Here, at the ſide, is a woodcut of a flying griffon carrying a man.]

¶ Item In our lande is alſo a zee very perurlyous/ and there can we haue noo paſſage with noo maner of ſhyppyng and than do we vs eaſy there ouer with our gryffons.

¶ Item at that one ſyde of this zee ronnyth a ſmale ryuere and therin be many precyous ſtones. and alſo ther growyth a certen herbe that is good to all maner of medycyne.

¶ Alſo ye ſhall vnderſtande that betwene vs and the Iewes ronnyth a great ryuer that is full of precyous ſtones and it is ſo ſtronge in here ronnyng yat noman ther ouer can paſſe/ excepte ye ſaterdaye/ and than parted ſhehere and toke with here all that ſhe fyndeth in here waye. And this ſame lande moſte we ſtrongely kepe for oure ennemyes. an[d] vp theſe coſtes haue we. xlij. [42] ſtronge caſtels none ſtronger in ye world. and ben well kepte of people. To vndeſtande. x. M. [10,000] knyghtes on horſbacke. vi. M. [6000] Croſſe bowes. xv. M. [15,000] longe bowes. and. xl. M. [40,000] othere men on horſbacke well armed. ye whyche theſe Caſtels haue in kyping by cauſe that the great kynge of Iſrahel ſhall not ther paſſe with his people. For he is twyes as ſtronge as I am. And his lande is twyes as grete as all Cryſtente and turkey. For he hath in his kepynge the ſeconde parte of the worlde. And the great kynge of Iſrahel hath vnder hym iij. C. [300] kynges. iiij. M. [4000] princes. duces. erles. barons knyghtes/ ſquyers without nombre. and all theſe be ſubgette to the great kynge of Iſrahel. But yf he myght paſſe ouer this forſayde ryuer with his people they ſholde ſlee both cryſten and turkes. And ye ſhall knowe that we all ſaterdaye late paſſe. viij. C. or. M. [800 or a 1000] men for beye ſuche manere good[s] or marchaundyſe as they wyll haue. but we late them not come with in ye wallis of thys caſtels. for they bye it without ye walles of thys fortreſſes. and they paye ther marchaundyſes with platis of ſyluer or of gold for they haue none other money. and whan they haue don ther beſynes they tourne home ayen in theyr owne lande. and theſe forſayde caſtels be ſete to gyder within a bowe ſhotte. And ye ſhall vnderſtande that within a myle of theſe caſtels is a great Cite and a fayre and it is the ſtrongeſt of all the worlde. the whyche cite is in our kepyng of one of our kyngis. and he receyueth tribute of the great kyng of Iſrahel. And alſo gyueth vs euery yere. ij. C. [200] horſes laden with golde/ ſyluer/ and precyous ſtones. Except alle charges and coſtes that men doth in the cyte and in thyſe forefayde caſtels. And whan that we haue warre ayenſt them/ than ſlee we them alle and late noman alyue. and therfore they wyll kepe no warre ayenſte vs. and the wymmen of the Iewes be very fayre none fayrer in erth nowe a dayes lyuinge. And by this forſayde ryuer is a zee ther noman may paſſe/ but

whan the wynde blowythe fro benethe ſtrongely than parted ſhe here/ and thanne the[y] paſſe with great haſt. and than they take with hym all maner of precious ſtones. but they may ſelle none therof [be]for[e] that wee haue taken therof our choſe.

℘ In a parte of our lande is an hylle there noman may dwelle for hete of the ſonne/ and there bee wormes many on without ſyre can not lyue. And by this ſame hylle we kepe. xl. M. [40,000] people that no thyngeells but make ſyre/ and whan this wormes feele the ſyre than thei come oute of the erthe and goo in too that ſyre. and there they ſpynne lyke the wormes yat the ſylke ſpynneth And of that ſame ſpynnyng we make our clot[h]ynge that we were on ſeſte dayes. and whan they be ſoule/ than they be caſt in to ye ſyer and they becom as ſayre as euer they were afore

And ye ſhall vnderſtande that ſaint Thomas doeth more myracles/ than ony ſeynt in heuen For he comyth bod[i]ly euery yere in his chirche and doth a ſermon/ and alſo in a palays there ye here after of hym ſhall here.

[Here, at the ſide, is the repreſentation of the creature deſcribed in the next paragraph.]

℘ And ye ſhall alſo knowe that there be dyuers of people of ſaſon in our lande/ alſo there be people that haue the body of a man and the hede lyke a dogge and they be good takers of ſyſſhe. and they be good to vnderſtande of theyre ſpeeche. and they wyll goo in to the zee a hole daye longe to the tyme that they haue taken ſuche as they wolde haue/ and than ye [they] come ayen charged with ſyſſhe and bere them in to ye houſes for they haue there dwellinge places vnder erthe. and thenne take we part of there ſyſſhes that vs beſte lyketh. and they do great harme among our bee thow yat be wylde. and they ſyghte alſo ayenſte our archers. &c.

℘ In oure londe is alſo one manere of byrdes and laye ther eggis in the zee. xxi. and ther out growen yonge byrdes. and than the[y] flee away and we take ſomtyme of theym for they bee good for to ete whan they be yonge For yf theyr were ony man that hathe loſt his nature and ete of this ſame byrde he ſholl it gete ayen and becom as ſtronge as euer he was afore.

[Here is a woodcut of a tree dropping oil, guarded by a dragon, as deſcribed in the next paragraph.

℘ Alſo in our lande is that ſame tree/ ther yat holy creſtendom or olye [? *oyle*] out ronnith. and this tree is dreye/ and ther is a great ſerpent which yat tree hath in kepynge all the hole yere nyght and daye but aloue vp[on] ſeynt Iohns daye and night and than ſlepyth the ſerpent or dragon. and than goo we to the tree and take yat criſma. and of this ſame is nomore than iij. po[u]nd. and than tourne we ayen ſecretely

with great dreile and ſere yat he vs not ſee/ for ells be wyll ſlee vs. and this ſame tree is a dayes iourney fro ye paradys of ye erthe. but whan this ſerpent is a waked than maked he great mone and ſorow. and this dragon hath. ix. hedes and. ij. wynges. and is as great as twoo horſes. But for all yat it followeth vs ſtylle tyl we ben come to the zee ayen. and than tourned it ayen. and thenne bere we that criſma. to ye patriarch of ſeynt thomas and he haloweth it/ and ther with they make vs al cryſten. and ye remenaunt ſende we to ye patriarche of Iheruſalem. and he ſende it forth to the Pope of rome. and he puth therto olye tof lyſe [? *oyle of lyſe*] and than halowyth it/ and then he ſendeth all cryſtente through

℘ Alſo ye ſhall vnderſtande whan we ſhall goo to warre than doo we afore vs bere with. xiiij. [14] kynges. xiiij. [14] coffers with golde and ſyluer really wrought with precious ſtones. and the other kynges come after vs with grete ſtremers and baners of ſylke and ſyndale very rychely wrought. Ye ſhall knowe alſo that afore vs gone. xl. M [40,000] clerkis and alſo many knyghtis. and men afore there be ij. C. M. [200,000] without cariers and cariers that go with the olyphantes and cary our harneys and vitales.

℘ Ye ſhall vnderſtande alſo as we goo to ſylde than put we oure lande in the kepyng of the Patriarche of ſeynt thomas. And whan we peceſably ryde than do we bere afore vs a croſſe of wodde in worſhyp of oure lorde Iheſu Cryſte. Alſo in the incomynge of euery cyte ſtande. iij. croſſes made of wodde/ for to remembre ye paſſion of oure lord Iheſu cryſte. And whan we ryde peceſably than do we alſo bere afor vs a baſyn full of erthe to remembre yat we be come of erthe and that we ſhall waxe erth ayen. and we do alſo bere for vs another baſyn full of ſyne gold to a token that we be the nobleſte and myghtyeſt kyngis of all the worlde.

℘ There is alſo in our lande noman ſo hardy that dare breke his wedloke. but yf he dyde he ſholde be incontynent be burnyd. For our lorde hym ſelfe hath ordeyned wedlok therfore it ſhold be kept by reaſon yf that we louyd oure lorde Iheſu Cryſte. For it is one of the ſacramentes of the holy chyrche.

℘ Alſo there dare noman make a lye in oure lande. for of he dyde he ſholde incontynent bee ſleyn and we be ſeythful in oure ſaying and doying.

℘ Alſo ye ſhall vnderſtand that we euery yere goo vyſite the holy body of the prophete danyel in oure foreſt/ and we take with vs. x. M. [10,000] clerkis and as many knyghtys. and. CC. [200] caſtels. made vpon Olyphantes fore to kepe vs from ye dragons ye whyche haue. vij. hedes. the whych that haue theyr dwellynge in that foreſt.

℘ And there bee alſo in that ſame place dates ye winter and ſomer hange on the trees ſayr and grene. And ye foreſte is great a. C. and xxx. [130] dayes iourney. and ye ij.

patriarches ben before vs at table for they haue the myght of the pope of rome. And we haue twyes as many abbotes in oure lande as there be dayes in the yere. [and] xv. more And euerich one of them cometh ones in ye yere and faythe maſſe vpon ſaint Thomas auter. And I my ſelf ſeye alſo maſte in the grete feſtis of ye yere. and ther for I am called pope Iohn. For I [am] priſte after the outſhewyng of ſacrificie of the auters. and kinge after outſhewing of Iuſtice. ¶ And I pope Iohn was halowid afore I was borne. for oure lorde ſende his angell to my fader and fayde to hym make a pallays the whyche ſhall be of the grace of god and a chamber of that paradyſe for your ſonne comynge For hi ſhall be the gretteſt kynge of the worlde. and he ſhalle a longe tyme lyue. So who that in this pallays comyth he ſhall haue no hongre or thryſte. and he ſhall not deye and as ſone as my fader was a wakyd he was very mery/ and incontynent he began to make thys pallays lyke ye ſhall here. At fyrſt of ye incomynge of thys pallays is made of criſtall and the couerynge of it is of precious ſtones and within realy wrought with ſterres lyke yf it were ye heuen. and that pauing is alſo of criſtall and within this ſame pallays be none wyndowes. and within this ſame pallays be. xxiiij. [24] pyllers of fyne gold and of precyous ſtones of all maner ſortes. and ther am I at great feſte dayes of the yere and ſeynt Thomas prechyth in middell of this pallays to the people. And whithin this ſame pallays is a conduyte or a fontayne is lyke wyne in drynkynge/ ſo who thereof drincketh be defyred none other mete nor drinke and noman can telle fro whens it cometh or whyther it gothe. Alſo ther is another great merueyll in this ſame pallays whan we ſhall goo to dyner/ ſo is there no maner of mete made redy for vs/ nor there is no manner of inſtrumentes to make mete redy with all. but there comith before vs all maner of delycious mete that comyth there thoroughe the holy gooſt. And it is not wel poſſyble to wrytte all maner of goodnes they [haue] whiche yat be in oure lande. And ye ſhall vnderſtande that we wrytte nothinge to you but trewe is. For if we ſholde wryte lyes to you/ god and ſeynt thomas ſholde punyſſhe vs/ for we ſholde leſe all our dignyte and oure worſhyp.

And we praye you that ye wyl writte vs ayen with the berer of this lettre. and ſende to vs ayen a good knyght of ye generacyon of fraunce.

And we praye the kynge of Fraunce that he wyll vs recommaunde to the myghty kyng of Englande. and alſo to all other kynges the whyche yat dwelle be yonde the zee thow that ben cryſtened and we praye god that he you wyl gyue the grace of the holy gooſt Amen.

Written in oure holy pallays in the byrth of my ſelfe. v. [five] hondred. and ſeuen.

Emprenteth by me Iohn of Doesborowe:

Bibliography of Cited Works

Primary Sources

Manuscripts

'Edition, without translation of a fragment of an Irish translation of the Letter of Prester John', in the Royal Irish Academy, (RIA, 466, olim, C iv 2).

'Latin Version of the Letter of Prester John', in Trinity College Dublin, (TCD, MS. 448).

Books

Anonymous, 'The Revenger's Tragedy', (London, 1607), in Gomme, A.H., (ed.), *Jacobean Tragedies*, (Oxford, 1969).

Calderón de la Barca, Pedró, 'La Aurora en Copacabana', (Madrid, 1672), in Engling, Ezra S., (ed. & trans.), *La Aurora en Copacabana of Pedró Calderón de la Barca*, (London, 1994).

Carew, George, 'The Historie of Aravcana, written in verse by Don Alonso de Ercilla, translated out of the Spanish into Englishe Prose almost to the Ende of the 16: Canto', (London, 1812), [Lambeth Palace Library, Ms. 668], in Pierce, Frank, (ed.), *The Historie of Aravcana, written in verse by Don Alonso de Ercilla, translated out of the Spanish into Englishe Prose almost to the Ende of the 16: Canto, transcribed with introduction and notes* by *Frank Pierce*, (Manchester, 1964).

Denison Ross, E., 'Prester John and the Empire of Ethiopia', in Arthur Percival Newton, (ed.), *Travels and Travellers of the Middle Ages*, (London, 2003).

Dekker, Thomas, 'The Shoemaker's Holiday', (London, 1600), in McIlwraith, A.K., (ed.), *Five Elizabethan Comedies*, (Oxford, 1973).

De Oña, Pedro, 'Arauco Domado', (Madrid, 1590), in Maxwell-Lancaster, Charles, & T. Manchester, Paul, (eds. & trans.), *Arauco Tamed*, (New Mexico, 1948).

De Vega, Lope, 'El Nuevo Mundo Descubierto por Cristóbal Colón', (Madrid, 1600), in Shannon, Robert M., (ed. & trans.) *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus, A Play in Three Acts by Lope de Vega: A Critical and Bilingual Edition*, (New York, 2001).

Eden, R., *The First Three English books on America*, Arber, E., (ed.), (Birmingham, 1885).

Marston, John, 'The Malcontent', (London, 1604), in Gomme, A.H., (ed.), *Jacobean Tragedies*, (Oxford, 1969).

Middleton, Thomas, 'Women Beware Women', (London, 1657), in Gomme, A.H., (ed.), *Jacobean Tragedies*, (Oxford, 1969).

Middleton, William and Rowley, William, 'The Changeling', (London, 1969), in Gomme, A.H., (ed.), *Jacobean Tragedies*, (Oxford, 1969).

Shakespeare, William, 'The Tempest', (London, 1611), in Brown, J.R., (ed.), *William Shakespeare's The Tempest*, (New York, 1996).

Shakespeare, William, 'The Tempest', (London, 1611), in, Kermode, Frank, (ed), *The Tempest by William Shakespeare*, (London, 1954).

Tourneur, Cyril, 'The Atheist's Tragedy', (London, 1611), in Gomme, A.H., (ed.), *Jacobean Tragedies*, (Oxford, 1969).

Articles

Greene, D., 'The Irish Versions of the Prester John Letter', in Celtica, ii, (1952), pp. 117-145.

MacNiocaill, G., 'Fragment d'une version Irlandaise de la Lettre du Prêtre Jean', in Études Celtiques, viii, (1958-1959), pp. 416 – 419.

Secondary Sources

Allardyce, Nicoll, *The Development of the Theatre, A Study of Theatrical Art from the Beginnings to the Present Day*, (London, 1966).

Baldwin Smith, Lacey, *Treason in Tudor England: Politics and Paranoia*, (Princeton, 1986).

Beadle, R., (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, Introduction by William Tydeman, (Cambridge, 1994).

Beckingham, C.F. & Huntingford, G.W.B. (eds.) *The Prostor John of the Indies, A True Revelation of the Land of Prester John: being the narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Ethiopia in 1520, Written by Fr. Francisco Alvarez, The translation of Lord Stanley of Alderley*, (1818), (Cambridge, 1961)

Birmingham, David, *Portugal and Africa*, (London, 1999).

Blackburn, Robin, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848*, (London, 1988).

175

Bolgar, R.R., *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries*, (Cambridge, 1954).

Boso, Cardinal, Ellis, G.M., (trans.), *Biography of Alexander III*, (foreword by Peter Munz), (Oxford 1973).

Breight, Curtis, C., *Surveillance, Militarism and Drama in the Elizabethan Era*, (New York, 1996).

Brown, S., *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth Century England*, (Cambridge, 1981).

Cameron, E, *The European Reformation*, (Oxford, 1991).

Cohen, W., *Drama of a Nation: Public Theatre in Renaissance England and Spain*, (London, 1985).

Conrad, Joseph, *The Heart of Darkness*, (New York, 1950).

Crawford, J.P.W., *Spanish Drama Before Lope de Vega*, (Oxford, 1937).

DuBois, Page, *Centaurs and Amazons*, (Ann Arbor, 1991).

Eagleton, Terry, *The Significance of Theory*, (Oxford, 1990).

Eco, Umberto, *Baudolino*, (New York, 2002).

Fage, J.D., & Oliver, Roland, (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Africa, Vol. 3, From   c1050 to c1600*, (Cambridge, 1997).

Fage, J.D., *A History of Africa*, (3rd. Ed.), (London, 1995).

Fogel, Robert William and Engerman, Stanley L., *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, (Boston, 1974).

Frame, D. M., *The Complete Works of Montaigne, Essays, Travel Journal, Letters*, (London, 1957).

Genovese, Eugene, D., *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, (New York, 1976).

Goodman, Martin, *The Roman World: 44 BC - AD 180*, (London, 1997).

Griffen, Nigel, (ed. & trans.), De Las Casas, Bartolomé, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, (Harmondsworth, 1992).

Grotius, H., *Of the Law of War and Peace*, (Paris, 1634).

Gumilev, L.N., *Searches for an Imaginary Kingdom: The Legend of the Kingdom of Prester John*, (Trans. by R.E.F. Smith), (Cambridge, 1987).

Gutiérrez, Gustavo, *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ*, (New York, 1993).

Hastings, James, (ed.), *Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion & Ethics, Vols. I – XIII*, (Edinburgh, 1926-1976).

Hammond, Martin, (ed. & trans.), *The Iliad of Homer*, (London, 1987).

Hanke, Lewis, *All Mankind is One: A Study of the Disputation Between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda on the Religious and Intellectual Capacity of the American Indians*, (Illinois, 1974).

Hanke, Lewis, *The Spanish struggle for justice in the Conquest of America*, (Boston, 1965).

Hartog, Francois, *The Mirror of Herodotus, The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, (Berkeley, 1988).

Heat Moon, W. L., *Columbus in the Americas*, (New Jersey, 2002).

Heinemann, Margot, *Puritanism and Theatre*, (Cambridge, 1980).

Heiple, Daniel L., 'Versions of Christian Truth in Calderón's Orpheus *Autos*' in F.D. De Armas (ed), *A star crossed Golden Age: Myth and the Spanish Comedia*, (London, 1998).

Hingeston, F.C., *Royal and Historical Letters during the Reign of Henry IV, King of England and of France & Lord of Ireland, Vol. I*, (London, 1860),

James, C.L.R., *The Black Jacobins*, (New York, 1989).

Kamen, Henry, *The Spanish Inquisition: An Historical Revision*, (London, 1997).

Kamen, Henry, *The Spanish Inquisition*, (London, 1965).

Kamps, Ivo, *Historiography and Ideology in Stuart Drama*, (Cambridge, 1996).

Kussmaul, Ann, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge, 1981).

Kidd, M. *Stages of Desire: The mythological tradition in the Classical and Contemporary Spanish theatre*, (Pennsylvania, 1999).

Kingery, Hugh MacMaster, (trans. & ed.), *Three Tragedies of Seneca, Hercules Furens, Troades & Medea, with Introduction and Notes*, (Oklahoma, 1966),

Lederer, David, 'The Mirror, critical self - reflection and the psychological origins of European World domination', in Gosman, Vanderjat & Veenstra, (eds.), *The Propagation of Power in the Medieval West, Selected proceedings of the International Conference Groningen 20 -23 November 1996*, (Groningen, 1996), pp 405-417.

Leverenz, David, *The Language of Puritan Feeling: An Exploration in Literature, Psychology and Social History*, (New Brunswick, 1980).

Levin, Leslie, *Metaphors of Conversion in Seventeenth Century Spanish Drama*, (London, 1999).

Lindqvist, Sven, *Exterminate All The Brutes*, (London, 1996).

Lovejoy, A.O. & Boas, G., *Primitivism and related ideas in Antiquity*, (U.S.A., 1935).

Massimo, M.V., *Alexander, Child of a Dream*, Vol. I, (London, 2001).

McKendrick, Melveena, *Theatre in Spain, 1490 - 1700*, (Cambridge, 1989).

Mills, Kenneth & Taylor, William B., (eds.), *Colonial Spanish America: A Documentary History*, (Delaware, 1998).

Northrup, David, *Africa's Discovery of Europe, 1450 - 1850*, (Oxford, 2002).

Orr, Bridget, *Empire on the English Stage, 1660 - 1714*, (Cambridge, 2001).

Palliser, D.M., *The Age of Elizabeth 1547 - 1603*, (London, 1983).

Parker, Alexander A., *The Approach to The Spanish Drama of the Golden Age*, (London, 1959).

Pavia, Mario N., *Drama of the Siglo del Oro, a study of magic, witchcraft and other occult beliefs*, (New York, 1959).

Perry, Marvin & Frederick M. Schweitzer, *Anti-Semitism, Myth and Hate from Antiquity to the Present*, (New York, 2002).

Peters, Francis Edward, The Monotheists, Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Conflict and Competition, (Princeton, 2003).

Pierce, Frank, *Alonso De Ercilla Y Zúñiga*, (Amsterdam, 1984).

Quint, David, *Montaigne and the Quality of Mercy, Ethical and Political themes in The Essais*, (Princeton, 1998).

Rennert, Hugo A., *The Spanish Stage in the time of Lope de Vega*, (New York, 1963).

Romm, James, S., *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought*, (Princeton, 1992).

Rowse, A.L., *The England of Elizabeth*, (Hampshire, 1950).

Russell, Peter, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator', a Life*, (Yale, 2001).

Russello, Gerald J., (ed.), *Christianity and European Culture, Selections from the Work of Christopher Dawson*, (U.S.A., 1998).

Said, Edward, *Orientalism*, (New York, 1994).

Sanceau, E, *The Land of Prester John; A Chronicle of Portuguese Exploration*, (New York, 1944).

Shannon, Robert M., *Visions of the New World in the drama of Lope de Vega*, (New York, 1989).

Shergold, N.D., *A History of the Spanish Stage from Medieval times until the end of the Seventeenth Century*, (Oxford, 1967).

Shoemaker, William H., *The Multiple Stage in Spain during the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, (Princeton, 1935).

Silverberg, Robert, *The Realm of Prester John*, (London, 1990).

Steele, Colin, *English Interpreters of the Iberian New World from Purchas to Stevens: A Bibliographical Study*, (Oxford, 1975).

Stepto, M., & Stepto, G., (eds. & trans.), De Erauso, Catalina, *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*, (Boston, 1996).

The First Book of Moses called Genesis, The Authorized King James Version, introduction by Steven Rose, (Edinburgh, 1998).

Thomas, William, *Historie of Italie*, (London, 1549).

Twycross, Meg & Carpenter, Sarah, *Masks and Masking in Medieval and early Tudor England*, (Ashgate, 2002).

Tydeman, W., *The Theatre in the Middle Ages, Western European Stage Conditions, c800 - 1576*, (Cambridge, 1978).

Wheatcroft, A., *Infidels, the Conflict between Christianity and Islam, 638 - 2002*, (London, 2003).

Whiteway, R.S., (trans. & ed.), *The Portuguese expedition to Abyssinia in 1541 – 1543, as narrated by Castanhoso*, (London, 1902)

Wickham, Glynne, *The Medieval Theatre*, (Cambridge, 1987).

Williams, Eric, *Capitalism and Slavery*, (North Carolina, 1994).

Wilson, Margaret, *Spanish Drama of the Golden Age*, (Oxford, 1969).
Zarncke, Friederich, *Der Priester Johannes*, (Leipzig, 1876 – 1879).

Zemon Davis, Natalie, *Fiction in the Archives Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth Century France*, (Stanford, 1987).

Articles

Adorno, Rolena 'Censorship and its evasion: Jeronimo and Bartolomé de Las Casas', in *Hispania*, lxxv, no., 4, (Oct, 1992), pp 812 - 827.

Baker, David Weil, 'Topical Utopias: Radicalising Humanism in Sixteenth Century England', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500 - 1900*, xxxvi, no. 1, (Winter, 1996), pp 1-30.

Bartels, Emily, C., 'Othello and Africa: Postcolonialism Reconsidered', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, iv, no. 1, (Jan., 1997), pp 45-64.

182

Berry, Herbert, 'The First Public Playhouses, especially the Red Lion', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xl, no. 2, (Summer, 1989), pp 133-148.

Boswell, Terry, 'Colonial Empires and the Capitalist World Economy: A Time Series Analysis of Colonisation, 1640 - 1960', in *American Sociological Review*, xliv, (Apr., 1989), pp 180-196.

Braude, Benjamin, 'The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, (3rd Ser.), liv, no. 1, (Jan, 1997), pp 103 -142.

Breight, Curt, "Treason doth never prosper": The Tempest, and the discourse of treason', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xli, no. 1, (Spring, 1990), pp 1-28.

Case, Thomas E., 'The Significance of Morisco Speech in Lope's Plays', in *Hispania*, lxv, no., 4, (Dec., 1982), pp 594-600

Champion, Larry S., 'The Malcontent and the Shape of Elizabethan - Jacobean Comedy', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500 - 1900*, xxv, no. 2, (Spring, 1985), pp 361-379.

Chase-Dunn, Christopher & Grimes, Peter, 'World Systems Analysis', in *Annual Review of Sociology*, xxi, (1995), pp 387-417.

Cohen, Walter, 'The Merchant of Venice and the Possibilities of Historical Criticism', in *English Literary History*, xlix, no. 4, (Winter, 1982), pp 765-789.

David Gray, Henry, 'The Sources of The Tempest', in *Modern Language Notes*, xxxv, no.6, (Jun. 1920), pp 321-330.

Dawson, Anthony B., 'Women Beware Women and the Economy of Rape', in *Studies in English Literature 1500 - 1900*, xxvii, no.2, (Spring, 1987), pp 303-320.

Dean, Paul, 'Tudor Humanism and the Roman Past: A Background to Shakespeare', in *Renaissance Quarterly*, xli, no. 1, (Spring, 1988), pp 84-111.

Demos, Raphael, 'The Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment (1750 - 1821)', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xix, no. 4, (Oct, 1958), pp 523-541.

DeVries, Kelly, 'The lack of a Western European military response to the Ottoman invasions of eastern Europe from Nicopolis (1396) to Mohacs (1526)', in *The Journal of Military History*, lxiii, no. 3, (Jul. 1999), pp 539-559.

Dichl, Huston, 'Inversion, Parody and Irony: The Visual Rhetoric of Renaissance English Tragedy', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500 - 1900*, xxii, no. 2, (Spring, 1982), pp 197-209.

Dixon, Victor, 'Lope de Vega and America: The New World and *Arauco Tamed*', in *Renaissance Studies*, vi, no. 3 - 4, (1993), pp 249-269.

Dryzek, John S., Clark, Margaret L., & McKenzie, Garry, 'Subject and System in International Interaction', in *International Organization*, xxxxiii, no. 3, (Summer, 1989), pp 475-503.

Eisaman Maus, Katharine, 'Horns of Dilemma: Jealousy, Gender, and Spectatorship in English Renaissance Drama', in *English Literary History*, liv, no., 3, (Autumn, 1987), pp 561-583.

Emirbayer, M., & Goodwin, J., 'Network Analysis, Culture and the Problem of Agency', in *The American Journal of Sociology*, xcix, no. 6, (May, 1994), pp

1411-1454.

Fintz Altabe, David, 'The significance of 1492 to the Jews and Muslims of Spain', in *Hispania*, lxxv, no. 3, (Sep, 1992), pp 728-731.

Frey, Charles, 'The Tempest and the New World', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xxx, no. 1, (Winter, 1979), pp 29-41.

Gillies, John, 'Shakespeare's Virginian Masque', *English Literary History*, (*ELH*), liii, no. 4, (Winter, 1986), pp 673-707.

Goldberg, Dena, 'Sacrifice in Marlowe's The Jew of Malta', in *Studies in English Literature 1500 - 1900*, xxxii, no. 2, (Spring, 1992), pp 233-245.

Haliczer, Stephen H., 'The Castilian Urban Patriciate and the Jewish Expulsions of 1480 - 1492', in *The American Historical Review*, lxxviii, no., 1, (Feb., 1973), pp 35-62.

Hallett, Charles A. 'The Psychological Drama of Women Beware Women', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900,*' xii, no 2, (Spring, 1972), pp 375-389.

Herrero, Javier, 'Renaissance Poverty and Lazarillo's family: The birth of the Picaresque genre', in *Publications of the Modern Language Assoc. of America*, lxiv, no. 5, (Oct, 1979), pp 876-886.

Kirsch, Arthur, 'Virtue, Vice and Compassion in Montaigne and The Tempest', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, xxxvii, no.2, (Spring, 1997), pp 337-352.

Leinwand, Theodore B, 'Shakespeare and the Middling Sort', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xliv, no. 3, (Autumn, 1993), pp 284-303.

Lenz, Josephine, 'Base Trade: Theatre as Prostitution', in *English Literary History*, lx, no. 4, (Winter, 1993), pp 833-855.

Levin, Richard A., 'If Women Should Beware Women, Bianca Should Beware Mother', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, xxxvii, no. 2, (Spring, 1997), pp 371-389.

Logan, George, M., 'The Relation of Montaigne to Renaissance Humanism', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xxxvi, no. 4, (Oct-Dec., 1975), pp 613-632.

Moffitt-Watts, Pauline, 'Prophecy and Discovery: On the spiritual origins of Christopher Columbus's "Enterprise of the Indies", in *The American Historical Review*, xc, no. 1, (Feb, 1985), pp 73-102.

Nosworthy, J.M., 'The Narrative Sources of The Tempest', in *The Review of English Studies*, xxiv, no. 96, (October, 1948), pp 281-294.

Nowell, Charles, E., 'The Historical Prester John', in *Speculum*, xxviii, no. 3, (July, 1953), pp 435-445.

O'Connell, Michael, 'The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm, Anti-Theaticalism, and the Image of the Elizabethan Theatre', in *English Literary History*, lii, no. 2, (Summer, 1985), pp 279-310.

Parks, George B, 'The Genesis of Tudor Interest in Italian', in *Publications of the Modern Languages Association of America*, (*PMLA*), lxxvii, no. 5, (Dec. 1962), pp 529-535.

Pincombe, Michael, 'Some Sixteenth Century records of the words Humanist and Humanitian', in *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, xliv, no., 173,

(Feb. 1993), pp 1-15.

Rubies, Joan-Pau, 'Hugo Grotius' Dissertation on the Origin of the American Peoples and the use of Comparative methods', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xxv, no.2, (Apr. - June, 1991), pp 221-244.

Russell-Wood, A.J.R., 'Iberian Expansion and the Issue of Black Slavery: Changing Portuguese Attitudes, 1440 - 1770', in *The American Historical Review*, lxxxiii, no. 1, (Feb., 1978), pp 16-42.

Salomon, B., 'The Theological Basis of Imagery and Structure in The Malcontent', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500 - 1900*, xiv, no. 2, (Spring, 1974), pp 271-284.

Scott, David, 'Colonial Governmentality', in *Social Text*, xl, (autumn, 1995), pp 191-220.

Schwartz, Stuart B., 'The Voyage of the Vassals: royal Power, Noble Obligations, and Merchant Capital before the Portuguese Restoration of Independence, 1624 - 1640,' in *The American Historical Review*, xcvi, no., 3, (Jun., 1991), pp 735-762.

Schwoebel, R.H., 'Coexistence, Conversion and the Crusade against the Turks', in *Studies in the Renaissance*, xii, (1965), pp 164-187.

Seed, Patricia, 'Taking possession and Reading Texts: establishing the Authority of Overseas Empires', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, (3rd Ser.), xlix, no., 2, (April, 1992), pp 183-209.

Skura, Ann Meredith, 'Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in The Tempest', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xl, no. 1, (Spring, 1989), pp 42-69.

Spanos, William V., 'Culture and Colonisation: The Imperial Imperatives of the Centred Circle', in *Boundary 2*, xxiii. no.1, (Spring, 1996), pp 135 - 175.

Stamm, J.R., 'The use and types of humour in the Picaresque Novel', in *Hispania*, xlii, no. 4, (Dec, 1949), pp 482-487.

Straznicky, Marta, 'The End(s) of Discord in The Shoemaker's Holiday,' in *Studies in English Literature, 1500 - 1900*, xxxvi, no. 2, (Spring, 1996), pp 357-372.

Stuart, Donald, C., 'A Note on Voltaire's *Lettres Philisophiques*', in *Modern Language Notes*, xxxii, no. 3, (March, 1917), pp 169-180.

Takaki, R., 'The Tempest in the Wilderness: The Racialisation of Savagery', in *The Journal of American History*, lxxix, no. 3, (Dec., 1992), pp 892-912.

Vaughan, Alden T, 'Shakespeare's Indian: The Americanisation of Caliban', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xxxix, no. 2, (Summer, 1998), pp 137-153.

Vitkus, Daniel J, 'Turning Turk in Othello: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xlviii, no. 2, (Summer, 1997), pp 145-176.

Walter, James, 'From Tempest to Epilogue: Augustine's Allegory in Shakespeare's Drama', in *PMLA*, xcviii, no. 1., (January, 1983), pp 60-76.

Washburn, W.E., 'The meaning of "Discovery" in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', in *The American Historical Review*, lxviii, no. 1., (Oct, 1962), pp 1-21.

Weckmann, Luis, 'The Middle Ages in the Conquest of America', in *Speculum*,

xxvi, no. 1, (Jan. 1951), pp 130-141.

Weil Baker, David, 'Topical Utopias: Radicalizing Humanism in Sixteenth Century England', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500 - 1900*, xxxvi, no. 1, (Winter, 1996), pp 1-30.

Weimann, Robert, 'History and the Issue of Authority in Representation: The Elizabethan Theatre and the Reformation', in *New Literary History*, xvii, no. 3, (Spring, 1986), pp 449-476.

Willis, Deborah, 'Shakespeare's Tempest and the Discourse of Colonialism', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500 - 1900*, xxix, no. 2, (Spring, 1989), pp 277-289.

Wolff, R. Lee, 'Mortgage and Redemption of an Emperor's Son: Castile and the Latin Empire of Constantinople', in *Speculum*, xxviiii, no. 1, (Jan, 1954), pp 45-84.

Yost, John K., 'Taverner's use of Erasmus and the Protestantisation of English Humanism', in *Renaissance Quarterly*, xxiii, no. 3, (Autumn, 1970), pp 266-276.

Further Reading

Bhabha, Homi K., *The Location of Culture*, (London, 1994).

Clay, Diskin & Purvis, Andrea, *Four Island Utopias, being Plato's Atlantis, Euhemoros of Messene's Panchaia, Iamboulos' Island of the Sun & Sir Francis Bacon's New Atlantis. With a supplement, Utopian Prototypes, Developments & Variations*, (Newburyport, 1999).

Davies, Hunter, *In search of Columbus*, (London, 1991).

Eagleton, Terry, *The Illusions of Postmodernism*, (Oxford, 1996).

Eagleton, Terry, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, (Minneapolis, 1996).

Fern'andez-Armesto, Felipe, *Columbus*, (Oxford, 1991).

Guthrie, W.K.C.G., *In The Beginning: Some Greek views on the origins of life and the early state of man*, (London, 1957).

Keller, John, E., *Alfonso X: El Sabio*, (New York, 1967).

Kadir, Dejal, *Columbus and the ends of the earth: Europe's prophetic rhetoric as conquering ideology*, (Berkeley, 1992).

Maddison, A., *Phases of Capitalist Development*, (New York, 1982).

Malik, Kenan, *The Meaning of Race: Race, History and Culture in Western Society*, (London, 1996).

Mann, V.B., Glick, T.F., & Dodds, J.D., (eds.), *Covivencia, Jews, Muslims and Christians in Medieval Spain*, (New York, 1992).

Menocal, Maria Rosa, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians created a culture of tolerance in Medieval Spain*, (U.S.A., 2002).

Peters, Francis Edward, *The Monotheists, Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Conflict and Competition*, (Princeton, 2003).

Said, Edward, *Culture and Imperialism*, (new York, 1993).

Sale, Kirkpatrick, *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian legacy*, (London, 1991).

Tilly, C, *Coercion, Capital and European States*, (Cambridge MA, 1989).

Thomas, Hugh, *Rivers of Gold: The Rise of the Spanish Empire from Columbus to Magellan*, (New York, 2003).

Thomas, Hugh, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade from 1440-1870*, (New York, 1997).

Thompson, W., *Postmodernism and History*, (New York, 2004).

Wallerstein, Immanuel, *The Modern World System*, (New York, 1974)

Articles

Axtell, James, 'Columbian Encounters', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, (3rd. Ser.), xlii, no. 4, (Oct., 1995), pp. 649-696.

Geyer, Michael, & Bright, Charles, 'World History in a Global Age', in *The American Historical Review*, c, no. 4, (Oct., 1995), pp 1034-1060.

Gillet, Joseph, E., 'Torres Naharro and the Spanish Drama of the Sixteenth Century: II', in *Hispanic Review*, v, no. 3, (Jul., 1937), pp 193-207.

Hart, T.R., 'Renaissance Dialogue into Novel: Cervante's Colloqiuo', in

Hispanic Issue, cv, no.2, (Mar., 1990), pp 219-240.

Kizca, John E., 'Patterns in Early Spanish Overseas Expansion', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, xlix, no. 2, (Apr., 1992), pp 229-253.

Knapp, Jeffrey, 'Elizabethan Tobacco', in *Representations*, xxi, (Winter, 1988), pp 26-66.

Lea, Henry C., 'The First Castilian Inquisitor', in *The American Historical Review*, i, no. 1, (Oct., 1895), pp 46-50.

Orgel, Stephen, 'The Authentic Shakespeare', in *Representation*s, xxi, pp 1-25.

Phillips, James, E., 'The Tempest and the Renaissance idea of man', in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, xv, no. 2, (Spring, 1964), pp 147-159.

Quinn, David B., 'Columbus and the North, England, Iceland and Ireland', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, (3rd., Ser.,), xlix, no. 2., (Apr., 1992), pp 278-297.

Internet Sources

The published works of Gearóid MacNiocaill are available online at CELT, (Corpus of Electronic Texts):
http:// www.ucc.ie. /celt/MacNiocaillbib.html [18 September 2004].

The manuscript catalogue, of the British Library, featuring listings for the Prester John Letter in both Latin and English translations, is available online at:
http://www.bl.uk. / catalogue/manuscripts [18 September 2004].