

“Hell is Empty, and All the Devils are Here”: The Influence of Doctor Faustus on The Tempest

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William Shakespeare's sources and influences have been the subject of much discussion, which includes vigorous scholarly debate over what effects, if any, Shakespeare's contemporaries had on his art. Of those contemporaries, Christopher Marlowe arguably had the greatest impact. However, it is difficult to craft an argument for a specific influence, because, as Stephen J. Lynch puts it, "I would not deny the profound influence of Marlowe, Chaucer, and the Bible on Shakespeare, but such influences are submersed and dispersed throughout Shakespeare's work" (117). Thus, numerous influences for various plays have been proposed, but few have been embraced by the majority of Renaissance scholars, whose disputation over such matters continues still. Yet it remains an issue worth interrogating because such analyses can profoundly influence our understanding of the plays and of Shakespeare's art more generally.

Most of the scholarship regarding Marlowe's influence on Shakespeare appears to focus almost exclusively on Shakespeare's early plays. One analysis that many other articles cite is Irving Ribner's. He compares and contrasts the works of both playwrights, but he focuses only on Shakespeare's early plays, such as Henry VI, Richard III, Romeo and Juliet, and The Merchant of Venice (Macbeth is the only later play addressed). James Shapiro makes some claims of a very strong influence that all but died out by 1600. He finds that, at least early on in Shakespeare's career, the assimilation of Marlowe's art took on different forms, evolving from parodic to tributary. Marjorie Garber's article on the subject is primarily concerned with Shakespearean drama written before Marlowe's death. Although she disagrees with Shapiro in that she views the influence as reactionary rather than assimilative, she agrees with him in perceiving such an influence as being relatively short-lived. A recent article by Maurice Charney identifies Shakespeare's indebtedness to Marlowe as characterized in a comparison of

The Jew of Malta and The Merchant of Venice. Charney's analysis focuses on the relationship between two specific plays; however, it is also indicative of the general trend in scholarship to discuss the influence of Marlowe upon Shakespeare within a framework that focuses on the early plays of the latter, without even acknowledging the possibility of an influence within his later works.

Nevertheless, there are a small number of articles that suggest a Marlovian influence on later plays or at least on The Tempest. Of those articles that address the various connections between Doctor Faustus and The Tempest, the conclusions that are drawn vary greatly from each other. Jeffrey Hart suggests that Prospero is something of an amalgamation of Faustus and Robert Greene's Friar Bacon, citing Prospero's abjuration scene as the main parallel with Friar Bacon. But David Young disagrees with Hart's conclusion. Young argues that The Tempest is a product of the influences of Marlowe and Jonson (although the accepted date for production of The Alchemist raises some serious doubts upon this theory). For Young, tracing a partial influence to Jonson's alchemist helps to reconcile some of the significant differences between Faustus and Prospero.

Another critic that argues for a connection between both plays is David Lucking, who highlights a number of parallels between Doctor Faustus and The Tempest. Most of his observations are thoughtful, though some are more tenuous than others. Although Lucking's critical reading of Prospero is similar to my own, he does not utilize the parallels that he mentions to explain this reading. He points out many of the similarities, but he seems reluctant to propose any significance behind them. In other words, although Lucking says of Prospero that "from the point of view of those subjugated to his authority he is little more than an overbearing tyrant imposing his own arbitrary laws and enforcing them by violence," and he goes on to say

that “even when the Europeans arrive on the island, Prospero does not comport himself in a manner markedly different from that of Faustus” (165-166), he avoids using the analogies that he has already enumerated in order to support these observations. The article also fails to propose any significant reason behind the obvious deviation that Prospero takes from Faustus’s course of action in the latter part of The Tempest.

The Tempest was one of Shakespeare’s last plays. Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus had already been thrilling audiences for at least seventeen years (some estimations claim that it had been around more than twenty years). How much influence Marlowe had on Shakespeare continues to be heavily debated by scholars. I am going to specifically address these two plays in order to show that Marlowe’s impact can still be detected in the latter portion of Shakespeare’s career. Furthermore, by discussing the similarities between the characters and scenes of both plays I am proposing a reading of The Tempest that not only utilizes those similarities, but also explores the significance of the salient differences between it and Doctor Faustus.

One thing that must be dealt with in any discussion of Doctor Faustus is the issue of the A and B texts. Marlowe’s play exists in two significantly different forms. The version that is referred to as the A text was published in 1604, eleven years after Marlowe’s death. The B text, which was first published in 1616, omits 36 lines from the A text, yet it is 676 lines longer (introduction 63). Further complicating the issue is the notion—with which most scholars agree—that Marlowe probably had a collaborator (many critics believe that someone besides Marlowe wrote the comic scenes). And Henslowe’s diary includes an entry on the 22nd of November, 1602, stating that he paid William Birde and Samuel Rowley for “adicyones in docter fostes” (206). The debate over the A and B texts affects my discussion only insofar as it complicates my ability to show that the similar characters, actions, and scenes occurred in Doctor

Faustus before The Tempest was written. However, the evidence suggests that the vast majority, if not all of the analogous actions and characters were extant in versions of Marlowe's play that were being performed before The Tempest was complete.

The first recorded performance of The Tempest was put on for King James on November 1st, 1611 (Hulme vii). By this time, the A text of Doctor Faustus had already been published in three separate editions. Additionally, Henslowe paid for revisions to the play because it was so popular and had made so much money already that he wanted to keep it fresh so that he could continue to pull in a profit from the performances of it.

Robert Logan has written some of the most recent criticism analyzing the possible influence of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus on Shakespeare's The Tempest. He proposes that the main commonality between the plays lies in the fact that both protagonists are meant to be viewed as somewhat representative of the playwrights that authored them, and that the portrayal of magic in the plays is intended to symbolize imagination. Logan is somewhat dismissive of the textual parallels between the plays—such as those that David Lucking points out—therefore he overlooks some of the most compelling evidence that would support an argument for influence. For example, he addresses Jonathan Bate, David Lucking, and David Young's various arguments for connections between the plays, specifically their discussion of Prospero drowning his book as compared with Faustus's offer to burn his. Logan responds, "I am less sure of the inevitability of the verbal echo than are Bate and Lucking, but I do agree with all three critics that, even in this very late play, 'Shakespeare is still haunted by Marlowe'" (Shakespeare's Marlowe 198). Hence Logan agrees that there are significant connections between the two plays; however, this is the only time in the chapter that he addresses any verbal parallels. He attempts to make an argument

for influence that makes few references to any linguistic similarities. The only influence that he discusses basically involves the symbolism of magicians and magic.

The similarities between many of the deeds, scenes, and characters (as well as the words and phrases they use) in Doctor Faustus and The Tempest offer the most salient evidence for influence, and therefore merit further discussion. To begin with, the descriptions within each text of Faustus and Prospero do not merely correlate in regarding them both as magicians, but also as scholars. Although Prospero, unlike Faustus, had already earned earthly power, in the form of his dukedom, before developing magical power, his conversation with Miranda becomes a confession that magic had become his preoccupation:

And Prospero the prime duke, being so reputed
 In dignity, and for the liberal arts
 Without a parallel; those being all my study,
 The government I cast upon my brother
 And to my state grew stranger, being transported
 And rapt in secret studies. (1.2.72-77)

Prospero not only mentions “secret studies,” but also being unparalleled in the liberal arts. This suggests that Prospero’s life before becoming a magician was in fact quite similar to Faustus’s situation in the beginning of Doctor Faustus. Prospero goes on to say, “I thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated / To closeness and the bettering of my mind” (1.2.89-90). Prospero did not allow his responsibilities as Duke of Milan to interfere with his studies. On the contrary, he let his scholarship overtake any worldly obligations, and ultimately, his “secret studies” became the sole focus of his scholarship.

The concept of Prospero as both Duke and scholar before becoming magician and lord of the island is repeatedly addressed throughout the scene. Interestingly, the offices of scholar and Duke are often portrayed hierarchically, with Prospero's scholarship consistently being valued and prioritized above his dukedom. By declaring, "my library / was dukedom large enough" (10), and praising Gonzalo for "Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me / From mine own library with volumes that I prize above my dukedom" (12), Prospero reinforces the notion that—prior to becoming a magician—he, like Faustus, was a scholar first and foremost.

Faustus is initially presented in the midst of this same process of transition from scholar to magician. He is no longer content with studying philosophy, medicine, law, or theology. Therefore, the only thing that can sustain his interest lies in a book of magic:

These metaphysics of magicians
 And necromantic books are heavenly,
 Lines, circles, signs, letters, and characters—
 Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.
 O, what a world of profit and delight,
 Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,
 Is promised to the studious artisan! (A text 1.1.113-114)

The evident thirst for power that is depicted in this passage and elsewhere could be perceived as a stark difference between the two magi; however, I will argue that Prospero's prolonged estrangement from his Dukedom has excited a desire to regain his worldly power, which is apparent towards the end of the play.

Other similarities between the two plays can be found in many of the scenes in which magic is performed. Faustus and Mephistopheles's visit with the Pope seems to have inspired

two scenes in The Tempest. The B text version of this scene includes a moment when Faustus and Mephistopheles disguise themselves as cardinals in order to trick the Pope. This, along with Faustus's invisible antics at the Pope's expense, provides an analogue to Ariel's tricks against Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban in The Tempest. While Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban are conversing, Ariel—who cannot be seen by any of them—continually antagonizes Caliban, who thinks that Trinculo is responsible for the insults (3.2.42-71). Similarly, Faustus and Mephistopheles frame the cardinals that they were impersonating, which causes the Pope to blame the wrong people for Bruno's escape (B text 3.1.161-201). Faustus's request to be invisible during the A text version of this scene, which is mostly the same as the latter part of the B text version, prompts Lisa Hopkins's parenthetical observation that “the desire to control seeing and being seen is one of the many things – including, effectively, a name, since both are variants of ‘fortunate’ – which he [Faustus] shares with Shakespeare's Prospero” (75). The fact that both of the protagonists' names have the same meaning is highlighted by many scholars; however, the first part of Hopkins's claim is also useful. This observation not only pertains to the magicians' commands regarding invisibility, but also to the penchant that each seems to have for observing other characters while he goes unnoticed.

The banquet that Ariel presents to Alonso and his party also includes some remarkably similar traits to the Pope's banquet. Some of Prospero's spirits place a table in front of melancholic Alonso and his disheartened band of cohorts (though Sebastian and Antonio are still resolved to murder Alonso and usurp his throne), then they lay a feast upon the table (3.3.20). But, before anyone can partake of the refreshments, Ariel appears in the form of a harpy and, after an exchange of words, vanishes along with the food. In addition to the obvious similarity with Faustus invisibly stealing the Pope's food, this scene is also reminiscent of the pageant of

the seven deadly sins in Doctor Faustus, in that both magical feats are purposed to distract their targets, as is explained by Lucifer (A text 2.3.100), and by Prospero when he says, “My high charms work, / And these, mine enemies, are all knit up / in their distractions” (4.1.88-90). The aim of Prospero’s distractions is not the same as Lucifer’s. The timing of Ariel’s interjection suggests that he is not only conveying a message of the utmost importance, but that he is also meant to interrupt Antonio and Sebastian’s plot to murder Gonzalo and Alonso. However, even considering the different ends, the similarity of the means may suggest influence.

The metadramatic elements of Doctor Faustus also provide an interesting point of reference for The Tempest. Of the metadramatic scenes in Doctor Faustus, the most useful analogue for Prospero’s masque comes when the Emperor is presented with Alexander the Great and his paramour. In the A text, Faustus warns that his conjurations will have no physical substance:

It is not in my ability to present before your eyes the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes, which long since are consumed to dust. [...]

But such spirits as can lively resemble Alexander and his paramour shall appear before your Grace in that manner that they best lived in, in their most flourishing estate. (4.1.47-56)

Alexander and his paramour are mere spirits, they have no physical being. Hence they cannot be called upon as interlocutors; in fact, it would seem that any attempt to enter into a discourse with them might disrupt the spectacle. This notion is reinforced in the B text when Faustus tells the Emperor:

My lord, I must forewarn your Majesty

That when my spirits present the royal shapes

Of Alexander and his paramour,
 Your Grace demand no questions of the king,
 But in dumb silence let them come and go. (4.1.92-96)

Faustus's warnings are echoed by Prospero at the beginning of the masque in The Tempest, when he says, "No tongue! All eyes! Be silent!" (4.1.59). This command is elaborated upon when, after Ferdinand has attempted to praise the spectacle, Prospero responds, "Hush and be mute, / Or else our spell is marred" (4.1.126-127). Prospero's commands have another antecedent in Doctor Faustus, when Faustus first conjures Helen of Troy. Faustus tells the scholars to "Be silent then, for danger is in words" (A text 5.1.25 B text 5.1.26).

The metadramatic nature of these dialogues further suggests Marlowe's influence on Shakespeare. While the magicians' lines are not directly addressed to the audience, the emphasis on those lines and the repetition of their sentiment would have communicated to the audience the need to be quiet and pay attention to what is about to happen. Although there are metadramatic elements in many Shakespearean plays, none of them include a character whose words convey this type of message in quite the same way as Prospero's do in this scene. Not only does it seem as though Shakespeare appropriated a Marlovian technique, but it also appears to be a form of paying homage that anyone familiar with Doctor Faustus, as the vast majority of Renaissance theatre-goers were, would probably recognize.

Another parallel present in both plays lies between Faustus's explanation to the Emperor and Prospero's explanation to Miranda and Ferdinand regarding the ethereal nature of the magical performances. Faustus clarifies the nature of the spectacle after he stays the Emperor from embracing Alexander and his paramour, "My gracious lord, you do forget yourself / These

are but shadows, not substantial” (B text 4.1.103-104). Prospero explains the same point to Ferdinand and Miranda:

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
 As I foretold you, were all spirits and
 Are melted into air, into thin air;
 And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
 The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
 And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
 Leave not a rack behind. (4.1.148-156)

Though Prospero’s explanation contains a bit more linguistic flourish than Faustus’s, the parallels are unmistakable. Not only do they share the same sentiment, but they focus on describing the “insubstantial” nature of the magical feats. Even though Prospero uses more elaborate language, he repeats the key words and ideas of Faustus’s explanation.

In addition to the analogies already discussed, the plots to murder both protagonists share many interesting and specific traits. In the B text of Doctor Faustus, Benvolio, Martino, and Frederick plot to kill Faustus for the disgrace he has caused Benvolio by producing horns upon his head in front of the Emperor. Benvolio’s initial outrage is met with a threat by Faustus:

I’ll raise a kennel of hounds shall hunt him so
 As all his footmanship shall scarce prevail
 To keep his carcass from their bloody fangs.
 Ho, Belimoth, Aragon, Ashtaroth! (B text 4.1.146-149)

However, the Emperor's entreaty causes Faustus to stay his devils and remove the horns. Benvolio is not content with this resolution, so he and his cohorts ambush Faustus and cut off his head. When Faustus comes back to life, he again calls some devils to his command:

Ashtaroath, Belimoth, Mephistopheles! [...]
 Go horse these traitors on your fiery backs,
 And mount aloft with them as high as heaven;
 Thence pitch them headlong to the lowest hell.
 Yet stay. The world shall see their misery,
 And hell shall after plague their treachery.
 Go, Belimoth, and take this caitiff hence,
 And hurl him in some lake of mud and dirt.

[To Ashtaroath.]

Take thou this other; drag him through the woods
 Amongst the picking thorns and sharpest briars,
 Whilst with my gentle Mephistopheles
 This traitor flies unto some steepy rock
 That, rolling down, may break the villain's bones
 As he intended to dismember me.

Fly hence. Dispatch my charge immediately. (B text 4.2.78-92)

In The Tempest, Prospero is the target of a similar conspiracy to ambush and murder him. The conspirators—Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo—have different motives than Benvolio and his associates, but they receive remarkably similar punishments. Ariel informs Prospero of the

torments he has enacted upon Caliban and company before leaving them mesmerized in a pool of mud:

So I charmed their ears
 That calf-like they my lowing followed through
 Toothed briars, sharp furzes, pricking gorse, and thorns,
 Which entered their frail shins. At last I left them
 I' th' filthy-mantled pool beyond your cell,
 There dancing up to th' chins, that the foul lake
 O'erstunk their feet. (4.1.180-183)

Then, after the conspirators have been released from their stupor and distracted by fine clothes, the stage direction reads, "A noise of hunters heard. Enter divers spirits in shape of dogs and hounds, hunting them about, Prospero and Ariel setting them on." Much like Faustus's kennel of devil hounds, Prospero and Ariel set them on by calling out their names: Mountain, Silver, Fury, and Tyrant (4.1.255-257). Prospero goes on to order additional punishments, akin to those which Faustus ordered:

Go, Charge my goblins that they grind their joints
 With dry convulsions, shorten up their sinews
 With agèd cramps, and more pinch-spotted make them
 Than pard or cat o' mountain. [...]
 Let them be hunted soundly. At this hour
 Lies at my mercy all mine enemies. (258-263).

This passage appears to echo Faustus in both spirit and language. Considering the context of a foiled murderous plot, the mention of hounds, thorns, and lakes of mud suggests that the details of Shakespeare's scene were inspired by those of Marlowe.

Of the many parallels between the two plays, one of the most peculiar is Faustus and Prospero's orders regarding the appearance of Mephistopheles and Ariel respectively. Not only are they both ordered to become invisible to all eyes but their masters', but they are also ordered to take on a different appearance. Faustus's request regarding Mephistopheles's appearance and invisibility makes up the fourth and fifth conditions of the contract between them. Faustus reads aloud those conditions as follows: "Fourthly, that he [Mephistopheles] shall be in his [Faustus's] chamber or house invisible. Lastly, that he [Mephistopheles] shall appear to the said John Faustus at all times in what form or shape soever he [Faustus] please" (2.1.102-105). In The Tempest, this type of request seems strange because Ariel, unlike Mephistopheles, remains invisible to all of the characters except Prospero during the entire play, except when he takes the form of a harpy. Prospero tells Ariel to "Go make thyself like a nymph o' th' sea. Be subject / To no sight but thine and mine, invisible / To every eyeball else" (1.2.301-303). He is, at the very same time that he is ordering Ariel to change shape, charging him to remain invisible to everyone else on the island. So why would Prospero require Ariel to change form if he is the only person that can see the spirit? At least Faustus provides a reason for his request, albeit one that appears to be purposed for comedic value rather than logical rationalization:

I charge thee to return and change thy shape.

Thou art too ugly to attend on me.

Go, and return an old Franciscan friar;

That holy shape becomes a devil best. (1.3.24-27)

Although the second half of this passage is certainly in keeping with Marlowe's playfulness with religious imagery that pervades much of Act 1, the first half appears to be the simplest explanation for this request. Prospero does not give any explanation for his similar request, so what is the reason for it? The fact that he does not have an obvious reason may suggest that Shakespeare was simply paying subtle homage to his fallen contemporary by dramatizing such an exchange. There is no need to have an invisible character change his appearance, unless the playwright wished to give a nod to the aforementioned exchange between Faustus and Mephistopheles.

Ferdinand's cry that "Hell is empty, / And all the devils are here!" (*The Tempest* 1.2.214-215) provides one of the most interesting analogies, as it is reminiscent of both Mephistopheles and Faustus at two very different points in Marlowe's play. Ferdinand's words recall Mephistopheles's statement: "Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it" (A text 1.3.78 B text 1.3.75). However, Ferdinand's emotion resembles Faustus's at the very end of the play, when Faustus says, "Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while! / Ugly hell, gape not. Come not Lucifer! / I'll burn my books. Ah, Mephistopheles!" (A text 5.2.121-123). Ariel did not need to provide Prospero with such a detailed report of the terror that he caused the crew and passengers of the ship; he could have described the general effect without including Ferdinand's exact words. But it is easy to imagine how hearing this line cried out on stage could evoke a theatre-goer's recollection of Faustus's tragic end.

Having identified many of the intertextual elements of the two plays, I would like to return to an examination of some other critics' observations in order to address some of the counterarguments regarding the influence of Doctor Faustus, which will ultimately help me show that not only does such an influence exist, but that it can profoundly affect how The Tempest is

read and perceived. One of the main arguments against Marlowe's influence on The Tempest relies on an interpretation of Prospero as a purely beneficent magician—possessing only the best of intentions—throughout the play. Thus, according to this argument, Shakespeare could not have been thinking of Faustus when he was creating Prospero, because the magicians are so thoroughly unlike one another. Faustus represents black magic, whilst Prospero is the quintessential white, or what is sometimes referred to as natural, magician. Such an interpretation of Prospero's character relies on the assumption that—from the very beginning of the play—he has only good intentions for all of the objects of his manipulation.

This argument has been proposed by a number of scholars, including Robert Logan and David Woodman. According to Logan, Prospero's abjuration of his "rough magic" shows that "his intentions are honorable and have always been so" (214). Thus, Prospero is in many ways an antithetical character to Faustus because Faustus is damned from the start whereas Prospero has only the best intentions from the very beginning. David Woodman contributes to this perspective by portraying Prospero as the quintessential white magician who is too pure to be subject to the trivialities and passions that characterize Faustus:

Prospero's power over his spirit Ariel enables him to accomplish a series of triumphant maneuvers that culminate in a harmonious reunion as well as in his restoration to a usurped throne. Not only does he cure some of the diseased minds of the rebels but he also cures the diseased body politic of his kingdom. Once he has achieved these benevolent ends, he abandons celestial aid and resumes his earthly rights as a mortal. (65)

Even for a reading of Prospero's character that is sympathetic from the very beginning of the play, this seems to be overreaching and a bit overly optimistic. Considering Prospero's

confessed neglect of his dukedom, it is just as likely that his “kingdom” is better off without him. Also, as I shall show, Prospero’s magic and his intentions are far too ambiguous to simply assume that he has everyone’s best interests at heart from the beginning. Woodman goes on to explain some of the criteria used in his judgment of the nature of Prospero’s magic: “It will be worthwhile [...] to look [...] at a few magicians whom some critics claim to have been archetypes for Prospero. Clearly these are not black magicians like Doctor Faustus [...] white magicians were never ambitious, covetous, or willing to barter their souls with the Devil” (65). With the possible exception of the willingness to barter one’s soul, I would argue that Prospero does not conform to the criteria that Woodman puts forth.

Robert Logan supports Woodman’s reading by arguing for an influence that is “chiefly doctrinal” in nature:

Each play expresses a strong interest in magic and the magician as representations of the imagination; and each play features a protagonist who is a magician and, from a metadramatic perspective, also a playwright. Ostensibly, however, Faustus and Prospero are on opposite sides of the fence since the former is fascinated with necromancy and the latter is absorbed in white or natural magic. (“Glutted with Conceit”¹ 195-196)

While I do not disagree with his observations regarding the metadramatic elements, the notion of a thematic influence—which supposes that the magicians are also playwrights and their magic represents the imagination—seems not nearly as compelling as an argument for influence that utilizes the other parallels. I would suggest that Logan’s argument is ultimately inadequate because it does not address most of the aforementioned similarities between the two plays.

¹ The previously mentioned chapter of *Shakespeare’s Marlowe* was revised to focus just on *Doctor Faustus* and *The Tempest*. It was then renamed “‘Glutted with Conceit’: Imprints of *Doctor Faustus* on *The Tempest*” and published earlier this year as a chapter in *Placing the Plays of Christopher Marlowe*.

Furthermore, reading Prospero as a consistently altruistic white magician conflicts with Lawrence Danson's astute observations regarding the need for all protagonists in Shakespearean comedies to undergo profound change. Danson's remark, that "from his earliest plays, Shakespeare had been dealing with this problem of a comic anagnorisis which also implies a character's self-discovery" (220), highlights Prospero's context as one of many Shakespearean protagonists and suggests that he cannot be a well-intentioned philanthropist throughout the play because that would contradict the necessity of his achieving a new level of self-discovery during the course of the play.

The distinction made by Woodman and Logan between Prospero and Faustus using the dichotomy of necromancy and white magic is problematized by the fact that Prospero says, "Graves at my command / Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth / By my so potent art" (5.1.48-50). While there is other evidence in the play that suggests that Prospero's magic may actually be black magic, this statement stands out as an explicit confession that Prospero practices necromancy.

Additionally, in Night's Black Agents, Anthony Harris points out some revealing parallels between Prospero and Sycorax, the witch who was in charge of the island before Prospero arrived and usurped her power:

It seems probable that the 'demi-puppets' who perform at Prospero's behest are the same spirits as the 'more potent ministers' that Sycorax invokes. It is certainly true that both use Ariel as their principal spirit/servant, with the important distinction [...] that whilst Prospero can both summon and command Ariel, Sycorax cannot force him to carry out her repellent demands against his will.

(145)

Harris goes on to point out that Sycorax imprisons Ariel within a tree and Prospero threatens to do the same. Harris also claims that “Apart from their affinities with the powers of Sycorax, the magical arts of Prospero are, in many other respects, indistinguishable from those of ‘black’ witchcraft.” One of his examples mentions Prospero’s ability to cause madness (145). The comparison of Prospero and Sycorax, along with the identification of certain characteristics of Prospero’s magic as black, undermines the argument that Prospero’s magic is of an obviously beneficent nature.

That Prospero can be perceived as a black magician supports the idea that he may not be as well-intentioned as some critics argue. Further evidence of this can be found in the words and deeds of Prospero and his loyal servant Ariel. While receiving Ariel’s initial report regarding the success of the tempest, Prospero asks, “Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil / would not infect his reason?” To which Ariel responds:

Not a soul
 But felt a fever of the mad and played
 Some tricks of desperation. All but mariners
 Plunged in the foaming brine and quit the vessel,
 Then all afire with me; the King’s son Ferdinand,
 With hair upstaring (then like reeds, not hair),
 Was the first man that leapt, cried “Hell is empty,
 And all the devils are here!” (1.2.208-214)

Prospero’s orders to torment his victims, to drive them mad and make them desperate, have been well executed. Though Ariel has not physically harmed anyone, he has caused profound suffering at his master’s behest. Ferdinand’s exclamation poignantly draws our attention to the

maliciousness of Prospero's actions. Rather than exhibit any guilt for the suffering he has ordered, Prospero responds to this news by saying, "Why, that's my spirit" (1.2.215).

The question of the nature of Prospero's intentions seems to be related to the question of whether or not he seeks revenge. He has spared the lives of his victims, but to what end? Does the fact that he ordered Ariel not to harm them suggest that he is not going to harm them himself, or order Ariel to do so at a later time? It is impossible to say for sure, but we are given some more hints as to the nature of his design when Ariel takes the form of a harpy and confronts Alonso, Gonzalo, Sebastian and the rest of their party. Ariel reminds the three main perpetrators of their offenses against Prospero. Then he tells them that "The powers" have "Incensed the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures / Against your peace" (3.3.73-75). This severe threat suggests that the tempest and the presumed drowning of Ferdinand are only the beginning of the group's tribulations. In the next sentence, Ariel makes a grave remark that confirms Alonso's supposition that his son is dead:

Thee of thy son, Alonso,
 They have bereft; and do pronounce by me
 Ling'ring perdition (worse than any death
 Can be at once) shall step by step attend [...]

After Ariel finishes his tricks and torments, Prospero confirms for us that the spirit was simply following his instructions. The magician's servants have antagonized his foes as part of his Machiavellian machinations. Prospero then gloats:

My high charms work,
 And these, mine enemies, are all knit up
 In their distractions. They now are in my power;

And in these fits I leave them, while I visit

Young Ferdinand, whom they suppose is drowned. (3.3.88-92)

Prospero has not caused any physical pain to his enemies (Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo are the only ones physically harmed by Prospero's violent magic); nonetheless, severe damage has been done. Despite the relative delicacy with which Prospero has handled his enemies, I think that this passage ominously suggests a goal of vengeance. When someone says of his enemies, "They now are in my power," it usually does not bode well for those enemies.

Megalomania is how I would define another aspect of Prospero's character that Anthony Harris identifies. Harris addresses one of the exchanges between Prospero and Miranda, when Prospero mentions being unparalleled in the liberal arts (1.2.73-74). Harris finds that implicit in this passage is "the hubris and desire for fame displayed by Faustus and Friar Bacon," and he goes on to say that "At this stage of the play it is clear that Prospero has not learnt from his misfortune; even in exile he still has his priorities wrong" (133). The hubris and desire for fame that Harris detects in this passage are arguably evident in Prospero throughout the majority of the play. His desire to regain his lost worldly power appears to be something of an obsession, as it may be the sole motivation for his machinations. Even the process of arranging Miranda and Ferdinand's marriage may simply be a maneuver to expand the political power that he once held and is now determined to regain.

Further supporting this supposition is another point of comparison that calls into question Prospero's motives and character, which is the fact that Faustus and Prospero are both scholars turned magicians who thirst for power. This thirst is more obvious in Faustus, but Prospero makes a striking admission that reveals to what extent he values the prospect of regaining, and

even expanding, the political power that he once squandered. Just before revealing to Alonso that his son is still alive, he tells the king:

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 me my dukedom. (5.1.168-171)

This short passage provides two pieces of information that are of great significance for understanding Prospero's character. First, Prospero admits that he values his dukedom as much as a parent values a child. Apparently, absence has made his heart grow fonder, and the dukedom which he once neglected has become a treasured prize worth all of the planning and manipulation. Prospero's words also highlight the fact that the arranged wedding between Miranda and Ferdinand was not necessary for him to regain his dukedom. While this could be argued as evidence of Prospero's beneficently looking out for his daughter's future, it could just as well show that Prospero is unwilling to settle for merely regaining his former power. Perhaps his goal all along has been to increase his power by both regaining his former office and marrying his daughter into the royal family.

Another of Prospero's seemingly altruistic deeds that deserves to be reexamined is Ariel's interruption of Antonio and Sebastian's plot to murder Gonzalo and Alonso. While such a deed could be argued as evidence of Prospero's beneficence, it could also merely reflect his desire to preserve his enemies for the time being, in order to ensure that no one besides him is allowed to harm them. He may also simply be protracting their suffering because if Antonio and Sebastian's plot was successful, then Prospero would not have the satisfaction of seeing Alonso writhe under the notion that Ferdinand has drowned.

In addition to the parallels already enumerated, there remain a few more that are worth noting if only to better analyze when and why the parallels come to an end and the paths of the two magicians diverge. The contract that binds Mephistopheles to Faustus is one of the most significant aspects of Marlowe's play, but the contract that binds Ariel to Prospero is a detail that is often overlooked. The abuse that Ariel receives for merely mentioning the contract seems quite unwarranted when Prospero tells him, "Thou liest, malignant thing!" (1.2.257). Prospero disregards Ariel's unwaveringly loyal service and threatens to imprison him in a tree, much like Sycorax had done before Prospero came to the island. "If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak / And peg thee in his knotty entrails till / Thou hast howled away twelve winters" (1.2.294-296). Besides serving as further evidence of the possibly black nature of Prospero's magic, this exchange also leads to the renegotiation of Ariel's contract with him.

The renewal and renegotiation of the contract between Prospero and Ariel is germane to my argument in two ways. First, Prospero and Ariel renegotiate the contract so that Ariel will remain indentured for two more days (1.2.299). This is a salient detail because the entire action of the play takes place within a time span of three hours (as we are reminded by Alonso in the final scene when he remarks that his son could have only known Miranda for three hours at the most, because that is how long it has been since the tempest wrecked the ship). Earlier in the scene, Prospero says:

by my prescience
I find my zenith doth depend upon
A most auspicious star, whose influence
If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes
Will ever after droop. (1.2.180-184)

This is not merely a statement to highlight Shakespeare's adherence to the unity of time; it is also an observation of the relative importance of the following three hours. After Miranda and Ferdinand have pledged their love for each other, Prospero says, "I'll to my book, / For yet ere supertime must I perform / Much business appertaining" (3.2.94-96). Hence it appears as though Prospero's magical plan for the next few hours involves the love affair of his daughter and Ferdinand, yet he indentures Ariel for two days, not three hours. The terms of the renewed contract suggest that Prospero's original intentions for his enemies would have required much more of Ariel's services.

While it is possible that Prospero foresees this as the length of time necessary for Ariel to fulfill Prospero's final order—for "calm seas, auspicious gales, / And sails so expeditious that shall catch / Your [Alonso's] royal fleet far off" (5.1.314-316)—such a notion is contradicted by the epilogue that directly follows, when Prospero states, "Now my charms are all o'erthrown" (1), and claims that he requires the audience's help. "Gentle breath of yours my sails / must fill, or else my project fails" (11-12). While the epilogue certainly requires Prospero to shift roles and address the audience directly, his words, coupled with the fact that his final command to Ariel is more of a request for a favor considering that Ariel has already been released and Prospero has already abjured his magic, encourage doubt in the notion that he expected Ariel to fulfill such a duty all along. Although Ariel has throughout the play proved himself to be a loyal and dutiful servant, Prospero's early reproach and accusations further permit such a doubt and suggest that if Prospero really planned to have Ariel execute a final order for good sailing weather, then he would have made such an order before abjuring his magic, when he was still in a position to threaten the spirit.

The second pertinent aspect of the renewal of the contract is simply that it serves as another reminder of Faustus. Towards the end, Faustus is nearly convinced by the Old Man to repent, but Mephistopheles steps in and threatens to tear Faustus limb from limb, coercing him into giving up on the concepts of repentance and salvation (5.1). Faustus then agrees to cut himself and renew his contract. The significance of the differences between this scene and the contract renewal in The Tempest is that they highlight the contrasts in each magician's relationship with his servant. Though both spirit and devil are bound to serve their masters for a particular length of time, the quality of service that they provide within that span differs greatly.

However, Ariel and Mephistopheles also have many commonalities. In their analyses of the similarities between the plays, David Lucking and John Mebane have separately come to the same conclusion: That Ariel's closest analogue in Doctor Faustus is the Good Angel. This interpretation makes sense given the multitude of criticism that identifies Ariel as representing Prospero's airy, admirable qualities, and Caliban as symbolizing the earthy, dark aspects of his personality. While I do not entirely disagree with this idea, I would argue that Ariel bears a much greater resemblance to Mephistopheles than he does to the Good Angel.

To that end, it should be noted that the terminology used to address Ariel and Mephistopheles did not carry with it the same meaning and connotations during the Renaissance that it does today. Ariel is consistently referred to as a spirit throughout the play, whereas Mephistopheles is often described as a demon. Modern day audiences would interpret these terms differently, but in Elizabethan England, they were synonymous with each other, and therefore interchangeable. This is evidenced by the use of words spirit and demon in both plays. In The Tempest, Prospero mentions that certain members of Alonso's party are "worse than

devils” (3.3.36), and Ferdinand refers to Prospero’s spirit servants as devils² in response to the tempest and the subsequent assault on the ship (at least crew and passengers perceived it as an assault, as they were being driven mad and trying to escape fire and drowning). The terminology is even more fluid in Doctor Faustus. Mephistopheles describes Lucifer to Faustus as “Arch-regent and commander of all spirits” (A text 1.3.65). John Mebane explains the ambiguity that was inherent in these words during the Renaissance: “The word ‘spirit’ could mean either ‘angel’ or ‘devil,’ and Renaissance demonologists frequently pointed out that devils could disguise themselves as benevolent angels in order to play upon the magicians’ pride and lure them to damnation” (27). A substantial portion of the debate over how damned Faustus is at various points throughout the play is based on the first condition of the contract, which states that “Faustus may be a spirit in form and substance” (A text 2.1.97). Another point that contributes to the discussion is the Evil Angel’s comment “Thou art a spirit, God cannot pity thee” (A text 2.3.13). Some critics argue that these passages show the utter damnation of Faustus’s soul early on in the play. Whether or not that is true, they do serve as poignant reminders of the devilish connotations that the word spirit held during the Renaissance.

The similarities between Ariel and Mephistopheles go far beyond the interchangeability of the terms used to describe them, or the fact that they both serve magicians. The nature of their service provides the most interesting comparisons and contrasts between the two characters. Although many of the magical feats in both plays are attributed to the magicians, the vast majority of the magical acts that are performed on stage are performed by these primary servants. Harris observes this in The Tempest, when he correctly states, “Nearly all the supernatural happenings in the play, although clearly directed by Prospero, are in fact put into operation by

² For further discussion of the many occurrences of the word devil in The Tempest, particularly in reference to Caliban, see David Lucking’s “Our Devils Now Are Ended: A Comparative Analysis of The Tempest and Doctor Faustus” p.157.

Ariel” (138). Perhaps Marlowe crafted his story in this way to highlight the metadramatic elements by having the magician—who may, as Robert Logan suggests, symbolize the role of the playwright—direct his lead actor, Mephistopheles, to perform the spectacles that Faustus desires. Then we could further suppose that Shakespeare was inspired by Marlowe’s earlier work to utilize many of these elements in his own play, which is even more explicitly metadramatic and which includes a magician/protagonist who is even more obviously representative of a playwright.

An additional consequence of having Ariel and Mephistopheles perform most of the magic is that it lends them an importance that they surely would not have otherwise. If they are each integral to their masters’ magic then they must have a certain amount of control over their masters. While such an observation is an understatement in regards to Mephistopheles, it suggests that Ariel is not merely an agent of Prospero, but also a necessary component of his plans. Both the spirit and the devil enact their masters’ wishes, play tricks at their behest, and behave in such a manner that causes multiple characters from each play to refer to the respective servant as a devil. The moments when Ariel is referred to as a devil, and when Prospero’s other servants are referred to as devils or goblins, such as when Prospero unleashes his goblins to punish Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban, highlight how closely Prospero’s spirits resemble Faustus’s devils, in deed as well as in name.

If Prospero’s intentions are as wicked as they seem, then his similarity to the damned Faustus is clearer and the fact that The Tempest is not a tragedy means that, at some point during the course of the play, he must undergo a significant change of heart. Of course I am referring to the *volte face* that some critics have argued takes place because of Ariel’s entreaties. Ariel draws attention to the inhumane and undeserved torture that Gonzalo has endured, and he reminds

Prospero that Gonzalo is an innocent victim. As Prospero himself admitted earlier, Gonzalo facilitated his and Miranda's survival by furnishing the duke with some of his beloved volumes, including his book of magic, before the exiles were set adrift. Yet "good old lord Gonzalo" was not excluded from Prospero's machinations. Ariel appeals to Prospero:

His tears runs down his beard like winter's drops
 From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works 'em
 That if you now beheld them, your affections
 Would become tender. (5.1.15-18)

The fact that Ariel's report focuses first on Gonzalo and his sufferings seems to suggest that a wrong has been committed, that Prospero may have crossed a line. The magician asks, "Dost thou think so, spirit?" To which Ariel replies, "Mine would, sir, were I human" (19-20). Thus we are presented with a spirit entreating his master to behave with some humanity and compassion. Ariel evidently succeeds, as Prospero responds:

And mine shall.
 Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
 Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
 One of their kind, that relish all as sharply
 Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?
 Though with their high wrongs I am struck to th' quick,
 Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
 Do I take part. (20-27)

Unlike Faustus, Prospero is persuaded to "stay thy desperate steps!" (Marlowe A text 5.1.53). Thanks to Ariel, Prospero is persuaded to do the right thing, that "The rarer action is / In

virtue than in vengeance.” This suggests that he perceives only two real options. Although he decides to go down the path of virtue, his words prove that he has at least considered opting for vengeance. The next line is perhaps the most telling of what Prospero’s intentions had been up to this point: “They being penitent / The sole drift of my purpose doth extend / Not a frown further” (5.1.27-30). Although this obviously does not specify what he had in mind for his enemies, it strongly supports the idea that his actions from this point forward are not what he had originally intended. He has been convinced not to follow through with his original purpose, and we are left to wonder just what that purpose would have entailed.

The contrasts between Ariel and Prospero’s relationship and Mephistopheles and Faustus’s relationship become the most evident and relevant during each play’s supposed *volte face*. Cleanth Brooks identifies a *volte face* for Faustus when the Old Man tries to talk him into repenting. There are many discrepancies between the A text and the B text version of the Old Man’s dialogue, but he essentially fears for Faustus’s soul and tries to convince him to repent. Faustus suddenly and unexpectedly responds with suicidal despair:

Where art thou, Faustus? Wretch, what hast thou done?

Damned art thou, Faustus, damned! Despair and die!

Hell calls for right, and with a roaring voice

Says, ‘Faustus, come! Thine hour is come.’ (A text 5.1.48-51)

Then, after Mephistopheles hands him a dagger, Faustus prepares to stab himself when the Old Man intervenes again and entreats him to “call for mercy and avoid despair” (A text 57 B text 60). Faustus responds by referring to the Old Man as a friend and telling him, “I feel thy words to comfort my distressed soul. Leave me a while to ponder on my sins” (A text 59-60 B text 61-62). At which point, after some parting words, the Old Man leaves and Faustus once again

expresses his inner turmoil and the tension he feels between damnation and redemption, which compels Mephistopheles to threaten him: “Thou traitor, Faustus, I arrest thy soul / For disobedience to my sovereign lord. / Revolt, or I’ll in piecemeal tear thy flesh” (A text 67-69 B text 69-71). The threat works. Faustus refers to Mephistopheles as “Sweet Mephistopheles,” and offers to use his own blood to renew his contract, which prompts Mephistopheles to say, “Do it then, Faustus, with unfeignèd heart, / Lest greater dangers do attend thy drift” (A text 74-75 B text 77-78). Then, after Faustus cuts his arm and writes with his blood, he speaks the words that, for Brooks, appear to signify his *volte face*: “Torment, sweet friend, that base and crooked age / that durst dissuade me from thy Lucifer, / With greatest torments that our hell affords” (A text 76-78).

David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen’s introduction to the Revels Plays edition of Doctor Faustus remarks that, in this scene, Faustus’s “cravenness in asking that Mephistopheles torment the Old Man for tempting Faustus to good is one last sign of his deeply corrupted nature” (21). They also mention Roma Gill, who, in her own introduction to the play, focuses on Faustus’s kissing Helen of Troy in this scene as the final moment of his damnation: “The kiss signals the ultimate sin, demoniality, the bodily intercourse with spirits.³ Now the Old Man gives up hope of saving Faustus. After such knowledge there is no forgiveness” (17). Cleanth Brooks interprets the scene similarly, arguing that “when Faustus does indeed become irrecoverably damned, he shows it in his conduct, and the change in conduct is startling. Faustus has now become a member of the devil’s party in a sense in which he has not been before” (287). This *volte face* seems much more debatable than Prospero’s, based on the notion that Faustus does not appear to undergo the kind of profound change that Prospero does. However, Brooks’s interpretation encourages us to take a closer look at the respective scenes of both plays.

³ Gill mentions that this was first pointed out by W.W. Greg.

The Old Man is severely mistreated by Faustus for his attempt to save Faustus's soul. His petitioning of Faustus is not unlike Ariel's supplication to Prospero in that they both try to appeal to the magicians' better nature, to their humanity. I would argue that they are both attempting to make a final plea for each protagonist's soul respectively. Perhaps the main difference is that Ariel makes a personal argument using pathos, whereas the Old Man presents a spiritual argument to someone who has lost his faith. In any case, Ariel succeeds where the Old Man fails because of the relationship that Ariel has with Prospero. As I have already tried to argue, Ariel's closest analogue in Doctor Faustus is Mephistopheles, but he, unlike Ariel, is not trying to save his master's soul, he is out to ruin it. Ariel is diligent and dutiful, as we are told on multiple occasions. Mephistopheles is notoriously disobedient, and his service to Faustus is so profoundly disappointing that it makes many critics question Faustus's intelligence in entering into the pact and remaining faithful to it even though Mephistopheles obviously does not hold up his end of the bargain. The relationship between Ariel and Prospero is one in which the servant appears to genuinely care for his master and look out for his best interests, whereas the relationship between Mephistopheles and Faustus is diametrically opposed to this, as is evidenced by Mephistopheles's threats against Faustus and his encouragement of Faustus's suicide.

Therefore, Prospero's divergence from Faustus's path to damnation is primarily due to the differences between Ariel and Mephistopheles, rather than the perceived differences between the magicians themselves. With Ariel's help, Prospero is able to utilize magic as a means to accomplish all of his goals, whereas Faustus's demands are poorly met by Mephistopheles. The contrast of Prospero's success with Faustus's relative failure may not be attributable to any significant differences between their types of magic, as some scholars have proposed, but rather to the levels of dutifulness and dependability of their servants. Thanks to Ariel, Prospero is

eventually persuaded to abjure his “rough magic,” because choosing virtue over vengeance does not require him to maintain his “potent art.” Faustus, on the other hand, is coerced by Mephistopheles to abjure God, not his magic. Thus Prospero drowns his book, whereas Faustus only wishes he had burned his.

The notion that Marlowe’s play influenced Shakespeare’s seems obvious given the abundance of textual evidence; however, the question remains regarding what type of influence it was. While an argument could be made for an assimilative influence, one that utilizes certain aspects of the original in order to make some kind of claim or point along the same lines, it seems much more likely that Shakespeare was reacting to Marlowe’s play, especially considering the salient differences between the servants and the dramatic difference in the outcomes of the two plays. A reactionary influence would suggest that Shakespeare was not merely appropriating some of Marlowe’s techniques and strategies, but that he was reflecting upon them thoughtfully and as a playwright with decades of experience. M.C. Bradbrook makes a similar, albeit more generalized, argument regarding reactionary influence: “Shakespeare’s relation to Kyd, and to Lyly, is often of a more detailed kind than his relation to Marlowe, for what they offered were theatrical models of rhetorical speech and dramatic patterning. What Shakespeare learnt from Marlowe, the only figure whose poetic powers approached his own, was shown rather in reaction” (203). The argument for perceiving Prospero as a Faustian character does more than simply affect a reading of him, it also has profound ramifications on the perception of his relationship with Ariel. Ariel’s similarities with Mephistopheles reveal how integral he is to Prospero’s design, but their differences reveal how integral he is to the fate of Alonso’s party and Prospero’s soul. Prospero’s Faustian tendencies suggest that his soul is

indeed in danger throughout most of the play, and the abjuration of his rough magic and the drowning of his book are necessary steps toward his salvation.

Interestingly, however, some moments in the final scene suggest that Prospero may not have entirely turned over a new leaf. His remark to Alonso about Ferdinand being as valued to his father as Prospero's dukedom is to him, along with Antonio's accusation that the devil speaks through Prospero, serves as a reminder of Prospero's original intentions and the fact that he used wicked means to achieve selfish ends. Prospero may have spared his enemies and now claims to forgive them, but he still managed to torment them, regain the power he once neglected, and acquire even more power for his family, all without anyone realizing that he was behind all of the events that had transpired. In other words, he behaves like Faustus, manipulates people, plays God, and gets away with it. Perhaps that is Shakespeare's ultimate response: that repentance and the abjuration of magic would allow the magician to succeed in his magical ventures without incurring eternal damnation. This would be somewhat fitting considering that Marlowe and Shakespeare had such similar backgrounds, yet by the time Shakespeare was writing The Tempest, his path had diverged greatly from Marlowe's. Marlowe had been an exceptionally successful playwright in life, but by the time of his murder in 1593 and for many years after, his reputation was soiled by rumors that he had been an atheist and a catholic spy. Shakespeare, on the other hand, had become quite wealthy and successful by the time he wrote The Tempest, many years after Marlowe's death. As Kenneth Muir points out, some critics' comparisons of Doctor Faustus with Macbeth are hardly justifiable considering "the absurdity of comparing the work of a man of twenty-eight with that of a man of forty" (9). I would add that Marlowe was likely even younger than that when he authored Faustus, and Shakespeare was certainly older by the time Prospero first appeared on stage. Yet, remarkably, one of The Bard's final works bears a

significant resemblance to that of his long dead contemporary. Perhaps at one level, Shakespeare wrote The Tempest as a reflection on how far he had come and how different his life and his career had been from Marlowe's.

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