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The Tempest so effectively invites comparison with Shakespeare's own earlier works that we may underestimate another sense in which it can be seen as retrospective or even nostalgic: in its evocations of the work of other playwrights, and in particular of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus. These evocations are admittedly not the direct, verbal echoes of Marlowe that James Shapiro and others have carefully traced in the plays of Shakespeare's early and middle career, or that Ben Jonson offers in his reference to Doctor Faustus in The Alchemist.<sup>i</sup> For that reason, they need to be approached tentatively, with Shapiro's warning in mind that arguments for literary interchange can be only conjectural "in the absence of extended and unmistakable topical allusion" (138-9). And yet Shapiro himself argues persuasively that interchange exists even in the absence of such allusion, even making the bold claim that Shakespeare avoided tragedy for several years as a means of avoiding engagement with Marlowe (96), and the analogues in The Tempest to elements of Shakespeare's own earlier works are similarly more situational than verbal. Unsurprisingly, what is often most striking about these evocations is how differently Shakespeare handles an action, motif, or set-piece that has a demonstrable analogue in Marlowe.

Simply by choosing to write a play whose protagonist is a magician, Shakespeare entered what his contemporaries would indisputably have recognized as Marlowe's territory, given the continued success of the play on stage.<sup>ii</sup> To invoke a chief rival at this stage of his career is no doubt to engage to some degree in the kind of contest over literary reputation that Shapiro traces in his study of the interchange between the mature Jonson and Shakespeare, where the issue is not "mastery over precursors they found difficult to surpass, but the weightier influence that an

established dramatist can wield over a rival's place in literary history" (134). Without underestimating this element of contest, I would like to argue (this side of re-invoking a naïve conception of gentle Will) that Shakespeare may also be paying valedictorian tribute to what has happened on the stage over his career, and that by invoking his rival he is in some sense trying to sum up not only his own progress, but that of English drama generally, in a way that we associate more easily with an author who confronts literary history directly, such as Sidney, Jonson, or Dryden. In this sense his evocations of Marlowe are inextricable from the retrospective tenor of the entire play and its engagement with distinctive elements of his own corpus. <sup>iii</sup>

David Young, John Mebane, and David Lucking have provided the most useful comparisons of Doctor Faustus and The Tempest to date, exploring the two plays' connections between magic and art, power and illusion.<sup>iv</sup> Lucking in particular makes explicit the various ways in which Shakespeare incorporates specific motifs from Marlowe's work. These parallels include the focus on the magical book (which is to be--or rather not to be-- burnt in Marlowe, drowned in Shakespeare), the pageantry of the magical illusions of the Seven Deadly Sins and the marriage masque, the interrupted banquets used to deflate and mock the Pope and Sebastian and Antonio, and the conspiracies against the magician by Benvolio and crew and by Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban.

Since the devil is in the details, comparing the implications of the two plays' comic scenes and conspiracies might yield insights valuable to students of both plays. One clear difference between the comic scenes in the two plays is that although Marlowe's representations of the shenanigans of Wagner, Robin, and Rafe or Dick often parody and thus deflate the actions of the tragic protagonist, the actions of Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban do not generally deflate

Prospero. Robin's service to Wagner parodies Faustus's contract with the devil, and Robin and Rafe's desire to use magic to satisfy carnal urges (an element that Jonson exaggerates considerably further in The Alchemist) shadows the bathos in Faustus's magic, the plummet from grand designs to silly tricks. Paradoxically, the comic scenes in The Tempest do not as directly deflate the comic character at its center, or at least they do not comment as directly on his actions. We could certainly say that the subplot of Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban undermines the audience's confidence in Prospero's art, most notably of course by prompting the abrupt ending of the wedding masque, but it would be a stretch to argue that they accomplish what the comic scenes in Faustus do, which is to underscore what Young describes as Faustus's "basic movement . . . from potency to impotence" (151). I follow Stephen Orgel and nearly all recent critics in finding less grandeur and more complexity in Prospero than Frank Kermode and Frances Yates found a generation or two ago, but the buffoonery in The Tempest diminishes him less than that in Faustus diminishes its protagonist.

What, then, does the comic subplot involving Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban mock? Like the minor characters in Faustus, Shakespeare's commoners (and Caliban) provide, especially initially, a jaundiced view of how likely it is, on this island or anywhere, that Gonzalo's vision of a new golden age will come to pass. Like Marlowe's clowns, Stephano and Trinculo are at least as interested in the bottle as the book that Caliban reminds them is crucial. Trinculo's reaction to Caliban under the cloak augments the play's treatment of Caliban as monstrous, but many commentators have noted the crucial turning point in his statement that in England "would this monster make a man—any strange beast there makes a man. When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian" (2.2.29-32).<sup>v</sup> Combined with Stephano's subsequent interpretation of Trinculo and Caliban together

under the cloak as a single four-legged, two-headed monster, Trinculo's appraisal of the cruelty at the heart of European fascination with the wonderfully strange provides the satiric turn that forces the audience to reconsider its easy acceptance of Prospero and Miranda's assumptions of absolute difference from and superiority to Caliban. These twin elements of the scene—despite the play's continuing treatment of Caliban as belonging to no stable category--lead neatly to Gonzalo's treatment in 3.3 of the spirits, whom he believes to be "people of the island," as "of monstrous shape" and yet as having "manners . . . more gentle-kind than of / Our human generation you shall find / Many, nay almost any" (30-4).

The scene thus prepares for Caliban's eventual regret at having followed Stephano, and for his acceptance of some responsibility for Caliban—"This thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine" (5.1.275-6). The subplot here performs something quite different from the scenes with Robin and Rafe in Faustus, especially the scene in which they invoke Mephostopheles and tear him away from his current action, in part because it requires the audience to examine its assumptions about the minor characters, and also because it is making Caliban more than simply a foil for Prospero. If this is an instance of Shakespeare's innovation in moving from simple juxtaposition of the major and minor action to integration of a subplot, it is one that in its focus on the concept of service, its emphasis on drink and lust (once Caliban has whetted Stephano's interest in Miranda), and its indication of a break in the action seems to have been inspired by the comic scenes in Faustus. Just as Shakespeare's analogies so often creatively confuse the tenor and the vehicle—illuminating both—so do his best subplots, such as that of Gloucester in Lear, accentuate and develop both minor and major characters. We might even say that Stephano and Trinculo, who are perhaps as static in their interests as Robin, and Rafe or Dick, help to accentuate the shifting perspectives the play offers on Caliban. One of the first elements of the

subplot perhaps best supports the argument that it illuminates Caliban as much as Prospero: in Faustus, Robin's pact with Wagner parodies Faustus's bargain with Lucifer, yet Caliban's sad speed in subjecting himself to Stephano, lacking any kind of parallel to Prospero's actions, is a more broadly targeted bit of satire.

The conspiracy to kill Prospero offers another way of conceiving of how Shakespeare incorporated elements of Faustus, again connected to the issue of what we should see Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban as mocking. Their plot, of course, mirrors that of Sebastian and Antonio. Or should it be the other way around? Yes, Antonio suggests killing Alonzo before Caliban suggests killing Prospero, but if we see Shakespeare as harking back to Faustus for inspiration in his own play about a magician, we might consider the possibility that the plotting of Benvolio and crew to wreak revenge on Faustus was the seed of both murder plots. Lucking comments on the similarity of the conspiracies against the two magicians, focusing on the similarity of the magicians' punishments of the conspirators: having them dragged through rough terrain by dogs or by spirits. I want to suggest that we take this parallel further, that we consider the possibility, admittedly not demonstrable, that the conspiracy in Marlowe's B- text, led by Benvolio with his accomplices Martino, Ferderick, and the soldiers, inspired both murder plots in The Tempest. As far as I know there is only one play before The Tempest in which a magician faces and prevents a murder plot, and it is the B- text of Faustus. Why is this significant, beyond providing at least a possible clue about the genesis of the play? If it is true, then it provides further circumstantial evidence that the B- text, although not printed until the 1616 Quarto (B1), nevertheless reflected what Shakespeare saw performed on the stage, as many editors have surmised. In The Damnable Life, or the English Faust Book, Benvolio's desire for revenge is stressed through his three attempts at revenge, but nowhere is murder his explicit goal, as it clearly is in the B-Text, where

he vows “O may these eyelids never close again/ Till with my sword I have that conjuror slain” (iv.ii.8-9).

I am tempted to argue that because Benvolio’s murder plot is arguably the most serious of the comic elements of Faustus, it is an especially appropriate source of inspiration for the murder plots in The Tempest, which are also the most serious elements of a comedy. And yet the matter of the interrupted banquets in the two plays brings this logic into question. In one of those paradoxes that have always been the hallmark of Shakespeare’s work—as emphasized recently by Peter Platt—the interrupted banquet is probably the most humorous scene in Marlowe’s tragedy, while the interrupted banquet in Shakespeare’s comedy performs an entirely serious function, initiating Prospero’s attempts to punish his enemies and prompt their contrition.

In the context of the discourse on magic, and especially of Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus, the element of Shakespeare’s magic play that should be most striking is how little it raises the question of Prospero’s damnation. Robert Hunter West and others have made clear that anyone familiar with the doctrine and debates on the occult in the sixteenth century--or even anyone who had seen the magic plays of Marlowe or Greene--would immediately assume that the magician he or she was watching on stage was either damned or on the brink.<sup>vi</sup> How and why Shakespeare sidesteps this problem for Prospero is a mystery worth considering: how does the play hinge on the guilt and possible punishment of those who have wronged the magician rather than the guilt of the magician himself, whose reliance on spirits of any kind would or should have made his own guilt primary? In a curious twist on the argument about when and if Faustus’s damnation is certain (at the invocation? the bloody pact? kissing “Helen”? when dragged below?), critics continue to argue about when Prospero ultimately settles on forgiveness: Before the play begins? In response to Miranda’s sorrow at the shipwreck? In response to

Ariel's pity? In this sense Prospero culminates the line of Shakespeare's characters who must decide how to use their godlike power—Henry V, the Duke of Vienna—but the contrast with Marlowe's character would likely have been as notable to the audience. Shakespeare deflects some attention from the problem by displacing evil onto Sycorax, but it seems strange that such a ploy should suffice, no matter how often critics invoke the distinction between evil and good magic, goetia and theurgy. Nor does the argument from genre really do much: yes, Faustus is a tragedy whereas The Tempest is not, and yes, forgiveness fits better than damnation as an ending for a play in any of the categories into which we might put The Tempest (comedy, tragicomedy, or romance), but Shakespeare is clearly more interested in the quality of mercy extended by rather than to Prospero.

Despite advocating a Christian value, then, the play avoids a Christian conclusion in a way that the comparison with Marlowe helps illuminate. However reluctant he may be to give up magic, Prospero's decision to give it up is his alone: he seems under no divine pressure to do so, or even any external pressure of any kind. In this sense Prospero may paradoxically be a more radical figure than Faustus. By eliding the question of damnation, Shakespeare elevates the magician to the position of ultimate power, where all must fear him, and him no one. The comparison between Mephistopheles and Ariel, the instruments or efficient causes of Faustus's and Prospero's magic, highlights this shift. After Faustus signs the pact, the chief dramatic tension in the play hinges on the question of whether or not he can free himself from it, and from Mephistopheles: Mephistopheles is "bound" to serve him, but Faustus is bound. Even before the pact Mephistopheles underscores the orthodox position that the vaunting magician's words have no power over him. Faustus believes that "pliant" Mephistopheles is "Full of obedience and humility" (A 1.3.30-1), but Mephistopheles explains that he appeared not in response to

Faustus's invocation but because "when we hear one rack the name of God, / Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ, / We fly in hope to get his glorious soul" (48-50). Prospero's power over Ariel, by contrast, is nearly complete: Ariel can only beg that Prospero will fulfill his promise to free him.<sup>vii</sup>

Although scholars rightly associate the various shows performed by Ariel and Prospero with the masque, Marlowe's spectacles in *Faustus* also deserve consideration as having sparked Shakespeare's decision to include them in the action of *The Tempest*. Comparing the shows in the two plays again helps to underline the central differences between the two magicians: Prospero plays a far larger role in creating the shows than Faustus does, and is much more the stage manager or director of the action. Mephistopheles and Ariel are both instrumental, but Mephistopheles is much more of an instigator, especially in his attempt to divert Faustus from consideration of his soul by providing the pageant of the seven deadly sins. Despite his reliance on Ariel, Prospero is never in the position—as Faustus is—of merely being the witness to marvels: he is the begetter not only of Miranda but of nearly all of the play's wonders. As many critics have noted, perhaps most notably Barbara Traister, the degree of Prospero's power makes him stand out from Faustus and from all of the other magicians who precede him on the stage, which of course makes his renunciation all the more striking.<sup>viii</sup> Both Prospero and Faustus begin in magic as part of their immersion in contemplative study, and whatever active, social benefits they might have imagined as ensuing from their arts, they proved equally ineffective in producing the kind of golden age that theurgists sought. Their responses to their failures differ sharply, however, as Marlowe's Faustus proves unwilling or unable to give up his magic, despite having exactly twice as much time as Prospero to do so.

Prospero's retirement, which is both like and unlike Shakespeare's, defies the pattern represented in Renaissance poems of retirement, which usually register the speaker's immersion in private life and abandonment of the courtly world of public service. Prospero's earlier history recapitulates the genre's insistence on the corruption and cost of the active life, but his decision to return does not. Like Shakespeare he is paradoxically retiring from an activity (magic, dramatic poetry) predominantly associated, at least by others, with contemplation; unlike Shakespeare, he is retiring into activity. Stephen Greenblatt emphasizes well that Shakespeare himself was retiring from the professional world of the London stage, but the kinds of dramatic activity that the play underscores in its analogy of drama with magic are associated with arts, the book, enchantment, and illusion.<sup>ix</sup> Prospero returns, without magic, to the active world that he had in effect abandoned before his position had been usurped, whereas Shakespeare-- whatever his exact intentions had been, and despite his late collaborations-- gradually withdraws into literary inaction (a phrase which in his culture might well have been perceived as a tautology).

Prospero's willingness to "retire" from magic into active, political responsibility seems inextricable from another circumstance that sharply distinguishes him from Faustus, his fatherhood. The protagonist of Faustus may be unmatched, even among Marlowe's tragic heroes, in isolation. From the beginning of the action of The Tempest—although not from the beginning of its story—Prospero responds to what he perceives to be the responsibilities of his paternal role, in ways that are typical of Shakespeare's problematic fathers. If, as Greenblatt argues, Will Shakespeare anticipated retiring near his favored daughter, Prospero steps away from seclusion with Miranda, despite his all-too-sharp awareness that he is leaving an island on which he perceives one chief threat, Caliban, for a whole world of danger.<sup>x</sup> His willingness to leave the island, however mixed his feelings on the point may be, indicates a final renunciation

of seclusion, and of the control he had exercised over Miranda nearly to the end of the play. In abandoning seclusion, Prospero makes his final break from Faustus, and in the process starkly illuminates in retrospect how Faustus, at the end, performs the role of the central character in the morality play, proceeding to judgment, alone.

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<sup>i</sup> James Shapiro, Rival Playwrights: Marlowe, Jonson, Shakespeare (New York: Columbia UP, 1991).

<sup>ii</sup> On the continued success of Doctor Faustus, see for example the discussion of the play's stage history in Doctor Faustus: A- and B-Texts (1604, 1616), ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen, Revels Plays (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993), 48-62.

<sup>iii</sup> Harry Berger, Jr. has drawn valuable parallels between the play and More's Utopia, especially between Prospero's and Hythlodæus's aversion to public life, and that argument could be expanded to suggest that Shakespeare's retrospective view of English poetry takes in more than the London stage, but the echoes and revisions of Marlowe (and, I will argue elsewhere, Jonson) are in the foreground of Shakespeare's backward view (Harry Berger, Jr., "Miraculous Harp: A Reading of Shakespeare's Tempest," Shakespeare Studies 5 (1969), 253-83, rpt. in Berger, Second World and Green World: Studies in Renaissance Fiction-Making (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988), 147-85).

<sup>iv</sup> David Young, "Where the Bee Sucks: A Triangular Study of Doctor Faustus, The Alchemist, and The Tempest," in Shakespeare's Romances Reconsidered, ed. Carol McGinnis Kay and Henry E. Jacobs (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P), 149-66; John S. Mebane, Renaissance Magic and the Return of the Golden Age: The Occult Tradition ion Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1989); and David Lucking, "Our Devils Now Are Ended: A Comparative Analysis of The Tempest and Doctor Faustus," Dalhousie Review 80.2 (Summer 2000), 149-67.

<sup>v</sup> William Shakespeare, The Tempest, ed. Stephen Orgel, Oxford World's Classics, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987).

<sup>vi</sup> See Robert H. West, Shakespeare and the Outer Mystery (Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 1968), esp. 80-95. In "Prospero, Agrippa, and Hocus Pocus," English Literary Renaissance 11 (1981), 281-303, Barbara A. Mowat expands the range of magical traditions to which Prospero's character is indebted, and qualifies West's argument about the sense and instances in which Prospero's magic is damnable, but still acknowledges that "the language with which Prospero abjures his magic reminds us strongly of the Bacons and Faustuses of narrative and drama" (292).

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<sup>vii</sup> Like Berger (151-6, 168-70), I see Prospero as exaggerating for dramatic or rhetorical effect his anger at Ariel's desire for freedom, but whether or not Prospero himself waives on the issue of granting Ariel freedom, Shakespeare emphasizes Ariel's uncertainty on the issue, and thus his dependence on Prospero.

<sup>viii</sup> Barbara Howard Traister, Heavenly Necromancers: The Magician in English Renaissance Drama (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1984), 126, 138, 146.

<sup>ix</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare (New York: Norton, 2004), 291-4, 356-90.

<sup>x</sup> See Berger 157-63 and 184-5 for especially convincing arguments that Prospero views Caliban as more representative than Ariel of human behavior.