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The Tempest: Notes on Date and Text

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These notes on *The Tempest* supplement editorial commentary on the play and correct editors' responses to some of the problems the play poses, problems concerning its date, the accuracy of its text, and the interpretation of certain passages. Included are extended discussions of the much-disputed "wise"/"wife" crux at IV.i.122-24 and the complex shifts of perspective in the Epilogue. The following abbreviations are used for the editions most frequently cited:

F	*The First Folio of Shakespeare: The Norton Facsimile*. Edited by Charlton Hinman. London: Paul Hamlyn, 1968.
Kermode	*The Tempest*. Edited by Frank Kermode. The Arden Shakespeare. London: Methuen, 1954.
Lindley	*The Tempest*. Rev. ed. Edited by David Lindley. The New Cambridge Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Norton	*The Norton Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Edited by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus. New York: W. W. Norton, 2008.
Orgel	*The Tempest*. Edited by Stephen Orgel. The Oxford Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
Riverside	*The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Edited by G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.
Vaughan	*The Tempest*. Edited by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. The Arden Shakespeare. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1999.

Unless otherwise stated, *The Tempest* is quoted from the Folio, along with the act, scene, and line numbers of the Riverside edition; other Shakespeare works are cited from the Riverside. The text used for Ben Jonson is the old-spelling edition of *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925-52). The Bible is generally quoted from the Geneva version of 1560. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 20 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), is abbreviated as OED; the databases *Early English Books Online* and *Literature Online* as EEBO and LION respectively.

Date

There was a court performance of *The Tempest* on 1 November 1611. How long before that was it written? Plays performed at court were rarely brand new: it was a well-established practice for the Master of the Revels to make his choice from plays which had proved themselves in the commercial theatre in the preceding months; that way "the court could benefit from the selective filter represented by the audiences in the playhouses" (Astington 1999, 216). Composition can therefore be pushed back with some confidence to no later than the first half of the year.

Attempts to fix the earliest possible date have focused on a general belief that *The Tempest* is indebted to the so-called Bermuda pamphlets, accounts of voyages to the Americas involving storms and shipwreck which were not available in England before autumn 1610. But the case here is, to my mind, very weak. The main supposed source, William Strachey's "True Repertory of the Wreck

and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates", was not printed until 1625, and more importantly the 'echoes' of this and the other pamphlets which *The Tempest* is claimed to contain offer nothing beyond the predictable vocabulary any early seventeenth-century account of a shipwreck would be bound to draw on. Shakespeare's use of this material has become an article of faith in *Tempest* studies, but it perhaps has less to do with the evidence than with a desire to consolidate colonialist readings of the play.

For help with the date of *The Tempest* editors have been looking in the wrong direction, and further from home than they needed to. Good evidence for the play's earliest possible date exists in the form of another comedy about a conjuror and his assistant, performed by the same company, the King's Men, at the same theatre, the Blackfriars, within months of Shakespeare's play: Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*. There are numerous, close, detailed links between these two plays, some of which I have explored elsewhere (Holdsworth 2014). But in which direction does the influence go? Mary Thomas Crane, who notes the plays' shared interest in optical illusion, believes it cannot be determined: "it is impossible to be certain about the chronology and therefore about which play is responding to which" (Crane 2013, 263-64). Certainty becomes possible, however, when it is realised that in some of the links Jonson was repeating material from his own earlier work, thus identifying Shakespeare as the debtor, and *The Tempest* as the later play.

A striking example is Subtle's threat to Face during their first-scene quarrel:

> I'll thunder you, in peeces. I will teach you
> How to beware, to tempt a furie againe
> That carries tempest in his hand, and voice. (I.i.60-62)

Did these lines by *The Alchemist*'s fake magician give Shakespeare his title *of The Tempest*, its opening scene of the conjured storm, and its magician who really does carry tempest in his hand and voice, quite apart from its eleven references to thunder? It is not likely that Jonson is remembering Shakespeare's play, since Subtle's speech is a reworking of Mosca's encouragement to Voltore in the trial scene in *Volpone*, written four years earlier:

> Mercury sit upon your thundring tongue,
> Or the *French* Hercules, and make your language
> As conquering as his club, to beate along,
> (As with a tempest) flat, our adversaries. (IV.iv.21-24)

And Jonson's self-indebtedness goes back further than this, to his own *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) where Prospero (Shakespeare borrowed the name for *The Tempest*), expecting a quarrel, warns of "a tempest toward", but resolves that "my despair" will be slight (V.iii.196-98), thus anticipating also the Shakespearean Prospero's fear that "my ending is despair" (Epilogue, 15).

Briefer phrases which the two plays share point if anything more powerfully to *The Alchemist* as the earlier work, since their rarity can be checked using databases such as EEBO and LION. In *The Tempest*'s first scene the Boatswain mockingly tells Gonzalo to "use your authoritie" to quell the storm (I.i.23). The phrase occurs at the end of *The Alchemist*, when Lovewit urges Tribulation Wholesome to inspect his house: "Use your authoritie, search on o' gods name" (V.v.28). Jonson had already used exactly these words in *Poetaster* in 1601: "use your authoritie, command him forth" (V.i.397). As these are the only three examples of the phrase in all of Jacobean drama, a line of transmission from *Poetaster*, to *The Alchemist*, to *The Tempest* is clearly indicated.

The same is true of *The Tempest*, II.ii.73, where Stephano (another name Shakespeare took from *Every Man in His Humour*) encounters what he takes to be a four-legged monster suffering from a fever: "He's in his fit now; and doe's not talke after the wisest". In *The Alchemist* Face arranges Mammon's assignation with Doll and tells him, "she is almost in her fit to see you" (IV.i.8). Later Doll enters "*in her fit of talking*", and Mammon cries, "O, / Sh'is in her fit" (IV.v.1, 16-17). Elsewhere in Jacobean drama "in his/her fit" occurs only once, in an earlier Jonson play, *Sejanus* (1603): "in her fit? / EUDEMUS: She's so, my lord" (I.316); and in combination with "he's" or "she's" it occurs only in these three plays in the entire drama from 1580 to 1660.

One further series of repetitions also places *The Tempest* at the end of the sequence. At V.i.227 Alonso is unable to make sense of what is happening: "These are not natural events, they strengthen / From strange to stranger". Shakespeare is again remembering *The*

Alchemist: "This's strange! […] this is stranger!", cries Lovewit, as he tries to understand the conflicting reports of his neighbours (V.i.35, V.ii.15). Very rare elsewhere (Shakespeare has no other example), this play on "strange"/"stranger" occurs in an earlier Jonson work, *The King's Entertainment* (1604), "in this strange attire, / Dar'st kindle stranger, and un-hallowed fire" (555-56), as well as a later one, *The Staple of News* (1625), "strange turnes […] Stranger!" (III.ii.25-27). Again the direction of influence seems clear.

The Jonson Folio of 1616 gives *The Alchemist*'s date of performance as 1610. Plague closed the London theatres between July and November in that year, which is no doubt why the earliest record of the play is a production in Oxford in September. In the printed text, however, Jonson goes to great lengths to establish that the events of the play are taking place on 1 November 1610 (Jonson 1967, lxiii, 103). The best explanation of this, I think, is that the Oxford performances were a way of rehearsing the play while the King's Men waited for the London theatres to reopen, and Jonson added the time scheme in anticipation of acting resuming in the capital in November, which it did. Unless Shakespeare accompanied the company to Oxford, he would not have seen *The Alchemist* until it began its London run. December 1610 is therefore the earliest feasible date for the composition of *The Tempest*. As Jonson's play was not in print, Shakespeare's knowledge of it most probably came from seeing it acted, which suggests a latest date not far into 1611, while the verbal and other details which he imitated were still fresh in his mind.

Text

I.i.9-10
ALONSO
Good Boteswain have care: where's the Master? Play the men.

Alonso speaks these three short phrases, his only words in this scene, as he enters with the rest of the royal party. Most editors are unhappy with the apparent sense of "Play the men" ("Act like men") and take "play" as a mistake for, or a spelling of, "ply", so that rather than suddenly addressing the Mariners directly Alonso is telling the Boatswain to urge them on ("Ply the men") as they try

to save the ship. This is not convincing. OED does not recognise "play" as a spelling of "ply", and its closest approach to the required sense of "ply" is "petition, request repeatedly" (*v*. 5), rather than "urge on" or "set to work". A further objection is that F's "Play the men" was a common expression. EEBO has hundreds of examples, including one from the same year as *The Tempest* (in Chapman's 1611 translation of *The Iliad*, "thou shalt know what chiefs, what souldiers play the men"), and some widely quoted biblical instances (including, in the Geneva Bible of 1560, 1 Samuel 4:9, "Be strong and play the men", and 2 Samuel 13:28, "be bolde therefore, and play the men"). It is true that as an admonishment to the Mariners Alonso's remark is "needless and inopportune" (Kermode), since they are not being cowardly or giving way to panic; but this difficulty disappears if one takes him to be addressing not the Mariners but the courtiers, who in their agitation "assist the storme" by getting in the sailors' way, and are then heard "howling" below deck.

I.i.20-23

You are a Counsellor, if you can command these Elements to silence, and worke the peace of the present, wee will not hand a rope more

F's "worke the peace of the present" is obviously unsatisfactory, as is demonstrated by attempts to retain it, which are very strained. Riverside's gloss for "the present" is "the present occasion", but in F as it stands this makes no sense, since the present occasion is anything but peaceful. Vaughan offers "make the present moment peaceful", but does not explain how such a meaning can be extracted from what F prints. On the other hand, Kermode, who alters "present" to "presence" in order to import a reference to the peace which should prevail in the king's presence-chamber, admits there is no evidence that "the peace of the presence" was ever used in this way. The problem is "worke *the* peace of the present". If one removes this first "the" on the assumption that a scribe or compositor added it inadvertently in anticipation of the second one, one is left with "if you can […] worke peace of the present", which makes appropriate sense (the meaning now is "if you can create peace out of the present situation") and is supported by contemporary usage. Compare "work peace" in Webster's *The*

White Devil, written 1611-12, "I'll work peace between you" (Webster 2019, II.i.216), and, among many other examples offered by EEBO and LION, William Lithgow, *The Gushing Tears of Godly Sorrow* (1640), "mercy […] works peace from gushing eyes" (Lithgow 1640, sig. N1v). F's "of the present" is somewhat elliptical, but cf. Shakespeare's previous play, *The Winter's Tale*, "The glistering of this present" (IV.i.14).

I.i.46-47

GONZALO

I'le warrant him for drowning, though the Ship were no stronger then a Nutt-shell

Gonzalo is offering the joking reassurance that someone as villainous-looking as the Boatswain is destined to hang rather than drown, however frail the ship he is sailing in. Lindley emends "for" to "from", in the belief that as F stands Gonzalo is saying "I'll guarantee that he will drown", which is the opposite sense to the one required. F is correct, however, and the required sense is already present. "Warrant you for" meaning "guarantee that you will not" was a common idiom throughout the period. It occurs close in date to *The Tempest* in John Dod, *Ten Sermons* (1610), "they will warrant you for ever being insnared" (Dod 1610, 60), and it remained current to the end of the century, as indicated by Thomas Betterton, *The Revenge* (1680), "disappoint her. […] I'll warrant you for doing that" (Betterton 1680, 53).

I.ii.81-83

Prospero tells Miranda that Antonio's treachery began when he

> new created
> The creatures that were mine, I say, or chang'd 'em,
> Or els new form'd 'em

Prospero may intend an ironic echo of St Paul's assurance of the transformation of identity effected by faith: "if anie man be in Christ, let him be a new creature. Olde things are passed away: beholde, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17, Geneva

Bible). For "new creature" the Authorised Version of 1611 has "new creation".

I.ii.181-82
I finde my *Zenith* doth depend upon
A most auspicious starre

Prospero's "depend" glances at the idea of one's destiny "hanging" (Latin *dependere*) in or on the stars, as though physically attached. Cf. Romeo, who fears "Some consequence yet hanging in the stars" (*Romeo and Juliet*, I.iv.107), and Middleton and Rowley's Beatrice-Joanna, who discovers that "Beneath the stars, upon yon meteor [i.e. De Flores] / Ever hung my fate" (Middleton 2007, *The Changeling*, V.iii.154-55); also Richard Saintbarb, *Certain Points of Christian Religion* (1589): "if good lucke hang upon the Starres, then our holy obedience unto God doth depend upon them too" (Saintbarb 1589, G1v).

II.i.275-76, 284-86
SEBASTIAN
[…] for your conscience […]
ANTONIO
[…] where lies that? […]
[…] you doing thus,
To the perpetuall winke for aye might put
This ancient morsel

Antonio is urging Sebastian to help him kill Alonso and Gonzalo. Lindley, 203ff, and Vaughan, 198ff, note debts to *Macbeth* in this scene, but Shakespeare was also remembering two further occasions when a murder is solicited and the prospective accomplice hesitates: the exchange between the murderers in *Richard III*, "Where's thy conscience now? / O, in the Duke of Gloucester's purse" (I.iv.128-29), and Leontes' demand in *The Winter's Tale* that Camillo poison Polixenes: "bespice a cup, / To give mine enemy a lasting wink" (I.ii.316-17).

III.i.11-15

My sweet Mistris
Weepes when she sees me worke, and saies, such basenes
Had never like Executor: I forget:
But these sweet thoughts, doe even refresh my labours,
Most busie lest, when I doe it.

The general sense seems clear: toiling at his log pile, Ferdinand finds that thinking of Miranda and her sorrow for his plight gives him new zest for his work. As he has just announced, she "quickens what's dead, / And makes my labours, pleasures" (6-7). But what is to be done with F's "Most busie lest, when I doe it"? The usual assumption is that "busie lest" is the result of the compositor seeing two words when Shakespeare intended only one, the word being either "busilest" (Kermode; Vaughan) or a related form, "busiliest" or "busil'est" (Orgel; Riverside). The sense is therefore "My thoughts of Miranda refresh my labour most actively when I am engaged in it". But this is vulnerable on two counts: "busil(i)est" has never been found anywhere else; and Ferdinand is made to say something which seems too self-evident to need saying: how could his thoughts of Miranda refresh his labour when he was *not* labouring? A better route to intelligible meaning is available if we treat "busie lest" as two words not one, and take "lest" to mean "least". This is how the compositor of the Second Folio of 1632, who replaced "lest" with "least", understood what he saw in his copy, and although "lest" for "least" is not a common Shakespearean spelling, it does occur twice elsewhere in F, in *All's Well That Ends Well*, IV.ii.31, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, III.ii.35. Ferdinand's line of thought leads him to a paradox: as he works, Miranda's restorative effect on him is such that the more busied he is by his labour the less busied by it he is; he is thus "most busy least". This paradoxical play on "most"/"least" is a Shakespearean favourite; cf. especially *The Taming of the Shrew*, "seeming to be most, which we indeed least are" (V.ii.175); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "In least speak most" (V.i.105); and *Sonnet 29*, "With what I most enjoy contented least" (8); also *Love's Labour's Lost*, II.i.58; *Romeo and Juliet*, V.iii.223-24; and *Sonnet 125* (14).

III.i.39-42

full many a Lady
I have ey'd with best regard, and many a time
Th'harmony of their tongues, hath into bondage
Brought my too diligent eare

In a play much occupied with forms of servitude, it is not surprising that Shakespeare has Ferdinand introduce the idea of the ability of language, spoken or sung, to "bind" or "chain" the ear. Cf. Marvell's "A Dialogue between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure", where the Soul rejects Pleasure's "charming airs": "Cease tempter. None can chain a mind / Whom this sweet chordage cannot bind" (Marvell 2007, 36)[1]. Eloquence was emblematised as a figure "with chains of gold and amber binding listeners' ears to his tongue" (Jonson 2012, 3:142).

III.i.44-46

some defect in her
Did quarrell with the noblest grace she ow'd,
And put it to the foile

Most editors understand "foile" in the sense of "sword, rapier", and gloss Ferdinand's "put it to the foile" as "challenged it, as at a fencing match" (Orgel). Dissatisfied with this, Lindley assumes a misreading of long "s" as "f" and emends "foile" to "soil", taking the phrase to mean "sullied it". Both responses are mistaken. There is no evidence that "put to the foil" was used in the sense proposed, or that "put to the soil" was in use at all. "Put to the foil" was, however, a standard expression in wrestling, meaning "to subject one's opponent to a fall", and this is the origin of the phrase employed here: see OED, "foil", *n*. 2, 1, 2.a. There is no need to suppose that wrestling is being specifically invoked, as by the date of *The Tempest* only a general sense of "thwart, defeat" could be intended: cf. John Frewen, *Certain Sermons* (1612): "the doctors and learned men were oftentimes confounded and put to the foil" (Frewen 1612, Z4v).

[1] There is a pun on "chord"/"cord".

III.ii.130
O forgive me my sinnes

Trinculo, drunk and terrified, is resorting to Scripture: "And forgive us our sinnes" (Luke 11:4, Geneva Bible). Cf. Alonso's reference to "my Trespasse" in the following scene (III.iii.99), with its suggestion of "forgive men their trespasses" (Matthew 6:14).

III.iii.68-70
But remember
(For that's my businesse to you) that you three
From *Millaine* did supplant good *Prospero*

"But" here means "just" or "only", not "however". Cf. *Richard III*, "O but remember this another day, / When he shall split thy very heart with sorrow" (I.iii.298); *Sir Thomas More*, "Good sir, be still your selfe, and but remember…" (Greg 1911, 48).

IV.i.122-24
FERDINAND
Let me live here ever,
So rare a wondred Father, and a wise
Makes this place Paradise

Does Ferdinand say "and a wise" or "and a wife"? Is he adding to his praise of Prospero, or declaring Miranda's equal contribution to his perfect Eden? F, and the three reprints of F which followed in 1632, 1663, and 1685, all have "wise", but Nicholas Rowe in his *Works of Mr William Shakespear* of 1709 printed "Wife". Supporters of Rowe call his change "an emendation", as though he saw "wise" in his copy (he used F2 rather than F), judged it a mistake, and replaced it with "Wife" (Wayne 1998, 184). It is just as likely, however, given his own tendency to error and the frequency of "f"/long "s" confusions in early modern texts, that the mistake was Rowe's; that he misread F2's "wise" as "wife", capitalising the word as was his normal way with nouns. Whatever the truth of this, "wife" has made regular appearances in editions of *The Tempest* ever since, sometimes with no indication that a change has been made to the Folio text. Indeed, for a time at the end of the last

century it was possible to maintain that no change had been made at all. In 1978 Jeanne Addison Roberts noted small differences in the look of the word when the Folger Shakespeare Library's large collection of First Folios were compared with one another and announced that it was actually "wife". The crossbar of the "f" had broken off during printing, giving the semblance of a long "s", but the letter was still recognisably an "f" in some copies (Roberts 1978). For a while, Roberts' claim guided both texts and interpretations of the play. "Wife" was Orgel's choice in his 1987 edition, where in the textual notes it is designated "F". With its suggestion of a gender-inclusive Shakespeare it was hailed as "a reading whose time has come" (Orgel 1986, 64).

Only for a while, however. In 1996 Peter W. M. Blayney reported the results of close – microscopically close – inspection of the disputed letter as it appears in the Folger's eighty copies of F and unequivocally rejected Roberts' finding. The supposed "f" whose crossbar slowly broke away creating the illusion of a long "s" was itself an illusion: a consequence of "an extraneous bit of inked matter (a piece of lint, perhaps)", leaving a trace on the paper[2]. In F at least, "wise" was always "wise".

But before F? "Wife" supporters have continued their attempts to dislodge or at least weaken the claim of "wise" by pointing out that "to misread 'wife' as 'wise' would be an easy error by the compositor or by the scribe" (Lindley, who opts for "wife"). Shakespeare may therefore "have intended 'wife' all along" (Vaughan, who reluctantly reads 'wise'), and "editors who prefer *wife* have valid grounds for emendation" (Mowat 2016, 1657). Valerie Wayne seeks to fortify her stance of studied indecision (which legitimises "wife" as a valid alternative) by attacking the phallic bias of male bibliographers such as Blayney and Hinman, who bullyingly insist on certainty instead of leaving the case open (Wayne 1998, 186-87)[3].

"Wise" supporters, of whom I am one, might object that the mere fact that two letters can be confused with one another is not in itself "valid grounds" for rejecting one and replacing it with the

[2] See Mowat 2016, 1656-57, summarising Blayney's conclusions.

[3] The prejudice and muddle which sustain Wayne's argument are ably exposed by Ronald A. Tumelson II 2006.

other. As Lindley notes, "everything turns on editorial judgement of the more persuasive reading in context". He means this as opening the way to "wife", but when contextual fit is considered everything points away from "wife" and towards "wise". "Wife" suppresses the "wise"/"Paradise" rhyme (albeit with a short second line) which Shakespeare uses elsewhere, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV.iii.70-71. It creates a double subject with a singular verb – not unknown in Shakespeare but certainly not common. It is syntactically inept, since it is not clear if "wondered" modifies only "father" or "wife" as well. It is inaccurate, since Miranda is not yet Ferdinand's wife, and it reduces her grammatically and actually to an appendage ("*a* wife" – any wife?). It is also theologically adrift. God did not make the original Paradise with Eve's help, and if we are to think of the Paradise to which mankind will one day be readmitted, the Bible explicitly excludes marriage from it: there will be no more husbands or wives (see Mark 12:25; Luke 20:35).

No doubt most of these objections could be argued away plausibly enough, but the real case for "wise" rests not on the reasons to reject "wife" but on the verbal and thematic compatibilities which embed "wise" in the passage. Here are three of them.

1. "a wondred Father, and a wise": this rhetorical manoeuvre, which ensures that a second modifier receives as much emphasis as the first by adding it after the noun it modifies, is widely used in the period, in the drama (as in Thomas Nashe, *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, 1600, "a rich man, and a miserable" [Nashe 1600, C1r]) and elsewhere, e.g. Mark 6:20 in the Geneva and Authorised versions, "a juste man, and an holie". In Shakespeare it occurs several times, including *The Taming of the Shrew*, "A proper stripling, and an amorous" (I.ii.143), and *All's Well*, "A shrewd knave and an unhappy" (IV.v.63). As in *The Tempest*'s "a wondred […] and a wise", alliteration sometimes boosts the emphasis: EEBO offers "a carefull husband, and a kinde", "A lowd wife, and a lazie", "a gay man, and a great", and "a good man, and a godly-most"[4]. Versions of the formula which end "and a wise" are especially frequent. EEBO has thirty-four examples between 1525 and 1660,

[4] In, respectively, Wotton 1578, 344; Fletcher 1647 [c. 1620], 91; Chapman 1639 [c. 1615], B2r; Sylvester 1620, E8r.

including several which alliterate (for example, "a worthy knight and a wise" [*The Right Pleasant and Goodly History* 1554, 2B3r]), and one which both alliterates and employs "rare": "a Rare workman, and a wise" (Everard 1657, 176). Note also Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, "a good lady, and a wise and virtuous" (I.v.113).

2. "So rare a wondred Father, and a wise": retaining "wise" leaves intact an echo of a proverb: "A wise man is a wonder" (Tilley 1950, M423). Ferdinand's "wondred" makes the echo specific, but his addition of "rare" widens the compliment to include a similar contemporary commonplace, which declares that a wise man is as excellent as he is uncommon. Note the following, which as in *The Tempest* combine the two senses of "rare": "to be wise is to be rare, for it is rare to see a wise man" (*Every Woman in Her Humour* 1609 [c. 1606], B2r); "to find a wise man, it is rare" (Lok 1597, 97); "you are wise Sir, tis a rare Jewell" (Fletcher 1616 [1613], B2v). A further link with "rare"/"wise" couplings in the period is the addition of an intensifying "so": compare "so rare and wise" (Crimsal 1633, A1r); "so wise, so rare a man" (Daniel 1605, C6v); and "excellent Commanders are so rare, / Because they must be very wise" (Hubert 1628, 77). Clayton makes the additional point that "wise" "dialectically complements 'wondered', rounding out Prospero as Ferdinand sees him" (Clayton 2016, 441).

3. "A wondred Father, and a wise / Makes this place Paradise": Ferdinand's rapturous likening of Prospero to the Christian God – the heavenly Father, doer of "wondrous works" (Psalm 119), the maker of Paradise – again points strongly to "wise". Ferdinand seals his comparison by including God's primary attribute, his wisdom. "God only wise", the Bible repeatedly insists, "God is above all, most wise"; "there is none more wise than the most High". Like Prospero's, God's wisdom is that of a benign patriarch: "The Father alone [is] said to be King, immortall, wise"[5]. Ferdinand enlists the analogy again when he says that from Prospero he has received "a second life" (V.i.195).

It is true that having Ferdinand acknowledge that a wife as much as a father-in-law is needed to create his paradise would help the play's romantic hero look a little less male-orientated. But it can

[5] Romans 16:27; 1 Timothy 1:17; Jude 1:25; Romans 11:34 (note in the Geneva version of 1587); 2 Esdras 7:19; John 17:3 (note in Geneva 1587).

be argued that such a redrawing of allegiances would be false to the play and false to Shakespearean comedy in general, where male bonding regularly obstructs and sometimes sabotages comedy's conventional prioritising of heterosexual union. And beyond Shakespeare, Ferdinand's celebration of a men-only Eden is in tune with a long-standing line of thought which held that Adam's pre-Eve existence was mankind's most perfect time. "Such was that happy garden-state", remarks the speaker of Marvell's "The Garden", "While man there walked without a mate: […] Two Paradises 'twere in one / To live in Paradise alone" (Marvell 2007, 158)[6]. Having Ferdinand include Miranda here might improve our view of him, but advocates of the change could be accused of seeking to reprogramme the play for the present century, if not of trying to save the play from itself.

IV.i.123
wondred

OED finds only four examples of this word. Three of them (two dated 1595 and a third 1612) it glosses as meaning "wonderful, marvellous". The fourth is the *Tempest* example, for which it creates a separate sense, "performing such rare wonders". Several editors accept this, but it is surely too much of a stretch to derive such an elaborate, active use from a single past participle. "Wondrous, to be wondered at" fits the context, as it does that of the other three examples, so only a single sense is probably involved. This is supported by two earlier uses which OED has missed. In the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene* Jason's ship is "The wondred *Argo*" (Spenser 1590, 2A4v), and in Thomas Lodge's *The Wounds of Civil War*, printed in 1594 but written up to seven years earlier, the Romans possess "the wondered Legions of the world" (Lodge 1594, B3r).

IV.i.264-65
Shortly shall all my labours end

[6] For discussion of Shakespearean and other early modern all-male utopias, see Holdsworth 2009.

Prospero is announcing the imminent fulfilment of his plan to regain his dukedom and marry Miranda to Ferdinand, but his words, assisted by the comprehensiveness of *all*, resonate beyond their surface meaning. The end of labour was a way of thinking of the end of life, as in George Sandys' *Christ's Passion* (1640), where Christ declares, "All is finished, here my labours end" (Sandys 1640, D2r), and Robert Aylett's "Meditation of Death": "To all that labour, pleasing is the end" (Aylett 1622, 54). The analogy occurs in Stoicism, but it was also biblical: "The dead which die in the Lord, are fully blessed […] for they rest from their labours, and their workes follow them" (Revelation 14:13, Geneva Bible)[7].

Editors' missing of this suggestion of mortality is part of a larger failure to note the heavy sense of an ending, for Prospero, for the play, for its audience, that Shakespeare is at pains to develop well before the end arrives. *The Tempest* begins by telling us we are witnessing only the end-phase of an otherwise undramatised story which started "In the dark backward and abysm of time […] Twelve year since […] twelve year since" (I.ii.50-53). Time is "now" (to use a frequently employed word) making up for lost time by driving urgently towards its own terminus. "'Tis time", Prospero informs his daughter, "The howr's now come, / The very minute byds thee ope thine eare" (I.ii.22, 36-37).

Time's power and passing are underlined by making Prospero not only its spokesman but its captive, for whom time is running out. The point needs stressing, as we are often told he is still quite youthful. According to Vaughan he is perhaps "as young as 35" (24); far from nearing his end, "we prefer to think of Prospero as a middle-aged man who looks forward to regaining his dukedom and watching his grandchildren grow up" (284). This is not a preference the text supports. In IV.i, even as he directs the masque which celebrates Ferdinand and Miranda's betrothal and happy future, he implies that his own future is limited: his "weaknesse" and "infirmitie" are more than his "old braine" can cope with (159-60). As the play reaches its last scene, its protagonist seems also to be reaching his: he will "retire me" (not simply return) to Milan, where "Every third thought shall be my grave" (V.i.311-12). Now a character without a role, all that remains to him is to tell "The story

[7] Note also Stradling 1625, 192: "the end of all their labours shall be rest".

of my life", a prospect Alonso savours: "I long / To heare the story of your life" (305, 312-13). Again there is a suggestion of cessation: we seem to be promised the story of a completed life, even though its subject is the teller. Was Shakespeare thinking of a much-quoted text in the Psalter about life approaching its terminus? "All our dayes are gone: we bring our yeares to an end, as it were a tale that is told" (*The Book of Common Prayer* 1603, F8r). That he was is suggested a few lines later by the Epilogue, where Prospero speaks of himself as a fictional character suddenly aware that he has little story left. His one anxiety is the kind of "ending" (15) that awaits him.

V.i.48-50

Graves at my command
Have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth
By my so potent art

These lines conclude Prospero's impassioned celebration of his magic which begins "Ye Elves of hils, brooks, standing lakes" (33); they are immediately followed by his decision to renounce conjuring altogether ("But this rough Magicke / I heere abjure", 50-51). The position of this final claim may be significant, as for the first time Prospero crosses a line between the ability to control the natural world (all his other examples of his skill come down to influencing the weather) and necromancy, traffic with the dead, which was viewed unambiguously as one of the black arts, and therefore needing his rejection of it if he is to retain the audience's approval. Perhaps Shakespeare's intention was to have him come to this ability in his repertoire and then recoil from it. By "this rough magic" he may therefore mean this particular skill rather than magic in general, though it still prompts him to throw his book of spells into the sea.

As is well known, the celebratory part of Prospero's speech is a careful paraphrase of Medea's address to Hecate in Book 7 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Shakespeare went occasionally directly to Ovid, but it is clear that on his desk as he wrote was Arthur Golding's verse translation of 1567, for Golding's English is

sometimes repeated in detail[8]. The passage under discussion, however, is an exception. The Ovidian equivalent is only three words, "manesque exire sepulcris", and Golding offers little more: "I call up dead men from their graves". Rather than make do with this, Shakespeare replaced it with a memory of Matthew's account of the aftermath of the crucifixion: "the graves did open them selves, and many bodies of the Sainctes which slept, arose, and came out of the graves" (Matthew 27:52-53).

What triggered the switch from a classical to a biblical source? The previous sentence in *The Tempest* reads "The strong bass'd promontorie / Have I made shake" (46-47), which was all Shakespeare did with Golding's "I make the mountains shake, / And even the earth itself to groan and fearfully to quake". However, Matthew introduces his walking dead by noting "the earth did quake". It must have been reading "the earth […] to quake" in Golding that recalled the New Testament passage to Shakespeare's mind. Was he conscious of its origin when he inserted it? And if so, what was his intention in having Prospero boast of his power to resurrect the dead in terms which describe the death and resurrection of Christ? If we answer 'yes' to the first question, the best answer to the second is that he wished to make shockingly clear the blasphemous path Prospero is embarked on, as a way of explaining his abrupt renunciation of all occult practices which follows.

V.i.206-13

O rejoice
Beyond a common joy, and set it downe
With gold on lasting Pillers: In one voyage
Did *Claribell* her husband find at *Tunis*,
And *Ferdinand* her brother, found a wife,
Where he himself was lost: *Prospero* his Dukedome
In a poore Isle: and all of us, our selves,
When no man was his owne.

Dennis C. Kay, in a note on Gonzalo's pillars, has sent commentators in the wrong direction by claiming that Gonzalo is

[8] See Bate 1993, 249-54. The relevant extracts from Ovid and Golding are in Orgel, 239-41.

referring to the pillars of Hercules, adopted by Charles V as an emblem of his rule (Kay 1984). The suggestion of imperial ambition would have little relevance to Shakespeare's play, where the emphasis is hardly military, and more on personal than political recovery. In any case, assuming a reference is present, Kay has missed a far more likely candidate: the method chosen by the Swiss states at the Disputation of Berne in 1528 to commemorate their decision to reject Catholicism and become Protestant. John Foxe first described how the event was marked:

> The day and the yeare when this reformation with them began, from Popery to true Christianitie, they caused in a pillar to be engraven with golden letters, for a perpetuall memory to all posteritie to come. Victory of the Gospel. an. 1528. (Foxe 1570, 1024)

Foxe's account is frequently repeated in contemporary sermons, and his pillar becomes "pillars", and the memory "lasting", as in *The Tempest*[9]. The meaning of the event, for Shakespeare's Protestant audience at least, was deliverance from error, which is how one might describe one of *The Tempest*'s main concerns.

There is more occurring in the passage, however, than the insertion of an historical parallel. The Swiss pillars bear merely a date, whereas Gonzalo's will spell out almost the entire plot of the play. Or a version of it. Like Horatio's "true delivery" of what has happened in *Hamlet*, Gonzalo's account is coherent but reductive. Although Claribel has "found" a husband in Tunis, she has not done so in the way that Ferdinand found a wife on the island. Nothing contradicts Sebastian's claim that she was forced to marry and loathed her father's choice (II.i.129-33). Gonzalo declares that "all" have found themselves, but no benign self-discovery is detectable in Sebastian or Antonio, the latter possessing "an evil nature" and a capacity for falsehood which has "no limit" (I.ii.93-96). And Gonzalo's "all" does not include the unteachable Caliban, of whose existence he is unaware, and whom it seems beyond the play's power to define or make sense of. Even as *The Tempest*

[9] For example, Heywood 1679, 186: "the City *Zurick* ingraved the Year of their deliverance from Popery upon Pillars, in Letters of Gold, for a lasting memorial".

negotiates its own conclusion, it begins to signal the form which conflicting interpretations of *The Tempest* will take.

V.i.242-45
This is as strange a Maze, as ere men trod,
And there is in this businesse, more than nature
Was ever conduct of: some Oracle
Must rectifie our knowledge

Editors do not comment on Alonso's "rectifie", though Shakespeare had not used the word before (in the later *Henry VIII* it occurs twice). It sounds somewhat pedantic in context, and in its standard sense of "correct" it is not quite appropriate, as the Neapolitans are in a state of bewilderment rather than error. Rectification was, however, a stage in alchemy, and alchemical terms become more frequent as Prospero's "Project gather[s] to a head" − itself an alchemical phrase (V.i.1). Cf. Joseph Du Chesne, *The Practice of Chemical and Hermetical Physic* (1605): "Rectification, is a reiterated Distillation to perfection"; "*Aqua vitae* […] thou shalt rectifie to the highest perfection" (Du Chesne 1605, 2A4v, R1r). Alonso's meaning is therefore closer to "refine, improve" than "correct"[10].

Who is the oracle who must rectify our knowledge? Is it, as well as the play's protagonist, its author, who has an oracle's unique access to all secrets, and to their consequences? If so, this can count as another of *The Tempest*'s many debts to *The Alchemist*. There, too, Jonson is occupied with constructing a sly portrait of the artist: in this case the master alchemist Ben Jonson, engaged in turning the dross of petty London swindlers and their dupes into the gold of great comedy.

Epilogue, 1-20
Spoken by *Prospero*
Now my Charmes are all ore-throwne,
And what strength I have's mine owne,
Which is most faint: now 'tis true
I must be heere confinde by you,

[10] On the play's use of alchemical terms, see Holdsworth 2014, 86-87, and Roulon 2019.

Or sent to *Naples*, Let me not
Since I have my Dukedome got,
And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
In this bare Island, by your Spell,
But release me from my bands
With the helpe of your good hands:
Gentle breath of yours, my Sailes
Must fill, or else my project failes,
Which was to please: Now I want
Spirits to enforce: Art to inchant,
And my ending is despaire,
Unlesse I be reliev'd by praier
Which pierces so, that it assaults
Mercy it selfe, and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardon'd be,
Let your Indulgence set me free. *Exit*.

It is sometimes suggested that F's heading to the Epilogue is an embellishment added by Ralph Crane, the company scrivener who copied out the text for publication. Nevertheless, if Shakespeare was not responsible for "Spoken by *Prospero*", he might well have approved its insertion, since it anticipates the Epilogue proper by teasingly begging the question as to the identity of the figure who, after "*Exeunt omnes*", returns alone to deliver the play's valediction. The twenty lines that follow are Shakespeare's boldest juxtaposition of what for every audience are conflicting levels of knowledge as it responds to the illusionistic nature of theatre and, like Antonio, "credits its own lie" (I.ii.102) by taking make-believe for fact. There is no single answer to the question, 'Who is speaking?' The speaker takes on different identities which alternate, merge, or are superimposed on one another as each line follows the line before. At first we seem still to be watching the "real" Prospero, who has re-entered for a final soliloquy about his lost powers. His opening reference to "my Charmes" connects him with this character's double use of "my charms" in the previous scene (V.i.2, 31), and "Prospero" continues intermittently to be in charge when he mentions Naples, his dukedom, the "bare island" where the play has been set, and the loss of his "art" and of the "spirits" which assisted it. But with the emphatic "you" at the end of line 4 a different speaker, the actor for whom Prospero was

merely a role, is suddenly audible, and we are invited to hear the speech again according to a quite different set of meanings. "My Charmes" are not the character's magic spells but the actor's qualities which allow him to charm and fascinate his audience, the "art" not the dark arts of the magician but the skill of the performer, "spirits" mental strengths, not supernatural beings. "Heere […] In this bare Island" is the projecting stage of the Globe or Blackfriars theatres, "bare" because devoid of scenery, and this speaker "enchants" not by laying people under spells but delighting them.

Is "pardon'd the deceiver" another of these ambiguities? Commentators, if they pause over the phrase at all, do so only to tell us that the deceiver is Antonio, who does seem to be the character referred to: Antonio was pardoned by Prospero when Prospero chose to "forgive" his brother's "rankest fault" (V.i.131-32). But "the deceiver" is oddly cryptic: why not name him, even if to call him "brother" would infect Prospero's mouth (V.i.130-31)? And "deceiver" is perhaps not quite the right term for someone so undisguisedly unpleasant. The uncertainties are deliberate, as they encourage the thought that the title might better fit someone else. Pursuing that idea, one comes immediately to Prospero himself, the play's arch-deceiver who in the opening scene deceives everyone, the characters experiencing the storm and the audience watching it, as to what kind of storm it is, and whose deceptions then create the rest of the play, until he "discases" himself in the final scene. To admit him as an alternative (or addition) to Antonio we merely need to suppose that having his "dukedom got" his first act has been to pardon his own trickery.

There is another candidate: William Shakespeare. Imagining a character, or an actor, in *The Tempest* branding the playwright a deceiver might suggest that one is confusing Shakespeare with Pirandello, but it is not a particularly bold step, as it was a commonplace of Renaissance aesthetic theory that all art dealt in falsehood. "It has been said of Poetry and Painting", John Bulteel observed, "that he that could deceive best, was the most worthy, because that is the end of those Arts" (Bulteel 1683, 328). The idea reinforces the link between Prospero and his creator that many critics have detected, as writer and conjuror become one and the same. Davenant suggested that "we may descend to compare the

deceptions in Poesie to those of them that professe dexterity of Hand, which resembles Conjuring […] [We] are content (if we like the carriage of their feigned motion) to pay for being well deceived" (Davenant 1650, B3v). One wonders if Davenant remembered his comparison when, seventeen years later, he adapted *The Tempest* for Restoration audiences.

"'Tis all *deceptio visus*", Face remarks toward the end of *The Alchemist* (V.iii.61), describing the play he is in, and plays in general, as well as his alchemical scam. Does the supposed relationship between drama and deceit account for the depressed tone of the Epilogue, where "prayer" rhymes with "despair", "faults" become "crimes", and none of the figures who speak or are referred to achieves the "release" he seeks? The lines keep their secrets, provoking questions and withholding answers. Why, for example, does Prospero say that he might be "sent" to Naples rather than go there, when it was a trip he himself proposed (V.i.308)? It seems that this Prospero, having broken out of the play, is suddenly under the control of an audience which has acquired the author's power to decide his movements. Later the audience gains still more power when it is accorded a priest's authority to grant "indulgence" for sins, so their consequences might be escaped. But what are the sins, and who is the sinner? Two more examples: when the speaker requests the help of the spectators' hands to release him, what does he envisage that their hands will do: untie his bonds, be brought together in prayer, applaud, or break an evil spell (which a clap of the hands was thought to do)? And finally: how should we hear the Epilogue's penultimate line, "As you from crimes would pardon'd be"? Evenly stressed, with a stress on "you", or a stress on "crimes"? It is typical of this play that each version of the line is valid, but choosing one shuts down meanings that only one of the others makes available.

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