

"There's Magic in the Web of It":

White and Black Magic in
Jonson, Marlowe and Shakespeare

By

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Abstract

This paper investigates the ways that William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson manipulated the traditional forms of black and white magic to suit their theatrical purposes in The Tempest, The Alchemist and Doctor Faustus. The paper argues that the three plays explore the paradox that the role of the magician symbolizes: man is by nature at once both limited and limitless. Magic enables the dramatists to liven their plays with theatrical spectacle, and more importantly to explore the existential tensions entailed in the notion of hidden knowledge. Their plays record in different ways the threat that the rise of science posed for magic. Marlowe records something of the contemporary attack upon magic as blasphemous, Jonson something of the sudden destruction of alchemy at the hands of chemistry and Shakespeare something of the fading of occultism generally with the growing empirical knowledge of the world.

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I: Introduction: The Status of Magic in Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare

Rather illusions, fruits of lunacy,
That makes men foolish that do trust them most.
(Doctor Faustus, 2.1.18-19)

"Divinity, adieu! These metaphysics of magicians / And necromantic books are heavenly!" (1.1.49-51). Christopher Marlowe's protagonist Dr. Faustus uses magic to free himself from the constraints of his own humanity, and in doing so embraces further study of the unknown. With these words, Marlowe establishes the fascination that his protagonist has and an Elizabethan audience would have had for the art of magic. As a scholar, Faustus establishes the boundaries for the study of magic and the repercussions that the practice of such an art would have entailed. In Ben Jonson's The Alchemist, the reader is presented with a group of manipulative conspirators who would use alchemy (considered an area of white magic along with astrology, the raising of Neoplatonic daemons, and healing with herbs) to escape the conditions of earthly life (Woodman 13). Jonson satirizes the science of alchemy to illustrate the opportunism that arises when gullibility and greed surpass common sense. Jonson's victims are awed by Subtle's airs and charisma, and by Face's false advertising. As a result of their

self-serving ambitions, the malefactors in The Alchemist play prize fools and reinforce Jonson's underlying moral message.

In William Shakespeare's The Tempest, the audience is offered characters who are victims of fate, for whom magic is a means to escape from the inevitable. Shakespeare, however, obfuscates the notion of white magic by folding elements of both black magic and fertility magic into Prospero's art, though the validity of Prospero's art is justified by its outcome. As a result, the presentation of magic in The Tempest, like that in Doctor Faustus and The Alchemist, enacts the tension implicit in the notion of forbidden knowledge. It was the existential tension inherent in humanist thought generally, indeed in any human quest for self-liberation. Marlowe, Shakespeare and Jonson necessarily, given the centrality of religious thought at the time, represent it as a crisis of conscience.

Because magic was little understood by all but adepts, the use of a magician protagonist could create opportunities to awe an audience with a presentation of the unknown. A review of some aspects of the concept of magic at the time makes clear what was involved in such effects. In his Historie of the World (1614), Sir Walter Raleigh dedicated chapter 11 of his first book to the divers kinds of magic and conjuring:

Now for Magicke it selfe; which Art (saith Mirandula)
pauci intelligunt, multi reprehendunt, Few understand,

and many reprehend: Et sicut canes ignotos semper
allatrant, As dogges barke at those they know not: so
they condemne and hate the things they understand not.

(1.1.166)

Raleigh distinguished between legitimate magic (dedicated to the worshipping of God) and the various forms of unlawful magic which, as described by Heinrich Bullinger, whose writing was held in high esteem by the Elizabethan Church, and by medieval writers such as Chaucer, involved the invocation of evil spirits. Raleigh divides legitimate magic into three categories:

And this is the first and highest kinde: which Piccolominie calleth divine Magicke: and these did the Latines newly intitle sapientes or wisemen: For the feare and worship of God is the beginning of knowledge. [. . .] A second kinde of Magicke was that part of Astrologie, which had respect to sowing and planting, and kinds of agriculture and husbandrie: which was a knowledge of the motions and influences of the Starres into those lower elements. [. . .] The third kinde of Magicke containeth the whole Philosophie of nature; not the brablings of the Aristotelians, but that which bringeth to light the inmost vertues, and draweth them out of natures hidden bosome to humane use, Virtutes in centro centri

latentes, Vertues hidden in the center of the center,
according to the Chymists. (1.11.166-167)

The modern terms of black and white magic differentiate between magic that invokes evil spirits, and what the French referred to as *magie blanche*, or natural magic, that had healing properties (OED, "Magic," def. 1b). Chaucer refers to natural magic in his House of Fame (1384).

Ther saugh I pleyen Iogelours,
Magiciens and tregetours,
And phitonesses, charmeresses,
Olde wicches, sorceresses,
That use exorsisaciouns,
And eek thise fumigaciouns;
And clerkes eek, which conne wel
Al this magyke naturel,
That craftely don hir ententes,
To make, in certeyn ascendentes,
Images, lo, through which magyk
To make a men ben hool or syk.
Ther saugh I thee, queen Medea,
And Circes eke, and Calipsa;
Ther saugh I Hermes Ballenus,
Lymote, and eek Simon Magus.
Ther saugh I, and knew hem by name,

That by such art don men han fame. (3.1259-1276)

Natural magic was considered a legitimate practice in the Middle Ages, so long as it was not employed for malevolent ends (OED, "Magic," 1a). Natural magic was understood by medieval writers to involve the making of a waxen image under astrological conditions to injure or benefit the health of the person represented (OED, "Magic," 1a). Natural magic would also have been known to involve the application of a medicament to a weapon to cure the wound produced by such a weapon (OED, "Magic," 1a). Such practice was later explained by science, and while still considered natural, would hardly be called magic. Any magic involving the invocation of evil spirits would have, of course, seemed dubious (OED, "Magic," 1a).

Black magic involves the supposed invocation of evil spirits or devils; Marlowe makes Faustus a black magician in order to create the dramatic tension that animates his play. Marlowe could have adapted his characters Mephistophilis and Lucifer from contemporary sermons on the nature of good and evil spirits. The most authoritative of these is found in The Decades of Henry Bullinger, which were made compulsory reading for the less educated clergy of the Elizabethan Church of England (Cromarty, screen 1). Bullinger describes the nature of good spirits, or angels, as that of complete obedience and service to God. According to Bullinger, good angels are

innumerable, incorruptible and are in constant pursuit of truth. They are in strict service to God, rejoice in God's glory, and sing His praises in hymns. They are also assigned to protect man under God's instruction and supervision. That the true nature and substance of angels cannot be wholly perceived allows Marlowe a certain latitude in depicting the crisis of conscience that plagues Faustus.

Now what the nature of angels is, it cannot thoroughly be declared of any man. For there are many things in the order of creatures, whose nature cannot directly and perfectly be expounded: they may nevertheless after a sort, according to our capacity, be shadowed out. Some therefore there are which say that angels are good spirits, ministers, of a fiery nature, created for the ministry or service of God and good men. Other some say angels are heavenly spirits, whose ministry and service God useth to execute all things which he hath determined. Wherefore we shall not seem to miss much of the mark, if we say that angels are good spirits, heavenly substances (I mean incorruptible), created for the ministry or service of God and men. (Bullinger 328)

Heaven, and God's ministering angels, remain relatively undefined by Marlowe, while Mephistophilis and Lucifer are less

abstract. So too are Bullinger's fallen angels, whom he shadows out more clearly in their wicked nature and revolt than he does his angels of good.

Now what thing devils are, it is no less hard and doubtful exactly to define by reason, than I said it was difficult to describe fully the nature of angels: howbeit I will shadow them out by one or other kind of description, to the end I may entreat of them in a certain order. Evil angels are corrupt and wicked spirits, and, for their revolting or falling away, everlastingly condemned: subject indeed they are to God, but yet nevertheless adversaries to God and men, for that they turn all their travails and studies to the contempt and despising of God, and to the deceiving and destruction of men. (Bullinger 349)

When Marlowe puts his black magician on stage, he places him between a Good and Evil Angel to represent his continuing crisis of conscience. From that fact, we can assume that Faustus is not completely without merit, for, according to Bullinger, Good Angels only appear at the service and protection of men whom God determines to be good in nature. Moreover, Faustus uses black magic without a full appreciation of what that magic entails and he is therefore a victim of circumstance; he is damned from the beginning of the play, and his life plays

out without control. Marlowe creates doubt about the freedom of Faustus's will early in the play. In Act 2, scene 3, Faustus asks the Good Angel if it is too late to repent. The Good Angel replies: "Never too late, if Faustus can repent" (2.3.81).

Marlowe's use of "if" raises the issue of whether Faustus is one of the elect or one of the reprobate. According to Calvinist doctrine, if Faustus is elect, then it is never too late to repent; however if he is reprobate, he cannot repent and it is always too late (Keefer, 45, 81n). The issue is raised again in Act 4, scene 2:

What art thou, Faustus, but a man condemn'd to die?

Thy fatal time doth draw to final end;

Despair doth drive distrust into my thoughts.

Confound these passions with a quiet sleep:

Tush, Christ did call the thief upon the cross.

Then rest thee, Faustus, quiet in conceit. (4.2.33-38)

In his notes on this passage, Michael Keefer cites St. Augustine's interpretation of the thief upon the cross. St. Augustine remarks that one of the thieves is saved and one is damned, but we are not to know which one. The same can be said of Faustus. With the presence of both the Good and Evil Angels, we cannot be sure until the play's end whether Faustus is elect or reprobate (Keefer 72, 37n).

Faustus's literal crisis of conscience is demonstrated by the appearance of both the Good and Evil Angels whose discourse interrupts Faustus's interior monologue throughout the play. The interruption perhaps distracts the reader from truly interpreting Faustus's intentions. He is alone in his study only at the very beginning and at the very end of the play. The movement of the play from the first scene to the last invokes the image of the Elizabethan Wheel of Fortune, an image that implies an otherworldly power that overrides human control. In both scenes, Faustus rationalizes his decisions with a logic that is irresistibly human, and as fellow human beings we are led to choose as he chooses. Marlowe adds further to Faustus's humanity by rendering him a comic figure in many of the intervening scenes, and in so doing he diminishes what is threatening in black magic. How else could a successful scholar dissolve so easily into parlour tricks? Would Helen not attract any man? Are we not all predisposed to temptation? Faustus is heady with the experience of magic; it is an inebriation reminiscent of the classical bacchanal where figures change back and forth between human and monstrous. Faustus is never certain of the illusory world created by Mephistophilis, and his attempts to rationalize his mental torment are pitiable.

He is in the ubiquitous Hell described by Mephistophilis, but is not convinced that he has a genuine opportunity to repent and escape his contract:

Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,
 A hundred thousand, and at last be sav'd.
 O, no end is limited to damned souls.
 Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
 Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
 Ah, Pythagoras' metempsychosis, were that true
 This soul should fly from me, and I be chang'd
 Unto some brutish beast.
 All beasts are happy, for when they die
 Their souls are soon dissolv'd in elements,
 But mine must live still to be plagued in hell.

(5.2.94-104)

Faustus is incapable of recognizing the opportunities for repentance even until the last (where Christ's blood is pouring down the walls of his study) because these illusions are no more real than the siren Helen who would steal his soul with a kiss.

O lente lente currite noctis equi!
 The stars move still, time runs, the clock will
 strike,
 The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd.
 O, I'll leap up to my God: who pulls me down?

See, see where Christ's blood streams in the
firmament:

One drop would save my soul, half a drop! Ah, my
Christ,

Ah rend not my heart for naming of my Christ,

Yet will I call on him, oh spare me Lucifer!

Where is it now? 'tis gone,

And see where God stretcheth out his arm

And bends his ireful brows!

Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,

And hide me from the heavy wrath of God.

No, no?

Then will I headlong run into the earth.

Earth, gape! O no, it will not harbour me.

You stars that reign'd at my nativity,

Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,

Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist

Into the entrails of yon laboring cloud,

That when you vomit forth into the air

My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths,

So that my soul may but ascend to heaven.

(5.2.67-89)

Faustus is the most tragic figure in all of the three plays
being examined. He is predestined to fail. Faustus is never

given the opportunity to use white magic, and he invokes Mephistophilis without any real comprehension of the contract he is set to enter into. Faustus is not merely a sorcerer. He has a working knowledge of magic, and is a revered intellectual. He is well-schooled in mathematics, science and literature; he has a stature as a scholar that adds an almost mythological dimension to the play. We are presented with another Prometheus, one who is wiser than most, but crosses God's authority and is punished for it. His demonstrations of magic that dissolve rapidly into sheer spectacle are similar to the shows of morality exercised by the gods of Mount Olympus. As if to confirm this similarity, we have the image of Helen of Sparta who appears as another Eve. However, was Marlowe also hinting that Faustus, like Helen, is wrongfully accused and is therefore illegitimately damned by his actions? It is an entirely different field of action in Marlowe than we see in Jonson, or in Shakespeare. Marlowe has created a sympathetic protagonist who uses black magic; we are meant not to question Faustus, but to question the means by which he advances his ambition:

But Faustus' offence can ne'er be pardoned: the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus. Ah gentleman, hear me with patience, and tremble not at my speeches. Though my heart pants and quivers to remember that I have been a student

here these thirty years, O would I had never seen
 Wittenberg, never read book: and what wonders I have
 done, all Germany can witness, yea all the world, yea
 heaven itself, heaven the seat of God, the throne of
 the blessed, the kingdom of joy, and must remain in
 hell for ever - hell, ah, hell, for ever! Sweet
 friends, what shall become of Faustus, being in hell
 for ever? (5.2.14-25)

If that question arises in the audience's mind, along with it comes a suspicion that Marlowe sees religion as an impediment to knowledge, and finds it distasteful and anachronistic in relation to intellectual currents of his time.

While Faustus employs black magic to advance his cause, Shakespeare's protagonist, according to the literary scholar Frank Kermode's critically accepted position, manipulates white magic to achieve his ends. White magic involves the invocation of good spirits and is used for beneficent or harmless purposes. Kermode argues that Prospero succeeds as a white magician because he doesn't inflict physical harm upon his enemies, Antonio, Sebastian and Alonso. Prospero uses white magic to restore his authority and then abandons magic once order has been restored. The argument, however, does not take into account some clearly negative elements of magic in the play. When Prospero abjures his magic and drowns his book, the action

is a self-deprecating maneuver designed to underscore the danger of the magus's power. After all, the passage directly preceding alludes to Medea's incantation and hints at something more sinister.

Have I given fire and Jove's stout oak
 With his own bolt: the strong-based promontory
 Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
 The pine and cedar; graves at my command
 Have waked their sleepers, ope'd and let'em forth
 By my so potent art. But this rough magic
 I here abjure; and when I have required
 Some heavenly music (which even now I do)
 To work mine end upon their senses that
 This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
 Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
 And deeper that did ever plummet sound
 I'll drown my book. (5.1.45-57)

And while Prospero does restrain himself from inflicting physical harm upon his enemies, he does inflict a mental torment on them and on others, a torment similar to that we see in Marlowe. For these reasons, it seems better to represent Prospero as using not white but rough magic, a term Shakespeare himself created to describe Prospero's art.

In Prospero's abjuration we have another rationalized argument for the use of magic, as Prospero is another qualified scholar. However, Prospero has a specific end in mind: to regain his kingdom. Is Prospero's use of magic validated because his goal is not so vague as the curiosity that moves Faustus towards an exploration of necromancy? Is not Prospero's manipulation of others at least as sinister as Faustus's illusory antics? We can deduce something of what Shakespeare means by "rough magic" from his use of the term "rough work" in Timon of Athens, a tragedy that illustrates the darker aspects of humanity such as the devastating vice of greed.

You see this confluence, this great flood of visitors:

I have in this rough work shap'd out a man
 Whom this beneath-world doth embrace and hug
 With amplest entertainment. My free drift
 Halts not particularly, but moves itself
 In a wide sea of wax; no levelled malice
 Infects one comma in the course I hold,
 But flies an eagle flight, bold and forth on,
 Leaving no tract behind.

(Timon of Athens, 1.1.41-50)

Shakespeare's "rough work" in Timon of Athens represents limitless possibility; the "sea of wax" could signify a malleable perpetual sea of creativity and inspiration which is

not limited to the confines of a writing tablet or academic books. Within this sublunary beneath-world, or earthly, existence, it is possible to fashion human nature after what is desirable or necessary. Prospero's art is a similar one of orchestration and manipulation. He teaches Caliban language in hopes of refining him, and then abandons him on the island because he is still not civilized enough for Milan court life. Prospero forces hard manual labour upon Ferdinand as proof of Ferdinand's affection towards Miranda. Most significantly, Prospero uses a shipwreck to strand his enemies on the island because he is incapable of regulating them otherwise. Prospero is constantly using his rough magic to carve out a place for himself and in order to do this he must first mold the wills of those around him. However, his work is not always entirely successful and is often harsh, as in the case of Caliban. Prospero endeavors to transform the nature of individuals so that he may become their master, something we see in Jonson. However, as in Jonson, the magic is only crudely sufficient.

Prospero carves out his destiny for himself and in this sense has a much easier task with his magic than Faustus has with his. While both protagonists are isolated, Prospero's isolation is physical, not social or intellectual. The island is fertile and is filled with spirits such as Ariel who are accomplices to Prospero's grand design, a design that is reduced

(somewhat mockingly by Shakespeare) to Ferdinand and Miranda's unfinished chess match in the cave. Faustus's isolation, however, is both social and intellectual, not just physical, and he is much more the alien as a result. Faustus represents a sort of estrangement from others, and that estrangement leads him to seek magic for both intellectual stimulation and the company of other untouchables (such as Valdes, Cornelius, Lucifer, and Mephistophilis). Faustus's magic is a personal revolt against academic and religious authority. It is a milder form of the anarchy that is expanded dramatically in The Tempest with Antonio's political overthrow of Prospero. We are led to believe that Prospero has been wrongly usurped, and that the natural order in the play has been upset by political upheaval. By exerting his will over the others on the island, Prospero contains the anarchy and emerges as a benign dictator. It is a plainly paradoxical role, as the scope of Prospero's beneficence is limited by his own desire for political control.

For all its darkness, however, rough magic can work powerfully for the good. Shakespeare has secluded Prospero on an island, a fact that sets us at a remove from him. We see him not just as an isolated individual, but as the last bastion of truth and honesty. From the beginning of The Tempest, we are encouraged to believe that Prospero's cause is just if for no other reason than that he is not surrounded by charlatans until

the fateful shipwreck. The shipwreck is itself symbolic of the Apocalypse with Prospero as the ultimate judge of souls. His magic is benign and seemingly divinely assured; it is devoid of the cynical rhetoric we see in Jonson and is ultimately affirmed in the union of the lovers Ferdinand and Miranda and the restoration of political legitimacy at the end of the play. We could also argue that this union of lovers implies salvation. Man has been absolved of his sins -- "The rarer action is / In virtue than in vengeance. They being penitent, / The sole drift of my purpose doth extend / Not a frown further" -- and is allowed to propagate the species (5.1.27-30). It is a hope that has no place in Marlowe's magic or, to a great extent, in Jonson's.

The corrupt triumvirate of Face, Dol, and Subtle in Jonson's The Alchemist also uses rough magic. But while the rough magic of The Tempest is a distorted version of white magic, the rough magic of The Alchemist is a completely corrupted version of white magic, one that renders magic impotent. Subtle, Face, and Dol are all three guilty of the same manipulation we see in Prospero, but they meet with failure. "[W]ith realistic insight and eager cunning," David Woodman observes, "the charlatan magician could, under the guise of doing good, manipulate his gulls and make fortunes, until he entangled himself in his own plot, or made a fatal error in

judgment" (Woodman 137). Implicated in their obfuscation of magic is Jonson's distinction between a magician and a sorcerer: a magician possesses a real and extensive knowledge of magic, while a sorcerer feigns it (Woodman 123-124). Face, Dol and Subtle are sorcerers practicing rough magic; the language of The Alchemist (which is essentially highly stylized rhetoric) is meant to confound both the audience and the other characters in the play, as opposed to being used to accomplish some real or tangible goal.

It is, of the one part,
 A humid exhalation, which we call
Materia liquida, or the unctuous water;
 On the other part, a certain crass and viscous
 Portion of earth; both which, concorporate,
 Do make the elementary matter of gold;
 Which is not yet *propria materia*,
 But common to all metals and all stones.
 For, where it is forsaken of that moisture,
 And hath more dryness, it becomes a stone;
 Where it retains more of the humid fatness,
 It turns to sulphur, or to quicksilver,
 Who are the parents of all other metals.
 Nor can this remote matter suddenly
 Progress so from extreme unto extreme,

As to grow gold, and leap o'er all the means.
 Nature doth first beget the imperfect, then
 Proceeds she to the perfect. Of that airy
 And oily water, mercury is engendered;
 Sulphur of the fat and earthy part; the one,
 Which is the last, supplying the place of the male,
 The other of the female, in all metals.
 Some do believe hermaphrodeity,
 That both do act and suffer. But these two
 Make the rest ductile, malleable, extensive.
 And even in gold they are; for we do find
 Seeds of them, by our fire, and gold in them,
 And can produce the species of each metal
 More perfect thence, than nature doth in earth.

(2.3.142-170)

Jonson uses the science of alchemy as a symbol of human perfectibility. The irony is of course that no human being is perfectible and that fact produces the utter collapse of morality in The Alchemist. Face, Dol and Subtle are a sort of tribunal incapable of exacting true judgment. The success of their enterprise relies equally on their victims' gullibility and ultimate hope for salvation as on financial gain. As Woodman observes:

The notion of a healing elixir, whose cure-all powers supposedly fulfill every desire and sustain life indefinitely, was the perfect idea for all those posing as healers. Its elusive quality and beckoning promise was ideal for financial gain. As Jonson employs alchemy, its ramifications become multi-leveled, interchangeably overlapping in business, religion, and healing. The drive to discover gold is both worship and commercial enterprise, as well as a key to unlimited sexual prowess that will prolong man's happiness forever. Yet it is on man himself that the pseudo-chemists parasitically feed. Their activity here underscores the future trends of manipulative relationships in a growing age of commerce. (Woodman 136)

We could say that the same blind faith applies to religious fanaticism in the play: for Tribulation Wholesome, the non-existent philosopher's stone becomes a kind of Second Coming (3.1.34-35, 3.2.97-101). Even Sir Epicure Mammon represents himself as a kind of new Jesus who goes about healing the sick and purifying the souls of mankind (2.1.63-70). However, the landscape of The Alchemist is anything but another Eden. It is a microcosm of disorder; it is an Eden post-apple, and a further example of the dangers of knowledge.

The world of all three plays is an Eden post-apple. In that disordered world, magic is a dangerous knowledge. Its danger -- and illusion -- is that it leads man to think that he is in control. It is no coincidence that the three magicians are scholars, because the moral crisis that they endure plays out a tension that lay at the heart of Renaissance humanism. On the one hand, as John Carroll argues,

The axiom on which the humanist rock was to be forged was put well by Pico della Mirandola in 1486 as by anyone: 'We can become what we will.' It is more complete than Alberti's earlier and more celebrated formulation: 'Men can do all things if they will.' So the humanist fathers put their founding axiom: man is all-powerful, if his will is strong enough. He can create himself. (Carroll 3)

On the other hand, the problem of necessity, which is reducible to the problem of death, presses in.

Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare used magic to explore -- sometimes seriously, sometimes comically -- this tension and what was entailed in it. In the next chapter, I will consider the role of the magician in the three plays, both in terms of its practical, theatrical dimension and in terms of its symbolic power. In the third chapter, I will consider how the plays test the moral boundaries of magic in their presentation of it. In

the fourth chapter, I will consider how the plays reflect the challenge that scientific inquiry posed to magic.

II: The Performative and Symbolic Roles of the Magician

You taught me language, and my profit on it
 Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
 For learning me your language!
 (Tempest, 1.2.363)

One role of dramatists is to please audiences, and Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare found in the figure of the magician a generous resource for achieving that end. They use their magicians to give their audiences a delight that derives from the most rudimentary to the most spectacular, even awesome, stage effects. Whatever the effect, however, the delight is always embedded in the eternal human paradox that the magician and his art symbolize: man is at once both limited and limitless. Everything the magician does embodies the continual struggle between what is humanly conceivable and what is humanly possible. As Woodman observes, "The aura of magic was an obvious source of dramatic excitement for the playwright, and, more important, it lent itself as an attribute to the various kinds of personal power that so many Renaissance plays explored" (Woodman 137). The apocalyptic storm that Prospero creates shows the gigantic scope of his powers, though he never desires beyond what he perceives as rightfully his. The impatience and ill temper he shows when practicing his art,

however, communicate the constraints that bind him, and Prospero exhorts the audience to find sympathy with his cause in the play's epilogue.

Now, 'tis true
 I must be here confined by you,
 Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
 Since I have my dukedom got
 And pardoned the deceiver, dwell
 In this bare island by your spell;
 But release me from my bands
 With the help of your good hands.
 Gentle breath of yours my sails
 Must fill, or else my project fails,
 Which was to please. (Epilogue.3-13)

Faustus yearns for an escape from the boredom of the already mastered arts of academia. He never covets to leave the earthly world entirely, for he would still "wall all Germany with brass / And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg" (1.1.89-90), but he perceives Mephastophilis as a means to achieving a sort of unity (albeit a totalitarian one) in the New World that he will create.

By him I'll be great emperor of the world,
 And make a bridge thorough the moving air
 To pass the ocean with a band of men;

I'll join the hills that bind the Afric shore,
 And make that country continent to Spain,
 And both contributory to my crown;
 The emperor shall not live but by my leave,
 Nor any potentate of Germany. (1.3.104-111)

Subtle uses his limited knowledge of a limited science to achieve the limitless ends that arouse his victims, such as Sir Epicure Mammon, who strive for the impossible goal of perfecting human nature.

Do you think I am fable with you? I assure you,
 He that has once the flower of the sun,
 The perfect ruby, which we call elixir,
 Not only can do that, but, by its virtue,
 Can confer honor, love, respect, long life;
 Give safety, valor, yea, and victory,
 To whom he will. In eight and twenty days
 I'll make an old man of fourscore, a child.
 (2.1.46-52)

Jonson's play involves the science of alchemy, which theoretically strives for the impossible: to turn baser metals into gold. This alchemy also applies to the characters in Jonson's play. "Having endeavored to perfect himself through eradicating base elements from his own character," Woodman argues, "he can then strive to raise all that is inferior to a

state of perfection"(Woodman 12-13). Subtle has transformed to a reputed scientist from an indigent derelict "pinned up in the several rags." "You had raked and picked from dunghills," Face reminds him, "before day; / Your feet in moldy slippers, for your kibes, / A felt of rug, and a thin threaden cloak, / That scarce would cover your no-buttocks"(1.1.33-37). Likewise, Face has undergone a transformation. Now the master of Lovewit's house, nevertheless, "[H]ave I ta'en thee out of dung," Subtle asks him --

So poor, so wretched, when no living thing
 Would keep thee company, but a spider, or worse?
 Raised thee from brooms, and dust, and watering-pots,
 Sublimed thee, and exalted thee, and fixed thee
 In the third region, called our state of grace?
 (1.1.64-69)

Subtle, however, strives for a monetary end, more practical than alchemical perfection, and it is achievable because of the gullibility of his victims, characterized monumentally in Abel Drugger. Within the play, we see at work forces opposing each other, both alchemically and literally. Subtle, Face and Dol practice to deceive where Ananias seeks the truth. Out of the chaos and utter corruption Jonson distills a succinct moral message for his audience: "Will you be / Your own destructions, gentlemen?"(1.1.103-104).

Besides providing a venue to explore the eternal human paradox of limitation, the character of the magician also opens the door to more immediate effects. Take, for example, an episode from the second act of The Alchemist. Sir Epicure Mammon has brought his skeptical friend Surly along to watch the alchemist and his assistant at work. He hopes and believes that the creation of the philosopher's stone is only hours away:

FACE: Sir, please you,
Shall I not change the filter?

SUB: Marry, yes;
And bring me the complexion of glass B.

MAMM: Have you another?

SUB: Yes, son; were I assured
Your piety were firm, we would not want
The means to glorify it; but I hope the best.
I mean to tinct C in sand-heat tomorrow,
And give him imbibition.

MAMM: Of white oil?

SUB: No, sir, of red. F is come over the helm too,
I thank my maker, in Saint Mary's bath,
And shows *lac virginis*. Blessed be heaven!
I sent you of his faeces there calcined:
Out of that calx, I have won the salt of
mercury.

MAMM: By pouring on your rectified water?

SUB: Yes, and reverberating in Athanor.

How now! what color says it?

FACE: The ground black, sir.

MAMM: That's your crow's head?

SURLY: Your cockscomb's is it not?

SUB: No, 'tis not perfect. Would it were the crow.

That work wants something.

SURLY: O, I looked for this.

The hay's a pitching. (2.3.54-73)

The brilliant impersonation of the pretended alchemists, the swift change of costumes, the carefully considered movement of glasses, vials, and coloured liquids all help to produce the vivid illusion that something glorious is about to take shape from the baser elements, and the audience is swept up with the excitement of anticipation. But the audience takes pleasure not just in its engagement in the action, but also in its distance from it, in other words in a particular kind of dramatic irony. The audience knows what Sir Epicure doesn't know and Surly is only guessing at: the colourful action and speech that Face and Subtle perform into such conviction is a fraud. The audience delights in the brilliance of Face and Subtle's control over what is happening on stage, in this apparent dedication to and utter absorption in their game. The brilliance of their

manipulation, along with the superb characterization of credulity in Sir Epicure, is the source of the scene's comedy.

There is something else in the artistic distancing at work in the scene as it is staged, and it is related to what, in film studies, has been called "scopophilia", literally the love of looking. "Sitting immobile in the theater," Elise Lemire writes, "isolated from the rest of the audience by virtue of the darkness, the film spectator is seemingly left alone to peer secretly at the illusion of a private world displayed on the screen. In turn, this world on the screen functions like a projected image of the spectator's own subjective fantasies" (Lemire, 57). Film theorists often associate scopophilia with voyeuristic tendencies. Lemire, for example, points to Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, where a series of point-of-view shots and the use of a telephoto lens, she argues, are evocative of phallogocentric desire (Lemire 61).

Part of the pleasure an audience takes in the incident from The Alchemist is the pleasure of gazing at something secret and forbidden. Illicit in the first instance is the confidence game that excites the desires of Sir Epicure Mammon and in the second instance the hidden alchemical art that lies behind it, with its exciting aura grounded in secret fantasies of power and pleasure fulfilled. It is a vicarious pleasure, but with clearly sensual

properties. As the incident takes place, the air on stage is still scented with Sir Epicure's libidinous longings:

I will have all my beds blown up, not stuffed:
 Down is too hard. And then, mine oval room,
 Filled with such pictures as Tiberius took
 From Elephantis, and dull Aretine
 But coldly imitated. Then, my glasses
 Cut in more subtle angles, to disperse
 And multiply the figures, as I walk
 Naked between my succubae. My mists
 I'll have of perfume, vaped 'bout the room,
 To lose ourselves in; and my baths, like pits
 To fall into; from whence we will come forth,
 And roll us dry in gossamer and roses.

(2.2.41-52)

Things of a similar kind are at work in Act Three, Scene One of Doctor Faustus.

FAUS: Now, by the kingdoms of infernal rule,
 Of Styx, Acheron, and the fiery lake
 Of ever-burning Phlegethon, I swear
 That I do long to see the monuments
 And situation of bright splendent Rome.
 Come therefore, let's away.

FAUS: You say true, I'll ha'it.

POPE: What, again! (3.1.42-70)

The comedy here is much coarser than that of The Alchemist, but its source is the same, in part the incident's irony, for the audience is in on the joke, in part the excitement of anticipation, for Faustus has the power to manipulate the scene at will, and in part the ludicrous incongruity between what could and what does happen. There are traces of the pleasure of scopophilia, especially in Faustus's opening speech, which is capable of evoking private fantasies of power, and the pleasure is doubled, in a sense, for the viewers who realize that Faustus's potent manipulations are themselves controlled by divine decree.

That pleasure runs clearer in Faustus's encounter with the spectral body of Helen of Troy:

Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships
 And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
 Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss;
 Her lips suck forth my soul, see where it flies!
 Come Helen, come, give me my soul again;
 Here I will dwell, for heaven be in these lips,
 And all is dross that is not Helena. (5.1.91-97)

Through Mephistophilis, Faustus can bring the dead to life in as sensuous a form as this, and the act excites an aura of private

fantasies of power and pleasure. But Faustus's very words, "Her lips suck forth my soul," divert the audience's gaze to the inevitable tragedy that a greater power has laid out for Faustus.

Shakespeare too uses his magician for effects like these. At the end of Act Four, Scene One of The Tempest, Caliban leads Stephano and Trinculo onto the stage soaking wet and smelling "all horse piss," thanks to Ariel, who has been obstructing their quest to murder Prospero. Trinculo is dazzled by a piece of the "glistening apparel" that Ariel has hung for them to see:

CAL: The dropsy drown this fool! What do you mean
To dote thus on such luggage? Let't alone
And do the murder first. If he awake,
From toe to crown he'll fill our skin with
pinches,
Make us strange stuff.

STEP: Be you quiet, monster. Mistress Line, is not
this my jerkin? Now is the jerkin under the
line! How jerkin you are like to lose your hair
and prove a bald jerkin.

TRIN: Do, do. We steal by line and level, an't like
your grace.

STEP: I thank thee for that jest; here's a garment
for't. Wit shall not go unrewarded while I am

king of this country. 'Steal by line and level'
is an excellent pass of pate. There's another
garment for't.

TRIN: Monster, come put some lime upon your fingers
and away with the rest.

CAL: I will have none on't. We shall lose our time,
And all be turned to barnacles, or to apes
With foreheads villainous low.

STEP: Monster, lay to your fingers. Help to bear
this away where my hogshead of wine is, or I'll
turn you out of my kingdom! Go to; carry this.

TRIN: And this.

STEP: Ay, and this.

PROS: Hey, Mountain, hey!

ARIEL: Silver! There it goes, Silver!

PROS: Fury, Fury! There, Tyrant, there! Hark, hark!

(4.1.230-257)

Again, the fun for the audience lies in the unexpected effects of the magician's power and the incongruity between what it might do and what it actually does. Prospero's manipulative power here is the power to humiliate, and as such it is capable of awakening an aura of secret fantasy around the viewer's gaze. The effect is more sensual in Act One, Scene Two, where Prospero

wakens Miranda so that she might see Ferdinand, whom Ariel, at Prospero's command, has just led onto the stage:

PROS: The fringed curtains of thine eye advance,
And say what thou seest yond.

MIR: What is't, a spirit?
Lord, how it looks about. Believe me, sir,
It carries a brave form. But 'tis a spirit.

PROS: No, wench, it eats and sleeps and hath such
senses
As we have -- such. This gallant which thou
seest
Was in the wreck, and but he's something stained
With grief (that's beauty's canker) thou
mightest call him
A goodly person. He hath lost his fellows
And strays about to find 'em.

MIR: I might call him
A thing divine, for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble.

PROS: It goes on, I see,
As my soul prompts it. Spirit, fine spirit,
I'll free thee
Within two days for this.

FERD: Most sure the goddess

On whom these airs attend! -- Vouchsafe my
 prayer
 May know if you remain upon this island,
 And that you will some good instruction give
 How I may bear me here. My prime request,
 Which I do last pronounce, is (O, you wonder!)
 If you be maid or no? (1.2.408-428)

The audience takes scopophilic pleasure in witnessing Ferdinand and Miranda's flirtations. Again, the fun for the audience is also in the irony that we are aware Prospero has contrived to bring the two lovers together. Our gaze shifts from Ferdinand and Miranda to the figure of Prospero who luridly watches the exchange between his daughter and her suitor.

The magician figure in Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare does allow for comedic, scopophilic and ironic elements, but the magician also serves the playwright in a larger, more extensive way. The role of the dramatist is to please the audience, to offer up shows of curiosity and exploration that have some basis in the existent daily lives of the audience. As Reed observes, the magician makes this exploration more effective on stage.

Inherent in the use of magicians are attributes conducive to a remarkably high dramatic effect: foremost among them is the magician's command over beings, or demons, whose intelligence is immeasurably

superior to that of human beings. In consequence, the plays that present sorcerers awaken feelings of awe and mystery. Even the poorer of these plays benefit, in the theatrical sense, from supernatural motivation: they have an intrinsic capacity to produce unexpected, and, hence, spectacular episodes. (Reed 88)

Marlowe uses the character of Faustus to entertain (the parade of the seven deadly sins and the banquet sequence with the Pope being perfect spectacles), but also to instruct. His Doctor Faustus is a study in cosmology, not merely theology. Marlowe is offering up a pedantic discourse on the nature of matter and place with Faustus serving as the epicentre of this debate. As Faustus debates his conscience and intent with the Good and Evil Angels on his shoulders, Mebane observes, place and matter become illusions and the world becomes Faustus's stage.

The identification of worldly power and pleasure with theatrical spectacle and hence with illusion is perhaps epitomized in the Masque of the Seven Deadly Sins which Lucifer presents to Faustus in act 2. The stage - which represents the world and which is, at the same time, a place where deceptive imagination reigns - is identified with the realm of privation that is Satan's domain. To find purely sensual

fulfillment and to triumph in this world's struggle for conquest is a hollow victory indeed: it is to proceed downward toward a bestial level of existence and ultimately to unite with Lucifer. (Mebane 135)

Illusory magic is primary in this play, as it is in Shakespeare, which is evidenced by Faustus rendering himself invisible at the papal feast. By rendering himself invisible, Faustus offers Marlowe's audience a hilarious albeit blasphemous opportunity to glance into the unseemly world of fallen angels, and vindictive spirits.

How? Bell, book and candle, candle, book and bell,
Forward and backward, to curse Faustus to hell.

Anon you shall hear a hog grunt, a calf bleat, and an
ass bray,

Because it is Saint Peter's holy day! (3.1.83-86)

Faustus, like Prospero, sees others without being seen. And while this fantasy realm is essentially entertaining, it also reduces Faustus's magic to cheap trickery.

Faustus is degraded through his grandiose schemes of self-sufficiency that remove him from God. "All of Faustus' apparent self-delusions ultimately derive from his belief that he is a demigod who can fully realize his divine potential by releasing the powers of the self," Mebane argues. "Instead of seeking salvation by accepting a subordinate position within the

universal hierarchy, he seeks Godhead within the powers of his own mind, and in doing so he enters the realm of his own fantasy" (Mebane 135). Even as Faustus aspires towards Godhead, he becomes more of a beast.

. Now, Faustus, must thou needs be damn'd,
 And canst thou not be sav'd.
 What boots it then to think of God or heaven?
 Away with such vain fancies, and despair,
 Despair in God, and trust in Belzebub.
 Now, go not backward: no, Faustus, be resolute.
 Why waverest thou? O, something soundeth in mine
 ears:
 "Abjure this magic, turn to God again."
 Ay, and Faustus will turn to God again.
 To God? He loves thee not;
 The God thou serv'st is thine own appetite,
 Wherein is fix'd the love of Belzebub:
 To him I'll build an altar and a church,
 And offer lukewarm blood of new-born babes! (2.1.1-14)

Only when Faustus again begins to question his denial of God does he appear human. His vulnerability is his greatest power and his greatest attraction to the audience.

The slapstick foolery of Marlowe's comic scenes must have appealed to Elizabethan audiences, who were accustomed to the

same humour found in morality plays. Marlowe's Doctor Faustus owes much to the morality plays developed in the late fourteenth century. The parade of the seven deadly sins is a dramatized allegory of abstract values and vices, which only emphasizes the struggle for Faustus's soul. The Good and Evil Angels that confound Faustus represent the existential tension within the play, and typify the common belief of the sixteenth century that the devil and his accomplices could be physical entities and not simply allegory (Woodman 137).

Faustus's gratification is superficial as it is based on illusion, and his sexual passions are thwarted by a succubus Helen and devilish sirens that drown out his repentant voice.

My heart's so harden'd I cannot repent.

Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven, But
fearful echoes thunders in mine ears, "Faustus, thou
art damn'd!" Then swords and knives,

Poison, guns, halters, and envenom'd steel

Are laid before me to dispatch myself,

And long ere this I should have done the deed

Had not sweet pleasure conquer'd deep despair.

(2.3.18-25)

The audience participates in Faustus's spiritual conflict by responding to his thwarted gratification. The desire for

greatness does not belong to Faustus alone; it is a human desire tailored for the humanist stage.

Like Marlowe's Faustus, Jonson's characters in The Alchemist are also striving to recreate themselves in an exalted though doomed world on earth. Jonson's gulls, namely Tribulation Wholesome and Sir Epicure Mammon seek to regain this lost kingdom through the art of magic and the philosopher's stone. It is a retreat into illusion and self-sufficiency that fails because of its resistance to discipline and religious restraints. The enthusiasm of the characters is overblown to rapidly involve the audience and to emphasize the depth of the failure to create this illusory world. While Ananias remains doubtful of Subtle's intentions, Tribulation embraces the new art; the effects of Subtle's alchemy are not entirely lost to Puritan faith.

It may be so,
 When as the work is done, the stone is made,
 This heat of his may turn into a zeal,
 And stand up for the beauteous discipline,
 Against the menstruous cloth and rag of Rome.
 We must await his calling, and the coming
 Of the good spirit. (3.1.29-35)

The world of The Alchemist is another lost Eden that fails because the protagonist's knowledge (in Jonson's play of

alchemy, in Marlowe's play of scripture) is flawed. Jonson, while setting up the same sort of spiritual conflict we see in Marlowe, is also trying to deliver a moral message to his audience. Mebane argues that Jonson, like Marlowe, uses illusory magic in his play to great effect in exposing the self-serving ambitions of the alchemist and his clients.

In *The Alchemist* he sets out to ridicule the claim of occult philosophers that human beings are demigods who can literally perfect their own personalities, control time and change, or perfect the fallen world through magical arts. The center of the play is the deflation - or perhaps explosion - of the illusion that the individual can realize a godlike potential through a series of self-transformations and that this perfection of the soul can lead directly to the radical reformation of nature and society.

Unlike the royal personages to whom Jonson attributes the power to transform society in his court masques, the reformers ridiculed in *The Alchemist* are, in Jonson's view, hypocrites: they profess noble motives, but in reality they possess partially concealed self-centered motives. The transformations which they undergo are illusory, and their utopian dreams are

merely indulgences of their own lust and ambition.

(Mebane 137-138)

The aim of the alchemist (and perhaps of the author as a sort of extenuation of the magician) is to combine the realm of the physical with the realm of the ideal. While Jonson paints a world without any seeming trace of inherent honesty, he is also challenging the audience to enjoy earthly life as it has been allotted and to hold out for the true joys of otherworldly life. Jonson's comedy is more focused on gullibility and moral dilemma than the existential tension rife in Marlowe's play. Jonson's characters subvert the order that exists in their microcosm of a society and fail. Subtle's exhortations on alchemy are never questioned, and entrance is forbidden into the inner sanctum of Lovewit's house where Subtle's art is concentrated. Therefore, Jonson leads the audience further into an illusory world of false promises and into the depths of vice. Each change of scene, each drawing of the curtain, each new entrance into Lovewit's house leads the audience deeper into Subtle's enterprise of deceit and chaos until the audience, unaware like Druggier and the other victims, is also part of Subtle's conspiracy. The audience then acts as the baser metals awaiting purification through alchemy, and Jonson then becomes a more learned and ethically superior Subtle who purifies his audience through the moral value of his play.

The order that is subverted in both Marlowe and Jonson is more optimistically restored in Shakespeare's The Tempest. While Shakespeare's play opens with an apocalyptic shipwreck orchestrated by a usurped leader, the play ends in the union of young lovers. The Tempest is replete with images of fertility, and the chess match between Ferdinand and Miranda hints towards a larger architecture within the play. In Shakespeare's The Tempest, as in The Winter's Tale, the audience is presented primarily with fertility magic. There is the obvious contrast of what is green and growing versus what has been rendered unproductive and withered. In The Winter's Tale, Shakespeare reinforces this dichotomy with the sheep-shearing festival. Florizel and Perdita are in costume symbolic of the flourishing and growth of spring, hence we are led to believe that their love will prosper in spite of obstacle. In A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shakespeare again uses this pastoral imagery of rebirth and resurrection to bring the two sets of lovers together.

The same holds true for The Tempest. Ferdinand and Miranda are safely ensconced in Prospero's cave playing chess while Prospero "called forth the mutinous winds, / And twixt the green sea and the azured vault / Set roaring war" (5.1.42-44). However, the island in The Tempest is one of enhanced vegetation, "hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves", "green sour ringlets", and "midnight mushrooms", that is interrupted

due to Prospero's "rough magic" (5.1.34, 38, 40). Prospero's art is depicted as a breach in nature, and we are led to believe that while Prospero physically unites the lovers, he is not responsible for their emotions.

The music in The Tempest is an integral part of the redemptive process and is very much in keeping with fertility magic. It also lends to an organic orchestration (natural, musical, and architectural) inherent to the play. The island is Prospero's island, and is suggestive of Prospero's own fears. It is a large canvas and serves as an extension of the empty dinner chair whereon Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo. Prospero's island is a rebuilt kingdom and is the foundation for his master plan to restore order. However, the blueprints for this new kingdom depend largely on the success of Prospero's magic and his ability to exercise his influence over those who surround him. Do we then assume that perhaps The Tempest does not ultimately end in sanguine redemption?

Shakespeare uses (white) magic in this play as a direct reflection of Elizabethan society under the threat of Spanish invasion. The Tempest was Shakespeare's homage to the superiority of Elizabethan England. Like Jonson, Shakespeare sets up a microcosmic society, but in the shape of Prospero's island. Prospero controls the natural elements surrounding the island, while England's formidable naval corps similarly defends

the seas surrounding the English isle. Shakespeare, argues Woodman, uses the established notion that white magic could bring healing to a diseased individual (a concept that an Elizabethan audience would have readily accepted), and so this notion could extend to a diseased body politic.

[U]ndoubtedly the major white magician in English Renaissance drama, his relationship to healing and order is based upon the interconnection of art and nature: to effect reconciliation, he evokes the assistance of the hidden properties of nature and then governs them through his magical art. 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 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 benevolent ends, he abandons celestial aid and resumes his earthly rights as a mortal. (Woodman 64-65)

However, this concept of Prospero as a magician-doctor is fraught with tension, for the healing required in this play is not merely physical, but also spiritual.

Prospero has been critically accepted as an exemplar of the white magician; however, he is not lacking the vice of pride and is therefore not true to the definition of a white magician. Prospero practices Shakespeare's appropriate, but enigmatic rough magic. White magic would imply that Prospero holds genuine sway over the moral conduct of his adversaries. However, Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio reform of their own volition and their actions are merely suspended by Prospero's manipulations. Caliban also remains bitter and vindictive towards Prospero, and as Prospero cannot reform Caliban through the beneficial healing properties of his supposed white magic, Caliban is simply abandoned on the island. For all of Prospero's attempts at refining Caliban, the latter is left with nothing more than acrimony. "You taught me language, and my profit on it / Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you / For learning me your language!" (1.2.364-366). Prospero recognizes the importance of communication; he teaches Caliban to speak, but did not anticipate Caliban's ability to manipulate language.

Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,
That if I then had waked after long sleep,

Will make me sleep again; and then in dreaming,
 The clouds, methought, would open and show riches
 Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked
 I cried to dream again. (3.2.135-144)

Caliban's speech vacillates between the sheer beauty of language and childlike rhythm. Suddenly, Caliban does not appear to be the monster Prospero would paint of him. Rather than face a complicated process of reintegration into courtly society, Prospero simply abandons Caliban on the island. As a result, The Tempest becomes a play, not about magic, but about the search for freedom and the abuse of power.

Shakespeare retains his optimism by implying that these desires can be reconciled within oneself providing that union (through love) is achieved. Ferdinand and Miranda then come to represent men and women as a whole. Prospero is himself reconciled at the end of the play and finishes his magical tour de force by drowning his book. However, Shakespeare's partial use of Medea's speech, and the fact that Prospero was originally ostracized due to his suspicious studies indicate that he is not entirely benevolent or selfless. Prospero has returned to an art that is little understood by those around him, and succeeds largely due to their gullibility in a situation similar to what we see in Jonson.

Prospero's art is one of spectacle similar to Mephistophilis. However, the events of The Tempest are contrived to meet a historical position of value; the ends justify the means, the lovers unite, and so the audience is satisfied. Shakespeare has created a sympathetic character in Prospero, or at least a more easily recognizable victor. Because Prospero's cause is justified in the play by his refusal to cause bodily harm to his enemies, so his use of magic is also justified. Shakespeare, like Coleridge, asks the audience for a willing suspension of disbelief, and we suspend it willingly. Prospero is easy to indulge. He reflects the more positive aspects of human nature made all the more obvious by the contrast with Caliban whose vices have made him monstrous. Shakespeare has resolved Marlowe and Jonson in the ultimate compromise of character. Prospero uses magic, but for the betterment of a community. Because it is not solely a self-aggrandizing gesture on Prospero's behalf, he succeeds where Faustus, Fauc, Subtle and Dol fail.

III: The Dramatic Boundaries of Magic

Yet sit and see,
Minding true things by what their mockeries be.
(Henry V, 4.Chorus.52)

How much is man permitted to know? This question was especially important to Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare because they were dramatists. They were simultaneously required to entertain an audience without offending the sensibilities of the Church and State in the person of the censor.

In the plays of Ben Jonson and Philip Massinger, in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, in a court masque by Thomas Carew, in the sermons of John Donne, there is evidence, if we look carefully, of a highly sophisticated system of oblique communication, of unwritten rules whereby writers could communicate with readers or audiences (among whom were the very same authorities who were responsible for state censorship) without producing direct confrontation. The official recognition of the public theater as both, up to a point, a privileged domain with laws of its own, and a useful safety valve or even a source of intelligence, has been well established. (Patterson 45)

In her book, Censorship and Interpretation, Annabel Patterson postulates that dramatists and writers during the mid-sixteenth to late seventeenth centuries could avoid the perils of censorship by developing a language code within their work: "the institutionally unspeakable makes itself heard inferentially, in the space between what is written or acted and what the audience, *knowing what they know*, might expect to read or see" (Patterson 63). In the example of King Lear, the folio edition, to avoid giving offense, omitted "the mock-trial that Lear in his madness conducts, arraigning his wicked daughters for their crimes against him and humanity", along with the Fool's rhyme about sweet and bitter folly (Patterson 62-63). Patterson also mentions that the stringency of censorship depended on the amount of provocation the theatres were giving at the time. King Lear was performed in court in December 1606, three years after Jonson's scandalous anti-Scottish production of Eastward Ho! which landed the author, along with George Chapman, in jail.

The role of the magician furnished the author with the means to publicly express his opinion and with the ambiguity necessary to avoid unjust interpretations. It also provided an avenue to broach the question of man's limitations, and was a practical dramatic feature to entertain the audience. However, the practice of magic was also in seemingly obvious defiance of

the Church, and consequently, the State. As a result, the case of censorship was built upon the dramatist's presentation of magic and "interpretations could be radically different depending on what one selected as the context of the utterance" (Patterson 50).

Shakespeare based Prospero largely on John Dee and Cornelius Agrippa, while Marlowe altered the legendary Historia von D. Johan Fausten to suit the purposes of his play. Jonson was familiar with Dee and Agrippa and no doubt with the exposure of frauds in numerous witch trials. This chapter will examine how each author, in tailoring the practice of magic for the purposes of his play, made use of the oblique system of communication discovered by Patterson.

Magic was a subject liable indeed to censorship. Agrippa's work, De occulta philosophia, was publicly censored, and Agrippa himself was labeled as a sinister black magician, even though Agrippa's theories were in keeping with the Erasmian and evangelical influences of his time (Yates, Occult Philosophy, 64). These influences themselves were censored in parts of Europe, most notably in Italy where Francesco Giorgi's Platonic leanings were also receiving harsh criticism (Yates, Occult Philosophy, 62-63). Giorgi's De harmonia mundi epitomized the early-sixteenth century Platonism that had fallen into disfavour with the revival of the rigorous Catholic orthodox

Aristotelians, who censored Giordano Bruno. Pico della Mirandola's theses dealing with cabalistic magic were also censored (Yates, Occult Philosophy, 62).

It is surprising that out of this harsh criticism of occultism we have the figure of the legendary Faust, and later Marlowe's Faustus, the traditional image of the seeker after unlawful knowledge (Yates, Occult Philosophy, 64). The ambiguity Marlowe finds in Faustus is that found throughout antiquity: the dangers of esoteric knowledge.

For although it was believed throughout antiquity that to be supremely wise or great or good carried with it as a natural corollary the possession of superhuman powers, nevertheless from the very earliest times such gifts were also known to be ambiguous. The Hebrew notion of spiritual downfall and sin resulting from the commerce between mortals and angels, the Greek conception of Promethean *hybris*, the natural fear and awe attending necromantic feats illumined magicians with a lurid light which was already threatening them with a loss of caste in the days of the Roman Empire. The ethics and the reality of magic have always been and will always be in question. But the Christian Church settled the matter out of hand by diabolising the whole phenomena. [. . .] This was the poison

compounded of hatred and fear injected into the veins of medieval magic. It seemed to be writhing in its death-agonies in the story of Doctor Faust; and not all that Friar Bacon could do in the way of an antidote was likely to avert its doom. (Butler, Myth of the Magus, 264)

Marlowe's portrayal of Dr. Faustus is in keeping with the requirements of the black magician, such as "[s]pecial garments, a staff and rod, ablutions, ink and pen, an invocation written in blood, a young goat to be sacrificed, incense, and fumigation", but Faustus is duly punished for his practices and religious authority is thereby reaffirmed (Woodman 28). However, by manipulating black magic Marlowe has managed to express indirectly an unorthodox religious view in the overly harsh punishment of a sympathetic scholar. Frances Yates writes of a reaction that is written into the play:

The medieval formula of fear of sorcery is applied to a situation which is not medieval. Faustus is not a medieval sorcerer; he is a Renaissance scholar who has taken all learning for his province with a particular bent towards the natural sciences. The medieval anti-sorcery formula, ignorantly applied to the Renaissance scholar, produces Faustus, the genius with an

artificially induced neurosis. (Yates, Occult
Philosophy, 119)

Like John Dee, Faustus is an accredited scholar with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, and in this he was hardly suspect to authority, because Dee was favoured by Elizabeth I. And because Faustus fails, Marlowe would seem to reinforce the opposition of Church and State to black magic. Faustus is repeatedly offered opportunities to repent by the Good Angel, and repeatedly rejects them. However, Marlowe creates enough doubt of free will in his play (for example, the melting heavens in the prologue that conspire Faustus's overthrow) that it is possible to forgive Faustus, and moreover, to pity him.

The crux of the argument of authorial censorship is that Faustus crosses the line between magician and witch when he signs his pact with Mephastophilis.

Lo Mephastophilis, for love of thee
 I cut mine arm, and with my proper blood
 Assure my soul to be great Lucifer's,
 Chief lord and regent of perpetual night.
 View here the blood that trickles from mine arm,
 And let it be propitious for my wish. (2.1.53-58)

Marlowe may well have been aware of the private pact of signing one's soul over to the devil as outlined in the definitive text on witchcraft, the Malleus Maleficarum of Heinrich Kramer and

James Sprenger. Kramer and Sprenger detail two manners of profession: one is a solemn ceremony where witches meet together in a conclave on a set day (as we see in Macbeth), and the devil appears to the witches in the assumed body of a man. The other ceremony can be made at any hour alone, as we see in Marlowe's Doctor Faustus.

The other private method is variously performed. For sometimes when men or women have been involved in some bodily or temporal affliction, the devil comes to them, at times in person, and at times speaking to them through the mouth of someone else; and he promises that, if they will agree to his counsels, he will do for them whatever they wish. But he starts from small things, as was said in the first chapter, and leads gradually to the bigger things. (Kramer and Sprenger 99, 101)

We see in Act One, Scene One that Faustus has the affliction of boredom and that his desire to pursue new realms of knowledge stems from this and from a natural inclination towards curiosity. Kramer and Sprenger cite weariness as one method by which the devil subverts the innocent (96). Moreover, Marlowe tells us that Faustus did not summon Mephistophilis, rather Mephistophilis came of his own will in hearing God's name

slandered. Faustus then is guilty not of conjuring evil spirits, but only of the attempt.

FAUS: Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee?

Speak.

MEPH: That was the cause, but yet *per accidens*,
 For 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;
 Nor will we come unless he use such means
 Whereby he is danger to be damn'd.
 Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring
 Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity,
 And pray devoutly to the prince of hell.

(1.3.45-54)

Lucifer is continually forced to placate a recalcitrant and retributive Faustus with dumbshows, including a succubus Helen who seems to revive the previously unstimulated sexual appetite of Faustus.

Here it is to be noted that the devil is more eager and keen to tempt the good than the wicked, although in actual practice he tempts the wicked more than the good, because more aptitude for being tempted is found in the wicked than in the good. [. . .] For since he already possesses the wicked, but not the good, he

tries the harder to seduce into his power the good whom he does not, than the wicked whom he does, possess. (Kramer & Sprenger 97)

This would seem to suggest that Faustus may unknowingly have been seduced from the outset by a devil who assumes the human guise of the magicians Cornelius and Valdes. Also outlined in the Malleus Maleficarum are the six ways evil spirits have of afflicting man, the last being most significant to Marlowe's play.

And with regard to the first class of injuries with which they afflict the human race, it is to be noted that, apart from the methods by which they injure other creatures, they have six ways of injuring humanity. And one is, to induce an evil love in a man for a woman, or in a woman for a man. The second is to plant hatred or jealousy in anyone. The third is to bewitch them so that a man cannot perform the genital act with a woman, or conversely a woman with a man; or by various means to procure an abortion, as has been said before. The fourth is to cause some disease in any of the human organs. The fifth, to take away life. The sixth, to deprive them of reason. (Kramer & Sprenger 115)

Faustus's confused wavering between the poles of repentance and impenitence is more easily understood if we think of his judgment as being suspended. If he has indeed been deprived of the faculty of reason, then he is incapable of the malicious intent to slander God's name and side with Lucifer.

Marlowe may well have been familiar too with the Discourse on the Dignity of Man (1486) by the Italian humanist philosopher Conte Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, considered the "Manifesto of the Renaissance". Several of Pico's theses on cabalistic magic were deemed heretical by Pope Alexander VI. Pico's Discourse --

exalts the human creature for his/her freedom and capacity to know and to dominate reality as a whole. Far from being simply that, however, the *Discourse* deals with the vocation of the human creature who, possessing no determinate image, is urged to pursue its own perfection. Such a pursuit begins with moral self-discipline, passes through the familiar, multifarious world of images and fields of knowledge, and strives toward that most lofty goal which defies representation. Pico believes that this paradigm, by virtue of the fact that it is to be found in every tradition, is universal.

<http://www.princeton.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/pico/index.html>.

Pico stipulates that the dual nature of man's soul is equally capable of lifting man to the heavens, or plummeting him to the depths of hell (Pico 90). The process through which man is to pursue his own perfection is similar to that of Dee, a dedicated scholar who devoted 18 hours out of every day towards his studies (Butler, Myth of the Magus, 161), but most importantly it is parallel to that of Faustus, who begins his tragedy by leveling at the end of every art. Marlowe takes Pico's Discourse to its ultimate limit and represents the lofty objective of human overreaching, albeit with tragic consequences.

Pico's Discourse also sets up two definitions of the purposes of magic. The first purpose is concerned entirely with the operations and powers of demons; the second purpose is the highest realization of natural philosophy: "Natural philosophy will allay the differences of opinion and disagreements which from all sides vex, perplex and afflict our restless soul" (Pico 96). Traister relates Pico's distinction to Marlowe's play:

Obviously, Faustus desires the power and knowledge made possible by Pico's second kind of magic; command of such magic would be an appropriate next step from the accomplishments he has already to his credit.

Though somewhat self-centered, Faustus's aims for his magic are basically good. [. . .] His rationale for turning to magic suggests that he expects full control of the spirits with whom he will deal. (Traister 91-92)

The character of Faustus is tailored to fit the qualifications for a magician. Faustus relies on intellectual achievement, proper qualifications, and elaborate incantation to command the spirits (1.3.16-22). To merely conjure up the devil (which would characterize Faustus as a witch), none of the above is necessary. The practice of magic provides Faustus with the discipline he needs to test his abilities. Faustus's haste results in his loss of reason. He is so elated by the presence of Mephistophilis that he does not realize he has lost his power to control the spirits, and is now being controlled by the powers of evil. The chorus that introduces the play alerts the audience that Faustus's sense of control is only perceived. Like the parade of the seven deadly sins, and the appearance of Helen, all the magic in this play is illusory, as may be Faustus's opportunities for repentance (the words *homo fuge* that appear as Faustus prepares to sign the pact in blood, and Christ's blood which flows down the walls of Faustus's study). On its surface, the play is a *de casibus* tragedy that affirms conventional theology and morality. Faustus, the transgressing

magician, is a figure of outrageous and unrepentant *superbia*, and his fate is just. But insinuated within this morality play are suggestions that vindicate the quest for knowledge forbidden by authority, for Faustus is a magician who is betrayed into witchcraft. There are also suggestions that question the justice of a God who condemns a man to eternal damnation. All these suggestions are open to those in the audience who are conversant with magical literature. Traister suggests that the tragedy of Marlowe's play lies in the fact that Faustus never really acquires magical power beyond what he is allotted by Mephistophilis, but through his desire for magic Faustus relinquishes any control he has over his own life.

An Elizabethan audience, familiar with witchcraft lore, is likely to have been aware of the radical change in Faustus's position. He is not a magician who, like Friar Bacon, misuses his magical powers but rather a man who has no magical power -- as much as he desires it -- beyond the scraps that the devil permits him in order to mollify him. At the play's opening, Faustus could convince us of his potential to achieve much, whether good or evil, through magic and the power of his intellect. But by the end of scene 3, he has been transformed into a man who so covets power that he is willing to give away his soul for its

appearance. Ironically, of course, Faustus not only fails to receive true magic power but also relinquishes the power he already had to govern his own life on earth. (Traister 95-96)

Shakespeare, in contrast, creates a relatively benign and scholarly white magician whose goals are within reason. In Prospero, we have a sympathetic white magician who closely resembles the Elizabethan mathematician, Dr. John Dee, the unofficial astrologer to Elizabeth I (Butler, Myth of the Magus, 162). Shakespeare's interpretation of white magic conforms to Patterson's theory of oblique communication. He voices his personal views on precarious matters without directly criticizing the Church, State, or any specific individual. Prospero's island is anonymous and so can represent anything to anyone. By dividing vice and placing some onto Caliban, who is essentially alien to civilized humanity, and the rest onto criminal usurpers of a foreign realm, Shakespeare has removed from his play any cause for censorship.

Other famous white magicians, such as Oberon in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Friar Bacon in Robert Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay and Bomelio in Anthony Munday's The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune, may have contributed something to Shakespeare's creation of Prospero. The works they are from were familiar to contemporary audiences, and so the benevolent

presence of the white magician who uses his power to restore order would not seem out of place. White magic does not involve a pact with the devil, and unlike Faustus, the white magician is not overly covetous, or ambitious. There were many reasons to think of white magic as beneficial, Woodman suggests:

At a time when the human body was readily subject to plague and disease and the English body politic was still vulnerable, either to insurrection or the threat of Spanish invasion, the possibilities of achieving order through white magic were strongly appealing to audiences. Just as healing through white magic was shown to bring health to the diseased individual, so it might promote order in the diseased body politic.

(Woodman 64)

The prayerful dedication to and study of white magic was an affirmation to the continuance of peace and prosperity of the realm, and that is surely affirmed by Elizabeth I's patronage of John Dee. Indeed, Frances Yates has argued previously that the old Queen was a powerful if spectral presence in the play:

Surely contemporary audiences must have picked up the underlying trend of this play as a return to the magical world of the late Virgin Queen, her chastity and pure religion, now continuing and revived by the younger generation. Her philosopher, the white

magician Doctor Dee, is defended in Prospero, the good and learned conjurer, who had managed to transport his valuable library to the island. The presence of the Dee-like magus in the play falls naturally into place as part of the Elizabethan revival. [. . .]

Prospero, the beneficent magus, uses his good magical science for utopian ends. He is the climax of the long spiritual struggle in which Shakespeare and his contemporaries had been engaged. He vindicates the Dee science and the Dee conjuring. He allays the witch craze and establishes white Cabala as legitimate. (Yates, Occult Philosophy, 160)

It is also important to note that Prospero does not seek the worldly dominion of Faustus, but limits his use of magic to the regaining of his own kingdom of Milan. By indirectly avoiding recourse to foreign invasion, Shakespeare, unlike Marlowe, keeps his play free from troubling inferences that might be drawn from overly sensitive politicians. Prospero also does not seek to test his own power in competition with other magicians (as for example happens in Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay), or otherworldly forces. Rather the spirits of the island fall under Prospero's paternalistic control and cooperate with him, thereby promoting the harmonious aura of white magic,

an aura that is reaffirmed in the chaste love of Ferdinand and Miranda.

We are also led to believe that Prospero's enemies are in need of spiritual purification and order. Alonso, Antonio, Sebastian, Trinculo and Stephano are all consumed by lust and greed resulting in murderous, even regicidal, tendencies. Prospero's benevolent magic appears as the only viable means of reform, specifically when contrasted with the black magic of the witch Sycorax. Prospero's own account of his usurpation is so emotional, even given the benefit of time, that we are persuaded of Antonio's wrongdoing and convinced of Prospero's justified use of magic.

PROS: My brother and thy uncle, called Antonio
 I pray thee mark me, that a brother should
 Be so perfidious - he, whom next thyself
 Of all the world I loved, and to him put
 The manage of my state, as at that time
 Through all the signories it was the
 first,
 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. Thy false
 uncle -
 Dost thou attend me?

MIR: Sir, most heedfully.

PROS: Being once perfected how to grant
 How to deny them, who t'advance and who
 To trash for overtopping, new created
 The creatures that were mine, I say, or
 changed 'em,
 Or else new formed 'em; having both the
 key
 Of officer and office, set all hearts
 i'th' state
 To what tune pleased his ear, that now he
 was
 The ivy which had hid my princely trunk
 And sucked my verdure out on't. Thou
 attend'st not!

MIR: O, good sir, I do.

PROS: I pray thee, mark me.

I thus neglecting worldly ends, all
 dedicated
 To closeness and the bettering of my mind
 O'er-prized all popular rate, in my false
 brother
 Awaked an evil nature, and my trust,
 Like a good parent, did beget of him
 A falsehood in its contrary as great
 As my trust was, which had indeed no limit,
 A confidence sans bound. He being thus
 lorded,
 Not only with what my revenue yielded
 But what my power might else exact, like
 one
 Who, having into truth by telling of it,
 Made such a sinner of his memory
 To credit his own lie, he did believe
 He was indeed the duke out o'th'
 substitution
 And executing th' outward face of royalty
 With all prerogative. Hence his ambition
 growing --
 Dost thou hear?

MIR: Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.

PROS: To have no screen between this part he
 played
 And him he played it for, he needs will be
 Absolute Milan. Me, poor man, my library
 Was dukedom large enough. Of temporal
 royalties
 He thinks me now incapable; confederates,
 So dry he was for sway, wi'th' King of
 Naples
 To give him annual tribute, do him homage,
 Subject his coronet to his crown, and bend
 The dukedom yet unbowed (alas, poor Milan)
 To most ignoble stooping. (1.2.66-116)

Through Prospero's use of white magic, the binary opposites of black (evil) and white (good) that exist outside the enchanted isle are reconciled in the union of the two lovers. White magic is a symbolic force for good in The Tempest and becomes a staple of Shakespeare's other romantic comedies such as The Winter's Tale. There is indirect communication in The Tempest as there is in Doctor Faustus, and in both cases it affirms white magic. What is remarkable about The Tempest is that the indirect communication seems at first just to reinforce what is affirmed on the surface of the play, except for the darker elements of

Prospero's art. But in fact the affirmation of white magic is part of a much larger affirmation: the glory in every respect of the old realm. And in a play performed in 1611 and performed at court, that affirmation must be communicated indirectly. White magic fulfills the audience's desire for a harmonious resolution, and Shakespeare's indirect communication enlarges the sense of resolution to one of a golden era, of a great age that has passed.

Ben Jonson's sympathies seem to have been much more solidly with the new realm than with the old, and The Alchemist, both on the surface and in its own indirect communication, does little to ruffle the sensibilities of Church or State. Jonson's sentiments towards the opportunism of occultism echo those of James I. In The Alchemist, we have a complete send-up of the entire occult art reflective of the waning belief in magic under James I. Throughout The Tempest, Prospero's reliance on astrology and alchemy is revered.

Know thus far forth:

By accident most strange, bountiful fortune
 (Now, my dear lady) hath mine enemies
 Brought to this shore; and 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. (1.2.178-184)

In Jonson, such reliance upon the stars is used to confound the gullible and rapidly develops into charlatanism, as best epitomized in the episode between Druggier, Subtle and Face.

SUB: Sir, you must think,
 He may have a receipt to make hair come.
 But he'll be wise, preserve his youth, and
 fine for't;
 His fortune looks for him another way.

FACE: 'Slid, Doctor, how canst thou know this so
 soon?

I am amused at that!

SUB: By a rule, Captain,
 In metoposcopy, which I do work by;
 A certain star in the forehead, which
 you see not.
 Your chestnut or your olive-coloured face
 Does never fail; and your long ear doth
 promise.
 I knew't, by certain spots, too, in his
 teeth,
 And on the nail of his mercurial finger.

FACE: Which finger's that?

SUB: His little finger. Look.

You were born upon a Wednesday?

DRUG: Yes, indeed, sir.

SUB: The thumb, in chiromancy, we give Venus;

The fore-finger, to Jove; the midst, to
Saturn;

The ring, to Sol; the least, to Mercury,

Who was the lord, sir, of his horoscope,

His house life being Libra; which fore-
showed

He should be a merchant, and should trade
with balance. (1.3.38-57)

In his work Daemonologie, James I endorsed the death penalty for witches, magicians and their customers. The age of miracles had passed with the advent of Calvinism which advocated that because all lives were predestined, miracles were therefore the work of the Devil (Woodman 25). Alchemy and the philosopher's stone, which could produce such miracles, likewise fell into disfavour. Jonson's perversion of alchemy is representative of this skepticism. As Woodman argues, the secrecy and lure of wealth that surrounded alchemy were the ideal environment for frauds:

A more practical impediment to the practice of
alchemy, and one that directly stimulated

charlatanism, was its need for considerable financial underwriting. Indeed, alchemical discovery could not have gone on throughout the Renaissance without the lure of incredible riches to entice men of means and the heads of state to support it. The veil of secrecy that masked the alchemist's activities, combined with the protective obscurity of his writings, made it impossible to discern who was attempting a genuine transmutation and who was masquerading, extorting money, and devising means to arouse the hopes of his current guarantor. (Woodman 26)

Jonson's oblique communication continually and devastatingly links legitimate magic with the masquerading, and extortionate form of alchemy. It is no surprise that Jonson was held in such favour by King James I, who strongly disliked John Dee and was suspicious of anything relating to magical practices (Butler, Myth of the Magus, 172). Such satire also serves a moral purpose in Jonson, however, and reflects a certain misanthropy and disgust for intellectual stupidity. Because the science and practice of alchemy have a certain inherent pretense and false quality, they are perfectly tailored for the purposes of Jonson's play.

There is an undoubted satirical allusion to Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica* in Jonson's play, and Dee's

mathematical preface to Euclid is parodied throughout. Jonson pokes very clever fun at alchemists, magicians, mathematicians, scientists - all to him equally ludicrous - and in the end Subtle and his gang are cleared out of the house they have made the centre of their nefarious practices by the returning owner. But not before the very clever fun pointed to "the Elizabethan revival within the Jacobean age" as the object of satire. (Yates, Occult Philosophy, 161)

Face, Subtle, and Dol hide behind the rhetoric of alchemical jargon which results in disorder and confusion. White magic in Jonson, therefore, fails because it is not honestly or justifiably intended in its use. The white magician is not a sole being, but an enterprise and a disruptive force. As Woodman observes: "Greed enticed the rich sponsor who desired greater wealth, and greed drove the charlatan who desired both survival and wealth, especially if he could enjoy both in the comfortable quarters of his gullible patron" (Woodman 109). The capitalist sensibility of Subtle's enterprise dooms it to failure, and the language of The Alchemist serves as a conduit for the useless desires of the play's protagonists.

Out, the varlet

That cozened the apostles! Hence, away!

Flee mischief! had your holy consistory

No name to send me, of another sound,
 Than wicked Ananias? send you elders
 Hither, to make atonement for you, quickly,
 And give me satisfaction; or out goes
 The fire; and down th'alembics, and the furnace,
 Piger Henricus, or what not. Thou wretch!
 Both sericon and bufo shall be lost,
 Tell them. All hope of rooting out the bishops,
 Or the antichristian hierarchy shall perish,
 If they stay threescore minutes. The aqueity,
 Terreity, and sulphureity
 Shall run together again, and all be annulled,
 Thou wicked Ananias! This will fetch 'em,
 And make them haste towards their gulling more.
 A man must deal like a rough nurse, and fright
 Those that are forward, to an appetite.

(2.5.72-90)

Because the main characters in Jonson's The Alchemist are dupes, we are presented with the polarization of the emotional and moral acceptance of white magic versus the logic of skepticism. Woodman argues that the skepticism of the seventeenth century towards alchemy provided the ideal theatrical grounds for Jonson's satire: "By creating in his play The Alchemist (1610) a charlatan magician who was the antithesis

of everything that the consecrated white magician symbolized, Calson turned white magic into a further target for reproof, most definitely nothing to be held in awe" (Woodman 109). A perfect example of this disparagement of magic is found in Act Five, Scene Five between Lovewit, Mammon, Face and Surly.

MAMM: The whole nest are fled!

LOVE: What sort of birds were they?

MAMM: A kind of choughs,
 Or thievish daws, sir, that have picked my purse
 Of eight score and ten pounds within these five
 weeks,
 Beside my first materials; and my goods,
 That lie in the cellar, which I am glad they
 have left,
 I may have home yet.

MAMM: Ay.

LOVE: By order of law, sir, but not otherwise.

MAMM: Not mine own stuff?

LOVE: Sir, I can take no knowledge
 That they are yours, but by public means,
 If you can bring certificate that you were
 gulled of 'em,
 Or any formal writ out of a court,

That you did cozen yourself, I will not hold them.

MAMM: I'll rather lose 'em.

LOVE: That you shall not, sir,
By me, in troth. Upon these terms, they're yours.

What should they have been, sir, turned into gold, all?

MAMM: No.

I cannot tell. It may be they should. What then?

LOVE: What a great loss in hope you have sustained!

MAMM: Not I, the commonwealth has.

FACE: Ay, he would have built
The city new; and made a ditch about it
Of silver, should have run with cream from
Hogsden;
That, every Sunday, in Moorfields, the younkens,
And tits and tom-boys should have fed on,
gratis.

MAMM: I will go mount a turnip-cart, and preach
The end of the world, within these two months.
Surly,
What! in a dream?

SURLY: Must I needs cheat myself,
With that same foolish vice of honesty!
Come, let us go and hearken out the rogues.
That Face I'll mark for mine, if e'er I meet
him.

FACE: If I can hear of him, sir, I'll bring you word,
Unto your lodging; for, in troth, they were
strangers
To me, I thought 'em honest as myself, sir.
(5.5.57-89)

The alchemy in Jonson fails; it is a poorly understood means of communication and the enterprise of Dol, Face and Subtle cannot surmount the greed and vice that surround it. The use of the dubious and mysterious science of alchemy adds a degree of fantasy to Jonson's play, and also makes The Alchemist more of a spectacle. The moral message is maintained: greed cannot be sustained. Gold is as malleable as human nature, but neither are subject to perfection.

IV: Science and Magic

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's mine own,
Which is most faint. (Tempest, Epilogue.1-3)

While occultism and alchemy had risen in status under the reign of Elizabeth I, the Jacobean era ushered in a more skeptical view of magic.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century an intelligent contemporary would have found it difficult to predict this outcome. For magic and science had originally advanced side by side. The magical desire for power had created an intellectual environment favourable to experiment and induction; it marked a break with the characteristic medieval attitude of contemplative resignation. Neoplatonic and hermetic ways of thinking had stimulated such crucial discoveries in the history of science as heliocentrism, the infinity of worlds, and the circulation of the blood. The mystical conviction that number contained the key to all mysteries had fostered the revival of mathematics. Astrological

inquiries had brought new precision to the observation of heavenly bodies, the calculation of their movements, and the measurement of time. (Thomas 643-644)

As I have suggested, the increasing skepticism about magic is reflected in The Alchemist. While Shakespeare bases his protagonist on the life and writings of Dr. John Dee and Cornelius Agrippa's De occulta philosophia, Jonson attacks both Dee and Agrippa in his play. Jonson's black humour is the appropriate medium for a satire, and is a reaffirmation of God's moral dominion over man. To properly explain the decline in alchemy, and other practices associated with magic, it is necessary to consider the burgeoning role of science and the reformation of the Church in relation to the devaluation of ritual magic. This chapter will illustrate some of the contemporary influences on Jonson, Marlowe and Shakespeare to determine what, if anything, the dramatists are reacting to or against. The changing attitudes towards magic are directly reflected in The Tempest, The Alchemist and Doctor Faustus. While Jonson's play is an obvious reflection of the seventeenth century skepticism of occultism, Shakespeare's play is an affirmation of the beneficial properties associated with white magic. Marlowe's play differs from the other two in that it is a contemplation of the perils associated with black magic.

While white magic gained favour under Elizabeth I with Doctor John Dee, Woodman argues, it rapidly fell into disrepute in the Jacobean era.

The new century brought with it a certain crisis in kingship, eventually culminating in the crown's clash with Parliament and the chaos of civil war. Both James I and Charles I precipitated this confrontation by insisting upon their absolute role as king. The masque, of course, reinforced this concept of the king as a symbol of divine power and the giver of fertility and prosperity - the tribal role once filled by the white magician or witch doctor. As the grip of white magic on the public imagination relaxed (the focus on magic shifted to witch trials), the king, as it were, absorbed the role of the white magician. (Woodman 88)

Undoubtedly, King James approved of Jonson's biting satire where white magic and alchemy were concerned, as he grew increasingly wary of his son's staunch Protestantism and increasingly fearful of the Spanish and the Jesuits (Yates, Occult Philosophy, 160). Jonson's The Alchemist parodies Dee and all things magical.

He shall have a bell, that Abel;
 And by it standing one whose name is Dee,
 In a rug gown, there's D, and Rug, that's drug;
 And right anenst him a dog snarling Er;

There's Druggier, Abel Druggier. That's his sign.

And here's now mystery and hieroglyphic!

(2.6.19-23)

In The Alchemist, Jonson is attacking the enormous development of alchemy in occult philosophy, which is already present in Agrippa's text De occulta philosophia (Yates, Occult Philosophy, 162). Jonson is also satirizing Agrippa's theory that the "humor melancholicus has such power that they say it attracts certain demons into our bodies, through whose presence and activity men fall into ecstasies and pronounce many wonderful things" (Yates, Occult Philosophy, 53). Agrippa's description of melancholy involves three stages of development corresponding to the threefold structure of the human soul: the imagination, the rational, and the mental. In the final mental or intellectual stage, man gleans the secrets of divinity and divine law (Yates, Occult Philosophy, 53).

Prospero manages to attain all three stages of this development; Prospero attains the dexterity and scholarship of the imagination, the knowledge of nature, humanity and of the rational, and lastly he attains the knowledge of the divine which is directly related to the soul's salvation.

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,
 And ye that on the sands with printless foot
 Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him

When he comes back; you demi-puppets that
 By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
 Whereof the ewe not bites; and you whose pastime
 Is to make midnight-mushrooms, that rejoice
 To hear the solemn curfew, by whose aid --
 Weak masters though ye be -- I have bedimmed
 The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds,
 And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
 Set roaring war; to the dread-rattling thunder
 Have I given fire and rifted Jove's stout oak
 With his own bolt: the strong-based promontory
 Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
 The pine and cedar; graves at my command
 Have waked their sleepers, ope'd and let'em forth
 By my so potent art. But this rough magic
 I here abjure; and when I have required
 Some heavenly music (which even now I do)
 To work mine end upon their senses that
 This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
 Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
 And deeper than did ever plummet sound
 I'll drown my book. (5.1.33-57)

Through his forgiveness of his enemies, his love for Miranda,
 and his renunciation of magic, Prospero has redeemed himself.

In working out personal salvation, Prospero has gained immortal glory and the knowledge of the divine. Prospero has learned from his previous mistakes. He openly admits being too rapt in his studies to consider worldly events, also admits to excess, and lastly admits to trusting without limits (specifically where Antonio is concerned). The Tempest focuses on a man changed; we see how Prospero has used magic badly, and is now committed to using magic correctly. Prospero's character is one of positive growth; it is a growth cut short in Marlowe, as the play's epilogue informs us, due to the compression of time in the contract Faustus signs with Lucifer and Mephistophilis. It is also a growth entirely lacking in Jonson's corrupt triumvirate of Dol, Face and Subtle.

Prospero's spectacles, unlike those of Faustus, serve a didactic purpose. Prospero finishes as the morally grounded winner in the play, a notion which is solidified when he unites the lovers Ferdinand and Miranda. As Traister argues, Prospero's role and use of magic are essential to Shakespeare's underlying moral message.

Prospero's role as presenter is important, partly because his shows, unlike most magicians' presentations, exist more for their message than for their spectacle. Chasing clowns with hunting dogs may appear comparable to Friar Bacon's transportation of

Vandermast back to Germany or to Faustus's horning of Benvolio as a rather spectacular and not particularly profound trick. But Prospero is never guilty of purposeless cheap magic, as Bacon and Faustus sometimes are. His understanding of the characters he controls only persuades us more firmly of his wisdom and of the credibility of his magic. (Traister 132)

Jonson, conversely, sets up his play as a mock experience of Agrippa's theory of melancholy and devoted scholarship. Alchemy provides the illusion of awareness. However, the philosopher's stone does not exist within the play and so the occasion of human perfectibility becomes a nonexistent one. The resurgence of interest in the practice of alchemy in mid-to-late sixteenth century England was tied in with the reformation of the English church, as both were concerned with the purification of human souls. Jonson's play was a reaction to the renewed interest in alchemy; however, the new aim of alchemy was not to produce an elixir of life, but to purify mankind. As Mebane observes:

The growing scientific community in London stimulated renewed interest in investigating alchemical theories and procedures, and the language of alchemy, with its emphasis on the purification of nature and the human personality, struck a responsive chord in the minds

and hearts of those who saw the era as one which was about to witness the final purification of religion, the triumph of the arts and sciences, and the full control of humankind over its environment. (Mebane 93-94)

During and more significantly after the Reformation, the occult practices of Paracelsians and Neoplatonists were considered threats to intellectual and political establishments (Mebane 93-94). Jonson provides a send-up of this unqualified fear in The Alchemist by illustrating it as nothing more than charlatanism. Thomas recognizes in alchemy the opportunity for covetousness which is reflected in Jonson's play.

Time and again the alchemist believed himself on the brink of discovery of the stone, only for the pot to break and all the labour to be lost. [. . .] Alchemy was a difficult spiritual quest, since transmutation could not be accomplished until the adept had purged himself of all vices, particularly of covetousness; that is to say, he could not make gold until he had ceased to want to do so. (Thomas 642)

Jonson's send-up of alchemy is exactly this: Face, Dol and Subtle are so consumed by greed that the intent of their supposed white magic can only be seen as malevolent and damnable and so their enterprise fails.

O sir, we are all defeated! all the works
 Are flown *in fumo*, every glass is burst.
 Furnace and all rent down! as if a bolt
 Of thunder had been driven through the house.
 Retorts, receivers, pelicans, bolt-heads,
 All struck in shivers! (4.6.57-62)

However, white magic originally came into popularity for more practical than opportunistic purposes. The healing properties associated with white magic have been addressed in previous chapters of this paper, and notably in David Woodman's book, White Magic and English Renaissance Drama. In the opening chapter of his book, Woodman provides the backdrop for the rise in white magic. Diseases such as the bubonic plague had no cure; the failure of adequate medical therapy and a limited number of trained men soon forced people to turn to magic for relief. The care of a physician was also too expensive for most of the population, and there were simply not enough physicians to adequately meet the increasing needs of the public.

The rise and decline of the occult is cyclical in nature. White, or natural magic, was originally used as a substitute for medicine (Woodman 50-51). However, the increase in professional medics (who had attended any of the burgeoning schools of medicine) contributed to the dying need for magic. In his book, The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage, Robert Reed describes

the burgeoning role of science and the effect that scientific growth had on magic. Alchemy suffered a similar fate due to discoveries in chemistry. Magnetism and electricity, phenomena formerly explained by occultism, were now being explained in mechanical terms as the movement of particles. However, not all new discoveries in science were accepted automatically; most people required proof, or experience, before placing their trust in the new methods. Scientists no longer pursued experiments blindly hoping to corroborate a hypothesis until there was adequate proof of discovery. Charms, spells, and ancient prophecies that relied on faith alone were no match for this inquisitive spirit.

Born out of this humanist spirit of exploration is Marlowe's protagonist. Ptolemy believed that all authority should be questioned in the pursuit of knowledge, that one must look to the reasons and proof of what is said as opposed to who is saying it (Mebane 75-77). Marlowe's play is a perfect example of a scholar questioning knowledge and looking to other sources of experience for proof and enlightenment; however, Faustus is punished for this exploration because he looks to the perceived forces of evil in his quest for greater knowledge.

Each of the three plays examined in this paper contains the element of exploration which is not independent from the humanism of Elizabethan England. Man had repositioned himself

in the universe, and with this change in hierarchy came the inevitable power struggle. Also implicit, however, are the polar opposites of enthusiasm and blighted hope. Francis Drake returned from his global tour with a treasure-laden ship; this triumphant journey opened up the possibility that England could have the same power and glory enjoyed by the Spaniards. We see this optimism reflected in Shakespeare's The Tempest. However, in order to accomplish such colonialization, science, navigational technology and mathematics moved to the forefront, thereby discrediting the illusions of magic as we see in Jonson's play.

Faustus is well schooled in science and mathematics, and is not alone in his desire to exceed accepted knowledge. In Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, Butler observes, we see reflections of John Dee's own career under Elizabeth I and his insatiable curiosity.

The opening years of that remarkable reign saw Doctor Dee, as he was always called, at the height of his happiness and fame. *Persona grata* at court; very much in the eye of the great ones on the Continent too; solicited by four universities: Louvain, Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge; and already the author of learned books, what more could his heart desire? The answer has tragic implications. He desired universal

knowledge. [. . .] The middle-aged scholar could not reconcile himself to our human limitations, and was forever striving to transcend them. (Butler, Myth of the Magus, 162)

As in the case of Dee, Faustus's desires reap dire consequences. However, Faustus is not alone in his pursuit of higher learning. Rafe, Robin, Valdes and Cornelius are also attracted to the information made available through a study of magic.

The miracles that magic will perform
 Will make thee vow to study nothing else.
 He that is grounded in astrology,
 Enrich'd with tongues, well seen in minerals,
 Hath all the principles magic doth require.
 Then doubt not, Faustus, but to be renown'd
 And more frequented for this mystery
 Than heretofore the Delphic oracle.
 The spirits tell me they can dry the sea
 And fetch the treasure of all foreign wrecks,
 Ay all the wealth that our forefather's hid
 Within the massy entrails of the earth. (1.1.137-148)

Faustus shares the belief of Cornelius, and other scholars of Elizabethan England, that "through diligence in the pursuit and application of knowledge Englishmen could affirm dignity, procure wealth, and improve the quality of human life" (Mebane

75). However, Faustus goes one step too far in his desire to extend his imagination, and is left with nothing but illusions of grandeur.

Faustus's excessive curiosity and vainglory are reflective of Renaissance scholarship at large; caught between an exhausted study of academia and a lack of faith, Faustus is left to his own devices and he turns to black magic to alleviate his boredom. As Reed argues, this hunger for knowledge is part of the existential tension of the Renaissance.

The Renaissance was not only more credulous in respect to occult phenomena than the medieval period; it also had a hunger all its own, and this hunger extended beyond fact into the mysterious half-light of metaphysics. The extravagant acts of magic ascribed to Faustus appear to have expressed the Renaissance craving for the bizarre and unknowable. Little by little, they assumed the status of indisputable facts. [. . .] Doctor Faustus is one of several dramas of supernaturalism that have responded with equal success to two points of view: the symbolic and the realistic. The universal acceptance is due largely to the author's restraint, [. . .]. His natural dramatic sense dictated the advisability of restricting the achievements, but not the potentialities, of the great

sorcerer. [. . .] Under the talented pen of Marlowe the Faust legend attained an irony seldom matched in dramatic literature: in exchange for a few harmless pleasures, Faustus must pay the incalculable price of eternal damnation. Equally important, Marlowe's deliberate simplification of the German legend - that is, his rejection of the extravagant episodes - brings into crystal-clear focus the central idea: the contention between the opposing powers of Good and Evil for the soul of each of us, of whom Faustus is the embodiment. (Reed 90-91)

As Reed notes, the occult in Marlowe is counter-balanced by the presence of the religious symbols of the Good and Evil Angel who contend for Faustus's soul thus adding the feeling of a morality play to Marlowe's drama. "The emphatic focus upon the conflict between the good and evil agents -- the central thesis of religious drama - gives even Mephistophilis, who is Faustus's principal tempter, the aspect of a morality figure" (Reed 92). While making a pact with the devil may be the blackest of sins, Faustus does much to offset his pact. He is a lover of practical jokes, and is both affectionate towards, and protective of, his fellow men as is evidenced near the end of the play when Faustus isolates himself completely so that his friends will not suffer for his mistakes. "Oft have I thought

to have done so, but the devil threatened to tear me in pieces if I named God, to fetch both body and soul if I once gave ear to divinity, and now 'tis too late: gentlemen, away, lest you perish with me" (5.2.42-45). In loving his comrades Faustus shows a love for the God he has previously renounced.

Marlowe isolated his protagonist in a tower of self-information, and so Faustus moves from one set of shackles into another; Marlowe thereby absents Faustus from Agrippa's chain of intellectual development because he is rapidly removed from real contact with the world around him. However, as Yates argues, Marlowe acknowledges a Pseudo-Aristotelian theory of melancholy that is less defined than that of Agrippa: that of the isolated scholar being subject to overwhelming melancholy.

The thirtieth of the *Problemata physica* in this Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise discusses melancholy as the humour of heroes and great men. The argument is very detailed and medical but the main point is that the heroic frenzy, or madness, or furor, which according to Plato is the source of all inspiration, when combined with the black bile of the melancholy temperament produces great men; it is the temperament of genius. All outstanding men have been melancholics, heroes, like Hercules, philosophers, like Empedocles, Plato, and practically all the poets.

The theories of Pseudo-Aristotle on melancholy were not unknown in the Middle Ages, but in the Renaissance they attracted general attention. Assimilated into Neoplatonism through the Platonic theory of the *furores*, the notion of the melancholy hero whose genius is akin to madness became familiar to the European mind. (Yates, Occult Philosophy, 52)

By distorting the legend of Faust, Marlowe creates this melancholic Renaissance scholar who is doomed by his own humour into a pact relinquishing his soul. However, Marlowe counterbalances the seriousness of Faustus's studies, (which Ficino determined to be the cause of melancholy in his work on astral magic, De triplici vita), with the joviality and pranksterism of his newly acquired magic abilities (Yates, Occult Philosophy, 52).

Well, I am content to pass some sport,
 And by their folly make us merriment.
 Then charm me, that I may be invisible,
 To do what I please

Unseen of any whilst I stay in Rome. (3.1.52-56)

Faustus becomes a sympathetic figure embodying the existential tension of the humanist period because he fails to recognize the severity of his pact with Lucifer. The dramatic tension created by the physical presence of the Good and Evil

Angels in Doctor Faustus recalls the symbolic use of supernatural figures in medieval drama. While Marlowe's own atheist tendencies reflected in his play were prone to offend, the dramatic superiority of his play is essentially entertaining.

Marlowe's comedic elements are also in keeping with a shifting use of the devil figure in Renaissance drama. "The liberalization of his character makes him no longer the relatively staid demon of medieval convention," Reed argues. "His comic deportment is considerably more characteristic than had been that of his predecessors. Underneath his buffoonery, he is a clever designer of mischief, and yet can laugh as heartily at his failures as at his occasional successes" (Reed 47). While Mephistophilis certainly gives an agonizing portrait of the mental torment of hell, he also readily participates in Faustus's prank at the papal feast. Similarly, in Robert Greene's play, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, the devil appears to transport Miles down to hell, and acts as a leaven to counteract the sorrow Friar Bacon affects over his failed art.

MILES: There's nothing lets me from going with you,
 but that 'tis a long journey, and I have
 never a horse.

DEVIL: Thou shalt ride on my back.

MILES: Now surely here's a courteous devil, that for to pleasure his friend will not stick to make a jade of himself. But I pray you, goodman friend, let me move a question to you.

DEVIL: What's that?

MILES: I pray you, whether is your pace a trot or an amble?

DEVIL: An amble. "

MILES: 'Tis well. But take heed it be not a trot. But 'tis no matter; I'll prevent it.

DEVIL: What dost?

MILES: Marry, friend, I put on my spurs; for if I find your pace either a trot or else uneasy, I'll put you to a false gallop; I'll make you feel the benefit of my spurs.

DEVIL: Get upon my back.

MILES: Oh, Lord, here's even a goodly marvel, when a man rides to hell on the devil's back.

(15.46-64)

However, the comic elements in Marlowe do not detract from the tragedy that ensues. Any comic elements Marlowe bestows on Mephistophilis do little to offset Faustus's isolation that results in his pact with Lucifer.

Unlike Marlowe's intellectual and physical isolation of Faustus, Shakespeare's isolation of Prospero to the island makes the latter's magic seem more benign and controlled; Prospero's magic leads to a unified pattern unlike the disconnected episodes and displays of Faustus. Shakespeare's use of the island in The Tempest could have been precipitated by the recent discovery of the Bermudas adding the extra element of exoticism to the play; associated with this exoticism is mystery and possibly elements of the occult. Therefore, Prospero has no need to conjure demons and does not fall into the same trap as Faustus. As Reed notes, Prospero conformed to the Renaissance concept of magic in a way that Marlowe's protagonist did not.

Prospero's stature as a magician is due not so much to the novelty of performance as to the perfection and the manifold variety of his art. The raising of the tempest, the immobilizing of Ferdinand so that he cannot strike with his sword, the casting of victims into mental distraction, and the conjuring of spirits in a variety of shapes - all these feats belonged to the popular superstition of the Renaissance. (Reed 124)

The period of the Renaissance was especially interested in the practices of the occult, and Shakespeare's Prospero is the ultimate figure in sorcery for the era. That demons control the weather is a consistent tenet of witchcraft, which would

seem to support the notion that Prospero is indeed practicing benign witchcraft in The Tempest. Shakespeare also sustains the presence of white magic in The Tempest with the masque of Ceres, Juno and Iris in Act Four, Scene One; white magic was commonly held to be consistent with fertility magic. Ceres and Juno sing of bounty and good fortune and contribute to the prosperity resulting from white magic.

JUNO: Honour, riches, marriage-blessing,
 Long continuance and increasing,
 Hourly joys be still upon you;
 Juno sings her blessings on you.

CERES: Earth's increase, foison plenty,
 Barns and garners never empty.
 Vines with clustering bunches growing,
 Plants with goodly burden bowing;
 Spring come to you at the farthest,
 In the very end of harvest.
 Scarcity and want shall shun you,
 Ceres' blessing so is on you. (4.1.106-117)

The fact that Shakespeare's play ends in good weather directly coincides with the union of the lovers Ferdinand and Miranda. Such a harmonious ending justifies the use of Prospero's art in the same fashion that the resulting anarchy and chaos in

Jonson's play negates the manipulation of occultism for personal benefit.

Unlike Shakespeare, Jonson uses the superstition and fear of the occult in the Renaissance to provide a complete send-up of magic in his play. Jonson was not alone in his criticism of the occult. Thomas Heywood presented witchcraft both satirically in The Wise Woman of Hogsdon, and credulously in Gunaikeion. As Reed argues, Heywood, like Jonson, recognized the profitability of witchcraft and occultism, but he also recognized that such an opportunity for capitalism often resulted in charlatanry.

The distinction between genuine witches and charlatans who posed as occultists in the hope of monetary profit was commonplace during the reign of King James I. Indeed, the king himself, although a believer in the occult, exposed at least three fraudulent practitioners of the art. Like the king, Heywood was fully aware of the advantages to be gained by a pretender to occult knowledge, whether acting as a wise woman or a Jesuit exorcist; but this does not mean that he entertained a serious doubt as to the reality of witchcraft. Witches existed, as he informs us in Gunaikeion; on the other hand, knowledge of the occult was so profitable that women, and even men,

pretended to it in order to obtain some fraudulent advantage. (Reed 155)

Jonson uses blind credulity and avarice to the utmost satiric effect in The Alchemist. Part of the failure of alchemy in Jonson's play is its penchant for grandiose designs, such as an elixir of life which would cure all diseases (an end thought to be achievable through the practice of white magic); this concept was too far-reaching for the relatively new sciences. Jonson uses the sorcerer's art of alchemy to expose the gullibility of his countrymen, and the enterprise undertaken by Dol, Subtle and Face rapidly dissolves into charlatanism. Subtle and Face, like Faustus and Prospero, possess a forbidden language and use this to delude the other characters in the play who are consumed by greed; it emulates a morality play, but with the added humour of Jonson's acerbic wit. The play's dramatic efficacy is accompanied at every turn by the victim's unqualified faith in the magic arts. Jonson's play is firmly grounded in the Renaissance concept of the occult because, as Reed contends, it is not strictly limited to alchemy.

Many people are inclined to think that Jonson's play focuses exclusively upon the practice of alchemy. In actuality, Subtle pretends to almost every art ascribed to Renaissance sorcerers. During the altercation in the opening scene, Face charges him

with "searching for things lost with a sieve and sheeres," a practice common both to sorcerers and white witches. Subtle also feigns a knowledge of familiar spirits. Although Jonson exposes each of these sorceries as a hoax, he is not concerned primarily with satirizing Subtle, who has the redeeming quality of a clever wit; his principal objective is to expose the credulity of those people who accept each imposture of the charlatan as a bona fide act of magic. It is not surprising, therefore, that Subtle, despite his varied interests as a charlatan, devotes the major portion of his time to alchemy. The idea that a base metal can be transformed into gold has of course a compelling appeal to the greed innate in human nature; and greed, as Jonson recognized, since it tends to over-eagerness, is the trait most certain to produce and sustain an unperturbed credulity. (Reed 139-140)

The tone of Jonson's play was obviously reflective of King James's suspicion of the over-use or ill-use of witchcraft for personal gain in much the same way as Shakespeare's play reflects Elizabeth I's sympathies for magician-scholars such as John Dee. Shakespeare's play is one of judgment and balance with Prospero finally uniting the microcosmic society on the

island in harmony with the coupling of Ferdinand and Miranda. Because Shakespeare has presented us with both sides of the equation (with a man who has learned from his mistakes, with others corrupted by greed), and with the pairing of lovers, he provides a compromise between the tragedy of Doctor Faustus and the foolhardy charlatanism of The Alchemist. Shakespeare has presented the audience with a magician who is aware of his own limitations and who does not desire to surpass them. Because Prospero is a character at relative peace with himself (due to his isolation and recollected memory), and the elements on the island, The Tempest ends harmoniously. Prospero uses magic as it suits him, but also renounces it once his ends have been achieved. He returns to Milan to resume his worldly position, and therefore, chooses to remain human. Prospero has passed through the three stages of Agrippa's melancholy and is the wiser for it. Shakespeare's play is a reflection of the awe surrounding the occult that was perpetually dimming with the flourishing of science. Conversely, Jonson's play reflects the increasing opportunism of the occult art notably brought out during the witch trials under the reign of James I. It is a refutation of Agrippa's theory of melancholy, and similar texts, and is a sardonic retort to the white magic glorified under the reign of Elizabeth I. Marlowe's play is the most obviously defiant of the three because it presents a sympathetic portrait

of an educated man who succumbs to black magic to alleviate his boredom. Doctor Faustus reflects the inquisitive spirit of humanism and takes into account the Pseudo-Aristotelian theory of melancholy. Faustus is an isolated scholar who makes a bad decision that results in his eternal isolation from God.

Conclusion

The role of the magician in Elizabethan drama was both complex and enigmatic. As dramatists, Shakespeare, Marlowe and Jonson were required to entertain, to instruct and to invite their audience into the world of their plays. The figure of the magician furnishes them with a powerful instrument, which they used above all to demonstrate and explore the eternal human paradox that fascinated their age: that man is at once both limited and limitless. At the same time, magic was a morally ambivalent art, and Marlowe, Shakespeare and Jonson made use of the ambivalence by playing black and white magic against each other to create a complex mode of communication with their audience.

While Marlowe is ostensibly dealing with black magic, his presentation of it is complicated by the doubts he raises about Faustus's free will, and, while the motivation that moves Faustus towards a study of black magic is not malevolent, his use of the art still reaps dire consequences. In Doctor Faustus, as a result, we have a sympathetic protagonist who seems unduly punished for his overreaching, a revamping of the legendary German Faust in keeping with the spirit of Renaissance humanism and Marlowe's own tendencies towards skepticism. In

The Tempest, Shakespeare produced an enigmatic amalgam that he called rough magic. Though Prospero has been critically proclaimed a white magician, The Tempest in fact throws some doubt on the moral status of his art. Shakespeare has complicated the issue further by integrating elements of fertility magic and the partial use of Medea's incantation in Prospero's renunciation speech. Prospero's magic is ultimately justified, but not questioned, as the play ends with a return to order and prosperity, leaving magic behind on Prospero's island as a kind of suspect and dangerous knowledge. In Jonson, we have a complete travesty of alchemy, considered a derivative form of white magic. Subtle, Face and Dol create spectacular illusions of occult power on the stage, but they are not true scholars of magic, are motivated by greed and render the alchemy of the play impotent. The world of Jonson's play is one of decadence and fraud and is ultimately resolved in failure.

All three dramatists used magic and the magician for lively theatrical effects such as an unusually energetic irony and comedy and an almost voyeuristic engagement of fantasies of power and sensuality. The audience is offered a presentation of the forbidden through the use of magic and this is integral to the eternal human paradox of limitation. In all three plays what is forbidden is the knowledge that comes with the practice

of magic. Faustus is eternally damned for his use of black magic and Marlowe's play reflects the tension Faustus experiences as he tries to exceed the intellectual limits of being human. The tension in Shakespeare's play results in a questioning of the ends of magic and is illustrated by Prospero's exile for the use of magic, and his subsequent return to the Milan throne. Lastly, in Jonson the tension is illustrated by the lack of scholarship involved in Subtle's practice of alchemy; this tension reflects the skepticism and perceived opportunism of magic in the Jacobean era.

During the period in which the plays were written, attitudes towards occultism evolved from sympathetic acceptance under Elizabeth I to distrust and skepticism under James I. The threat of censorship and loss of patronage taught all dramatists of the period not only how to uphold the *status quo* on the surface of their work, but also how to communicate more critical messages obliquely to knowing members of their audience. Marlowe, Jonson, and Shakespeare use this two-sided communication in their presentation of magic. While Marlowe presents a resounding condemnation of black magic in Doctor Faustus, he insinuates doubts about double predestination and the goodness and even the existence of God to audience members who are adept in the lore of magic. To audience members with the same skills, Jonson insinuates a devastating critique of all

magic, indeed all illusion-making, into a play that brands alchemy as a greed-inspired fraud, and Shakespeare insinuates a celebration of the old reign of Queen Elizabeth into a play that apparently celebrates the benevolent autocracy and the concern for order that characterized the new reign.

The most effective historical threat to the viability of magic was the rise of science. Each of the three plays reflects the new environment in a different way. The growth of science was particularly deleterious to the practice of alchemy as the mystery surrounding the art was defeated by the documented research applied to chemistry. The science of exploration is most critical when applied to Shakespeare's play because Prospero's island reflects the exoticism and believed occultism of the newly discovered Bermudas. Marlowe's play has less to do with the rise in science than with the heretical attacks on some of his contemporaries who were practicing magic, such as Agrippa, Pico, and Bruno. Marlowe's play is a reflection of the environment of suspicion and fear surrounding the use of magic.

Shakespeare, Jonson and Marlowe succeeded in presenting the fraught existence of their magician protagonists and, in doing so, have left a legacy of entertainment that continually surpasses socio-political boundaries and constantly forces us as spectators to question our own desires for forbidden knowledge.

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