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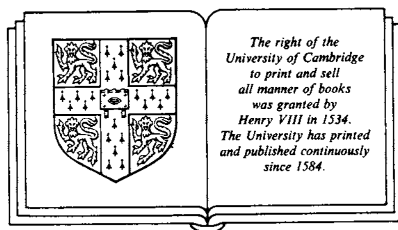

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THE POWER OF MAGIC: FROM *ENDIMION* TO *THE TEMPEST*

KURT TETZELI VON ROSADOR

With almost Pinteresque insistence *The Tempest* dramatizes conflicts of dominance and subservience. 'Where's the master?' (1.1.9–10)[1] – this is the question the first scene raises. With Prospero's decision to present himself as he was, 'sometime Milan' (5.1.86), the last act seems to provide an answer. These conflicts *The Tempest* embodies variedly and invariably in the relationships of father and child, master and servant, ruler and subject. Even young love is discussed in terms of freedom and bondage (3.1.88–9) and is objectively, if playfully, correlated with the checkings and matings of rival kings and queens. Small wonder that recent criticism has considered *The Tempest* first and foremost as a political play, emphasizing its patriarchal structures[2] or lodging it within ever-widening contexts of colonial discourses.[3] That the play deals with problems of power, of authority, and their representation, these studies have made abundantly and convincingly clear. They have laid bare many of the material and ideological assumptions and contexts within which the play's meanings unfold.

One of these contexts, however, has so far been strangely neglected: the power of magic. Reasons for this neglect may be sought among the numerous essentialist and functionalist (mis)readings the play's magic has been accorded in the past.[4] Being axiomatically aware that the pursuit of essences and inner-textual functions is, to put it politely, an unprofitable one, the cultural materialist, new historicist or deconstructionist critic searches –

[1] All quotations from Shakespeare's works are taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston, 1974).

[2] See, for instance, David Sundelson, 'So Rare a Wonder'd Father: Prospero's *Tempest*', in *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, ed. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn (Baltimore, 1980), pp. 33–53; Marilyn L. Williamson, *The Patriarchy of Shakespeare's Comedies* (Detroit, 1986), chap. III.

[3] For a listing of the more important older studies see Charles Frey, '*The Tempest* and the New World', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 30 (1979), 31, n. 10. Among the more recent essays Trevor R. Griffiths's may be singled out for its detailed history of images of Caliban on the nineteenth and twentieth-century stages: '"This Island's mine": Caliban and Colonialism', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 13 (1983), 159–80. See also the stimulating discussions by Francis Barker and Peter Hulme, 'Nymphs and Reapers Heavily Vanish: the Discursive Con-texts of *The Tempest*', in *Alternative Shakespeares*, ed. John Drakakis (London, 1985), pp. 191–205, 235–7, and Paul Brown, '"This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine": *The Tempest* and the Discourse of Colonialism', in *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester, 1985), pp. 48–71.

[4] This is an approach I have myself been – unashamedly – guilty of in *Magie im elisabethanischen Drama* (Braunschweig, 1970). Perceptive and logically stringent recent accounts of the dubiousness of Prospero's art have been provided by D'Orsay W. Pearson, '"Unless I Be Reliev'd by Prayer": *The Tempest* in Perspective', *Shakespeare Studies*, 7 (1974), 253–82, and Margreta de Grazia, '*The Tempest*: Gratuitous Movement or Action Without Kibes and Pinches', *Shakespeare Studies*, 14 (1981), 249–65. The whitewashing of Prospero has been taken furthest by Barbara Howard Traister, *Heavenly Necromancers: The Magician in English Renaissance Drama* (Columbia, 1984), pp. 125–49. Barbara A. Mowat has splendidly summarized and extended the gallery of

not without success – among subjects promising a richer and surer return: the other, the body, gender, class, race. He or she may have turned aside too soon. For the study of magic repays attention beyond the subtle distinctions of its essence. It is the contention of this paper that magic occupies a prominent place within the most momentous post-Reformation struggle, centring, in Stephen Greenblatt's words, on 'the definition of the sacred, a definition that directly involved secular as well as religious institutions';[5] that the Elizabethan plays on magic of the late eighties and early nineties reflect, and intervene in, this struggle; and that *The Tempest*, especially the uneasy cohabitation and sequence of Prospero's magical and ducal powers, the donning and doffing of the magical robe, and the abjuration of magic, must be placed within this context.

The fundamental questions informing this post-Reformation struggle have been succinctly formulated by Greenblatt: 'What is the sacred? Who defines and polices its boundaries? How can society distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate claims to sacred authority?'[6] Answers are variously provided by the main parties engaged in this struggle, which is a three-cornered affair between the institutions and ideologies of religion, magic, and the monarchy (with science making ready to enter the lists[7]). Given the ideological and political conditions of the sixteenth century – above all the schism of the Reformation – it is obvious that no consensual solution was envisaged. Nor was such a solution to be left to the evolutionary processes of history. The extreme violence of the struggle, however, was no doubt due to the fact that all parties engaged saw their authority as derived from the same source: religion, magic, and the monarchy all claim charismatic investiture. What characterizes charismatic authority is, according to Max Weber's important analysis, its extraordinariness, its transcendental legitimation. Hence it can demand the unconditional subordination of its followers and the strictest adherence to its doctrines. It is thus absolutist in character, suffering no rival. It is, however, not granted once and for all but is under permanent obligation to prove itself. This it must do by continuously trailing clouds of glory, that is, by sustaining its followers both materially and ideologically. The failure to do so, be it because of the ruler's weakening or his neglect of government, results inevitably in the fading and vanishing of charismatic authority.[8]

It is within such a general context that the half-latent, half-overt rivalry between the royal magic of the monarchy and the magician's art and its representation in Elizabethan times and drama must be seen.[9] This was a conflict which rarely flared into the open, as it did in the case of the North Berwick witches, who in 1591, as the

Prospero's literary and historical prototypes in 'Prospero, Agrippa, and Hocus Pocus', *English Literary Renaissance*, 11 (1981), 281–303.

5 'Shakespeare and the Exorcists', in its most recent revision in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford, 1988), p. 95.

6 Ibid., p. 96.

7 For the relation between magic and science and the nature of scientific thinking in the sixteenth century, see *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, ed. Brian Vickers (Cambridge, 1984).

8 *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie*, ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen, 1972), pp. 654–87. For a brief account and discussion of Weber's ideas see Wolfgang Schluchter, *Die Entwicklung des okzidentalen Rationalismus: Eine Analyse von Max Webers Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (Tübingen, 1979).

9 The discussion of the representation of the conflict between religion and magic in Elizabethan drama must be left to some future date. Some of the ideological and social implications have been studied usefully and from widely differing angles by D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (London, 1958), *passim*; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London, 1971), pp. 258–78 *et passim*; Stephen Greenblatt, 'Invisible Bullets', most recently in *Shakespearean Negotiations*, pp. 21–65. See also the wide-ranging survey by Michael MacDonald, 'Science, Magic, and Folklore', in *William Shakespeare: His World. His Work. His Influence*, ed. John F. Andrews (New York, 1985), I, 175–94.

title-page of the account of their evil doings has it, 'pretended to bewitch and drowne his Maiestie in the Sea comming from Denmarke'.[10] Quite understandably, James paid considerable personal attention to the matter, attending and guiding the judicial proceedings. But even in this case, or the similar instances of sticking pins into royal images known to have occurred in Elizabeth's time, it is never the witch or the magician who thinks worldly power within reach.[11] Quite the contrary: to whichever of the numerous varieties of the species the adepts of the occult may belong, whether their art can be described as ceremonial, natural or demonic, as white or black or rough, their aspirations stop far short of desiring office or rule. Agrippa's definition of his art may serve as an example:

> Magick is a faculty of wonderfull vertue, full of most high mysteries, containing the most profound Contemplation of most secret things, together with the nature, power, quality, substance, and vertues thereof, as also the knowledge of whole nature, and it doth instruct us concerning the differing, and agreement of things amongst themselves, whence it produceth its wonderfull effects...[12]

Agrippa is quite obviously at pains to keep within the bounds of a Neoplatonic bettering of the spirit through contemplation and not to encroach on the realm of the active political life. Similar restrictions can be found in the works of all other practitioners of the occult arts. The mastery of nature and of the world of spirit(s) or the small-scale power over one's fellows by hurting or healing is deemed sufficient by all of them.

Still, if, in George Eliot's words, 'the rude mind with difficulty associates the ideas of power and benignity', more difficulties necessarily arise even for sophisticated minds from the simultaneous existence and attractions of two charismatic powers. For the monarchy did not, could not, refrain from invading magic's proper realm. How could it, resting at least partially on the same ground? One of its central tenets, the myth of the king's or the queen's two bodies, is quite obviously closely allied to magical thinking.[13] The similarity of claims is furthermore strikingly illustrated by that glorious piece of royal magic, touching for the evil, which both Elizabeth and James used signally to boost their somewhat doubtful legitimacy. This is indeed what the title of William Tooker's defence of Elizabeth's royal healing power of 1597 calls it, *Charisma Sive Donum Sanationis*. And it is both magical and royal charisma.[14] The process of appropriating magical authority in order to prop and extend the crown's power accelerated dramatically with James's accession to the throne.[15] Francis Bacon, in his dedication to *The Advancement of Learning*, could then apply the name of the arch-magician to the king himself: 'your Majesty standeth invested of that triplicity which in great veneration was ascribed to the ancient Hermes',[16] a triplicity comprising ruler, priest, and magician. And in his masque *Oberon*,

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[10] *Newes from Scotland* (London, 1591).

[11] The only such claim known to me comes from a severe critic of magical practices and pretensions. In *The French Academie* (London, 1586), Pierre de La Primaudaye writes: '(as histories teach vs) some haue been so wretched and miserable, as to giue themselues to the Art of Necromancie, and to contract with the deuill, that they might come to soueraigne power and authoritie' (p. 230, misnumbered 239).

[12] *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (London, 1651), pp. 2–3.

[13] See the classical study of Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1957), and Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London, 1977).

[14] For the political use of touching, see Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 192–8; for its status within occult thinking Stuart Clark, 'The Scientific Status of Demonology', in *Occult and Scientific Mentalities*, ed. Vickers, p. 358.

[15] The problem is very speculatively treated by Douglas Brooks-Davies, *The Mercurian Monarch: Magical Politics from Spenser to Pope* (Manchester, 1983); for a general view of James's literary politics see Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries* (Baltimore, 1983).

[16] Ed. William A. Armstrong (London, 1975), p. 51.

Ben Jonson invested James's 'True maiestie' with 'sole power, and magick'.[17]

That the author of the *Daemonologie* was pleased by such identifications with royal magicians or the ascriptions of magical power to himself may seem strange. It becomes less strange if one realizes that James's attitude towards magic and witchcraft cannot be summed up under the heading of inquisitorial anxiety. He himself chose Solomon as the model of the perfect ruler and identified with him, Solomon, whose reputation rested not only on his wisdom but also on his magical skill and who was known to be the author of *Claviculae Salomonis*, a textbook for magicians.[18] Moreover, the process of appropriating magical authority by the monarchy was based on, and had been preceded by, strategies for containing the magician's power within fairly narrow limits. These limits were set and policed by the secular powers. For their two main strategies we can turn to king's evidence. The devil, writes James,

> will make his schollers to creepe in credite with Princes, by fore-telling them manie greate thinges; parte true, parte false: ... And he will also make them to please Princes, by faire banquets and daintie dishes, carryed in short space fra the farthest part of the worlde.[19]

This is, on the surface, a warning against the slyness of the devil in tempting and corrupting the ruler with the help of his followers, who try to insinuate themselves into the prince's confidence. But the description of the devil's and magician's power is also one of its severe limitations. Just as in real life Elizabeth made use of John Dee, but kept him at more than arm's length, so James very efficiently reduced the powers of the occult practitioners to those of courtly careerists and masters of revels serving the prince and never aspiring to the royal office themselves. The question of power was transformed into and contained within one of courtly behaviour and moral pragmatics.

The second strategy is even more drastic and efficient. It not only limits magical power to certain functions, it annihilates it altogether. If, writes James, formulating a commonplace of demonological literature, magicians are apprehended

> by the lawfull Magistrate, vpon the iust respectes of their guiltinesse in that craft, their power is then no greater then before that euer they medled with their master. For where God beginnes iustlie to strike by his lawfull Lieutennentes, it is not in the Deuilles power to defraude or bereaue him of the office, or effect of his powerfull and reuenging Scepter.[20]

In other words: the king and the magistrate, being God's representatives on earth, the possessors of royal charisma, cannot be touched by devilish or magical power. Royalty is thus enabled to appropriate whatever prestige attaches to its rival. Most important: by overcoming the powers of magic or by not being touched by them, the monarch proves him- or herself legitimate and truly charismatic.

From the viewpoint of the monarchy, the drama of royal versus magical magic is thus virtually one of foregone conclusion – with one important reservation: magical power vanishes only, as James repeatedly insists, in the presence of the lawful king, that is, if confronted with and seized by an unstained royal charisma. Yet neither Elizabeth nor James was the unquestioned possessor thereof, neither of them having a claim to the throne based on the single unquestionable charismatic legitimation, blood –

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[17] In *Ben Jonson*, ed. Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford, 1941), VII, lines 330–1.

[18] For a wide-ranging survey of Renaissance images of Solomon see Michael Hattaway, 'Paradoxes of Solomon: Learning in the English Renaissance', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 29 (1968), 499–530.

[19] *Daemonologie in Forme of a Dialogue* (Edinburgh, 1597), p. 22. For an excellent account of James's changing views on witchcraft and the highly political dialectics of demonism and kingship see Stuart Clark, 'King James's *Daemonologie*: Witchcraft and Kingship', in *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, ed. Sydney Anglo (London, 1977), pp. 156–81, esp. pp. 166–7.

[20] *Daemonologie*, p. 51.

that is, on direct lineal descent. The rise and popularity of plays on magic and witchcraft just before 1590 may thus be of some political significance. These are the years of the papal Bull of Excommunication, of Mary Stuart's bid for power, of the Babington Plot, of the Armada – all of them founded on the denial of Elizabeth's legitimacy, all of them inspired by the rival charisma of papal magic, by 'Poperie the nurse of Witch-craft'.[21] It would be a matter of some surprise if Elizabethan drama, always ready to seize on such topicalities, if Shakespeare, no despiser of well-considered literary trifles, were not to deal with a problem so obviously and inherently dramatic. The dramatic presentation of such general topicality of theme or problem is, however, never attempted by unilinear identification of real persons with the *dramatis personae*. It works by means of displacement, of allegorizing, of refraction – all of them techniques which tempt the latter-day reader into totalizing allegorical interpretations.[22]

John Lyly's *Endimion* is a case in point. Written and produced in the second half of the 1580s, it is in all likelihood the first Elizabethan play to stage magic locked in a struggle with monarchical power.[23] To do so, it employs those strategies James and the literature of demonology also use, strategies of displacement, containment, and annihilation. First, for purposes of distancing, the ground of the conflict is shifted to the realm of the dramatically traditional: the play is, in G. K. Hunter's words, 'a fairly obvious case of adapting the feelings of love to shadow forth the complex of fear, ambition, admiration that real courtiers felt about their real sovereign'.[24] Within the traditional love-theme the plotting and the structural arrangement in *Endimion* guarantee the subordination of Dipsas's magic to Cynthia's authority. For Dipsas is brought into the play by, and as the instrument of, Tellus, the figure intended to represent Cynthia's rival. Hence, right from the beginning Dipsas's merely instrumental character and subordinate position in the play's hierarchy are assured.

To the inferiority of her position Dipsas herself points with her boasts of power, grandiose as these may sound:

> I can darken the Sunne by my skil, and remooue the Moone out of her course; I can restore youth to the aged, and make hils without bottoms; there is nothing that I can not doe... (1.4.20–3)[25]

World-encompassing aspiration is what seems to characterize Dipsas's magical powers. Their potential threat is thrown into relief by the myth underlying them, by the model quoted: Ovid's Medea. But Dipsas's boast is also at once much reduced and limited by her admission that 'there is nothing that I can not doe, but that onely which you would haue me doe; and therin I differ from the Gods' (22–4). The strategy is exemplary: hubristic, boastful speeches become stock-features of all Elizabethan plays on magic. But the limitless aspirations, the clamorous protestations of power by the practitioners of the occult, are always ironically negatived either by the magician's own admission of limitation and failure (as in *Endimion*) or by the acting out of the discrepancy between the vastness of the design and the

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21 Thomas Cooper, *The Mystery of Witchcraft* (London, 1617), p. 120. The identification of the Pope and the Catholic religion with magical evil is a commonplace in Elizabethan literature, Sylvester II, Gregor VI and VII, and Alexander VI figuring as the most prominent examples; see, for instance, Thomas Beard, *The Theatre of Gods Iudgements* (London, 1597), pp. 122–3.

22 See the circumspect investigation of David Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics: A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968).

23 Earlier representations, such as those in *Clyomon and Clamydes* or *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*, belong to the romance tradition which deals with the problem of rival authorities, if at all, at some further removes.

24 *John Lyly. The Humanist as Courtier* (London, 1962), p. 184.

25 All quotations from *Endimion* are taken from *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, ed. R. Warwick Bond (Oxford, 1902), III.

pettiness of its realization (as in *Doctor Faustus* or, indeed, *The Tempest*).

However, such seems to have been the threat of magic that Lyly does not stop short here. By richly facetting his theme and antithetically structuring the whole play, Lyly creates Cynthia and Dipsas as polar opposites in their attitudes to love, their functions in the play, and the powers they wield. To the restricted power of Dipsas, Cynthia is able to oppose a 'Maiestie ... al the world knoweth and wondereth at' (2.3.16–17) and a government nothing short of the 'miraculous' (2.1.38). For Cynthia's power is the true charismatic one. It is transcendentally legitimized and under heaven's protection. In Cynthia's own words addressed to Dipsas in the scene of judgement at the end of the play:

> Thou hast threatned to turne my course awry, and alter by thy damnable Arte the gouernment that I now possesse by the eternall Gods. But knowe thou *Dipsas*, and let all the Enchaunters knowe, that *Cynthia*, beeing placed for light on earth, is also protected by the powers of heauen. (5.3.24–8)

Through the lady's overmuch protestings and sudden shift into obtrusive preaching ('and let all the Enchaunters knowe') Elizabeth's own voice insisting on her legitimacy and the charismatic nature of her authority may be heard. By defeating Dipsas's magic, Cynthia-Elizabeth triumphantly vindicates her own authority and right of position. Under such circumstances the annihilation of the rival charisma becomes a necessity and a matter of course. It is an annihilation managed by reformation, not by punishment or destruction – the latter are but the ungentle means of persuasion (5.3.258–61). In the prestabilized harmony of Lyly's courtly view, dramatic antithesis, the presentation of alternatives, initially so richly set out, has after all no place in the play. It is dissolved into the unfolding of the sovereign's power.[26] The questioning dramatist has ceded his place and task to the complimenting courtier.[27]

This is certainly not a part which any reader ever ascribed to Christopher Marlowe. Yet despite the common emphases on the rebelliousness of Marlowe's protagonists, their blaspheming or 'masochistic transgression',[28] Una Ellis-Fermor's apolitical view of *Doctor Faustus* still prevails today. For her, 'the scene is set in no spot upon the physical earth, but in the limitless regions of the mind, and the battle is fought, not for kingdoms or crowns, but upon the questions of man's ultimate fate'.[29] Consequently, Acts 3 and 4, Faustus's confrontation with Pope, Emperor and Duke, are relegated to the realm of crude popular entertainment or just tolerated within a scheme of ironic reversals. Hence, the political dimension of these scenes has gone unnoticed, a dimension in which magic is deeply implicated.

The aggressive potential of Faustus's aims becomes apparent if one realizes that he is the only magician in Elizabethan drama who reaches for the sweet fruition of an earthly crown. Having dismissed all academic disciplines as stale, flat, and unprofitable, Faustus at once formulates a vision of power:

> O what a world of profite and delight,
> Of power, of honour, and omnipotence,
> Is promised to the Studious Artizan?
> All things that moue betweene the quiet Poles
> Shall be at my command: Emperors and Kings,
> Are but obey'd in their seuerall Prouinces:
> But his dominion that exceeds in this,
> Stretcheth as farre as doth the mind of man:
> (80–7)[30]

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26 See also Peter Saccio, 'The Oddity of Lyly's *Endimion*', in *The Elizabethan Theatre V*, ed. G. R. Hibbard (London, 1975), pp. 92–111, esp. p. 94.

27 Thus *Endimion* is indeed in Joel B. Altman's fine phrase for all of Lyly's plays an 'emasculated "problem play"'; see his *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley, 1978), p. 197.

28 The phrase is Jonathan Dollimore's in *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Brighton, 1984), p. 114.

29 *Christopher Marlowe* (London, 1927), p. 87.

30 All quotations from the play are taken from *Doctor Faustus 1604–1616. Parallel Texts*, ed. W. W. Greg (Oxford, 1950). It is the B-version which is interpreted here.

Read exclusively within the psychomachia tradition or against Pico's oration on the dignity of man, this speech can be taken – as it frequently has been – to express nothing but Faustus's spiritual aspiration, the glorification of the limitless reach of man's mind. The insistent use of the vocabulary of power, however, undercuts such a reading: 'power', 'omnipotence', 'command', 'dominion' define Faustus's aspiration in terms of a barely disguised will to power, an absolute power at that. For when Faustus repeats his claim a little later he specifies it beyond the possibility of a spiritualizing misinterpretation:

> I'le be great Emperour of the world,
> And make a bridge, through the mouing Aire,
> To passe the Ocean: with a band of men
> I'le ioyne the Hils that bind the *Affrick* shore,
> And make that Country, continent to *Spaine*,
> And both contributary to my Crowne.
> The Emperour shall not liue, but by my leaue,
> Nor any Potentate of *Germany*. (329–36)

Nowhere in Elizabethan drama does any magician advance larger claims or is the threat to royal authority more decidedly expressed. Such a threat must, if at all possible, be unambiguously and rigorously countered. Marlowe sets out to do so by suggesting that the claims advanced by his hero are nothing but the products of a diabolically corrupted imagination. Since all of Faustus's visions of power, riches and voluptuousness follow immediately upon devilish temptations, they must be understood to be their results. They are thus emptied of reality and appear as fantasizings, inordinate in their scope, deeply ambivalent in their exhilarating upward thrust.[31] Elizabethan spectators acquainted with the methods of diabolical suggestion would be aware that such visions are totally divorced from any grounding in reality. The imaginatively imaginary nature of such claims is ocularly demonstrated by Faustus's encounters with the worldly powers, the Emperor and the Duke of Vanholt. During these scenes we hear nothing of Faustus's ruling ambition. Faced with established power, the threat of magic vanishes just as James postulates. What we see is a Faustus eagerly swallowing morsels of royal flattery and abjectly prostrating himself and his vaunted powers before the superiority of royalty:

> These gracious words, most royall *Carolus*,
> Shall make poore *Faustus* to his vtmost power,
> Both loue and serue the Germane Emperour,
> (1250–2)

By emptying out magic's reality, that is, by turning it into merely verbal magic, and by subordinating it to the only true magic, royal charisma, Faustus's licentious fantasizings of absolute power are contained. Faustus's behaviour at the papal court, his abduction of Bruno, is no proof to the contrary. For the encounter of Faustus and the Pope is not one of two charismas, magic and religion, but of two different versions of the same, magic. The doctrine of transubstantiation and the workings of exorcisms are sufficient proof to the Protestant mind of the magical character of Roman-Catholicism. For William Perkins, listing the abominations of popery, the

> fourth sinne is Magicke, sorcerie, or witchcraft, in the consecration of the host in which they make their Breadengod: in exorcismes ouer holy bread, holy water, and salt; in the casting out or driuing away of deuills, by the signe of the crosse, by solemne coniurations, by holy water, by the ringing of bells, by lighting tapers, by reliques, and such like. For these things haue not their supposed force, either by creation, or by any institution of God in his holy word: and therefore if any thing be done by them, it is from the secret operation of the deuill himselfe.

In short, 'if a man will but take a view of all poperie, he shall easily see, that the most part is meere Magique'.[32] The attempted exorcism of

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[31] See my '"Supernatural soliciting": Temptation and Imagination in *Doctor Faustus* and *Macbeth*', in *Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann (Manchester, 1986), pp. 42–59.

[32] *The Works* (Cambridge, 1603), pp. 744, 36.

Faustus by the priests with the help of 'Bell, Booke, and Candle' (1111) clearly defines papal power as superstitiously magical. The confrontation at the papal court must therefore be regarded as one of those contests of rival magicians so popular in the drama of the 1590s. In this contest Faustus comes out best. And since his power is effectively contained by royal authority, royal authority comes out even better. In Marlowe's grim vision, the stretching out of the mind of man is mere fantasizing, fit for the enclosed spaces of the scholar's study or the magician's circle (or the artist's little room),[33] while the reality principle, embodied by the wielders of worldly power, bears absolute sway over the rest of the world.

In Shakespeare's histories, the power of magic is similarly restricted. Two of the three plays which treat magic, *2 Henry VI* and *1 Henry IV*, virtually limit its presentation to one scene. Faint praise, condescension or total neglect has consequently been the critical fate of these scenes.[34] But there are better reasons than those of popular entertainment and ornamental function for the episodic treatment of magic in these histories, if magic is once again placed within the post-Reformation conflict of rival charismas. In a play about English history, the possessor of magical power is likely to confront the rival pretender to charismatic authority more or less directly. Displacement by theme (*Endimion*) or space (*Doctor Faustus*) is thus not available to the dramatist as a strategy to contain the claims of magic. They must be marginalized and delimited by different means. Episodic treatment, a way of formally and quantitatively containing magic, is one of them, necessitated by the choice of genre.

In *1 Henry VI*, however, the question of the power of magic is raised right in the first scene, never to be totally dropped throughout the play.[35] Exeter seems to interrupt the formal lament for the dead Henry V with a question tonally somewhat out of place, an inquiry into the causes of the king's death:

> Or shall we think the subtile-witted French
> Conjurers and sorcerers, that, afraid of him,
> By magic verses have contriv'd his end? (1.1.25–7)

This is no merely rhetorical question.[36] To be killed by magical art would plainly and posthumously negate both the king's legitimacy and authority, since it is of the essence of royal charisma that magic cannot touch it. Exeter's question raises a highly problematic issue: the legitimacy of Lancastrian rule in general and of Henry V – and by indirection Henry VI – in particular. It is not a question ever completely lost sight of in either of the tetralogies, insinuating itself into such a seemingly harmless compliment as the one about the 'witchcraft' in the French Princess's lips in *Henry V* (5.2.275–6) or emerging in Henry's troubled ruminations on the eve of the battle of Agincourt: 'Not to-day, O Lord...' (4.1.292–305). Yet in *1 Henry VI* Exeter's question seems to be quickly answered by what amounts to a quintessential definition of the legitimacy of royal rule: 'He was a king blest of the King of kings.' (1.1.28)

It is not only the form of the answer, the insistent repetition of one word, turning on itself and becoming self-legitimating, which conjures up ghosts of special pleading. Though verbally answered, Exeter's question is

[33] For a discussion of the play in terms of closure see Marjorie Garber, '"Infinite Riches in a Little Room": Closure and Enclosure in Marlowe', in *Two Renaissance Mythmakers: Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson*, ed. Alvin Kernan (Baltimore, 1977), pp. 3–21.

[34] For a perceptive essay see S. P. Zitner, 'Staging the Occult in *1 Henry IV*', in *Mirror up to Shakespeare: Essays in Honour of G. R. Hibbard*, ed. J. C. Gray (Toronto, 1984), pp. 138–48.

[35] The theme of witchcraft in *1 Henry VI* has been influentially treated by E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London, 1944), esp. pp. 163–8. Within Tillyard's problematic view of the providential course of English history, the play demonstrates 'the testing of England... by French witchcraft' (p. 163). The political dimension of witchcraft or of authority is not taken into account.

[36] For such a view see A. L. French, 'Joan of Arc and *Henry VI*', *English Studies*, 49 (1968), 425–9.