Introduction

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Introduction: Shakespeare and the supernatural

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Supernatural elements constitute a significant dimension of Shakespeare's plays: ghosts haunt political spaces and internal psyches; witches foresee the future and disturb the present; fairies meddle with love; natural portents and dreams foreshadow events; and a magus conjures a tempest from the elements. These aspects contribute to the dramatic power and intrigue of the plays, whether they are treated in performance with irony, comedic effect or unsettling gravity. Although Shakespeare's plays were written and performed for early modern audiences, for whom the supernatural, whether sacred, demonic or folkloric, was still part of the fabric of everyday life, these supernatural elements continue to enthral us, and maintain their power to raise a range of questions in more contemporary contexts. Supernatural elements implicitly question the border between the human and the non-human, and between the visible and the unseen. They also raise questions of control and agency, that intersect with the exercise of power, a central focus across Shakespeare's *œuvre*.

Shakespeare drew on the supernatural in all of his dramatic genres and throughout his career, from the early histories (such as *Richard III* and *2 Henry VI*) to the late romances (such as *The Winter's Tale, Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*), in tragedies (*Julius Caesar, Hamlet* and *Macbeth*) as well as in comedy (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), suggesting the importance of the supernatural in his approach to drama. Exploration of this dimension resonates with many of the central themes of the plays, raising theological, political, and moral questions. His work invites critical analysis of how supernatural figures, elements and forces are constructed in the plays, raising various options for performance, and what assumptions and ambiguities arise from these representations. The chapters of this volume respond to this invitation in a range of ways, taking into account early modern and contemporary perspectives.

The first challenge in approaching the theme of the supernatural is that of definition.[1] The etymology of the term suggests something 'that transcends nature', according to the current OED definition. However, as Darren Oldridge observes, in *The Supernatural in Tudor and Stuart England*, 'the boundaries between natural and supernatural phenomena have never been securely fixed' and this 'shifting border' in early modernity is particularly complex.[2] What constituted 'nature' and ordinary

natural laws for Shakespeare and his contemporaries? The vast differences between our understandings of a mechanistic universe, with rational laws, causes and effects, and early modern conceptions of a divinely created nature generate the first issue in trying to determine what distinguishes the natural and the supernatural.

Magical nature

The realm of the 'natural' was imagined as alive with invisible spirits and forces that could be harnessed with the right knowledge using what was understood as natural magic.[3] As Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham point out, there was a 'supernatural hyper-reality threaded through the natural order of creation'.[4] Nature was thought of as God's Second Book, a parallel green Bible, and repository of divine truths.[5] As Christopher Wortham and David Ormerod suggest, whereas 'modern man looks at the world […] medieval man looked through it. His attempt was not to describe the world, but to determine its meaning, and this meaning was to be fathomed in terms of the extent to which the world contained messages confirming and elaborating the revelation of divine scripture'. By comparison, the early modern viewpoint saw the world as 'an ordered and planned manifestation' with an underlying plan that could not 'be located immediately at a literal level'; it was the task of the scholar to see through the 'outward husk of reality' to 'its *nucleus*'.[6] The natural was thus a manifestation of the supernatural space of divine design; their version of nature was already infused with what, to us, is a supernatural conception.

Early modern authors made an additional distinction between the supernatural and the preternatural, which encompassed all that human knowledge could not explain, but that did not contravene the laws of nature, such as they were conceived. This could include the workings of dreams, certain meteorological phenomena, or the flight of witches; these were thought of as belonging to the realm of the unexplained, not the inexplicable. To complicate things further, deeds attributed to otherworldly beings could be described as 'supernatural' even when they were understood by contemporaries as natural events, albeit sources of wonder, thus extending the term 'supernatural' to the preternatural.[7]

Phenomena that were unexplained could be investigated in a proto-scientific way; supernatural or preternatural subject matter did not preclude seemingly methodical investigations and ordered arguments. As Keith Thomas observes, 'God's sovereignty was thought to be exercised through regular channels, and the natural world was fully susceptible of study by scientists seeking causes and regularities'.[8] Similarly, Jane

Davidson points out that, given the development of practices of observed realism in visual art, and the new scientific impulses, 'it was logical then that the mindset of careful observation and record was a part of the study of the supernatural as well'.[9]

In the Shakespearean canon, natural phenomena – such as storms, 'monstrous' births, and screeching owls – often function as omens, their strangeness as generative of the uncanny as ghosts, spirits, witches and magic. These natural phenomena often serve as foreshadowing to the audience and as signs for characters to interpret, just as nature was read as a divinely-created book of hidden truths. Monstrous births were ambiguous; they could be preternatural signs in nature's book that were potentially explainable; yet they could also be an act of God, suggesting sin or disorder in the natural world, as with Richard III, whose physical deformity was linked with his tyrannical rule and political disruption.

Miracles were understood as exceeding the laws of nature, evidence of God's particular intervention, beyond the ordinary workings of nature. The term *supra naturam*, as Oldridge points out, dated from the early Christian writers, and the term *supernaturalis* was first commonly used in the thirteenth century in the context of examining and classifying miracles.[10] However, by the sixteenth century, the orthodox view was that the time of miracles had passed and that while theoretically possible, miracles were now a highly rare occurrence.[11]

The supernatural in the early modern imagination

A lack of knowledge laid the groundwork for the construction of the supernatural, which countered a sense of powerlessness in the face of illness, death, birth deformities, acts of God and other inexplicable phenomena. Shakespeare's contemporaries were faced with short life expectancies, high rates of death in childbirth and the risk of many illnesses and diseases that were incurable, such as leprosy and the plague. Medical knowledge was poor and access to doctors limited; most people had little education or power to control their living conditions. In the face of a void of understanding, comforting and terrifying narratives entered into the vacuum.

Supernatural agency could fill this existential or experiential void, positing a seemingly rational explanation for otherwise inexplicable occurrences. The ghost, in particular, exemplifies the porous border between the natural and the supernatural. For the Catholic Church, the ghost was a soul in Purgatory, caught in limbo between

heaven and hell, thus able to cross over the threshold between life and death to deal with unfinished business. However, this shifted after the Reformation with the rejection of Purgatory, described in the *Thirty Nine Articles* (1571) as 'a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture' (Article XXII). Now, ghosts and apparitions were thought more likely to be a demon or a demonic illusion designed to trick the observer.[12]

The fairies from folklore were also linked to the demonic and were often thought of as spirits of the deceased, or as possessive spirits in the case of bewitchment.[13] James I, in his *Demonologie* (1597), had expressed the opinion that demons could disguise themselves as fairies, and John Aubrey, writing in the late seventeenth century, referred to 'those demons that we call fairies'.[14] Fairies were part of the animated natural world, alive with spirits, remaining a vibrant part of oral folklore, even in the face of emerging rationalism in the latter part of the seventeenth century.

Since nature was imagined as a network of invisible powers and spirits, it was assumed that these could be harnessed with the right knowledge, be it physics, astrology, alchemy or, simply, 'magic', a term encompassing a variety of beliefs and practices. Natural magic, working within the properties of nature, was the field of the local 'cunning' woman or man, providing medicinal advice, and locating lost objects or people.[15] The practices of cunning men and women were not necessarily magic; it depended on whether charms were used to accompany the medicine, and often prayers accompanied charms, again blurring the lines.[16]

Magic imagines a form of control over objects, people and events. In classical antiquity, the term referred to the arts of the *magi*, Zoroastrian priests of Persia who were known to practise astrology, claim the power to cure people and pursue occult knowledge.[17] Given that the Zoroastrians were suspect foreigners from the perspective of the Greeks and Romans, magic from the outset was something potentially threatening and likely to arouse apprehension.[18] Natural magic was distinct, in theory, from demonic magic, which involved a pact with the Devil to access demonic power (rather than the power of natural properties). As Richard Kieckhefer outlines, in *Magic in the Middle Ages*:

> Broadly speaking, intellectuals in medieval Europe recognised two forms of magic: natural and demonic. Natural magic was not distinct from science, but rather a branch of science. It was the science that dealt with "occult virtues" (or hidden powers) within nature. Demonic magic was not distinct from religion, but rather a perversion of

> religion. It was religion that turned away from God and toward demons for their help in human affairs.[19]

Perceptions of the status of magic in the medieval and early modern period differed widely. The Church had historically condemned the practice of magic; in *De Doctrina Christiana* (c. 426), Augustine unequivocally repudiated soothsayers and wizards who claimed they could invoke ghosts and spirits, associating them with demons:

> So all the specialists in this kind of futile and harmful superstition, and the contracts, as it were, of an untrustworthy and treacherous partnership established by this disastrous alliance of men and devils, must be totally rejected and avoided by the Christian. "It is not," to quote the apostle, "because an idol is something, but because whatever they sacrifice they sacrifice it to devils and not to God that I do not want you to become the associates of demons.[20]

Even 'white' magic was suspect, although in practice white witches often escaped heavy punishment.[21]

Anxiety over this issue was exacerbated by the historically indistinct lines between religion and magic in the medieval church, and between natural and demonic magic.[22] The post-Reformation Church argued that the rituals and ideology of the pre-Reformation Church were often close in character to the magic it condemned as demonic. Where precisely was the line to be drawn between prayers and charms? In theory, 'words and prayers […] had no power in themselves, unless God chose to heed them; whereas the working of charms followed automatically upon their pronunciation', as if they had a performative power.[23] However, in practice, the concepts overlapped. As Thomas accurately describes, magic and religion were 'rival therapies' and even after the Reformation, they were not mutually exclusive; 'there were magical elements surviving in religion, and there were religious facets to be the practice of magic'.[24]

Shakespeare's plays reveal various approaches to magic. In *2 Henry VI*, Margery Jordan, described as a 'witch', and Roger Bolingbroke, a 'conjurer', partake in demonic 'exorcisms' (1.4.4), successfully proceeding to 'raise … ghosts' and 'spirits' (1.4.19, 21) using black magic, devil-like, in the 'Deep night, dark night' (1.4.16).[25] Their arrest moments later makes it clear that such blasphemous spirit-raising is to be roundly

condemned. In *The Tempest*, Prospero's magic is more ambiguous. Is he a practitioner of 'white magic' (also termed 'theurgy' and 'natural magic'), or is he also resorting to 'black magic' (also termed 'necromancy', 'nigromancy' or 'goety')?[26] How magic was classified often depended on who was practising it, giving greater weight to the supernatural agent.

The practice of magic was traditionally gendered and subject to class distinctions. Higher magic, ostensibly white magic, was based on learned, scholarly knowledge and seen as the preserve of male magicians, the respected and revered (at least by some) magus figure, often compared to celebrated contemporary examples. In this context, magic was considered as an extension of book-based knowledge, generally inaccessible to women through a lack of access to education, and prejudice against female curiosity and power. Arguments against the involvement of women in affairs of Church and State were common, particularly in the wake of the Marian persecutions in England in the 1550s. In the eyes of Calvin and other Protestant writers, women ought 'to keep themselves lowly and mild.'[27] Failure to do so was to risk public opprobrium, or worse.

The intellectual study of magic was predominantly a European phenomenon, emerging in Florence during the Italian Renaissance in the context of Platonism. Works by writers such as Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, given impetus by Ficino's Latin translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, spread through Europe via the works of Paracelsus and Cornelius Agrippa. In England, these writings influenced figures such as Robert Fludd and John Dee, who dabbled in alchemy and was advisor to Elizabeth I.[28]

The protoscience of alchemy came under the umbrella of natural magic and was part of the intellectual, scholarly pursuit of magic. The alchemical concept of *solve et coagula*, breaking up components using the liquid solve as the medium in order to transform and recreate, resonates with the themes and imagery of *The Tempest*.[29] On the premise of the early modern assumption that all sublunary matter was composed of the four elements – earth, fire, air and water – alchemy constituted the search for the fifth element, *quintessence*, which all the superlunary, celestial bodies were believed to be composed of.[30] It was the path to immortality, as well as the means of transforming base metals to gold. Within the sphere of intellectual, scholarly knowledge was also astrology, the study of the effects of the heavenly bodies on the sublunary world that assumed influence over the body and events.[31] Although it was generally considered the concern of the Court, the nobility and the Church, given that it formed a cornerstone of medical knowledge, astrology impacted many other branches of

knowledge; traders of knowledge at all levels of society drew from astrological beliefs.[32]

In comparison with scholarly magic, lower magic was based on local, experiential and folkloric knowledge, not derived from bookish learning; this was the preserve of cunning women and men. Although this too was believed to be based on natural magic and understanding of occult forces in nature, it was nonetheless often perceived as easily sliding into dubious black magic, requiring demonic assistance. Lower magic was also often associated with the female witch, feared for her *maleficium*, the ability to cause harm to people and animals.[33] As Richard Kieckhefer states, 'It was men who were more likely to arouse anxiety by actually standing in magic circles and conjuring demons; it was women who were far more likely to be burned in the ensuring bonfires'.[34]

In *The Tempest*, the gendered polarity of magical practice is represented by the juxtaposition of Prospero, presented as an ennobled, scholarly sorcerer wronged by his enemies, and Sycorax, described as a 'foul witch' (1.2.259) (although since she never appears onstage, the audience only has Prospero's word for this). According to Prospero, she was exiled from Algiers for 'mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible / To enter human hearing' (1.2.266-67). In the playtext, Shakespeare invites questions over Prospero's distinction between his magic and Sycorax's by using Medea's incantations in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for Prospero's 'Ye elves of hills' speech (5.1.33). To further blur the lines, Prospero's power is generally performed through the agency of Ariel, who fulfils the traditional role of the witch's 'familiar'.

Notwithstanding Queen Elizabeth's reverence for an alchemist and astrologer such as John Dee, the political state generally took a dim view of magic, evidenced by the introduction of witchcraft legislation into England in the sixteenth century. In 1542 Henry VIII passed the first Witchcraft Act (subsequently repealed in 1547 by Edward VI); in 1563 Elizabeth I passed a new Witchcraft Act that punished those convicted of damage to property or persons by witchcraft with one year's imprisonment, and those convicted of murder by witchcraft with the death penalty. Originally, practitioners could only be prosecuted if their magic resulted in harm, however the legislation became more draconian in 1604 under James I and the mere practice of magic, regardless of its consequences, could attract prosecution.[35] Underlying the fear of witchcraft that fuelled these prosecutions was the notion that the witch entered into a diabolical contract with the Devil.

The Devil was a paradoxical figure; although constituting humanity's adversary, he was an instrument of God's judgement, part of the divinely sanctioned executive.[36] As James I described, the Devil was 'God's hangman'.[37] As Philip C. Almond points out, 'the history of God in the West is also the history of the Devil, and the history of theology also the history of demonology'.[38] Satan was perceived as ever present in the world, along with his company of evil spirits, part of the network of invisible forces that charged the physical world. As Thomas relates, 'men thus became accustomed to Satan's immediacy'; and 'once the possibility of his personal appearance in this world had been accepted it was but a short cut to the notion that there were individuals who entered into semi-feudal contracts with him, mortgaging their souls in return for a temporary access of supernatural knowledge or power'.[39] This belief condemned thousands of unfortunates to persecution, torture and execution.

Enchantment, disenchantment and the theatre

Theatre proved a unique space for staging and processing shifting currents of belief and scepticism in relation to the supernatural.[40] In early modern England, the power of belief affected the theatrical experiences of many, particularly with the staging of devils, as evident in the report of an early performance of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (c. 1592):

> at Exeter, an extra devil suddenly appeared among the actors on stage, causing a panic; in London the "old Theater crackt and frighted the audience" during one performance, at others, the "visible apparition" of the devil appeared on stage "to the great amazement both of the Actors and Spectators."[41]

For many, this was arguably theatre's *raison d'être,* as audiences flocked to the playhouses in anticipation of experiencing such 'great amazement'. As David Bevington reflects, 'The hope of such an event was possibly one fascination that drew audiences to the play [*Dr Faustus*], in somewhat the same fashion as spectators flock to the circus wondering if the high-wire artist will fall and be killed'.[42]

Shakespeare's use of the supernatural in his plays attests to its cultural and theological prevalence in early modern society, not unlike the playwright's equally liberal use of pagan, mythological or folkloric traditions. It may have been as difficult

for Shakespeare to resist the supernatural as it was for Renaissance humanists to produce art without turning to classical mythology. As Jean Seznec points out in *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, mythological and supernatural tropes had an enduring appeal:

> One need but recall, in this connection, St. Augustine or St. Jerome and their inner conflicts. Their minds are haunted by the profane poetry which they ought to denounce; it has penetrated their very souls. In the twelfth century, a Guibert of Nogent, a Pierre of Blois, secretly cherish the ancients whom they deny in public. Hildebert of Lavardin reminds the faithful that they are children of Christ, not of Minerva or Venus, but celebrates in Latin verses the statues of the gods and their supernatural beauty.[43]

As with mythological stories from Ovid and others, which provided the basis for fabulous stories, the supernatural was too tempting to dismiss for a popular playwright seeking to elicit curiosity and wonder among playgoers — and to ensure his company's commercial success, as well as his own.[44] Shakespeare's engagement with the supernatural also linked his *œuvre* to the semi-mythical, semi-divine classical works produced by figures such as Homer and Ovid, a linking that arguably contributed to Shakespeare's appeal for nineteenth-century Romantics such as Victor Hugo, who was also interested in spiritism and extolled Shakespeare's sublime, almost supernatural 'genius'.[45]

Shakespeare wrote in, and for, an enchanted world but one that was on the cusp of change, with the emergence of observational methods, proto-empiricism and sceptical discourses, as exemplified by works such as Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) and Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum* (1620), which reflected the impact of Protestant scepticism.[46] Scot argued that the time for miracles, oracles and prophecies had 'ceased', and that the preaching of a reformed faith had done away with Popish superstitions elsewhere: 'Divers writers report, that in *Germanie,* since *Luthers* time, spirits and divels have not personallie appeared, as in times past they were woont to doo'.[47] Bacon argued that 'prejudice' led men to continue to believe in the supernatural, as men are always tempted to use the 'same method … in every superstition, like astrology, dreams, omens, divine judgments and so on: people who take pleasure in such vanities notice the results when they are fulfilled, but ignore and overlook them when they fail'.[48]

Shakespeare's work often gives voice to such scepticism through characters such as Edmund in *Lear*, who scoffs at beliefs that we are 'fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance' (1.2.107-8),[49] and Lafew in *All's Well That Ends Well*, who claims:

> They say miracles are past, and we have our philosophical persons to make modern and familiar things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear. (*All's Well*, 2.3.1-6)[50]

Such statements register that times were changing through the works of 'philosophical persons', such as Bacon, or demonologists like Scot who made 'trifles of terrors' and revealed, in his *Discoverie*, various tricks used by supposed sorcerers and witches to con the credulous. Despite these thinkers, who were still a minority, and the Church of England's attempts to stamp out superstitious and demonic practices, most people still gave credence to supernatural beliefs, and audiences brought these beliefs to the theatre. As Lafew acknowledges, belief in the supernatural still had currency for his audience, suggesting at least a shared willingness to submit 'to an unknown fear'.

The playwright himself may have been as sceptical vis-à-vis the supernatural as Edmund or Lafew, yet he also took 'pleasure in such vanities', using assorted beliefs in the supernatural to feed audiences' desire for theatrical wish-fulfilment. As Stephen Greenblatt has argued, Shakespeare and his contemporaries replaced the power of Catholic ritual with that of the dramatic experience, one in which audiences willingly partook, underscoring the theatrical nature of belief in the supernatural: 'The official church dismantles and cedes to the players the powerful mechanisms of an unwanted and dangerous charisma; in return the players confirm the charge that those mechanisms are theatrical and hence illusory'.[51]

From this viewpoint, theatre had a key role to play, shoring up man's need for enchantment in a disenchanted world. As Kevin Pask observes, in *The Fairy Way of Writing*, the 'historical process of disenchantment represented an opportunity for the theatre, which could present "falsehoods" on the stage, at least in the form of fictions, with relative impunity. If popular magic no longer carried the ability to charm and to harm, it might still carry the potential to entertain. The fairy way of writing thus also belonged to the age of the new science'.[52] In other words, the gradual disenchantment

of the world could be exploited by playwrights as they strove to re-enchant audiences by giving the supernatural a bodily incarnation, one as striking as the 'dreadful fancy' and 'ghastly sprite' that terrorises Lucrece:

> Imagine her as one in dead of night
>
> From forth dull sleep by dreadful fancy waking,
>
> That thinks she hath beheld some ghastly sprite,
>
> Whose grim aspect sets every joint a-shaking;
>
> What terror 'tis! (*The Rape of Lucrece*, ll. 449-453)

Early modern playgoers did not need to 'imagine' such sights; they could experience the supernatural, or at least a version of it, by going to the theatre. The theatre took on a cosmological meaning, re-establishing the world full of wonders that was in the process of being lost.

Shakespeare's work looks both forward and back, to brave new worlds opening up, and to modes of sceptical thought, as well as the rich veins of medieval thought, folkloric traditions, pre-Reformation theology and the inherited narratives on the supernatural. Emerging proto-scientific discourses co-existed with older ways of framing the world and early modern drama reflects this. As Kristen Poole has argued, the *locus* of the stage dramatised the tension between science and the supernatural; the theatre building, with its trap door and balcony, embodied a mental mapping: 'the geography of the supernatural and the afterlife, the geography of heaven and hell', at a time when maps were becoming increasingly important in framing early modern perceptions of their world, as key references to maps in *King Lear* and *1 Henry IV* illustrate.[53] As Tiffany Stern recalls, the cosmic geographies that mapped the early modern mental world, of heaven, earth and hell, were inscribed in the very structures of the theatre itself.[54] In Shakespeare's Globe, the tangible reality of theatre performed and remediated these cross-currents of thought on the natural and the supernatural.

The concept of 'disenchantment' was first popularised by the sociologist Max Weber, who spoke of '*Entzauberung der Welt*' ('de-magi-fication of the world') to describe the process by which medieval society transitioned from a spiritual to a secular worldview, from a God-infused cosmos to a proto-capitalist system.[55]

Thomas's seminal study on *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971) traces, from a historical perspective, the gradual relinquishing of belief in magic and supernatural modes of thought that were tied to the development of Protestantism. In his concluding chapter, he quotes from the Epilogue of *The Tempest*: 'Now my charms are all o'erthrown, / And what strength I have's mine own — / Which is most faint' (*Tempest,* Epilogue 1–3), suggesting that Prospero's renunciation of magic reflects something of the broader processes of incipient disenchantment.[56] This disenchantment would develop further after the upheavals of the Civil War in the mid-seventeenth century, gaining ground with the establishment of the Royal Society and the beginnings of the Scientific Revolution.

Supernatural modes of thought proved resilient in the face of emerging discourses of scepticism and rationalism, and have survived in various ways into modernity.[57] Beliefs in witchcraft, sorcery, ghosts and astrology linger and retain their potency in many contemporary cultures, in some contexts with tragic consequences. In 2017, the United Nations held an Experts Workshop on Witchcraft and Human Rights in Geneva to address the torture and deaths arising from accusations of witchcraft around the world.[58]

Supernatural discourses arguably remain relevant to understanding humanity. As Philip C. Almond observes, the twenty-first century has seen a 'new Western engagement with the imaginary enchanted world of preternatural beings', adding that the 'modern enchanted world is one of multiple meanings where the spiritual occupies a space between reality and unreality. It is a domain where belief is a matter of choice and disbelief willingly and happily suspended'.[59] Ewan Fernie, in his insightful study on the demonic, has demonstrated its significance for understanding not only many of the most powerful texts of the Western canon but also core truths of the human psyche.[60] His work points to the importance of analysis of the supernatural for understanding early modernity as well as for holding up a mirror to our own complex selves.[61]

The contributions in this collection evidence a variety of critical approaches to the supernatural in Shakespeare. Several chapters focus on situating his work within historical contexts, evidencing a shared focus on the role of the supernatural in an economy of knowledge and craft, artisanal and intellectual. Within this economy, power circulated and was negotiated; shared narratives fuelled the trading of knowledge and expertise. These historicist approaches illuminate the ways in which

the supernatural created a productive discursive field for interrogating political, linguistic and theatrical questions, and how the supernatural challenges the use of language, providing alternative forms of communication (spectral, musical, alchemical, topical). Other chapters turn to questions of performance of the supernatural and contemporary adaptations. They explore the ways that the discursive field of the supernatural has been appropriated for a range of contemporary agendas and interpretations in various stage productions and screen adaptations. The contemporary era has brought new technical possibilities to staging the supernatural, yet contemporary discourses, for example on gender, require new interpretations and shifts to the playtext. Modern interpretations also face the challenge of reinvigorating the mystery of the supernatural and its dramatic power for a predominantly sceptical audience.

These different approaches inform each other, opening up various dialogues between the chapters; histories haunt texts and spaces, and have consequences on performance choices. The political and historical strands we have outlined in this introduction are taken up in different ways by all of the authors, particularly through the issue of embodiment, a key aspect of theatre which rests on a physical onstage presence, be it the actors', or the existence of a stage on which actors can perform the supernatural, as well as a theatre (or venue) in which audiences can view the actors and experience the paradox of supernatural embodiment.

Embodying the supernatural

Just as the concept of the supernatural challenges our ability to describe or circumscribe it through language, attempts to give the supernatural a material or bodily reality in a theatrical contexts are equally problematic. How is the supernatural embodied in Shakespeare's plays? Victoria Bladen's and Chelsea Phillips' chapters explore different types of supernatural bodies, invisible and legible. Bladen's chapter on 'Shakespeare's political spectres' examines the political dimensions of Shakespeare's ghosts in the context of the theory of the king's two bodies. The playwright was intensely interested in cases of rupture, where power had not passed legitimately to a new ruler, leaving unresolved the question of where the spirit of 'authentic' monarchy lay. By taking examples from *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Richard III* and *Macbeth*, Bladen argues that this displaced spirit constitutes a type of 'second' ghost that haunts the monarch's throne. The ghosts in these plays function as signs of

the additional spectre that remains unseen yet a traceable sign of disorder in the body politic.

The political disorder virtually embodied by ghosts could be more perceptibly incarnated by a human body marred by physical deformities. These deformities could, in turn, be taken as the evidence of 'supernatural generation'. Like Bladen, Phillips's work is concerned with supernatural bodies, however Phillip's focus is on the maternal body that functions as a potent site of intersection between natural and supernatural worlds, and the 'monstrous' birth that can function, like the 'second ghost', as a sign of disorder. In her chapter '"Rudely stamped": Supernatural generation and the limits of power in Shakespeare's *Richard III*', she outlines how the lack of adequate scientific, medical and biological knowledge created a vacuum filled by supernatural beliefs. The pregnant body was imagined to be susceptible to external forces, as evidenced by monstrous births such as that of Richard III. She divides 'supernatural generations' into four categories: some supernatural generations are marked by maternal impression and/or witchcraft, that could have potent effects on a child (exemplified by Caliban, affected by his mother's witchcraft); generative events accompanied by portents, when births are followed by strange natural phenomena; births seen as prophesies or signs; and changeling children. Political disruption could lead to unnatural births, and these could facilitate conjuring, as in *Macbeth.* Explaining supernatural events, while not reducing their threat, could at least render the supernatural legible. Phillips situates Shakespeare's various references within the historical contexts of constructions of monstrosity, and then focuses on *Richard III*, arguing that the language of the supernatural in fact fails to adequately explain Richard's origins.

In Anchuli Felicia King's chapter on 'Digital puppetry and the supernatural: Double Ariel in the Royal Shakespeare Company's *The Tempest* (2017)', she examines the implications of presenting a 'double' Ariel using the digital puppetry of motion capture (mo-cap) technology in the 2017 RSC production. That year's season followed in the wake of the four hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's death, inspiring director Gregory Doran to experiment with the supernatural dimensions of *The Tempest*. The creative team were asked what technology Shakespeare would be using if he were alive today. The Jacobean masque form, which foregrounded technical innovation and stagecraft as a significant aspect of production, was a resonant precedent and inspiration. King provides valuable insights on the technical processes involved in mo-cap technology and examines how its abilities and limitations reflected and tapped into the play's themes of containment and liberty.

Her contribution further develops the question of the supernatural body. Whereas Bladen's and Philips' chapters explore different types of supernatural bodies, invisible and legible, taking a symbolic approach to the challenge of embodiment, King explores how technology can reinterpret Ariel's magical body. In doubling it, through mo-cap technology, in what ways does it remind us of the uncanny and porous border between the physical and supernatural worlds? The limitations of the visual effects in this production, that resulted in the appearance of a 'trapped' Ariel double, resonate with the play's themes of control and power, central to early modern discourses on magic, as well as to the political issues raised by the supernatural. The 2017 RSC production divided critics, suggesting that attempts to stage the supernatural for contemporary audiences can prove challenging for directors.

Haunted spaces

In early modernity, the supernatural was utilised in various ways in religious, political and cultural discourses, which the theatre drew from and contributed to. The concept of a metaphysical space that surrounded the known world facilitated the construction of powerful abstract concepts and narratives. It assumed surveillance of the ordinary world by a cocooning divine presence who had made the world and continued to observe it. In Shakespeare's theatre, the physical space with its layers of earth, heaven and hell, within which the actor was located, echoed and was shaped by these metaphysical constructions; at the same time, in a reciprocal relationship, as Tiffany Stern observes, the physical theatre also 'dictated and circumscribed imaginative space for Shakespeare's audience' through 'its locational, visual and aural presence'.[62]

The sub-stage area was often associated with death and Hell; bodies were lowered into it for burial scenes, and devils might emerge from it, for example in *Dr Faustus*. In *Hamlet*, the ghost's voice emerges from 'the cellarage', seeming to originate from a subterranean space, suggesting an unquiet corpse or a demon. Pierre Kapitaniak's contribution, 'Demons and puns: revisiting the 'cellarage scene' in *Hamlet*', like Bladen's, re-examines the construction of the ghost, but in the context of a haunting of language and of a haunted theatrical space. He brings new angles on Hamlet's first encounter with the ghost, arguing that the scene may be better understood when placed in the context of medieval stage traditions and several sixteenth-century plays that provide precedents for Shakespeare's language and subterranean location of the ghost, rather than a demonological interpretation. Taking into account historical and performative considerations, Kapitaniak argues that the various nicknames that

Hamlet gives the ghost do not necessarily invoke a demonic connotation, as is commonly assumed, but may well have their origins in previous theatrical precedents. These precedents, or traditions, suggest that embodying the supernatural requires a leap of faith, one in which audiences choose to believe, basing their choice on (often obscure) knowledge from the past.

While Kapitaniak's work of linguistic archaeology reinvestigates the theatrical space of the ghost in terms of the haunting of past dramatic texts and their language formulations, Florence March's chapter 'Performing the Shakespearean supernatural in Avignon: A challenge to the Festival' examines a different type of haunted space: the *Cour d'Honneur* of the medieval papal palace in Avignon. Listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO, the *Cour d'Honneur* is the central venue for the annual Festival d'Avignon, combining medieval history with contemporary theatrical practice. Its imposing structure, spectacular dimensions and history render it a daunting theatrical space and challenge for productions. What are the implications for Shakespearean productions in this epic space with its layers of history and performance? As Marvin Carlson argues in *The Haunted Stage: the Theatre as Memory Machine*, theatre is a repository of memory, and a particularly haunted space.[63] March analyses a series of productions from the mid-twentieth century to the present, considering how they approached staging the supernatural in this venue. She explores how history and the implications of the Shakespearean supernatural intersect in this evocative space, and how natural forces, such as the *mistral*, the fierce *provençal* wind, together with the monstrous dimensions of the walls of the court, stage a confrontation between the transient and the permanent.

Supernatural utterance and haunted texts

The supernatural also plays a semantic role in Shakespeare's work, as metaphor and utterance. Theatre can be a haunted space, but it can also haunt language. Yan Brailowsky discusses the manner in which the supernatural is expressed through language, especially in the guise of prophetic utterances, in his chapter 'Prophecy and the supernatural: Shakespeare's challenges to performativity'. Using ordinary-language philosophy and plays taken from the tragedies and the histories (*Julius Caesar*, *2 Henry VI, Richard II,* and *Macbeth),* this chapter shows that Shakespeare's prophecies are paradoxically non-performative on stage because they are never properly acknowledged as such. These prophecies can be efficacious offstage, however, asserting the powers of the poet to contribute to the fashioning of history.

Harking back to the freedom enjoyed by the *vates* (the poet-prophet) of Roman Antiquity, Shakespeare uses prophetic utterances to question historical narratives, and to provoke or interpret supernatural phenomena. In the process, the playwright makes language 'stutter', a concept borrowed from Gilles Deleuze's notion of '*bégaiement de la langue'*, using prophetic utterances which strengthen the power of language to make, or unmake, kings and kingdoms. By discussing prophecies and omens from a pragmatist perspective, Brailowsky questions early modern conceptions of the supernatural and contemporary notions of performativity, unsettling the idea that genealogies may be linear. If anything, supernatural genealogies are rhizomatic or reticular, an idea that Laurie Johnson takes up in exploring how a playtext's appropriation and development of supernatural dimensions can function as a response to local and contemporary concerns.

Johnson's chapter, 'Puck, Philostrate, and the locus of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s topical allegory', explores the relationship between mythical and folkloric intertextual sources for Shakespeare's comedy and contemporary topical allusions. The intersection between these references contributes to the construction of the supernatural in the play. He firstly explores the potential sources for the name 'Puck', noting that the particular formulation appears to be Shakespeare's, although indebted to similar words for the sprite. Johnson then turns to the contemporary competition between George Buck and John Lyly for the position of Master of the Revels, then occupied by Edmund Tylney, to argue that Puck and Bottom may allude to Buck and Lyly, and that in 'Robin Goodfellow', there may be a further topical reference to Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. Johnson sees the *locus amoenus* of the fairy realm as a space that Shakespeare uses to maintain control of the tension between the array of sources and topical references. He also highlights how the textual economy of the playwright in the Elizabethan theatre was bound up in the management of audience expectations. Fairies, while linked with ghosts and demons, also created an alternative courtly and political world, a mirror to the human world. They thus provided an ideal vehicle for constituting intertextual references to the Elizabethan court, as Johnson's theory of a topical allegory illustrates. Consequently, Johnson's work also resonates with the essays in the volume that focus on performance and adaptation, and how the supernatural in Shakespeare can be utilised and shaped to meet the contemporary concerns of a play's creatives and audience.

Johnson's and Kapitaniak's chapters point to the value of establishing a genealogy of constructions and accretions of the supernatural in dramatic texts and theatrical practices. William C. Carroll's work takes a similar approach, as well as illuminating,

like Brailowsky and Johnson, how the supernatural functions as a productive discursive field for Shakespeare. In his chapter, '"Strange intelligence": Transformations of witchcraft in *Macbeth* discourse', Carroll traces the historiography of the Macbeth narrative, starting with brief early chronicle entries in the eleventh century that contain no supernatural elements, through later medieval accounts that introduce the weird sisters as a dream vision, and the suggestion that Macbeth's father was the Devil. Carroll shows that with Hector Boece's 1527 account, there was a significant shift in which the sisters change to actual figures encountered. The story was further developed in subsequent accounts, adding more depth to the supernatural dimension prior to Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Shakespeare's main source. Holinshed's 1577 edition included the famous illustration of the three weird sisters, depicting three well-dressed women of different ages. Carroll points to the variant constructions of the otherworldly characters, situating Shakespeare's play amidst discourses that range from the secular (such as George Buchanan's account, subsequent to Holinshed, in which the weird sisters are only in a dream) to the supernatural. As Carroll argues, Shakespeare's play appears to be indebted to both narrative traditions. What emerges is a picture of a narrative that gradually accumulates a supernatural dimension through its various retellings, culminating in Shakespeare's playtext. Carroll's genealogical approach to *Macbeth* thus complements Johnson's reading of the *Dream*, showing how competing texts can reveal topical references and contemporary issues.

Magic, music and gender

Two chapters discuss cases in which a playtext such as *The Tempest* competes with itself as it strives to (re)define magic, and its practice, through a multi-layered reading of music, or by a performative troubling of gender. Natalie Roulon's chapter, 'Music and magic in *The Tempest*: Ariel's alchemical songs', examines the intellectual 'high' magic tradition; it explores the rich alchemical dimensions of *The Tempest*, focussing particularly on Ariel's songs. She brings a range of new insights to the play and its musical facets through the lens of early modern alchemical links and associations. Roulon argues that Ariel can be read as an 'Ariel-Mercurius' figure, an attendant spirit to Prospero as alchemist, without whom the Great Work cannot take place. Ariel's role as chemical spirit recalls Marsilio Ficino's *spiritus*, whose nature is similar to that of musical sound, and it is through his Orphic music that most of the characters on the island are led on the path to spiritual purification. Even though musical magic is presented with irony on several occasions, Ariel's songs all partake of the idealising

current of the play, adumbrating the alchemical wedding of Ferdinand and Miranda, Alonso's regeneration, and Ariel's well-deserved freedom. Roulon's rich historical research strengthens the case for reading *The Tempest* as an alchemical palimpsest.

Katharine Goodland's work shifts our attention to the intersection of gender and magic in her chapter 'From Prospero to Prospera: Transforming gender and magic on stage and screen'. Like Phillips, Goodland is concerned with the female body as a border, however her focus is different interpretations of magical power. The gendering of magic becomes refocused with a female Prospera in various stage and screen adaptations. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare sets up an opposition between male and female forms of magic in the figures of Prospero and Sycorax, so what happens when Propero's body becomes haunted by that of Sycorax, mother of the supposed 'monstrous' Caliban? Goodland focuses on one screen and two stage productions: Julie Taymor's screen adaptation of *The Tempest* (2010), starring Helen Mirren; the 2003 McCarter Theatre production, directed by Emily Mann with Blair Brown as Prospera; and the 2012 Shakespeare and Company production directed by Tony Simotes, with Olympia Dukakis as lead. Goodland analyses how reviewers and critics have responded to these female Prosperas, and the gendered lenses through which performances and production decisions are viewed. She argues that these three productions invite us to rethink the playtext's opposition between gendered forms of magic, and to be aware of the cultural and political discourses that frame our critical responses. In this way, her work links to Johnson's argument for the importance of taking into account contemporary intertexts that inform audience reception of the supernatural. Her chapter also returns us to the challenge of how to embody the supernatural, and resist the traditional gender divisions of magic between the lowly, dangerous witch and the respected, male, magus figure.

Contemporary transformations

In the case of twentieth and twenty-first century performances and adaptations of Shakespeare, transcending nature has been explored through special effects, either in film, in popular fiction, or on stage. How have contemporary productions and adaptations responded to the challenge of reinterpreting the supernatural? Gayle Allan, in her chapter '"I'll put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes": Representing the supernatural in film adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', explores how various productions in the history of the *Dream* on screen have dealt with the fairy world, and the effects and implications of performance decisions, for example on

whether the fairies will 'fly' and how light or sinister the mood will be. While our modern conception of fairies is inherited from the nineteenth century, early modern conceptions were much darker; as Diane Purkiss notes, fairies, above all, were considered '*dangerous*'.[64] In the *Dream*, even when fairies intend to be 'helpful' to humans, things can go wrong, and they can be cruel even to each other, as Oberon's trick is on Titania. Options in depicting the fairies on screen range from abstraction to literalism, and in making choices, a production needs to firstly decide what the fairies are. Allan notes that in the play's screen history, there has been a strong impulse towards realism in attempting to immerse the audience in the otherworldly dimension. Fairy worlds in screen adaptations of the play invariably reflect the contemporary culture of the context in which the film was made, and Allan's analysis provides insights on the history of Shakespeare on screen and the depiction of the supernatural. Its consideration of the historical intertexts of each production recalls the historicist approach taken by several other chapters in this volume. Her work also points to the potential of the supernatural in Shakespeare to be adapted to vastly different cultures and genres.

As Maurizio Calbi has argued, Shakespeare is a constant spectral presence in contemporary culture.[65] Yukari Yoshihara explores the intriguing afterlives of Ophelia in Japanese pop-cultural appropriations and transformations in her chapter 'Ophelia and her magical daughters'. The paradoxical realism of the fairies in *Dream* contrasts with the otherworldly treatment reserved to a very human character from *Hamlet*, Ophelia, whose figure has haunted popular culture. While in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, there is no supernatural dimension to Ophelia, in her Japanese afterlives, she has been transformed in a variety of ways. Ophelia has contributed to the 'dead wet girl' figure, common in Japanese horror genres. Far from remaining a passive victim, many iterations of Ophelia give her agency and supernatural powers. Yoshihara firstly considers the key initiating role in the history of Shakespearean reception, and particularly the supernatural, of Natsume Soseki (1867–1916), the first Japanese Professor of English Literature at Tokyo Imperial University. She then provides a fascinating survey of Ophelia's various metamorphoses. Hayao Miyazaki rendered his Ophelia a sea goddess in *Ponyo* (2008); in the manga/anime series *Claymore*, created by Norihiro Yagi, Ophelia is a giant monster with a snake's tale; and in Gonzo's anime television series *Romeo X Juliet* (2007), Ophelia protects the Tree of Life of Neo Verona, a city in the air. The Shakespearean hypotext thus generates a space of exploration in contemporary Japanese pop culture, which opens up a new dimension of Ophelia as a supernatural character.

Taken together, the essays provide insights into an array of Shakespeare's plays, underlining the complexity of his use of the supernatural, as well as our own. The different chapters not only explore the manner in which Shakespeare negotiated with the supernatural, as if the supernatural were an external reality, but also the manner in which the playwright was an agent, a creator, rather than a mere witness, of the supernatural. They also evidence the ways that contemporary adaptations have added supernatural elements where they were absent in the original playtext. In so doing, *Shakespeare and the Supernatural* collapses distinctions: histories haunt texts and spaces, informing performance choices, and contemporary culture provides echo chambers for the myriad forms taken by supernatural beliefs of the early modern era. Overall, the volume provides a cross-section of current work on Shakespeare, encompassing textual insights, historical contexts, and interpretations of performance on stage and screen. It challenges us to rethink how we frame the world and construct the porous boundaries between the natural and supernatural. The volume also highlights the potential that performance offers us to explore this illuminating dimension of Shakespeare's work. In this ongoing project, Shakespeare's spectre and 'most potent art' will continue to haunt us.

Notes

1 On issues raised in defining the supernatural, see Victoria Bladen and Marcus Harmes, 'The Intersections of Supernatural and Secular Power', in Marcus Harmes and Victoria Bladen (eds), *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 1–3.

2 Darren Oldridge, *The Supernatural in Tudor and Stuart England* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 1–2.

3 On magic, see: Owen Davies, *Magic: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) and Frank Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit Learned Magic in the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013).

4 Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham (eds), *Angels in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 11–12. See also Peter Benes and Jane Montague (eds), *Wonders of the Invisible World: 1600–1900* (Boston: Boston University Press, 1995); and Christine Göttler and Wolfgang Neuber (eds), *Spirits Unseen: The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

5 On the idea of nature as God's Second Book, see Klass van Berkel and Arjo Vanderjagt (eds), *The Book of Nature in Early Modern and Modern History* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006).

6 Christopher Marlowe, *Dr Faustus: The A-Text*, eds. David Ormerod and Christopher Wortham (Perth: University of Western Australia, 1985).

7 Oldridge, *The Supernatural*, p. 3.

8 Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 80.

9 Davidson cites the compilation work, the *Malleus Omnibus* (1669), as a significant 'scientific work dealing with the supernatural', that counterbalanced other more secular scientific works, such as those of Konrad Gesner, Edward Topsell and Nicolas Steno. Jane P. Davidson, *Early Modern Supernatural: The Dark Side of European Culture, 1400–1700* (Santa Barbara, CA.: Praeger, 2012), pp. 5, 8–11.

10 Oldridge, *The Supernatural*, p. 1.

11 Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 80, 107.

12 On ghosts generally, see John Newton and Jo Beth (eds), *Early Modern Ghosts* (Durham: University of Durham, 2002); Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, chapter 19; and Kathryn Edwards, 'The history of ghosts in early modern Europe: recent research and future trajectories', *History Compass*, 10:4 (2012), 353–66.

13 See generally Diane Purkiss, *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (London: Penguin, 2000); and Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 185 and chapter 19.

14 Oldridge, *The Supernatural*, p. 9.

15 On cunning folk see Owen Davies, *Popular Magic: Cunning-folk in English History* (London; Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2007); Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, chapter 8; and Judith Bonzol, '"In good reporte and honest estimacion amongst her neighbours": Cunning Women in the Star Chamber and on the Stage in Early Modern England", in Lisa Hopkins and Helen Ostovich (eds), *Magical Transformations on the Early Modern English Stage* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 169–184.

16 Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 192.

17 Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 10.

18 *Ibid*.

19 *Ibid*., p. 9.

20 Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. and trans. R. P. H. Green (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), Book II, sec. 89, p. 99. For additional contextual documents delineating Augustine's influence on medieval and early modern conceptions on witchcraft, see Alan Charles Kors and Edward Peters (eds.), *Witchcraft in Europe, 400–1700: A Documentary History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

21 Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 257.

22 See Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, chapter 2.

23 *Ibid*., p. 61.

24 *Ibid*., p. 267.

25 *2 Henry VI*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2nd edn., 1997).

26 Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, p. 62; Barbara Howard Traister, *Heavenly Necromancers: The Magician in English Renaissance Drama* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1984).

27 John Calvin, *Sermons on the Epistle to the Ephesians* [1577], trans. A. Golding (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973), p. 569. On the dangers of feminine curiosity, see Yan Brailowsky, 'From Genesitic Curiosity to Dangerous Gynocracy in Sixteenth-Century England', in Line Cottegnies, Sandrine Parageau and John J. Thompson (eds.), *Women and Curiosity in Early Modern England and France* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), p. 27–40.

28 Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 224–5. On Dee's relationship with Elizabeth I, see Benjamin Woolley, *The Queen's Conjurer: The Science and Magic of Dr. John Dee, Advisor to Queen Elizabeth I* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001). See also Mickaël Popelard, *La figure du savant chez Shakespeare et Marlowe: rêves de puissance et ruine de l'âme* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2010). An additional figure who may have had some influence on Shakespeare was Giordano Bruno, whose interest in hermeticism was analysed by Frances Yates in her landmark study *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1964).

29 For the process of *solve et coagula*, dissolution and coagulation, as essential to the alchemical process of refining the philosopher's stone, see Lyndy Abraham, *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 187.

30 Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 285.

31 *Ibid*., p. 287.

32 *Ibid*., pp. 285, 301, and generally chapters 10–12.

33 It is estimated by Brian Levack that there were approximately 90,000 prosecutions for witchcraft across Europe, of which around half resulted in executions. In Britain it is estimated there may have been up to 5,000 trials and 1500-2000 executions. The most common profile for those convicted and executed was elderly women. See generally Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (Harlow: Pearson, 3rd edn, 2006). For alternative estimates from various authors see Allison P. Coudert, 'The Myth of the Improved Status of Protestant Women: The Case of the Witchcraze' in Allison P. Coudert and Maryanne C. Horowitz Jean R. Brink (eds), *The Politics of Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Pubs., 1989), pp. 61–89.

34 Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, p. xi. On the extensive field of witchcraft and the witch trials, as well as Levack's *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, see James Sharpe, *Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Harlow: Longman, 2001); and Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

35 Almond Philip C, *England's First Demonologist: Reginald Scot & 'The Discoverie of Witchcraft'* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 14–16.

36 Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 469 and see generally pp. 469–492. On the Devil generally, see Philip C. Almond, *The Devil: A New Biography* (London: I.B. Tauris & Company, 2014).

37 Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 472.

38 Almond, *The Devil*, p. 18.

39 Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 471–73.

40 On the supernatural and the early modern stage, see Hopkins and Ostovich (eds), *Magical Transformations on the Early Modern English Stage*; Verena Theile and Andrew D. McCarthy

(eds), *Staging the Superstitions of Early Modern Europe* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013); and Ryan Curtis Friesen, *Supernatural Fiction in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010).

41 Leah S. Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe and Milton* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 42.

42 David Bevington, 'Introduction to *Doctor Fasutus*', in David Bevington et. al. (eds), *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), p. 249; Andrew Sofer, 'How to Do Things with Demons: Conjuring Performatives in *Doctor Faustus*', *Theatre Journal*, 61:1 (2009), 2.

43 Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art* (1940), trans. Barbara F. Sessions (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 266.

44 On the commercial needs of early modern theatre, see Paul Menzer, 'Crowd control', in Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (eds), *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 19–36.

45 Victor Hugo, *William Shakespeare* (Paris: A. Lacroix, Verboeckhoven et Cie, 1864). Despite Hugo's penchant for history and that he lived in the heyday of nineteenth-century positivism, the prolific writer was also fond of spiritism and participated in a number of table-turning *séances*.

46 Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, ed. Montague Summers (New York: Dover Publications, 1972); Francis Bacon, *Francis Bacon: The New Organon*, eds. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

47 Scot, *The Discoverie*, p. 87. On the 'ceasing' of oracles, prophecies, and omens, see book VIII. On Scot, see Almond, *England's First Demonologist*.

48 Bacon, *The New Organon*, Book I, section 46, p. 43.

49 William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. Jay L. Halio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

50 *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Suzanne Gossett, Jean E. Howard, Katherine Eisaman Maus and Gordon McMullan (New York: Norton, 3rd edn, 2016). See also Marco Mincoff, *Things Supernatural and Causeless: Shakespearean Romance* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993) and Harry Berger Jr., *Making Trifles of Terrors: Redistributing Complicities in Shakespeare* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

51 Stephen Greenblatt, 'Shakespeare and the Exorcists,' in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 120. Greenblatt compared *Lear* with Samuel Harsnett's *A Declaration of egregious Popish Impostures*, published in 1603, which notably inspired the scenes in which Edgar plays Poor Tom.

52 Kevin Pask, *The Fairy Way of Writing: Shakespeare to Tolkien* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), p. 4.

53 Kristen Poole, *Supernatural Environments in Shakespeare's England: Spaces of Demonism, Divinity, and Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 3. On Shakespeare and maps, see Christopher Wortham, 'Meanings of the South: From the *Mappaemundi* to

Shakespeare's *Othello*', in Anne M. Scott, Alfred Hiatt, Claire McIlroy and Christopher Wortham (eds), *European Perceptions of Terra Australis* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 61–81; and Peter Whitfield, *Mapping Shakespeare's World* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2015).

54 Stern, Tiffany, '"This Wide and Universal Theatre": the Theatre as Prop in Shakespeare's Metadrama', in Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern (eds), *Shakespeare's Theatres and the Effects of Performance* (London; Oxford: Bloomsbury, Arden Shakespeare, 2013).

55 Weber's thesis has been amply challenged since it was first used a century ago. See Nandini Das and Nick Davis (eds.), *Enchantment and Dis-Enchantment in Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama: Wonder, the Sacred, and the Supernatural* (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 3-7; Sara Lyons, 'The Disenchantment/ReEnchantment of the World: Aesthetics, Secularization, and the Gods of Greece From Friedrich Schiller to Walter Pater', *The Modern Language Review* 109: 4 (2014), 873–95; and, more recently, Jason A. Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2017).

56 *The Tempest*, ed. David Lindley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 2013). Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 641.

57 Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 248, 605; and Birgit Meyer and Peter Pels (eds), *Magic and Modernity: Interfaces of Revelation and Concealment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

58 www.ohchr.org/en/issues/albinism/pages/witchcraft.aspx, accessed 14 April 2019. Also see the exhibition notes for the University of Queensland Art Museum's exhibition *Second Sight: Witchcraft, Ritual, Power* 2019, https://art-museum.uq.edu.au/second-sight-witchcraft-ritual-power, accessed 14 April 2019.

59 Almond, *The Devil*, p. 17.

60 Ewan Fernie, *The Demonic: Literature and Experience* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

61 Also see generally Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences*; and Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

62 Stern, 'Shakespeare's Theatres', p. 32.

63 Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

64 Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, p. 8.

65 Maurizio Calbi, *Spectral Shakespeares: Media Adaptations in the Twenty-First Century* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

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