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Tudor-Stuart Drama**

by

Robert J. Goltra, Jr.

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Five Ceremonial Magicians of Tudor-Stuart Drama

by
Robert J. Goltra, Jr.*

Many late Elizabethan and early Jacobean plays concerned with magic contain characters that have been wrongly understood as magicians.¹ These figures never utilize their powers, ceremonially or otherwise, to control spiritual beings. As "magicians," they do not possess what C.J.S. Thompson describes as the

... art of influencing the source of events and of producing marvelous physical phenomena, by methods which ... owe their efficacy to their power of compelling an intervention of supernatural beings, or of bringing into operation some occult figures of nature.²

More often than not, they are depicted as charlatans and their magic ridiculed as superstition and looked upon as a mark of ignorance (Jonson's *The Alchemist*, for example). On the other hand, there are some plays in the period in which magic is a structural unit, whose magicians are real individuals exhibiting a craft belonging to one of two known systems, whose actions reflect contemporary moral beliefs. Plays of this kind are Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1588), Greene's *The Honorable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c. 1589), Munday's *John à Kent and John à Cumber* (1589), the anonymous *John of Bordeaux* (c. 1590), and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611).³ Although these dramas share with others a general subject-matter of magic, they also reflect predominant Renaissance beliefs about magicians and their art.

Religion and magic had been inextricably bound since the beginnings of Christianity, to the extent that the early Church had gained many converts who simply believed that they were obtaining a more powerful form of magic.⁴ Some of the best religious

*Portions of this monograph originated as a thesis submitted to the Division of English and Foreign Languages of Emporia State University for the Master of Arts degree in English.

¹Adolphus William Ward, *A History of English Dramatic Literature* (London: MacMillan and Company, Limited, 2 Vols., 1899), I, 443.

²C. J. S. Thompson, *The Mysteries and Secrets of Magic* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1928), p. 1.

³Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabeth Stage* (4 Vols. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1923), III, 422; 449.

⁴Keith V. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 25.

thinkers of the middle ages accepted the basic ideas of the magical sciences. St. Augustine played an important role in the transmission of classical superstition and made it necessary for the Scholastics, for whom he was the ultimate authority, to fit such belief into their theological systems.⁵ D. P. Walker points out that "the mass, with its music, words of consecration, incense, lights, wine, and supreme magical effect—transubstantiation" was a fundamental influence upon all medieval and Renaissance magic.⁶ The common Englishman who did not understand the theology behind the doctrine, believed that the ceremony was one in which the power and knowledge of the priest, combined with ritualistic utterances, produced a change in the nature of material objects.⁷ Moreover, Church emphasis upon the doctrine of the divine word, imparted in the Gospel of St. John, paralleled the direct correspondence between words and the divine idea which they expressed.⁸ Even the veneration of relics revealed the magical power with which the people endowed religious objects. Although the medieval Church fought magicians and magic through the middle ages, ironically it deplored only that magic unsanctioned by its own laws. It did not, for example, deny the possibility of supernatural action, but stressed that such activity could only emanate from God or the devil, thus basing the legitimacy of any magic upon an official Church view. It also considered the working of miracles (unquestionably the performance of true ceremonial magic, according to Thompson's definition) the most efficient way to demonstrate the truth of its teachings.⁹ Significantly, Frazer points to the conflict of principle between religion and magic (a prayer supplicates; a spell commands) and calls attention to the rivalry between priest and magician.¹⁰ Thomas argues that Renaissance magicians inherited their charms "from the medieval Church, and their formulae and rituals [from] centuries of Catholic teaching."¹¹ In principle, then, the medieval Church protested against magic; in prac-

⁵Henry Charles Lea, comp., *Materials toward a History of Witchcraft*, ed. Arthur C. Howland (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1957), p. 121.

⁶D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Fiction to Campanella* (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), p. 36.

⁷Thomas, p. 33.

⁸John G. Burke, "Hermeticism as a Renaissance World View," in *The Darker Vision of the Renaissance*, ed. Robert S. Kinsman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 102.

⁹Thomas, pp. 26; 254-56.

¹⁰Sir James George Frazer, "The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings," I, *The Golden Bough* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1958), 226.

¹¹Thomas, p. 42.

tice, the medieval and Renaissance Englishman believed that the Church was magic.

The general intellectual nature of the Renaissance also encouraged an interest in magic. Renaissance man recognized no real distinction between the material and the spiritual, concluding that any apparent distinction was the result of man's inability to perceive clearly.¹² The growing emphasis upon human reason did not, therefore, preclude a belief in magic. In fact, the rise of humanism increased rather than decreased its importance.¹³ As the Renaissance progressed, the concept of man as a microcosmic link between the material and spiritual worlds led to an elevation of man's power, magic being one instrument of exaltation.¹⁴ Moreover, the Renaissance interest in antiquity enhanced the appeal of magic, as scholars studied real and bogus sources of ancient knowledge that professed to contain solutions to human problems.¹⁵ Lynn Thorndike suggests that the growing influence of Neoplatonism (derived from the scholarship of Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, among others) contributed to

... a vague general notion that not only [were] the ethereal and elementary worlds joined by occult sympathy, but that all parts of the universe were somehow mystically connected, and that a simple magic key [might] be discovered by which [man could become master] of the entire universe.¹⁶

Even those who most vehemently objected to astrology, because of the lack of free will which it allowed, were attracted to magic, because it promised to liberate man from nature.¹⁷ As great as was magic's appeal to those who exalted human reason, it had an equally strong appeal to those who rejected the humanists' views. This group believed that man was dependent upon God and could acquire knowledge only through an understanding of God's symbols in nature. They sought this understanding by means of "illumination, revelation, and initiation into a body of ancient esoteric

¹²Hardin Craig, *The Enchanted Glass: The Elizabethan Mind in Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 1.

¹³Charles G. Nauert, Jr., *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), p. 225.

¹⁴Nauert, p. 232.

¹⁵Nauert, p. 231.

¹⁶Lynn Thorndike, *The Place of Magic in the Intellectual History of Europe* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), p. 224.

¹⁷Nauert, p. 233.

knowledge."¹⁸ Clearly, the period marked "not a stage in the abandonment of the occult in favor of pure reason, but a re-emphasis of the magical world view."¹⁹

Sixteenth-century theories governing ceremonial magic involve the theurgists (magicians who control and work through beneficent or rational spirits) and the goetians (magicians who control or employ devils or irrational spirits).²⁰ Fundamental to each was the belief that suprasensible living essences, as real forms, operated within the physical world.²¹ The main distinction between the two concerned the types of essences which they conjured up. Theurgists, for example, summoned median spirits from the Platonic realm between man and God. Goetians, on the other hand, summoned "superior" devils to control "lesser" ones.²² Theurgists worked with and within a divinely sanctioned Chain of Being. Goetians associated with devils who had revolted from God.²³ Here, one encounters the most generally accepted criteria for distinguishing between "good" or "white" magic and "bad" or "black" magic.²⁴ Finally, there was also an ill-defined line between goetian and witch.²⁵ Both systems, theurgy and goety, were active in the Renaissance, as theurgists sought to reach a union with various orders of celestial demons, even angels, while goetians sought to control devils and the terrestrial demons of pagan belief.²⁶ Theurgists claimed to be celebrating the majesty of God, insisting that the goetians had turned from God in search of personal power.²⁷ Thus, although both theories were linked to the Neoplatonic revival, there was, nevertheless, a distinction between them.

Whether theurgist or goetian, the ceremonial magician had a variety of devices for controlling his spirits. Suffumigations and observations of the phases of heavenly bodies were often resorted

¹⁸Hiram Haydn, *The Counter-Renaissance*, pp. 83; 177.

¹⁹Nauert, p. 226.

²⁰Thorndike, p. 224; Robert Hunter West, *The Invisible World: A Study of Pneumatology in Elizabethan Drama* (1939; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1969), p. 2.

²¹West, p. 2.

²²West, p. 47.

²³Haydn, p. 184.

²⁴Walker, p. 54.

²⁵Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), V, 13.

²⁶Walter Clyde Curry, *Shakespeare's Philosophical Patterns* (2nd ed. 1937; rpt. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), p. 153.

²⁷Haydn, pp. 184-85.

to as was music.²⁸ Early Renaissance Neoplatonists believed music to have great strength, convinced that both it and the human spirit were living kinds of air moving in an organized manner, and that a song had an even greater force, because it embodied an intellectual content.²⁹ But a magician was thought to exercise his greatest power through incantations and use of symbols expressing verbal and numerical relationships.³⁰ Incantations were thought to have two kinds of strength—that of the idea represented within the word, and that of the mind in the act of using the word.³¹ Furthermore, the joining of words in incantations was believed to impart an even greater power than that contained in the sum of individual words. Significantly, this power was felt to be enhanced if the word came from a noble language, for example, Hebrew. Although Hebraic letters were not viewed as conventional symbols, they were considered to be so representative of the structure of the universe that any manipulation of them possessed intrinsic power.³² Symbolic figures were believed to be as forceful as numbers. For example, the circle, thought to be the perfect figure, and the pentacle, thought to be a great force against demons, were the most powerful geometric figures.³³ The circle, present in most magic ceremonies, was used to form a spiritual barrier protecting the magician from any evil spirits which, by chance, might be invoked. Even the theurgist, who endeavored to call forth only beneficent spirits, might possibly invoke evil ones if careless in his preparations or impure in intentions.³⁴ Indeed, a lack of careful preparation was believed to invite death from epilepsy, apoplexy, or strangulation.³⁵ Ceremonial magicians, therefore, studied the areas of knowledge essential to their art, thus placing themselves in the proper frame of mind for the "almost" religious rite in which they participated. Agrippa had earlier advocated, as prerequisites to a formal control of spirits, a knowledge of the natural sciences, mathematics, and divinity, as well as a renunciation of carnal

²⁸Nauert, p. 273.

²⁹Walker, p. 6.

³⁰Nauert, p. 273.

³¹Nauert, p. 274.

³²Wayne Shumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 135.

³³Shumaker, p. 44.

³⁴Nauert, p. 279.

³⁵Thompson, p. 157.

desires.³⁶ It is probable, therefore, that a ceremonial magician would have been involved in acts of repentance, expiation, fasting, ablution, and meditation.³⁷

The historical development of the magician as character, the common acceptance of and belief in magic, the existence of two particular systems of magic—all were conducive to the appearance of the magician in the drama. Indeed, he would have been a difficult character for a playwright to resist. He was, first of all, an artist, creating both what was real and nonexistent. He investigated with great imagination the world around him. He exercised a creative power over the forces of nature. He commanded spirits whose intelligences superseded those of human beings. In the hands of Marlowe (and of those spurred on to imitation by the success of Faustus), he was the logical extension and refinement of the occult of early English drama. Englishmen, moreover, whose opinions informed these plays, traditionally believed in spirits, magic, and magicians.³⁸ Hence, the magician character succeeded not only because of an inherent character appeal, but also because of a correspondence to the real magicians of the world in which they "... seemed the natural representatives of things universally known to be true."³⁹ Thus, one finds in sixteenth-century England at least three views concerned with the morality of magic: the orthodox view that all magic was witchcraft; the less orthodox but commonly held view that the morality of magic depended mainly upon the magician's source of assistance; and the unorthodox view, presumably held by the goetians, that no form of magic was immoral.

I

Although Sir E. K. Chambers dates the composition of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* as 1588,⁴⁰ scholars who argue for a later

³⁶West, *The Invisible World*, p. 115.

³⁷Shumaker, p. 109.

³⁸Robert Rentoul Reed, Jr., *The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage* (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1965), p. 88.

³⁹Felix E. Schelling (ed.), *Shakespeare and the "Demi-Science": Papers on Elizabeth Topics* (London, 1927; rpt. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, n.d.), p. 172.

⁴⁰Chambers, IV, 422.

date point out that no English translation of the German *Faust-Buch* was available until 1592.⁴¹ However, Jeffrey Hart, noting that, on February 28, 1589, "a ballad of the life and death of Doctor Faustus, the great Cunngerer" was entered in the Stationers Register, argues that the Faust story was, indeed, known in England prior to 1592. He also claims that many Englishmen thought of Germany as the homeland of sorcerers and magicians, a view that suggests an acquaintance with German tales and magic.⁴² Moreover, the legend of Theophilis, very similar to the Faust tale and complete with written contract between man and devil, appeared in a homily dated 1000 A.D.⁴³ Kittredge describes it as "a stock item in medieval collections of miracles and virtues."⁴⁴ Assuming, nevertheless, that Marlowe had somehow seen an early version of the *Faust-Buch*, one concludes that his use of the material was at once both accurate and restrained. Faust had died in 1539, and his deeds had been greatly exaggerated after his death. The biography of 1587 was thereafter viewed as history, and it is obvious that Marlowe took few liberties with the material, merely omitting some of the more extravagant features, such as the appearance of Beelzebub and Belial in the shapes of grotesque monsters breathing fire, perhaps in the interests of credibility.⁴⁵

Faustus's signing the compact with Satan, the ignoble uses to which he thereafter puts his (or Mephistophilis's) powers, his rejection of numerous offers of salvation, and his tragic and horrifying end reveal him as a witch of orthodox religious beliefs. It implies that magic is, fundamentally, merely a form of witchcraft, an idea much at odds with the Elizabethan view of witches as base, ignorant creatures accompanied by animal familiars.⁴⁶ On this subject, Sidney B. Homan, Jr., has asked why Marlowe, with his admittedly unorthodox religious beliefs, would have chosen to write a play so much in keeping with orthodox opinion.⁴⁷ Although Homan is mainly concerned with the morality play elements, which he considers non-thematic matters, he poses a question pertinent to an understanding of Faustus the magician. One asks if it is more

⁴¹W. W. Greg (ed.), *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 1.

⁴²Jeffrey P. Hart, "Prospero and Faustus," *Boston University Studies in English*, 2 (1956), 199.

⁴³George Lyman Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1929), p. 239.

⁴⁴Kittredge, p. 239.

⁴⁵Reed, p. 90.

⁴⁶West, *The Invisible World*, p. 144.

⁴⁷Sidney R. Homan, Jr., "Doctor Faustus, Dekker's *Old Fortunatus*, and the Morality Plays," *MLQ*, 26 (1965), 497.

satisfactory to consider Faustus, not as a witch merely because he practices magic, but as a goetian who becomes a witch because his intellectual flaws and lack of skill cause him to fail as a magician and, thus, direct him into witchcraft and ultimate damnation. Contrary to traditional conceptions, therefore, Faustus may not be a man who has reached the limits of human knowledge which he now wishes to transcend through magic. Instead, he may be neither capable of knowing all that there is to know, nor of understanding that which he does know. In desiring to practice magic, he may be reacting against the same harsh spiritual doctrines of Reformation theology that had increased the general interest in magic in Protestant England. He has been educated at Wittenberg, a university noted for its radical Calvinism. Ultimately, however, he does not share his colleague's convictions.⁴⁸ Indeed, he shows a lack of any real belief or interest in theology. Earlier described by the Chorus as "Excelling all whose sweet delight disputes / In heavenly matters of theology,"⁴⁹ Faustus, then, observes that, inasmuch as he has taken a degree, he must "be a divine in show" (I.i.3), not the utterance of one either accomplished in or devoted to theology, but one more interested in verbal jousting than study and meditation leading to knowledge and the ability to reason, qualities obviously lacking in Faustus's discussions of theology, logic, medicine, and law.

Of theology, Faustus proclaims, "Divinity, adieu!" (I.i.47), following no extensive consideration of the subject. Indeed, Joseph T. McCullen thinks that he has no complete knowledge of theological studies, nor any recognition of their worth.⁵⁰ He does not appear to be in any position to consider his decision intellectually. McCullen further observes that Faustus, when evaluating theological studies, reads the Biblical injunctions, "The reward of sin is death . . ." (I.i.40), and "If we say that we have no sin we deceive our- / selves, and there's no truth in us . . ." (I.i.42-43), fail-

⁴⁸Paul R. Sellin, "The Hidden God: Reformation Awe in Renaissance English Literature," in *The Darker Vision of the Renaissance*, ed. Robert S. Kinsman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 152-53.

⁴⁹Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus in Elizabethan Plays Written by Shakespeare's Friends, Colleagues, Rivals, and Successors; to Wit: Christopher Marlowe, John Lyly, Robert Greene, Thomas Kyd, Ben Jonson, George Chapman, Thomas Dekker, John Marston, Thomas Heywood, Francis Beaumont, John Fletcher, John Webster, Thomas Middleton, William Rowley, Philip Massinger, John Ford, and James Shirley*, ed. Hazelton Spencer (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Company, 1933), Prologue, 18-19 (p. 41). Subsequent references to this work are noted by act, scene, and line numbers following cited material in the text.

⁵⁰Joseph T. McCullen, "Dr. Faustus and Renaissance Learning," *MLR*, 1 (Jan. 1956), 9. McCullen shows that Faustus's lack of complete knowledge extends to all areas of his study, as does his lack of recognition of their worth.

ing to read the successive parts of each verse which promise, respectively, eternal life and forgiveness of sin.⁵¹ Instead, he relies upon the harsher sections of the passages and ignores those which offer consolation, concluding, "Ay, we must die an everlasting death" (I.i.45). The subsequent effect of his spiritual despair is clearly compounded by his inherent insensibility, because his faulty interpretations are not restricted to matters of theology.

Of logic, Faustus declares, "Sweet Analytics, 't is thou hast ravish'd me," asking himself, "Is to dispute well logic's chiefest end?" (I.i.6;8), which he promptly affirms, stating, "Then read, no more; thou hast attain'd the end" (I.i.10), mistaking method (disputation) for the desired result of method (truth).⁵² In spite of his vast education and reputation, he displays, once more, an inability to apply knowledge so as to reason correctly.

Of medicine, Faustus remarks, "The end of physic is our body's health" (I.i.17). He believes that he has already accomplished this end because his prescriptions have saved many cities from the plague; but he rejects medicine because he is ". . . still Faustus and a man" (I.i.23), unable to ". . . make men to live eternally. / Or, being dead, raise them to life again" (I.i.24-25), thus confusing the man-like end of preserving health (the end which he has attained) with the god-like end of granting eternal life.

Of law, he concludes that its ". . . study fits a mercenary drudge, / Who aims at nothing but external trash" (I.i.34-35), having based his judgment upon a reading of two incorrect and incomplete excerpts from Justinian's *Institutes*, both of which deal with property.⁵³ He pays little or no attention to the law's contributions to an orderly society in its many other applications, as, for example, in its peaceful resolution of questions of property.

In his less than comprehensive examinations of the worth of theology, logic, medicine, and law, Faustus reveals that he possesses only a superficial knowledge of these disciplines which he has, presumably, studied in depth and does not have an ability to reason correctly nor to apply the knowledge which he does have. Moreover, he seems disinterested in the social benefits which these disciplines can provide. His desire to raise the dead and his rejection of a theology which does not promise eternal life disclose a

⁵¹McCullen, p. 9.

⁵²McCullen, p. 10.

⁵³See Hazelton Spencer's note to *Doctor Faustus*, p. 42.

man who aspires to god-like power. With limited knowledge and intellectual flaws, magic is the only avenue. Thus, Faustus turns to it as his only means of achieving his ends, declaring,

These metaphysics of magicians
And necromantic books are heavenly;
Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters,
Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.

(I.i.48-51)

Thinking magic capable of providing "a world of profit and delight, / Of power, of honor, of omnipotence" (I.i.52-53), he embraces it, claiming, "All things that move between the quiet poles / Shall be at my command . . ." (I.i.55-56). He has in mind his future position in the Chain of Being when he declares, "A sound magician is a mighty god" (I.i.61). It is doubtful what the nature of his commitment to this new discipline will be or whether he has the ability to master it.

The Elizabethan scholar was required to pursue self-knowledge, have faith in man's spiritual destiny, accept his responsibility to society, and show wisdom in his conduct.⁵⁴ In his rejection of divinity and his avowed fear of death, Faustus reveals a complete lack of faith in his spiritual destiny. His rejections of logic, medicine, and law show his disregard for the welfare of society. In an Elizabethan sense, he lacks the necessary tools for true learning.

There is reason, as well, to question Faustus's commitment to magic. He states that he desires "Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters" (I.i.50), merely the outward symbols and trappings of magic, with no apparent ambition to understand the principles underlying them, wishing only to employ these devices for worldly wealth and power. He wants to command spirits that can "fly to India for gold, / and Ransack the ocean for orient pearl" (I.i.81-82). He yearns to know the secrets of foreign kings (I.i.86) and to become a king himself (I.i.93). He seeks not the theurgist's union with median spirits to achieve beneficial effects and move toward an eventual union with the Absolute, but rather the goetian's power to control inferior spirits for personal gain. He is not interested in the time and effort necessary to become an accomplished goetian, a "sound magician" (I.i.61). Although he has had a

⁵⁴McCullen, p. 114.

glimpse of the power which magic can bring to the "studious artisan" (I.i.54), he is much more interested in the power than in the study required to achieve that power. Immediately, he orders Wagner to summon two magician friends, Cornelius and Valdes, saying, "Their conference will be a greater help to me / Than all my labors, plod I ne'er so fast" (I.i.67-68), thereby admitting his intellectual limitations and unwillingness to invest the time necessary for a mastery of the subject of magic. His summoning of his two assistants, therefore, reveals his faulty perception. Moreover, these men may not be competent tutors. When he tells them of his desire to "be as cunning as Agrippa was" (I.i.116), they fail to point out that he must have an extensive knowledge of mathematics, the natural sciences, religion, the Cabala, and Hermetic literature. Instead, they tell him that "these books, thy wit, and our experience / Shall make all nations to canonize us" (I.i.116-19). Because they hitherto have not been canonized, they apparently depend upon Faustus's intellect to help them gain power and wealth through magic. Moreover, Faustus does not question their incompetency. Cornelius tells him, "He that is grounded in astrology, / Enrich'd with tongues, well seen [in] minerals, / Hath all the principles magic doth require" (I.i.137-39), advice encompassing the celestial (astrology), the divine (languages), and the natural (physical sciences), ignoring the other preparations deemed necessary for a safe and effective ceremonial performance—repentance, expiation, fasting, ablution, and meditation. Faustus merely is told to "haste . . . to some military grove, / And bear wise Bacon's and Albanus' works, / The Hebrew Psalter and New Testament" (I.i.152-54). Furthermore, Cornelius and Valdes agree to acquaint Faustus with the incantations and ceremonies necessary for the invocation of spirits. Valdes even promises that, having once learned "the rudiments" of magic, Faustus will be more perfect than he (I.i.161). Thus, unaware of the difficulties confronting him (as he has been of so much else), Faustus plans to "canvass ever quiddity" of magic following dinner and wishes to conjure at once (I.i.161-65).

In the tradition of goety, Faustus's conjuration is not the work of an accomplished magician, nor, for that matter, is it blasphemy or witchcraft. Actually, he doubts his magical prowess, suspects even the power of magic, and has no confidence in himself to command devils to obey his will. Instead, he wishes merely to "try if devils will obey [his] hest" (I.iii.6). He does not resort to witchcraft, but admits that he has prayed and sacrificed to devils before conjuring (I.iii.6). Robert H. West thinks that Faustus's prayer may

have been the "dulia," allowed to saints and angels by the Catholic Church and to other spirits by magic rituals, rather than the "latria," the prayer of total submission.⁵⁵ It is also possible that his sacrifices were not blood offerings.⁵⁶ Moreover, his performance of them does not necessarily make him a witch.⁵⁷ He has taken obvious steps to protect himself from spirits which he expects to raise. He has drawn a circle for such protection (I.iii.9). He has also anagrammatized God's name and those of various saints, in recognition, perhaps, of the power of letters and words (I.iii.10). Furthermore, he has drawn geometric figures and characters to attract the influence of heavenly bodies. And he has invoked Jehova's name to enforce his will. In his actual performance, he both supplicates and commands—appealing to Beelzebub to make Mephistophilis appear, and commanding Mephistophilis to do so (I.iii.18-25). Although not an accomplished practitioner, he takes precautions against spirits which might be invoked, showing no inclination to submit to any evil forces. He does not blaspheme, but demonstrates that his grasp of the magic art, so recently acquired from his inadequate tutors, is no more complete than his understanding of theology, logic, medicine, or law.

When Mephistophilis appears to him in true form, Faustus commands him to change his guise to that of a monk (I.iii.26-29). When Mephistophilis starts to obey, Faustus congratulates himself for his excellence as a magician (I.iii.35-36). Later, however, when Mephistophilis explains that it was his own free will, and not Faustus's command, that caused him to materialize, Faustus readily accepts the explanation, once again revealing his doubts about his abilities as a magician. Until now, Faustus has not rejected the Scriptures or Christ, but he agrees to do so immediately when Mephistophilis explains, "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" (I.iii.50-52). Thus, Mephistophilis has convinced him that "the shortest cut for conjuring" is witchcraft (I.iii.55). Interested in magic only as a means to worldly gains, Faustus quickly admits that he has, indeed, done what Mephistophilis has described and agrees to subject himself to Beelzebub (I.iii.58-60).

⁵⁵Robert H. West, "The Impatient Magic of Dr. Faustus," *English Literary Renaissance*, 4, 231.

⁵⁶West, *The Invisible World*, p. 129.

⁵⁷West, *The invisible World*, p. 129.

From the orthodox Christian view of magic, Mephistophilis's appraisal of Faustus's conjuration is correct. Actually, Faustus could have failed to establish a control over demons (in the light of his incomplete mastery of other subjects and his scant attention to magic), but in spite of his incompetence and inexperience as a magician, he has succeeded by accident, although he fails to take advantage of his success. When Mephistophilis, pained by the interrogation that follows, begs, "O Faustus, leave these frivolous demands, / Which strike terror to my fainting soul (I.iii.85-86), Faustus is oblivious to the inherent warning and replies, "Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude" (I.iii.89). Showing his customary lack of insight and reason, totally accepting Mephistophilis's verdict, he himself proposes the pact that turns him from an erstwhile magician into a witch (I.iii.95-105).

Later, when Mephistophilis demands that Faustus sign a formal pact in blood to secure his allegiance to Lucifer, Faustus questions him about Lucifer's reason for desiring his soul and wants to know about the pain of hell. Once again, Mephistophilis appears to provide truthful answers (II.i.40-46), and Faustus completes the pact, despite God's warnings in congealed blood (II.i.61) and the inscription upon Faustus's arm (II.i.75-76). Thereafter, the magic in the play bears no resemblance to the work of the ceremonial magician, because it is the result of the pact and, consequently, witchcraft. But there remains the possibility that Faustus began as a goetian and became a witch because of his inadequacies as a magician. The drama may show the dangers inherent in the practice of magic by one unwilling or, perhaps, unable to master a difficult and dangerous art, by one who lacks faith in his ability to practice the art, or lacks faith in the art itself. Certainly, God damns Faustus for witchcraft to which he has turned when he has failed as a magician. At the play's end, when Faustus screams, "I'll burn my books . . ." (V.ii.135), the comment may be that of one who should have studied and believed in them.

II

Robert Greene introduced his goetian, Friar Bacon, in *The Honorable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c. 1589). Accord-

ing to Felix E. Schelling, "It was in direct emulation of the German 'back magic' of Faustus that Greene conveyed into his charming comedy of English rural life the English 'white magic' of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay."⁵⁸ Percy Z. Round, on the other hand, suggests a chapbook entitled *The Famous historie of frier Bacon and Ball's Illustrium majoria Britanniae scriptorum Summarium* as sources,⁵⁹ and Frank Towne argues that neither of these works nor the play itself present Bacon as a "white" magician.⁶⁰ One proposes, instead, that Bacon is a goetian whose masterful control of devils results in unfortunate consequences which cause him to renounce his magic. Early in the play, he conjures up a devil to do his bidding with the words, "*Per omnes deos infernales, Belcephon!*"⁶¹ Later, when he eventually renounces his magic, he confesses that

... it repents me sore
That ever Bacon meddled in this art.
The hours that I have spent in pyromantic spells,
The fearful tossing in the latest night
Of papers full of necromantic charms,
Conjuring and adjuring devils and friends,
With stole and alb and strange pentag[o]non,
The wresting of the holy name of God,
As Soter, Elohim, and Adonai,
Alpha, [Sabaoth] and Tetragrammaton,
With praying to the fivefold powers of [hell]
Are instances that Bacon must be damn'd
For using devils to countervail his God.

(IV.iii.86-89; brackets in original)

Clearly, Bacon is a goetian who has sought and achieved control of devils; he is not a "white" magician or theurgist. Whereas Faustus fails because of intellectual flaws, Friar Bacon succeeds because he is competent in the performance of his art. That he must finally renounce his craft does not imply that magic is witchcraft and, thus, immoral, anymore than does Faustus's renunciation. Friar Bacon simply makes an inappropriate choice by relying upon devils for assistance.

⁵⁸Felix E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama*, I, 387.

⁵⁹Percy Z. Round, "Greene's Materials for *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*," *MLR*, 26 (Jan. 1926), 19.

⁶⁰Frank Towne, "White Magic in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*?" *MLN*, 67 (Jan. 1952), 10.

⁶¹Robert Greene, *The Honorable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay in Elizabethan Plays . . .*, ed Hazelton Spencer (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Company, 1933), I.ii.124 (p. 181). Subsequent references to this work are noted by act, scene, and line numbers following cited material in the text.

Andrew V. Ettin describes Bacon as "vain and egocentric,"⁶² and Albert Wertheim argues that, in the course of the play, he demonstrates, or causes to be demonstrated, each of the seven deadly sins.⁶³ Both are correct in thinking that Bacon has flaws, although both see them as existing traits enhanced or revealed by the character's ability to practice magic. It is, perhaps, more accurate to think that these flaws stem from Bacon's practice as a goetian. He is not guilty, as was Faustus, of witchcraft. He does not lose his humanity as Faustus eventually does. He does not enter into a pact with devils. Instead, he commands devils. He describes himself as having such power that the "great archruler, potentate of hell, / Trembles when Bacon bids him or his fiends / Bow to the force of his [pentagonon]" (I.ii,53-55); brackets in the original). Even to the religiously orthodox, Bacon's ceremonial magic, which sought and bound devils to the will of the magician, was less damning than would have been an express consenting to devils in a witch-pact.⁶⁴ Although he is not a witch, his negative behavior may, nonetheless, be the direct result of his art. Neoplatonists who endeavored to distinguish between a lower order of spirits (which they sought to control) and devils (with which only witches usually consorted) postulated the existence of irrational demons who controlled the material world.⁶⁵ They believed that, although man was capable of managing these irrational spirits, a prolonged association with them would result in a goetian's loss of reason and subject him to fits of passion.⁶⁶ If, in theory, a goetian who worked with irrational demons of no inherently evil nature was in danger because of his association with them, a magician whose magic brought him into frequent contact with similar spirits would have faced greater peril, and much of Bacon's behavior shows the effects of his contact with such devils, reflecting cruelty, immorality, vanity, and false judgment. Only when this behavior precipitates a double murder does he recognize the harmful nature of his magic and renounce it, an action which suggests that the fault lies not with Bacon but with his system of magic.

Bacon's magic is both harmless and comic, at times, but never without a strain of cruelty. For example, when Burden, a colleague,

⁶²Andrew V. Ettin, "Magic into Art: the Magician's Renunciation of Magic in English Renaissance Drama," *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*, 19 (1977), 283.

⁶³Albert Wertheim, "The Presentation of Sin in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*," *Criticism*, 16, 285.

⁶⁴West, *The Invisible World*, p. 134.

⁶⁵Curry, p. 179.

⁶⁶Curry, pp. 179-80.

irritates him by saying, "Bacon roves a bow beyond his reach, / And tells of more than magic can perform, / Thinking to get a fame by fooleries" (I.ii.80-82). Bacon's reaction is inappropriate and unnecessarily harsh. Miles explains to Burden, "[Bacon's objective is to] turn you from a doctor to a dunce, and shake you so small that he will leave no more learning in you than is in Balaam's ass" (I.ii.108-10). Bacon gets revenge by commanding a devil to procure Burden's mistress from Henley. Although the sequence and Burden's subsequent embarrassment are, to an extent, comic and clearly meant to be, Bacon's action is mean-spirited and destructive, as he needlessly harasses Burden, using his magic merely as a means to assuage his vanity and take revenge.

Bacon's involvement in the secondary plot also reveals his lack of morality in his application of his magic. In this action, Edward elects to use Bacon's powers to capture Margaret, for whom his desire is not marriage but sexual conquest, and he has dispatched Lacy to woo the lady in his behalf. Bacon agrees to assist Edward in this dubious enterprise, but, at the same time, he reveals that Lacy is wooing Margaret in his own interests (II.ii.98). Bacon offers his "glass perspective" to enable Edward to view Lacy's activities in Fressignfield (II.ii.125-26), thereby encouraging enmity between Edward and Lacy. When Edward offers Bacon forty thousand crowns to prevent the marriage of the other two, Bacon replies, "Fear not, my lord, I'll stop the jolly friar / For mumbling up his orisons this day" (II.iii.150-51). He, then, uses his art to prevent the pending marriage, striking dumb a priest and interrupting a religious ceremony. He compounds this action, sending a devil to carry away Friar Bungay, the priest (II.iii.172-74). Bacon's art, here, is self-serving, and he has ridiculed not only a colleague but a fellow priest. That Bacon's magic does not cause lasting damage to the friendship of Edward and Lacy or to Lacy's romance with Margaret is due to Edward's recognition of the strength of the love between the other two (III.i.116-21), and not to any action on the part of Bacon.

The contest between Bacon and Vandermast, a German magician, may be one that, as Jeffrey F. Hart has suggested, "redounds to the glory of England as much as to the credit of Bacon."⁶⁷ Yet the text casts doubts upon Bacon's motivation. Whereas the contest was motivated both by nationalistic pride (III.ii.13-17) and by a

⁶⁷Hart, p. 199.

dispute as to which type of spirit (pyromantic or geomantic) gives the master the greater magical advantage (III.ii.27-28), Bacon is motivated only by vanity in his personal sense of superiority as a magician. As the contest begins, Vandermast greets Bacon courteously (III.ii.123-25), only to have Bacon denigrate his knowledge (III.ii.130) and take control of the spirit of Hercules which Vandermast has produced (III.ii.137-38). Then, not content with having demonstrated that his knowledge is superior to the pyromancy of Vandermast and the geomancy of Bungay (his fellow Englishman), he commands the spirit of Hercules to transport Vandermast to Germany (III.ii.158-59). Although King Henry then praises him, saying, "Thou hast honored England with thy skill, / And made fair Oxford famous by thine art" (III.ii.166-67), ironically Bacon has been more interested in establishing his reputation and embarrassing his adversary than in glorifying his nation or the university.

The episode involving the destruction of the Brazen Head further reveals Bacon's sense of vanity and his increasing lack of judgment. In the beginning, he tells Miles, his servant:

With seven years' tossing necromantic charms,
Poring upon dark Hecate's principles,
I have fram'd out a monstrous head of brass,
That, by the enchanting forces of the Devil,
Shall tell out strange and uncouth aphorisms,
And girt fair England with a wall of brass.

(IV.i.17-22)

Impatiently waiting for the Head to speak, Bacon charges Miles to watch for him and to awaken him should the Head stir (IV.i.30-55). As he leaves, he warns Miles: ". . . in thee rests Friar Bacon's weal: / The honor and renown of all his life / Hangs in the watching of this Brazen Head" (IV.i.27-29). Characterized throughout as a comic fool, Miles is, despite his availability, a strange choice for such an important assignment, but Bacon's passion for rest has overcome his good judgment. When Miles fails to summon him at the crucial moment and the Head is destroyed, Bacon reviles the servant and dismisses him from service, decreeing, "Some fiend or ghost haunt on thy weary steps, / Until they do transport thee quick to hell" (IV.i.147-48). The real blame for the loss of seven years' work, however, lies with Bacon. His choice of Miles for this special assignment, an action that implies a diminution of Bacon's reason, may be the result of his prolonged association with irrational

spirits. His error in entrusting this incompetent servant with the Brazen Head is reminiscent of Faustus's error in choosing Cornelius and Valdes for tutors. Although Faustus's mistake was probably the result of an inherent lack of wisdom, Bacon's is the result of his progressive deterioration of judgment.

It is the Lambert-Serlsby episode of IV.iii which causes Bacon to renounce magic. Lambert and Serlsby, who have quarreled over the right to marry Margaret, meet in a duel. Had Bacon not earlier prevented the marriage of Lacy and Margaret, this situation would not have developed and the death of these two gentlemen would not have occurred, but the consequences of Bacon's behavior do not end with the duel. The sons of Lambert and Serlsby, two "college mates," unaware of their fathers' impending duel, desire the use of Bacon's "glass perspective" to look in on their parents (IV.iii.27-30). When Bacon is told that the boys see their fathers "in combat," he encourages the two to "Sit still . . . and see the event" (IV.iii.64). When the sons witness the deaths of their fathers, they fatally stab each other (IV.iii.70-73). Only then does Bacon realize that his vanity in displaying his art has caused the deaths of four people (IV.iii.76). Thus, he breaks his glass and renounces magic as a practice which has upset the natural, divine order of the world (IV.iii.86-98), too late, however, to save one of his previous victims, because Miles is carried off by a devil who laments, "How restless are the ghosts of hellish spirits, / When every charmer with his magic spells / Calls us from ninefold-trenched [Phlegethon]" (V.ii.i-3; brackets in the original). Although Bacon renounces magic, he does so with a view much different from that of Faustus. He urges himself to "drown not in despair: / Sins have their salves, repentance can do much" (IV.iii.99-100), and pledges, ". . . I'll spend the remnant of my life / In pure devotion, praying to my God / That he would save what Bacon vainly lost" (IV.iii.107-09), clearly reflecting the medieval belief that a man could choose salvation and deliberately satisfy the conditions necessary for grace.⁶⁸

Although the play contains elements of comedy and romance, it is not proper to consider Bacon as a "white" magician who renounces magic merely to comply with an unfavorable orthodox view of the art. Bacon is a successful goetian exercising over spirits a power not achieved by Faustus. He uses his power, however, for personal ends. In spite of his competence, he demonstrates a man's inability to utilize magic constructively and to remain unaffected by his contact with spirits. His impaired reason notwithstanding, he resembles the empirical scientist who, confronted by evidence,

is able to reject a system that has proved harmful both to himself and others.

III

Bacon reappears as a magician in *John of Bordeaux, or The Second Part of Friar Bacon*.⁶⁹ Although authorship and date of composition are uncertain, W. W. Greg thinks that Greene wrote the play as a sequel to *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and suggests that it was composed around 1590.⁷⁰ Here, one finds a very much different Bacon, a magician using his art in a completely different way. Although still a goetian, he no longer employs "devils to countervail his God" (IV.iii.99), but uses his magic for the benefit of mankind.

Bacon in the first scene is vastly different from the haughty friar in the beginning of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. He is discovered in Germany, being greeted by the German emperor and by Vandermast (the magician whom he had bested in Greene's former play). He announces that he "left not his English skolls to gayne / a broud wealth or promotion . . ." (41-42), both of which had been important to the earlier Bacon. In his opening remarks, he recalls his repentance for his former misdeeds, admitting, "Bacon is ould and age can not / be blith for many yeares must meditat of sin . . ." (43-44). Later, when a Turkish emperor asks about his identity, he replies that he is "Cristian borne" and that his "calling is a frier" (145), thus describing himself, not as a powerful magician, but as a monk, whereas in the previous play, in words or actions, he does not attach any importance to his religious affiliation or his office until his renunciation speech. Later, in this same conversation with the Turkish emperor, he displays the same vanity in his magic as did the earlier Bacon, now at least somewhat tempered by Christianity, as is, indeed, his magic.

Captured with Perce by the Turks, the two were "setted in a thicket this poring on a booke / wher in was draune formes and

⁶⁸W. W. Greg (ed.), *John of Bordeaux or The Second Part of Friar Bacon*, The Malone Society Reprints, p. vii. Subsequent references to this work are noted by line numbers following the cited material in the text.

⁷⁰Greg, p. ix.

Carrectors that seme / most strange . . ." (130-32). Bacon later uses his powers to procure the emperor's crown, robe, sword, and escapes (170-240). He also conjures up a devil, that, disguised as a soldier, first threatens before carrying off to hell a spirit in the shape of the Turk's son. Unlike the earlier Bacon, he now uses his magic to embarrass a heathen, the foe of European Christian civilization, and to escape from the Turk. This second Bacon has not renounced his magic, but rather its immoral applications.

Bacon is involved in another love triangle in this play. Here, Ferdinand, the son of the emperor, wants to possess Rossalin, the faithful wife of John of Bordeaux, who is a commander in the emperor's war against the Turks. Ferdinand, in his designs upon Rossalin, resembles Prince Edward of the earlier play, for whom Bacon had shown no compunctions about aiding in his pursuit of Margaret. Here, Bacon's response to a similar situation is different. The magician who now seeks to break God's laws to further an adulterous relationship is Vandermast, not Bacon. Ferdinand offers him wealth for his services (as did Edward in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*), but, although Vandermast accepts the offer, he also cautions that magic cannot affect the mind and cannot compel the un-Christian renunciation of chastity (306-11). Instead, Vandermast devises a strategem through magic to brand John of Bordeaux falsely as a traitor, counting on disgrace and the subsequent deprivation of his family to deliver Rossalin to Ferdinand (321-32). Should the plan not succeed, he intends to deliver Rossalin to Ferdinand while she is sleeping and unable to resist his magic (334-37). Although Vandermast succeeds in having the emperor dismiss John of Bordeaux and cast out Rossalin and her family (479-97), Bacon, contrary to his impulse in the previous play, acts as a restorer of order and a defender of Christian principles. When John of Bordeaux appeals to the heavens for aid in correcting the injuries done to him and his family (617-18), Bacon answers the plea. However, when Rossalin continues to withstand Ferdinand's advances, Vandermast orders a devil, Asteroth, to convey the sleeping Roasalin to Ferdinand (652-54). Sensing the presence of a devil, Bacon summons Asteroth and learns of his intended mission (655-60). Recognizing that magic should not be used for immoral purposes, Bacon describes Vandermast as an "vnCevell scoller that abusest art and / turnest thy skill to pre Ieduis the Iust . . ." (661-62). Significantly, this Bacon possesses the same unsurpassed power over devils as did his predecessor. He charges Asteroth to

. . . stay trembling
 lacke to my stratch out waund or I will tei thy
 for a thowsand years wher [belce] Lucefer nor al
 the devells in hell shall once resece the from my magicke
 spells.
 (667-70; brackets in the original)

Finally, Bacon resolves the situation by forcing Asteroth to substitute Vandermast's wife for Rossalin (699). The changed nature of Bacon's view of the world, of God, and, perhaps, of his own situation and the nature of his magic is evident in his counsel to Rossalin:

Ladie be patien in yowr meseries the hand of god is hevie for a tyme to tri
 yor sufference in affliction, but when he sees you humbled to his mynd
 this bitter stormes will have a quiet calme and he will temper fortunes
 teranie and manifest yor wertues to the wored. (983-87)

Is it possible that this Bacon now sees himself as one afflicted, humbled, and desirous of manifesting virtues through magic? Such a view, earlier in the play, is supported by his conversation with a young scholar (725-46). Although the passage is corrupt, Bacon appears to answer affirmatively the scholar's question as to whether a higher power governs his magic (737-40). Moreover, when Frederick orders Rossalin, her children, and Bacon to prison (1043), Bacon cautions him that ultimate power rests with God (1046).

This kind of power is clearly revealed in the episode in which Bacon summons devils to release the prisoners from jail. When Asteroth and Rabsacke refuse to obey his commands and claim his body and soul as their property (1130-44), Bacon announces that devils have ". . . no / pouer over a Cristian fayth" (1144-45), forcing them to obey and sending them to capture Vandermast (1151-54). He ends the episode with a demonstration of Christian charity, releasing all prisoners after counseling them to mend their ways (1220-25). Using magic, he completes the restoration of order, showing that the charges against John of Bordeaux are false, striking Vandermast mad and placing him in the care of a devil, and bringing Ferdinand to repentance (1261-1338).

Although Bacon of *John of Bordeaux* is undeniably a goetian, a controller of devils, he is different from Faustus or Bacon of the previous play. Although the other magicians follow the traditional practice of using the name of God in the ceremonies in which they gain (or, perhaps, in the case of Faustus, attempt to gain) control over devils, neither exhibits any intention of using his power in

moral or Christian ways. Both Faustus and the earlier Bacon desire to increase their renown and have no reservations for upsetting the natural or divine order of the world in the process. Both show a disregard for other individuals and for the effects of their magic upon others. Both are caused to repent their practice of magic, consonant with the orthodox religious view of magic. The Bacon of *John of Bordeaux*, however, utilizes his magic differently. He describes himself as a Christian magician and acts to protect Christian virtue. Moreover, his commentary is that of a goetian who controls devils with the sanction and, perhaps, aid of God, thus precluding his identification as a heretic and any allusion to his practice of magic as witchcraft. This Friar Bacon, a character that identifies the Church with helpful and moral magic, appealed to those who believed that a magician could celebrate the majesty of God. If this Bacon's powers are meant to reflect his affinity with God, he is similar to the theurgists who derived their powers from an association with beneficent spirits. This Friar Bacon resembles more the magicians in Munday's *John à Kent* and *John à Cumber* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* than Faustus or the character in Greene's earlier play.

IV

Anthony Munday's magician in *John à Kent* and *John à Cumber* is a practicing theurgist. He has no direct contact with devils, but works through spirits of nonsubterranean origin. Nevertheless, Munday gives no evidence that John à Kent is a theurgist in the sense of one who seeks to move upward in the Chain of Being toward an Absolute. Like Bacon of *John of Bordeaux*, John à Kent uses magic to benefit others. His skill actually may be in his control of aerial spirits which the *Key of Solomon* terms "theurgia-goetia."⁷¹ The distinction is, however, not a major one. Historically, he is said to have concluded a pact with the Devil to obtain his powers.⁷² In Munday's play, however, there is no contact between magician and

⁷¹E. M. Butler, *Ritual Magic* (1949; rpt. New York: Noonday, 1959) p. 35.

⁷²Schelling, *Elizabeth Drama*, I, 388.

devils. Soon after John à Kent's first appearance, a young nobleman asks if he has power to summon ghosts and spirits. John à Kent's affirmative reply, while it shows him to be a necromancer, does not identify him as a goetian. In fact, he early seeks to reassure the audience of the nature of the play, anticipating its lightheartedness, declaring that his intention in it is to ". . . help, hinder, giue, take back, turne, ouerturne, / deceiue bestowe, breed pleasure, discontent, / yet comickly conclude, like John à Kent."⁷³ The only textual references linking his powers with devils are those uttered by rustic clowns. For example, Hugh, a sexton, describes John à Kent as one who ". . . neuer goes abroad with out a bushell / of deuilles about him" (1041-42) who uses them to punish any who denigrate him. Turnop adds that John à Kent

. . . neuer kist wench
or plad the good fellowe . . .
but my wife hath knowen on it ere I came home, and
it could not be but by some of his flying deuilles.
(1056-59)

Their lack of thought and firsthand knowledge comment more clearly upon their slight amount of sophistication and credulity than upon the nature of magic.

The plot revolves around John à Kent's efforts to aid two young noblemen, Lord Geogfrey Powis and Sir Griffin Meriddock, to marry Marian and Sidanen, respectively, whose parents have already betrothed them to the Earls of Morton and Pembroke. The moral nature of John à Kent's intent and his magic is reflected in his actions immediately after Powis and Meriddock request his assistance. Before agreeing to come to their aid, he seeks to ascertain if the two young women wish to marry these two young men. Disguised, therefore, as an elderly hermit, he comes to them requesting "charitable comfort" (217). Both girls grant him Christian charity (230-31), and he requests that they meet him at a spring which maidens traditionally visit before marriage. After questioning them at the spring, he learns that they do not wish the marriage which their parents have arranged for them—indeed, that they plan to kill the grooms and themselves (419-65). John à Kent will use his magic, therefore, to assist individuals who show compassion and strong moral convictions against forced marriages.

⁷³Anthony Munday, *John à Kent* and *John à Cumber*, The Malone Society Reprints, 11, 143-36. Subsequent reference to this work are noted by line numbers following the cited material in the text.

In contrast, John à Cumber, the other magician in the play, endeavors to aid the parents of the two girls in bringing about the marriage to Morton and Pembroke. Munday, thus, establishes a conflict between "white" and "black" magic (John à Cumber, one learns, has trafficked with devils and uses shades in his art). In a soliloquy (528-49) in which John à Kent expresses a need for a rival magician to "driue . . . [him] to sound pollicyes" (542) and give the play a conflict, he describes John à Cumber as a magician "that ouerreachte the deuill by his skill" (544). The Earl of Morton also tells how John à Cumber "once beguylde the deuill, / and in his Arte could neuer finde his matche" (696-97). John à Kent further notes that John à Cumber "went beyond the deuill, / And made him [sell] serue him seuen yeares prentiship" (999-1000; brackets in the original). Perhaps by its very nature, however, John à Cumber's magic is less powerful than John à Kent's, because this action clearly demonstrates the superiority of John à Kent's "white" magic to John à Cumber's "black" magic. John à Cumber, for that matter, even reveals the less potent nature of his art by enlisting the aid of rustics in his contest with John à Kent (1050-82).

Schelling argues that Munday is imitating the contests between Bacon and Bungay and Vandermast in Greene's play.⁷⁴ Yet, the contest between John à Kent and John à Cumber endures for the length of the play, and John à Kent, rather than desiring his opponent's annihilation, literally or figuratively, offers him a second chance to match skills (1460-91). Obviously, John à Kent does not employ magic for evil purposes; instead, he uses it to help restore order. Although he is subverting parental authority, he sees himself as enforcing an older and more natural order of things. He tells Sidanen: "I knowe not Lady how the world is chaunged. / When I was young they wooed the daughter first, / and then the father, when they had her graunt" (434-36). Although he supports the daughters' wishes, he does not desire a permanent enmity between them and their parents. Then, after triumphing over John à Cumber and uniting the two couples, he offers his rival another opportunity to affect the marriages desired by the parents, on the condition that they agree, if John à Cumber fails, to accept their daughter's wishes and "cease contention" (1475). Armed with this pledge, John à Kent causes a "dazzeling mist" to blind his foe (1613) when Powis and Meriddock enter the chapel to wed Marian and

⁷⁴Schelling, "Shakespeare and *Demi-Science*," pp. 161-62.

Sidanen. Thus, he achieves a peaceful, harmless resolution to the conflict.

Throughout the play, John à Kent uses his magic to affect the minds and imaginations of his opponents. In particular, he struggles with John à Cumber, utilizing Shrimp, whom Reed considers to be Munday's only character that is not "lifeless and two-dimensional."⁷⁵ Shrimp is certainly worthy of note, because performing magicians, like him, were common on the streets of Elizabethan and Jacobean England.⁷⁶ Known as "jugglers," they commonly were accompanied by boy assistants, bound in service (as he is) by contract, who aided them in their illusion.⁷⁷ An Elizabethan audience, regardless of their knowledge of pneumatological theories, easily would have identified Shrimp in this context. His appearances are characteristically preceded by the stage direction, "Enter Shrimp a boy," and he often refers to John à Kent as his master and, in turn, is addressed as would be a servant. Shrimp also resembles the beneficent rational spirits which theurgists engaged in their performance of magic. That Shrimp is capable of rational independent action is manifest in his deeds which further John à Kent's designs and for which he has received no clear or detailed instructions. For example, when John à Kent desires to acquaint Morton and Pembroke about the disappearance of their prospective brides, he merely directs Shrimp to Chester and asks that he awake those who are asleep (551-52). With no further instructions, Shrimp sings a song to Morton and Pembroke, accomplishing his mission (577-87). He uses music, not only to awaken anxiety, but also to lead, to comfort, and to render others unconscious. When Marian's father orders Oswen and Amery to deliver Marian and Sidanen to Chester for the wedding, Shrimp uses his "instrument" to produce music to entice the group to follow John à Kent's desired course (1100-09). When Marian and Sidanen despair because they think they will be forced to wed Morton and Pembroke, Shrimp uses music and song to comfort them (1114-28). When Oswen and Amery have delivered the young women to Powis and Mediddock, Shrimp charms them into a deep sleep with his music. As was earlier noted, music was an especially powerful aspect of magic, because, like the spirit, being a living

⁷⁵Reed, pp. 107-08.

⁷⁶Barbara A. Mowat, "Prospero, Agrippa, and Hocus Pocus," *English Literary Renaissance*, 11, No. 3 (1981), 298.

⁷⁷Mowat, p. 300.

kind of air moving in an organized manner, it could affect a listener's imagination and emotions. Song was also thought to enhance music, and it is noteworthy that Shrimp adds lyrics to his tune when he charms Oswen and Amery into sleep.

Munday's John à Kent, therefore, is a theurgist employing a rational spirit (Shrimp) to accomplish moral ends. His aims are different from those of Faustus and Greene's Friar Bacon. He restores and protects the natural order—or, at least, what he sees as the natural order. He causes no spiritual or physical injury to himself or anyone else. Unlike Bacon, the "Christian goetian" of *John of Bordeaux*, he drives no one mad. In contrast to Faustus and the two Friar Bacons, he has no contact with devils and no need to renounce his magic nor to be "Christianized." Thus, Munday cannot be accused of promoting witchcraft.

V

Jacobean Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* may be the only true magician. Reed points out that the successful depiction of such a character, when Renaissance belief in a man's potential and in magic (but not witchcraft) had faded, may have been possible because of Shakespeare's setting, an island removed from contemporary society.⁷⁸ For whatever reason, the success of *The Tempest* is beyond dispute; however, the nature of Prospero's magic and its abjuration are not. Jeffrey Hart thinks Prospero was an answer to Marlowe's Faustus, noting that both *Faustus* and *Prospero* mean *fortunate*, that both characters are magicians, and that both renounce their magic.⁷⁹ Walter Clyde Curry identifies Prospero as a theurgist aiming at "union" with the gods, whose magic is "a means of preparation for the intellectual soul in its upward progress," maintaining that Prospero uses his powers to right the wrongs done him and to purify himself for such a union.⁸⁰ Hardin Craig agrees generally with this premise and notes that Prospero does not renounce magic but merely abandons it when it is no longer

⁷⁸Reed, p. 149.

⁷⁹Hart, p. 201.

⁸⁰Curry, p. 180.

needed.⁸¹ On the other hand, Barbara Mowbat considers the nature of Prospero's magic to be less clearcut, pointing to his description of some of his past magic performances,⁸² which shows his command of all four elements, revealing not the performance of a theurgist seeking a spiritual union with the gods but that of an enchanter seeking god-like control over natural and supernatural worlds.⁸³ She further notes that Prospero renounces "wizards," like the historical Friar Bacon, who feel concern for their souls.⁸⁴

Prospero performs with traditional magical accoutrements, a staff and books on magic. He draws conjuring circles and commands spirits. In performance, he is aided by an assistant, Ariel, a spirit much like Munday's Shrimp with an ability to move instantly and to become invisible. A rational spirit, Ariel has command over lesser ones who are also employed for Prospero's purposes. Clifford Davidson considers Ariel to be "one of the elemental demons identified by Proclus and given their classic Renaissance description by Agrippa in *De Occulta philosophia*."⁸⁵ Such a demon would have power, as does Ariel, over many lower spirits. He also uses music to affect the imaginations of men, as does Shrimp. Moreover, the conversations between Ariel and Prospero recall the same master-servant relationship between Shrimp and John à Kent. At one point, for example, Ariel reminds Prospero of an earlier promise of freedom:

I prithee,
Remember, I have done thee worthy service,
Told thee no lies, made thee no mistakings, serv'd
Without or grudge or grumblings. Thou didst promise
To bate me a full year.

(I.ii.246-50)

Davidson also notes the similarity between the disappearance of the banquet (stage direction at III.iii.52) achieved by Ariel and a common "jugglers" trick called the "decollation of John Baptist" often performed by the boy assistants of street magicians.⁸⁶

⁸¹Hardin Craig, "Magic in *The Tempest*," *PQ*, 47 (1968), 8-15.

⁸²William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 3rd ed. (Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman and Company, 1980); see V.i.41-50 for Prospero's description. Subsequent references to this work are noted by act, scene, and line numbers following the material cited in the text.

⁸³Mowat, p. 287.

⁸⁴Mowat, p. 289.

⁸⁵Clifford Davidson, "Ariel and the Magic of Prospero in *The Tempest*," *Susquehanna University Studies*, 10 (1978), 289.

⁸⁶Davidson, p. 232.

Moreover, one observes that Prospero can also affect bodies and minds. He and his assistant can freeze men in place (I.ii.475-76), lead them where they will (I.ii.396-97), and render them unconscious (I.ii.185-86). He can also make men see what he wills and drive them mad and restore their sanity. As a powerful magician, he practices his art with the aid of a beneficent spirit.

Prospero explains to Miranda that his fall from power occurred because his studies in magic were his only concern: "The government I cast upon my brother / And to my state grew stranger, being transported / And rapt in secret studies . . ." (I.ii.73-77). He admits, further, that he had neglected "worldly ends" and had been ". . . all dedicated / To closeness and the bettering of [his] mind" (I.ii.89-90). Mowat thinks that Prospero's language in these passages resembles that of Renaissance Neoplatonists who completely rejected the physical world.⁸⁷ If so, then Prospero meets the requirements for a true theurgist: he works through a beneficent spirit (Ariel), and he has neglected the material in favor of the spiritual—the elevation of his mind. The question remains as to why he abjures magic and returns to his original position in the world.

Craig claims that "*The Tempest* is a Renaissance document and Prospero a Renaissance figure," pointing out that the aim of a Renaissance ruler would be to become a perfect lord.⁸⁸ But Prospero has not been the perfect ruler. Instead, he has neglected duty in favor of magic, a situation which must be resolved. Mowat notes Prospero's lack of self-recrimination for having neglected his office and considers his later abjuration of magic similar to wizards' renunciation of their art because of Christian concern for the danger which magic posed to their souls.⁸⁹ Were this the case, however, Prospero would return to his former status as Duke of Milan without having attained to perfection, showing concern only for himself and not for his subjects. As an islander, however, he expresses much concern for the affairs of the world. For example, his awareness of the presence of his "enemies" and his expressed anxiety for his "fortunes" indicate a renewal of his involvement with the physical world and its inhabitants. Whatever his original reasons for bringing enemy ships to his island, it is with his magic that he tests the nature of civilized man. Thus, he increases his

⁸⁷Mowat, pp. 284-85.

⁸⁸Craig, "Magic in *The Tempest*," p. 8.

⁸⁹Mowat, pp. 286; 289.

understanding of society. Through magic, he does not wish to force his enemies to repent but to allow each the opportunity to confess an evil nature and become penitent—but only if it is in the individual to do so. Thus, Prospero does not interfere with man's inherent nature; he merely affords it an opportunity to be revealed, allowing his enemies to demonstrate their lust for power and their lack of principles in endeavoring to obtain it.

Acting through Ariel and the lesser spirits, Prospero first clouds the minds of his immediate victims, convincing them that their ship has been sunk in a tempest and that they alone have survived. Ariel, then, lulls to a sleep all members of the party, except Antonio and Sebastian, who promptly exhibit the same lust for power which, according to Berger, had earlier deprived Prospero of his dukedom (II.i.209-95).⁹⁰ Gonzalo, too, demonstrates both the political naivete of common man and a personal desire for power, wishing to form a commonwealth without sovereignty but over which he would be king (II.i.145-69). Moreover, in a drunken state, Stephano and Trinculo plot with Caliban to murder Prospero and rule the island (III.ii). Clearly, civilized men cannot control themselves.

In the banquet scene, Prospero's aim is to encourage the wrong-doers to repent their former actions (III.iii). When they approach the table which spirits have placed before them, Ariel, like a Harpy resembling those in the *Aeneid* who snatched food from the Trojans, informs them that they must correct their wrongs before proceeding on their mission.⁹¹ After causing the banquet to vanish, he reminds Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio that they have usurped Prospero's dukedom, pronouncing upon them a sentence of "lingering perdition" (III.iii.60-82). Prospero, then, declares,

My high charms work,
And these mine enemies are all knit up
In their distractions. They now are in my pow'r
And in these fits I leave them
(III.iii.88-91)

In a confused state, Alonso reveals that he is penitent, but Sebastian and Antonio indicate that they are still unrepentant (III.iii.95-104).

Prospero turns his attention, next, to Ferdinand and Miranda. Having tested Ferdinand as he has the others, he explains, "All my

⁹⁰Karol Berger, "Prospero's Art," *Shakespeare Studies*, 10, 212.

⁹¹Berger, p. 226.

vexations / Were but my trials of thy love, and thou / Hast strangely stood the test . . ." (IV.i.5-7) and commands Ariel, "Bestow upon the eye of this young couple / Some vanity of mine art . . ." (IV.i.40-41). The "masque of Ceres," a celebration of fertility and love, follows, to be interrupted when Prospero suddenly remembers Caliban's plot against him (IV.i.130-42). By this time, both civilized and natural men have been shown to be capable of treachery and bestial behavior. In his "revels" speech, then, Prospero is reminded of death, that link which joins him to other men (IV.i.152-58). As a theurgist, he may seek, and even attain to, an intellectual union with the gods, but the inevitability of death links him to mankind. His distress "is not over the unreality of man but over his mortality."⁹² Although he may punish Caliban and his fellow conspirators, setting "spirits in the shape of dogs and hounds" upon them (IV.i.256), he cannot ignore the dire consequences of death prompted, in part, by Caliban's impending treachery. He discloses his own humanity when Ariel declares that, if he were a human, he would take pity on those whom he has distracted because of Prospero's orders (V.i.8-18). Admitting that he is "one of their kind" and observing that the "rarer action is / In virtue than in vengeance" (V.i.27-28), Prospero announces, "My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore, / And they shall be themselves" (V.i.31-32). Given the earlier events in Milan and Sebastian and Antonio's behavior on the island, Prospero cannot believe that, without the power of magic, any penitential feelings which these men now have will be long lasting, nor can he feel joy at the prospect of their being "themselves." Yet, after "a final salute to the ministers who helped him control the forces of nature,"⁹³ he declares,

. . . this rough magic
I here abjure, and, when I have requir'd
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 cetain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll down my book.

(V.i:50-57)

⁹²Berger, p. 233.

⁹³Barbara L. Estrin, "Telling the Magician from the Magic in *The Tempest*," *Bucknell Review*, 25, No. 1 (1980), 183.

Drawing a magic circle and placing all within it, including himself, he next forgives everyone and "dissolves" his charm (V.i.58-84). Having abjured his power and rejoined the world of men, he sends Ariel to fetch the hat and rapier of the Duke of Milan (V.i.86-87). It is not necessary to contend, as does Berger, that Prospero's magic cannot function in the "real" world. Berger views the island as "an imaginary realm" and Prospero's magic as an art "which did not work in the real world before his exile, and . . . will not work after his return to that world either," arguing that Prospero, therefore, must renounce his magic in order to return to that world.⁹⁴ On the contrary, the island and Prospero's magic may be seen as real and Prospero's abjuration as voluntary and no precondition for his return to Milan. His having used no magic does not mean that magic would not work. A theurgist who had renounced the world would deign to use magic to retain such a status. Prospero does not act in regard to the usurpation until "bountiful Fortune" presents him with the opportunity.

Nor is it necessary to view Prospero's abjuration as having been motivated by his attainment to perfection, as Craig insists.⁹⁵ Given the opportunity, Prospero has recognized the fact of mortality which, despite his powers, connects him with mankind. He realizes that, as a member of society, he was supposed to rule, but had neglected his duty for the study of magic. He now makes a second choice and returns to his former position as Duke of Milan. If he is to rule as a man, he must forsake magic which has endowed him with god-like power and forego that intellectual union with the gods, the ambition of theurgists. If he cannot ascend to the heights as Duke of Milan, he can at least rule mankind.⁹⁶ He has demonstrated his leadership abilities when he controls Sebastian and Antonio merely by fear, not with any god-like magician's art. Thus, he abandons his theurgical magic which did not involve him in any contact with devils, not for a religious reason, but a moral one, and returns to Milan, the perfect ruler, the result of his experiences as a magician.

⁹⁴Berger, p. 222.

⁹⁵Craig, "Magic in *The Tempest*," p. 14.

⁹⁶Berger, p. 230. Although Berger argues that the play defends the need for "a commonly accepted legitimate power," he also views Prospero as an usurper of Caliban's authority and Caliban's conspiracy as parallel to Prospero's plan to regain control of Milan. The present author does not agree that Caliban is presented as a rightful ruler.

These ceremonial magic plays reflect Elizabeth-Jacobean systems of magic and moral views. Both Marlowe's *Faustus* and Greene's *Friar Bacon* practice goety and suffer adverse effects therefrom. Ultimately, each renounces his magic. That *Faustus* is as incompetent and ill-prepared a magician as he is a scholar strongly suggests that, in his case, it is the practitioner rather than the system which is at fault. His fate, therefore, demonstrates not the view that all magic is immoral, or even that an association with devils can lead to no other end, but that the practice of magic is serious and should be so considered by the practitioner. In any event, his fate satisfies the belief that goety is, at base, witchcraft and sacrilege. On the other hand, Greene's *Friar Bacon*, a competent goetian, suffers the inevitable consequences of his sacrilegious association with devils. The *Bacon of John of Bordeaux*, another goetian, neither suffers such ill effects nor renounces his magic. However, his constant identification with Christianity and his protection of Christian values negate the usual association of goetian with witch.

A favorable view of theurgy is evident in *John à Kent* and *John à Cumber* and *The Tempest*. *John à Kent*, in legend a consorter with devils, works only through a median spirit. His opponent, *John à Cumber*, has contact with devils. *John à Kent* uses his powers for moral purposes and has no need to renounce his practices. Prospero, the only pure theurgist in the group, works through an aerial spirit and ceases to practice magic, not because the art is inherently immoral or sacrilegious, but because it has caused him to neglect his proper role as a temporal ruler.

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