

“Recoursing and Divining:”
The Tempest and Vergilian Time

Andrew Kaplan
Seattle, Washington

Bachelor of Arts, Bard College, 2013

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Virginia
in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts
Department of English
University of Virginia

“It may be,” wrote Sarah Annes Brown in 1994, “that our thinking [on Shakespeare and his classical antecedents] needs to be done in a vocabulary quite different from the conventional lex-
 is of ‘allusions’ and ‘sources.’” (3) Following this suggestion, there is certainly a distinct shift in
 substance that unites some of the recent writing on the links that bind Shakespeare and the clas-
 sics— and *The Tempest* and the *Aeneid* in particular. What exactly does it mean for the latter to
 be a “source” of the former? Recent criticism includes a move beyond from criticism preoccu-
 pied only with detailing the play’s verbal and visual allusions to the epic¹—and thus demonstrat-
 ing a certain kind of lineage— and towards larger affinities between the works on the level of
 temporality and experience. The former types of features are well documented (they include, for
 example, the debate on Carthaginian geography at 2.1.71-82² and the apparition of the Harpy at
 3.3.53); the latter features of the play are not as easily identified, but no less palpable. On one
 hand, the two types of readings depend on each other; for example, Vergilian verbal echoes,
 however simple, might function as a key to deeper resonances on a different level. Yet on the
 other hand, an attention to time, its treatment, and the play’s unique “outlook” can lead to a much

¹ Not to imply, of course, that all early-to-mid-20th century criticism of the play was monolithically preoccupied with such things. Harry Berger’s “The Miraculous Harp,” for example, will be discussed below.

² All quotations from *The Tempest* refer to Kermode’s Arden edition of 1954.

more nuanced, and useful, idea of Vergil's presence in the play—and of source-text relationships in general.³

A possible explanation for the critical fixation on specific verbal parallels between play and source that becomes apparent when reading earlier critics⁴ is that the attempt to establish a certain text within a discrete tradition is part of a separate but inextricable project of determining the author's "reading." That one text informed another is noted but is subordinate to the picture it provides of the writer himself, his education, the company he kept, or the access he had to libraries, archives, or collections. The results of this method range from identifying the most obvious passage (for example the elementary Latin grammar texts repeated verbatim in *Titus Andronicus*)⁵ which indicate the playwright's own elementary education, to less visible traces; however, such an approach hardly allows a text, or a constellation of texts, to exist on their own terms outside the critic's biographical agenda.

An epitome of this critical style just after the turn of the twentieth century can be found in H. R. D. Anders' *Shakespeare's Books*, which attempts at great length to catalogue the classical and

³ By "an attention to time" I mean more than simply the near-equality of time represented in the action and the time in which the play can be performed. While this equivalence in narrative time and performance time indeed factors into my conclusions on the play, I include in "an attention to time" the extensions of the actions represented within *The Tempest*: namely, both an inevitability of crisis brought on by the past as well as a projection, beyond the scope of the play, into the future. Since the events that precede and follow the stage-action fall outside the bounds of theatrical representation, they cannot be analyzed in the same way as staged events. When they *are* present within the bounds of the play (only as dialogue) it is thus not the events themselves that are treated but a certain *attitude* or *position* towards them. This attitude is informed by the character who speaks but, more importantly, by a pervasive sense unique to the play at large. It is this property of *The Tempest* that this project seeks to locate and describe. Ultimately, I will attempt to deal with what one might call "time as concept," while critics commenting on the duration of the action/play are dealing with what one might call "time-scale."

(Since terms relating to these two differing areas may overlap and become ambiguous, when I use phrases such as "temporality" I am referring to the former concept unless clearly stated otherwise.)

⁴ —such as those quoted below.

⁵ The first line of Horace's *Odes*, 1.22, at *Titus Andronicus*, 4.2.18.

contemporary texts that a man of Shakespeare's time may have had access to and track their verbal traces in the plays. Though meticulous, Anders' style is mechanical and limited to verbal allusions, taking similarity in diction to be the prime indicator of texts' affinity for each other. Even more important, though, is that the entire painstaking project is undertaken in search of a better understanding not of the works, but of the man. An analysis of sources, Anders concludes his preface, should be a glimpse into "Shakespeare's studio, where we can watch him actually at work upon his materials. We get into closer touch with him and we arrive at a better understanding." (xx)

Writing in 1948, J. M. Nosworthy begins his study of "The Narrative Sources of *The Tempest*" with a mapping of the play's time-scale that seems ahead of its time (and which we will refer to later), but does not immediately link his observations on the play's temporality with his source-study. He too engages in word-for-word matching of similar passages in Shakespeare and Vergil in order to substantiate what it means for the *Aeneid* to be the play's "pervasive" inspiration. His interesting scheme of the play as divided into two plots, "causal" and "effectual," is a unique innovation (and we will return to it), but he divorces that scheme from the epic entirely: "[Once] the effectual plot begins...in consequence, the *Aeneid* ceases to be a shaping force. It remains, however, as a minor but pervasive influence." (282) It is bold to relegate the epic's hand in the latter half of the play to "minor" status, and it is somewhat hard to unravel what it means for an influence to be both omnipresent and secondary. Perhaps Nosworthy makes more sense if one is looking at the play only in terms of linguistic and episodic parallels, of which there are

certainly fewer in the latter (“effectual”) stretch of the play.⁶ That *The Tempest*’s conclusion (and what presumably follows after it) is the *telos* towards which the preliminary plot has been “gathering” makes it impossible to divorce the two of them— and makes the Vergilian “presence” which, I will argue, is foregrounded in the opening just as great a component of the conclusion as well.⁷

Frank Kermode, introducing and annotating the Arden edition of the play in 1954, focuses much of his attention on determining how indebted *The Tempest* is to the masque tradition of the Jacobean court, the result being that some explicit Vergilian parallels are absorbed by this focus. Thus, in his note to Ariel's appearance as the harpy, he does cite Vergil's text; his comments, however, are not on their Shakespearean adaptation but on the theatrical effect of the *spectacle* of the illusion, which he argues gives the scene the feel of a masque.⁸ (88)

Geoffrey Bullough, who undertook a monumental source-survey of the entire canon in his 1957 *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, interestingly sums up the state of the field

⁶ —for, as will be discussed below, the passages in Vergil that contribute discrete theatrical episodes to *The Tempest* are not the same as those which contribute non-episodic theories of time once the play's “effectual plot” is underway.

On a different note, what we might identify as the “causal plot” is almost entirely non-dramatic— by which I mean that the backstory which sets the stage for the crises dramatized in *The Tempest* is never depicted but only reconstituted through the memory and speech of the characters onstage.

⁷ I do not mean that the outcome of *The Tempest* appears to us as some foregone conclusion in the same way that the founding of Rome appears in the *Aeneid*, with divine commentators reassuring us of its certainty. Indeed, the question of how exactly Prospero will deal with his “enemies” is a source of suspense until very near the end of the play. I mean only that once the Neapolitans are brought ashore, a crisis is imminent and unavoidable, and movement towards that crisis—as influenced by the past shared by all characters involved—cannot be slowed. Ultimately, I mean only that Nosworthy's division of the play into two discrete parts is helpful (in giving them names) but also slightly misleading (in masking their inseparability).

⁸ Furthermore, he posits that it acts as a parallel to the masque presented to Ferdinand and Miranda in 4.1, the following scene. This is especially significant for any reading of the play concerned with courtly performances as Prospero thus stages two opposing masques for both sets of his royal guests. Of course, whether one reads the Harpy scene as evoking a masque or not, both 3.3 and 4.1 remain displays of Prospero's stagecraft. Kermode's reading here only deepens the significance of the former scene in terms of its historical and performance contexts.

in the preface to his first volume, indicating a major turn from the equations of textual borrowing towards a more familiar, modern, and nuanced approach.

Though research has since brought to light comparatively few new parallels [between plays and antecedents], it has become increasingly apparent how much more often one can say, ‘This is like Shakespeare,’ than ‘This is definitely Shakespeare’s source.’ (ix)

Bullough’s acknowledgement has a twofold meaning: first, he recognizes the impossibility of determining discretely the sources of a text, as if in a vacuum; but second, he deemphasizes the entire endeavor of offering simple linguistic and lexical parallels. His generous compendium of source materials is thus an innovation in going beyond simple proofs of related diction and style, and a step towards making the relationship between two texts evident on a wider scale.⁹

In 1976, Jan Kott published “The *Aeneid* and *The Tempest*,” recognizing that the play’s Vergilian allusions are more than simple evidence of the playwright’s inspiration and exist on a level above the play’s words and actions themselves:

The insistent allusions to “widow Dido” seem to be what Roman Jakobson would call a “metalingual” sign, supplying the receiver with the code in which a message is to be encoded. Shakespeare is telling us: “Remember the *Aeneid*.” (424)

It is easy to remember it, but what are we to do with it? Throughout the rest of his article, though in its own way it draws crucial connections, Kott focuses on plot-points rather than holding to his standard of looking at a plane above the language— though his invocation of a “code” which can be clarified with the help of the epic would be revived in later criticism.

Reflecting on this critical history, Donna Hamilton surveys the impressively disparate connections drawn between the *Aeneid* and *The Tempest* and remarks that “it is hard to imagine such divergence in any traditional source study,” and concludes with Brown’s sentiment that *The Tem-*

⁹ His own project is thus a contribution towards this, as he prints longer selections from source-works rather than fishing for *loci classici* in the style of an annotator.

pest is evidence that “the method by which we assess the impact of a precursor text on a Shakespeare play needs revision.” (3)

Colin Burrow takes what seems like a half-step forward in his recent *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*; he still insists on treating discrete episodes as Vergilian imitations, but from a new perspective. He makes the long-overdue point that something fundamental changes in the transition from literary epic to dramatic action. (55-56) While the actual events of the *Aeneid* themselves were given Renaissance dramatizations in complete episodes (e.g. Marlowe’s *Dido, Queen of Carthage*) or in discrete set-pieces (e.g., Hamlet’s “The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms...” [2.2.432ff.]) Burrow’s approach realizes *The Tempest*’s unique position among such dramatists— its Vergilian episodes are not intended to serve above all as reenactments of poetic events (as Marlowe’s may be), but instead are repurposed for different ends and bear a much more complicated relation to their source. While Vergil may present fantastical elements of his legendary landscape simply by description, Burrow writes, in *The Tempest* the same episodes run up against the physical demands of theatrical representation.¹⁰ (81) These include, for example, the troubles at sea that initiate the action of both works, the supernatural apparitions that catalyze their action, and (perhaps most importantly) the poem’s many prospects from great distances.¹¹

This last feature (prospects from distances, spatial and temporal) is most notable, as the poem

¹⁰ And whereas Marlowe makes the choice to plainly represent deities on stage from the very opening of his play, Shakespeare’s representation of the supernatural is nearly always an invitation to question the nature of theatrical projects, including both the play as a whole and each act of representation its action contains.

¹¹ To be clear, I am not intending here to catalogue all the similarities between the works—I am detailing the corresponding features of the play and poem which *cannot* be easily represented on the stage. For example, the prospects across distances both geographical and temporal that Vergil might easily invoke with a simple *longe* must in *The Tempest* be represented by a figure on stage actually speaking or perceiving. Such a circumstance deemphasizes the *fact* of the matter and emphasizes in its place the *perception* of the beholder.

features as one of its initial settings *aether summum* (1.223); it is implied that this is a vantage point from which the whole world is visible and the subsequent “focus” on a single region of it (Jupiter’s *dispicere*) is simply a matter of choice on the observer’s part. Therein lies the most basic difference in forms: both the playwright’s and the divine spectator’s decision of what the “stage” represents is a matter of his own choice to which the spectator is bound,¹² but in the epic the stage is indeed the world itself, and its various settings are qualitatively, not symbolically, different.

Burrow is not talking about the obvious truth that dramatic episodes are enacted by players, but rather about the specific way Shakespeare frames Vergilian episodes in the play (most notably the appearance of the Harpy). Not only is an actor personifying on stage a figure from the epic— that character is itself a disguise. What seems to be the episode most closely lifted from the source (in which it is an objective “fact” of the poem’s world) is no more than Ariel’s illusory performance in the play. (81-82) Indeed, spectators may be unaware of the nature of Ariel’s performance while it is unfolding—just as the Neapolitans take it— but his eventual unmasking¹³ has no choice but to leave them with the same sense of disillusionment.¹⁴ The scene, then, is not quite an “allusion” to the epic of the sort we are used to. If anyone is alluding to the *Aeneid*, it is

¹² —that is, at least ostensibly. When the play is encountered as a text rather than a performance, a reading “resistant” to what appears to be its dominant perspective can be particularly constructive. (I am referring here not to “Prospero as playwright,” but simply to the author of the text.) However, a *spectator* is in no way in control of the transformation of text to performance. Given the special circumstances of the theater, one might acknowledge others—the director, the actors, the designers—who fundamentally shape not just the performance but the *perspective* it offers.

¹³ The unmasking I refer to comes with Prospero’s commentary “Bravely the figure of this Harpy...” (line 83ff.), during which Ariel may or may not still be present to receive Prospero’s debriefing.

¹⁴ If an audience’s reaction to the illusion of the Harpy was indeed one of belief, once Ariel unmaskes that reaction becomes itself a testament that whatever seems to be a “fact” of the play’s world may just as quickly “vanish into air, into thin air.” Even more specifically, if a spectator were to explicitly recall the Vergilian episode of Celaeno and the harpies while Ariel is in disguise, how much more complicated would his perception of the epic’s influence on the play become after the unmasking!

Prospero, not Shakespeare, upon whose orders the scene is performed and whose audience (or at the least, Alonso) he knows will understand it. Burrow highlights the moral dimension of this illusion-making (to paraphrase, each character¹⁵ beholding the scene interprets it in their own way, according to their own notions of fate, providence, and personal culpability), but his ultimate conjecture is that

Shakespeare turns Vergil into an illusion...All of this means that the *Aeneid* is not exactly 'central' to *The Tempest*, nor that it is peripheral to it either. The *Aeneid* shimmers across the work rather than shaping it, repeatedly providing options and possibilities for a larger understanding of the story. (81)

While Burrow's diction may be somewhat reminiscent of Nosworthy's equivocal "pervasive but minor," he is absolutely correct to focus on "understanding" rather than "shape." It is encouraging to see this more nuanced reading of the way the epic asserts itself in the play. "The Vergilian presence in *The Tempest* is often of this spectral kind," Charles Martindale writes, naming it a "ghostly quality." (99-100) The most important realization— seemingly only to be found in criticism of the last two decades— is that in these two works we have a relation between source and text unlike most others in the canon. We have a source, it seems, which lends something much more subtle than subject matter or dramatic episodes to its descendant. But nevertheless, Burrow arrives at his conclusion by laying corresponding episodes and speeches side by side, in some ways the same method that Hamilton suggests we move beyond. Through his own particular metatheatrical bent, Burrow takes a path different than my own to arrive at a starting point which I nonetheless believe to be constructive. What a reading of the play needs is an attention to Vergilian time, and a recycling of Nosworthy's useful scheme of "causal" and "effectual" plots." An appreciation of Vergilian echoes as simple "allusions" or "correspondences" will not quite

¹⁵ —and, perhaps, each spectator—

do, and Burrow perhaps does not even go far enough. If the epic is truly a different kind of source, there must be a turn towards the play's "outlook," its seeming worldview, and most importantly its attitude towards time, in which the poem's effect can be felt the strongest.

By attempting at length to describe the "spectral" presence of Vergil in *The Tempest*, I certainly do not mean to imply that it is the only work in the canon which features this sort of influence.¹⁶ *A Midsummer Night's Dream* particularly comes to mind as a play with a source (Ovid's *Metamorphoses*) whose presence is similarly complex; in many ways Ovid's presence in the comedy can be compared to Vergil's presence in *The Tempest*. The *Metamorphoses* certainly "shimmers across" the former play, to use Burrow's phrase, and its effect is often much stronger than that. The comparison of these two source/text correspondences is helpful to the project at hand in that it gives us an alternative model as to what a text's influence on a later work might look like when such an influence is on a separate level than simply the adaptation of common passages or episodes.¹⁷ Yet the closer we examine it, Vergil's "spectral" quality in *The Tempest* appears substantially different in kind. Ovid's contribution to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is certainly not found in the play's attitude towards time, or towards past and future events. Sprawling as the *Metamorphoses* is, Ovid's stated goal is to encompass all of history from primordial Chaos to his own day within a *perpetuum carmen*, a continuous song (1.2-4). This does not mean that he intends to write an exhaustive history of the world (i.e., include the sum total of all historical action), but rather that the temporal span of his work takes both Creation and the present as its endpoints. Indeed, it is the fact that not everything in the poem is narrated as if in a history

¹⁶—and indeed, an approach such as my own would be quite limited in its usefulness to the rest of the canon if it *were* the only such play.

¹⁷ Indeed, the lifting of passages straight out of Ovid is in one instance a documented feature of *The Tempest*, not of *Midsummer*! (see note 21 below).

text which actually gives it the feel of an epic, as each individual episode requires background, retelling, and re-narration.¹⁸ The myriad qualities which Ovid *does* impart to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* include its poetic diction,¹⁹ its embedded narratives,²⁰ and its seamless incorporation of supernatural action.²¹ All of these give the play its Ovidian flavor but have little bearing on the treatment of time in the play, which despite all its debt to the *Metamorphoses* nonetheless bears a structure nearly parallel to Shakespeare's other romantic comedies which are far less indebted to Ovid. The action of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is bookended neatly between obstacles to a handful of marriages and the resolution of those obstacles, and does not, for example, delay the fulfillment of its major expectations beyond the scope of the play.²²

To be clear, the *Tempest* comparison I am referring to (its "expectation") is the actual *return* from Prospero's island to Milan and his restoration to the dukedom, similar to Aeneas' actual foundation of Rome, both left undepicted in their respective works. It

¹⁸ —and, additionally, projection forward outside the scope of the episode itself. This is a hallmark of some of the etiological tales within the *Metamorphoses* (such as, for example, that of the Heliades), which look forward to their action's after-effects on the world of the present.

¹⁹ For example, its set-pieces describing a natural locale where a particularly fateful event is bound to occur (such as "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows..." [2.1.249ff.]

²⁰ For example, Oberon's remembrance of "Cupid all arm'd" and the metamorphosis of the "little western flower" (2.1.155-168).

²¹ Of course this is also an aspect of *The Tempest*, in some places owing to a direct influence from Ovid. For example, Prospero's speech summarizing and finally renouncing his art, "Ye elves of hills..." (5.1.33-57) has been shown to be heavily indebted to Golding's translation of Ovid's Medea in Book VII of the *Metamorphoses*. (Kermode, *Tempest*, 147)

²² While I am aware that this may well seem a simplistic summary of *Midsummer's* time-scale, I do not think it is reductionist. Of course the play *does* begin in the middle of certain conflicts (we learn, for example, that its lovers' feuds precede the play's opening), that being by no means a hallmark of Shakespeare's romantic comedies; *The Taming of the Shrew* and *As You Like It*, for example, dramatize their love-plots from the very beginning. However, *Midsummer's* resolution in marriages and reconciliations seems to me more of a defining stylistic feature than the manner in which it opens, and lacks the ambivalence of unfulfilled but promised expectation that concludes both *The Tempest* and the *Aeneid*, and which —were it a part of *Midsummer*—might put that play in the same category.

may be useful to return to Kermode's edition of *The Tempest*, for he cites commentators in his Introduction, such as Enid Welsford, who push back against contentions such as my own that *The Tempest* defers its expectations beyond the limits of its own scope. The containment of the love-plot within the bounds of the play, and its facilitation by Prospero, leads Welsford to picture *The Tempest's* final scene as offering both the closure of romantic comedy and the stagecraft of court masque: "The plot of [the play] leads up, without hesitation or uncertainty, to that moment when Prospero...draws back the curtain from before the inner stage, and discovers Ferdinand and Miranda playing at chess." (qtd. in Kermode, lxxiii)²³ While such a reading makes sense on its own terms,²⁴ the amount of "hesitation and uncertainty" present elsewhere in the drama's conclusion cannot be reduced or explained away by the resolution of Miranda's plot alone. In the way that the *Aeneid* does not conclude with the hero's "achievement" of his love-interest²⁵ but still looks onward to the founding of Rome expected from the poem's outset, the Vergilian echoes in *The Tempest's* conclusion arising precisely out of those plots which are *not* resolved are by far stronger than the sense of closure afforded by the love-plot.²⁶

Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending*, published several years later than his remarks on *The Tempest*, provide a sharper lens with which to view the play. His observations on narratives which begin *in medias res*, as both *The Tempest* and classical epic do, can serve to move us from simply classifying the play and its sources towards identifying the deeper implications of the

²³ Welsford, quoted in Kermode, lxxiii.

²⁴ that is, when it is primarily interested in showing a correspondence to court masque.

²⁵ —of course, we should be fully aware that Aeneas' violent defense of his betrothal to Lavinia is entirely different in kind than a courtship plot.

²⁶ Berger acknowledges this too: "In any good romance [Gonzalo's] final speech ["Look down, you gods, and on this couple drop a blessed crown..."] would be the concluding sentiment; ... only it is not that kind of play." (254)

play's explicit *and* subliminal invocation of the epic. His book is a commentary, mainly, on apocalyptic fiction and myth; yet as he is concerned with the effects of “beginning in the middle” on the remainder of a narrative, his findings are very much applicable here. At the center of his analysis is the thesis that the *medias res* technique has a deep relationship with the way *we*, the readers, perceive time and how our perception impacts our favored modes of storytelling.

Men, like poets, rush 'into the midst,' *in medias res*, when they are born; they also die *in mediis rebus*, and to make sense of their span they need fictive concords with origins and ends, such as give meaning to lives and to poems. (7)

Kermode is not suggesting that this technique, so characteristic of epic and dramas such as *The Tempest*, originated out of some ancient desire to be true to life through art— but it is a great coincidence that it is. The same urges find their way into both epic and lived experience (individual and communal), namely the need to remember what came before and to prophesy what will come after. The idea is not that art imitates life, or vice versa, but rather that it is easy to understand the appeal of narratives that from the outset are imbued with a sense of both action (i.e. “a crisis is imminent”) and belatedness (i.e., “much has already happened”).

As Kermode hypothesizes a human desire to make sense of our lifespan, to cast our time as “significant,” he argues that the resulting tendency is to frame our lifetime with reference to a beginning and an end; often, if the community of storytellers and -makers is large enough, this tendency might be reflected on a communal or national scale. In an interesting reflection, the impulse to create "fictive concords" might itself give rise to the epic forms which imitate such a process.

Though his explicit focus in *The Sense of an Ending* is on apocalyptic narratives, an approach which appeals to the primordial and prehistorical, classical examples of the prevalence of *medias*

res epics are somewhat easier to handle and put into context. Indeed, Kermode frames his own description of “fictive concords” under that very heading, using the phrase with which Horace originally described Homer’s work. While one of the distinctive moves in his analysis is his recognition of the perceived similarity of *medias res* narratives to lived experience, the Greek and Roman epic poets who produced the texts which popularized the convention of beginning in the middle give no indication of this rationale. Of course few contemporary authorial explanations of such features of their works survive (Compare, for example, the relative ease of referring to texts such as Edmund Spenser’s prefatory letter to *The Faerie Queene*, in which the composer of the epic conveniently states his reasons for adhering to certain formal conventions.²⁷) There is no explicit classical evidence that the appeal of epic narratives to classical audiences lay in their association with a time-frame that seems more in tune with human perception than others; indeed, the main motives for writing epic as prescribed (in the works of writers diverse as Horace²⁸ and Sir Philip Sidney) seem hopelessly trivial compared to Kermode’s grand invocations of birth, death, and perception. Considerations of “interest” or “pleasure” emphasize an aesthetic, rather than a psychological, fulfillment.

²⁷ —quoted below. I acknowledge, of course, that a writer’s stated rationale for his or her work need not be taken at face value and may be itself subject to critical, subversive, or resistant readings— and that the possible range of a work’s interpretations most definitely lies outside of any bounds prescribed by its creator. An authorial statement is not the final word, but if we are simply concerned with formal questions of how a text “came to be” the way it was, they can be invaluable.

²⁸ Horace’s *Ars Poetica* extols the virtues of epic poets, Homer above all, yet does not speak of his poems as belonging to a discrete *genre* or worthy of being imitated *because they belong to that genre*. Rather, features which we now might regard as genre conventions are described therein as hallmarks of a poet’s personal style. That they are the latter instead of the former does not detract from his insistence that aspiring poets adhere to such conventions. The deep intertwining of meter and subject-matter also places Horace’s epistle slightly off the path of the present discussion.

What *can* be taken from the *Ars Poetica* in the present context, however, is his one observation regarding the time-scale of Homer’s poetry. In the very same line which is the *locus classicus* of the phrase *in medias res*, Horace observes of Homer *semper ad euentum festinat*, “he always hurries to the event/crisis” (*e - uentum* most literally signifies “out-come”).

Kermode makes no mention of *medias res* theorists who preceded him, perhaps precisely because his approach is on such a grand scale. Renaissance antecedents to theories such as his hold up examples of *medias res* poetry not necessarily as appealing to some deep human truth (or rather, arising out of some deep-seated human tendency), but as appealing to logic and common sense. Specifically Sir Philip Sidney, in his *Defense of Poesy*, frames his appraisal of English dramatic poetry which begins with the narrative already underway in terms of “honest civility,” at first making the simple case that any work which makes undue demands on the audience’s suspension of disbelief is doomed to be ineffective. (148) Thus, the unity of time afforded by beginning close to an imminent crisis is not a poetic imperative but rather a measure of respect to one’s audience. This claim is a preface to a more formal one, Sidney’s opposition to the mingling of styles which concludes in his famous denunciation of “mongrel tragicomedy.” (150) This latter claim would not, however, be possible without a presupposed close association of form and content. In other words, “mingling kings and clowns” implicates a play’s treatment of time, since the unified, epic style— which Sidney associates with ideal tragedy— should be reserved for tragedy exclusively.

Of Kermode’s Renaissance antecedents in theorizing *medias res* poetry, Edmund Spenser’s remarks in his prefatory letter to *The Faerie Queene*, though brief, are the most useful in our application of these criticisms to *The Tempest* itself.

A poet thrusteth into the midst, even where it most concerneth him, and there recour-
ing to the things forepaste, and divining of thinges to come, maketh a pleasing analysis of
all. (16-17)

Leaving aside the question of why “thrusting into the midst” is the most “pleasing” method (except that it avoids the tediousness of certain “historiographers”), Spenser intimates the impor-

tant concept that beginning in the middle of things implicates both the past and the future—events situated before the narrative’s outset and which will continue after it is concluded (“divining of things to come”). The past and future are united not only because they contextualize the present moment into which the poet has “thrust,” but because they both lie outside the scope of the poem proper.

Thus the work must include a pattern of “recoursing” and “divining,” and such a pattern unites both the epic and the play. Vergil’s Books 2 and 3, and nearly all of Shakespeare’s 1.2, constitute the “recoursing;” the “divining” pervades the remainder of both works— and it may truly be called divining, for neither text depicts what it ultimately prophesies.

The best way into a description of what I would like to call the play’s “Vergilian time” must begin with Prospero’s dialogue with Miranda in 1.2, a scene that bears fewer surface-level resemblances to the *Aeneid* than it does deeper parallels. A superficial reading might note that the tableau of a powerful father and a concerned daughter, both spectators to a storm, mirrors our first glimpse of Jupiter and Venus in Vergil’s Book I. However, I find a deeper correspondence in Prospero’s narration to Miranda (part didactic and part pathetic) to Aeneas’ tale to Dido in Carthage. The intangible and invisible nature of past events *combined* with their formative influence in imminent crises is a natural result of the *medias res* format, imparting a sense of both reflection and momentum that is familiar in Vergil. Furthermore, in a method that fits neatly within Kermode’s theories on “origins and ends,” Prospero prepares Miranda for the future by first interrogating her memory of the past. An account of the nature and uses of memory (both Prospero’s and Miranda’s), and the way it shapes the play’s view on events before and after its own endpoints seems the best way into a description of *The Tempest*’s “Vergilian time.”

I am not as interested in the contents of Prospero's didactic exchange and narration as in the way it works. By this I mean that the way in which he primes Miranda's memory for his retelling of their shared history, the way he decides to sound her mind to see how it functions and what it contains or retains, is the most significant element. He begins, instead of speaking himself, by trying to elicit speech from her. Memory in both the epic and the drama is a source of speech; that is, in epic, memory produces the materials out of which his account is formed, or the poem is crafted or reconstructed. It provides as well the impetus to do so, the desire to memorialize through speech (as opposed to some other way). In drama the characters' individual or collective memory produces the speech which informs us of their past or pasts. And yet although memory is productive of speech in these cases, in *The Tempest* it is, to Prospero, conceived of as a primarily visual faculty. This is demonstrated immediately in this sequence of recollection. His question, which elicits Miranda's recall of her "four or five women," is especially important.

Prospero Canst thou remember
 A time before we came unto this cell?
 I do not think thou canst, for then thou wast not
 Out three years old.

Miranda Certainly, sir, I can.

Prospero By what? By any other house or person?
 Of anything the image tell me that
 Hath kept with thy remembrance.

Miranda 'Tis far off,
 And rather like a dream than an assurance
 That my remembrance warrants. Had I not
 Four or five women once that tended me?

Prospero Thou hadst, and more, Miranda. But how is it
 That this lives in thy mind? What seest thou else
 In the dark backward and abysm of time? (1.2.38-50)

To determine what Miranda has retained and what she has lost, Prospero asks her to tell images.

When she recalls the image of the women, he presses further: “What seest thou else?” Prospero recognizes that the material of memory, its most fundamental component, is visual and not verbal. These remembered “images” can serve to incite retelling, but he realizes that the retelling is a degree removed from the raw matter of memory itself, and thus must undergo a sort of translation. As in any translation, especially in one which moves from one medium to another (visual to verbal) instead of simply across languages (say, English to Latin), there will be certain things which simply cannot be carried across.

Prospero’s request to Miranda consists, then, of three parts: “Of anything the image tell me.” The past event occurs, then is remembered (or “kept”) as an image, and is finally related as speech. Not insignificantly, Prospero’s syntax puts the request in this chronological order (event—image—relation), and “the image” is both central in the line and the subject of the sentence. But as for the specific image itself, it cannot be made completely certain that the women Miranda remembers are in fact the more-than-five maids that once tended her in Milan. Her confession to Ferdinand that she is “skillless of” the way of the world abroad is especially telling, with its emphasis on the image—and illusion—that forms the basis of memory. She approaches Ferdinand in 3.1 while he is piling up “some thousands of these logs,” the “mean task” that Prospero has set him to. His recall of the “several women” he has known before prompts this rich response from Miranda:

I do not know
 One of my sex, no woman’s face remember
 Save from my glass mine own; nor have I seen
 More that I may call men than you, good friend,
 And my dear father. How features are abroad
 I am skillless of; but, by my modesty,
 The jewel in my dower, I would not wish

Any companion in the world but you;
 Nor can imagination form a shape
 Besides yourself to like of. But I prattle
 Something too wildly. (3.1.48-58)

Considered side-by-side with her initial exchange with Prospero, the operation of memory here seems much more dubious. What remains constant in both scenes, however, is the importance of the image, the knowledge that memory is made of “shapes” and “features” rather than words. Of course, we are surprised by Miranda’s admission that she does not remember another woman’s face, which seems to erase the image of the women she had called to mind in 1.2. In any case, memory and experience are collected through vision, especially vision of other people, and stored as such; Miranda subscribes to this view even as she forgets what she had recalled earlier.

Yet Miranda indicates that her expected future is in some way constrained by the raw visual material of her memory. “Nor can imagination form a shape / Besides yourself to like of.” Recalling Kermode’s conjecture that the predicted future is crafted out of consonances with the past (or vice versa), Miranda cannot form the shape of a human male face besides Prospero’s and Ferdinand’s—or rather, the shape that she does form is Ferdinand’s, and in the scarcity of alternatives, she has no choice but to be attracted to it. Her admission (and specifically the language she makes it with) at the beginning of the speech raises the possibility that her recall of the women is on some level a recall of herself. The “image” of the women that she related to Prospero may indeed be her “glass.” Suddenly, the word “image” as Prospero used it in 1.2.43 becomes very unstable. As above, he ostensibly refers to the way in which events are stored in the memory as images. In that case, the “image” is true memory, photographic at the best of times, and it is the relation, the translation into speech, which may distort it somewhat. But in Miranda’s speech, “image” takes on shades of meaning more in line with its original Latinate usage.

Imago signifies a dream or a shadow, a phantom, shade, or immaterial reflection. Prompted by Prospero to reveal “the image” that has kept with her remembrance, Miranda prefaces her response, “‘tis...rather like a dream than an assurance” before relating the memory of the four or five women.

The same word for her recalled image might just as well be applied to the faces she sees “in my glass” (they are both *imaginēs*), and perhaps most unsettlingly, the process of shape-forming she describes at the speech’s end is given the same name of “imagination.” She states, more or less explicitly, that it is the function of “imagination” to “form a shape” out of the visual material of memory. It seems much more likely, in this light, that Miranda is being honest with Ferdinand here and that her image of the women is in fact her own reflection. Miranda, as above, is a valuable character for examining the operation of memory—and yet it is destabilizing when she mixes the vocabulary of memory with the vocabulary of imagination. Prospero is responsible in some sense for this, asking his daughter “the image tell me” when what that question means to her is likely very different than what we as spectators take it to mean. We might interpret: “Tell me the picture, as you have it, of that past event,” whereas Miranda might hear: “Tell me the picture, as you have assembled it from your observations—mostly of your own self.

In Vergil, *imago* is Aeneas’ word for the shade of Creusa, insubstantial as he tries to embrace it in his flight from Troy.

ter conatus ibi collo dare bracchia circum;
ter frustra compresa manus effugit imago.

Three times I tried to throw my arms around [her] neck; three times the shadow, grasped in vain, fled my hands. (2.792-3)

These lines are themselves part of a recollection—Aeneas’ tale to Dido—and thus an “image” of an image. And just as Miranda suggested about her own “imagination,” these lines are repeated (or rather reflected) verbatim by the epic’s narrator when Aeneas encounters the shade of Anchises in the underworld (6.700-1). The words can be repeated exactly as they appear in Book 2—no changing of feminine to masculine is required, since *imago* is always feminine, whether it denotes Anchises’ shade or Creusa’s. The most important feature is that an *imago* is immaterial, as are the shades of the underworld and Miranda’s reflection. This relation between image, imagination, and memory as expressed by Prospero and Miranda finds an interesting comparison in *Aeneid* 1.441-93, in which Aeneas comes across the depiction of the war at Troy painted on the wall of the temple of Juno at Carthage. The hero finds the image of his memory materialized in an unexpected place. The illustration is so accurate (or rather, so consonant with his own memory) that he recognizes all of the major players in the scene—including himself.

Aeneas, then, to put it in familiar terms, encounters an image (i.e. an *imago*, a shadow) from his own memory depicted materially. He feels he must “cry it o’er again” (as Miranda feels at 1.2.134), not just “recoursing” but reliving, since viewing the images serve the same purpose as recalling them mentally—perhaps even more intensely, as this reiteration was so unlooked for. It prompts him to exclaim, “*quis iam locus...Achate, / quae regio in terris nostris non plena laboris?*” (“What place is there now, o Achates, what country on earth that is not full of our suffering?”) The significance of this moment becomes clearer when we realize that this is the first real glimpse we are given (in Aeneas’ eyes) of the hero’s own history. His first speech in the storm hinted at the prior experience of the war (1.94-101), yet we do not have a definite picture of his past, or of where exactly he is coming from. Suddenly, coming ashore in a foreign land, he finds

his own prologue depicted by the artists of an alien people. Within the *medias res* structure of epic— with our blindness to the time before the curtain rose— this moment is extraordinarily powerful. Even before Aeneas’ own account of the events depicted (which comes in Book 2), we see the hero’s prior experience as it abides in his own memory, just as Prospero posits— as a series of images.²⁹

It is indeed a series; Aeneas proceeds down the mural, viewing each section episodically. Just as Miranda does, he recognizes himself among the images of his memory, although of course he knows the appearance, the “features” of both men and women, Trojans and Achaians, Amazons and Ethiopians.

se quoque principibus permixtum adnoui Achiuis
Eoasque acies et nigri Memnonis arma.

He even recognized himself, there in the midst of the Achaian chiefs; he recognized the hordes of the East, and the arms of black Memnon. (1.488-9)

He realizes that he is himself an image in not only his own memory but in what might be called the “cultural memory” of Carthage itself. Although he has never met a Carthaginian in his life, his image on the temple is so recognizable to himself and to the rest of the city that Venus must shroud him in a mist so that “he will be recognized by no one.” The defining feature of Carthage, as noted above, is that it is constantly under construction, incomplete—yet on these unfinished walls Aeneas encounters his own memory’s image. Oddly, of all the parts of the the unfinished city, the mural seems remarkably complete. The temple it belongs to is itself in progress (*hic templum Iunoni ingens Sidonia Dido / condebat*, in the imperfect tense: “here Dido of Sidon was

²⁹ The only difference, perhaps ironically, lies in the fact that Vergil intervenes to tell us something about the mural: it is *pictura inanis*, an empty image. What seems, conversely to be a “substantive” image, is the contents of Aeneas’ memory. Vergil intimates an ironic reversal of which image is actually “substantial” and which is intangible.

in the middle of constructing a massive temple to Juno”), yet the mural is, strangely, finished, rich in detail and uncannily accurate. That this representation of memory is present in this completed form even in the unfinished city of Carthage demonstrates not only the city’s nature as a representation of the present (i.e., a space suspended between recollection and expectation) but of the potential self-reflection that Aeneas might, in fact, be seeing instead.

Thus the similarities between play and poem in the recollection of what preceded their openings (Sidney’s “recoursing”) likewise form the foundation for the following action in both (and the “divining” of its ultimate results). What Nosworthy names the “causal plot” of *The Tempest* is essentially another way of referring to the sum total of prior events remembered by characters in the play’s opening, none of them dramatized. Nosworthy himself sees the influence of Vergil in the sections of the play which look backwards (as we have demonstrated above, namely in 1.2), and must have in mind as well the similarity of the function of memory in the two works. But it is somewhat easier to prove the interconnectedness of the backward-oriented sections of both play and poem, since the *medias res* format creates, by its very nature, the “dark backward and abysm of time” which Prospero and Aeneas (though in their own styles) fill up again with their narrations and “recourse.”

Yet Vergil’s hand is as evident in the play’s future as it is in its backward gaze. What, then, can we make of the “effectual plot,” the consequences of these remembered actions which make up the bulk of the play proper? The key, I believe, lies in the rationales characters offer for decisions they make, and actions they initiate, during the play’s moments of crisis. As figures such as Prospero, Antonio, and Sebastian invoke the past as a motivation for future action, we can come

closer to understanding the way the “causal” epic past³⁰ shapes the “effectual” present and future, and combines with them to form a true sense of “Vergilian time.”

When Burrow suggests that “the *Aeneid* ... repeatedly [provides] options and possibilities for a larger understanding of the story,” we can take one of those “options for larger understanding” to mean that a Vergilian perspective on time ultimately emerges amongst several contrasting perspectives. This is best illustrated in comparing the first great scene of memory, 1.2., with the first great scene of the “effectual plot:” Sebastian and Antonio’s conspiracy in 2.1. The two (scenes, but also characters: Prospero and Antonio) present opposing visualizations of time and the uses of the past, one tending towards “crisis” and the other towards repetition. Though they do form a dichotomy, the relationship between them is nuanced, and a fine distinction must be made between saying that one conception of time trumps another (which is not my intention) and that one conception of time gets the final word. Since the presence of both, and a similar pattern of interaction between them, is a hallmark of the *Aeneid*, I argue that this aspect of the play is both an inheritance from, and a correspondence with, Vergil.

Prospero lays claim to the sense of “crisis time” (termed *kairos* by Kermode [195-196]) both at *The Tempest*’s opening³¹ and near its conclusion,³² almost as if he believe it to be his personal property to exploit and manufacture. But this outlook on time does not belong to Prospero exclusively, nor (for several reasons) is he the perfect figure to exemplify it. His self-styled status as

³⁰ —read: reconstituted through memory.

³¹ “The hour’s now come...”; “I find my zenith doth depend upon / A most auspicious star...” (1.2.36, 182-3)

³² “Now does my project gather to a head...” (5.1.1)

an arbiter of memory³³ (and thus, as he would have it, a master of events to come) is undermined, most strikingly in his forgetfulness of Caliban's plot in 4.1— a major crisis in itself. For the first time in the play he speaks the words "I had forgot," (4.1.139) and even more striking than his own forgetfulness is Ariel's own decision not to remind him ("When I presented Ceres, / I thought to have told you of it, but I feared..." [4.1.167-8]). Because of these lapses in Prospero's memory and self-styled status, it is important to call the "crisis" viewpoint not quite Prospero's own, but rather one with which he seeks to identify himself. Let us look at Prospero's and Antonio's positions more closely; a sort of hybrid of the two helps us arrive at an understanding of what I call "epic time."

Antonio's goading of Sebastian into their opportunistic conspiracy is based on terms loaded with temporal significance: "prologue," (2.1.249) "precedent," (287) and "destiny" (248). He depicts the (apparent) shipwreck that has just befallen the king's party as a sort of tidal motion, the circularity of which gives his proposed coup a sense of destiny— not because it is part of some fated inexorable movement forward, but because the past is bound to repeat itself. The cycle of brother usurping brother seems fated by all the elements that have brought them, finally to the present moment:

[In returning from Tunis]
 We all were sea-swallowed, though some cast again—
 And by that destiny, to perform an act
 Whereof what's past is prologue, what to come
 In yours and my discharge. (2.1.247-50)

³³ —a status further reinforced by his didactic exchanges with Ariel and Caliban later in 1.2, in which he compels them to recount the circumstances of their coming under his power, and the circumstances of their remaining that way. Even Ariel's demand for freedom is transposed into a ritualized retelling of his liberation from Sycorax. In that instance, Prospero exerts power not just physical/elemental (freeing Ariel and enlisting him into his service) but also intellectual (he purports to control an 'official' narrative of the island's pre- and early colonized history). With regard to Caliban's challenge to Prospero's perceived master-narrative, see note ____.

Sebastian appears convinced, and says resolutely:

Thy case, dear friend,
Shall be my precedent. As thou got'st Milan
I'll come by Naples. (286-8)

The apprehension that “what’s past is prologue” seems to be Antonio’s nod towards a cyclical nature of time, that what once has been will repeat itself again. It is between the remembrance of “precedents” (circularity) and the inexorable drive forward to crisis and conclusion (linearity) that this strange sense of epic time lies.

What is actually taking place in the scene, up to and including Ariel’s arrival to prevent the assassinations? Are Sebastian and Antonio actually subscribing to a cyclical view of temporality that is superseded by Prospero’s? After all, the fulfillment of their plot (with all the temporal implications it would carry) is foiled at his bidding. While entertaining dreams of success in the brief interval between the birth of their plot and its end, they lay out a vision of violence begetting violence, blood begetting blood, and usurper usurping usurper.³⁴ Though sometimes violent, the process seems just as natural as the motion of waves and tides, the “sequent toil”³⁵ of natural processes taking their respective turns as dominant. By taking up Antonio’s former coup as “my precedent,” Sebastian is not justifying his attempt on his brother’s life but rather normalizing it as the way of the world. In the first speech of Antonio's quoted above, the elemental forces of the

³⁴ Prospero himself might be partaking in a similar process with his subjugation of Caliban, though by Prospero’s own account the episodes are completely different. In what he professes to be the master-narrative, Caliban’s preexisting nature as well as subsequent misdeeds marked him for subjugation; on the other hand, Prospero’s original tenure as Duke of Milan seems not to have been marked by abuses of power or trust. This is all according to Prospero’s account; Caliban, unbeknownst to himself, seems to partake more of Antonio’s tidal metaphor—though Caliban’s expectation of revenge is flavored with more of a sense of *justice* than Antonio’s amoral plot.

In his own words, Caliban’s fortunes, too, seem to depend upon a most auspicious star: as in Brutus’ phrase, there is an opportune moment to seize control (when Prospero is asleep) as well as necessary preparations (Remember / First to possess his books…) [2.3.89-90]

³⁵ Sonnet 60.4.

world seem themselves to be facilitating the place and time for their plot. That the sea has conferred its blessing, as it were, upon their endeavor gives it the appearance of “destiny.” As a consequence it goes without saying that this view of time and human affairs has, intentionally, nothing to do with morality,³⁶ which in some form must enter into a consideration of why the epic *hero*’s narrative is as privileged as it is.³⁷ The conspirators’ desire to reenact the past is reflected in their own diction, as they develop a metaphor of the cyclical nature of the tides. Sebastian admits that he is inert, “standing water,” as Antonio counsels him instead to reenact the past just as the tides do.

Sebastian	I am standing water.
Antonio	I’ll teach you how to flow.
Sebastian	Do so; to ebb Hereditary sloth instructs me.
Antonio	O, If you but knew how you the purpose cherish Whiles thus you mock it... Ebbing men, indeed, Most often do so near the bottom run By their own fear or sloth. (2.1.217-224)

Though the figures of speech are similar, this is nothing like Shakespeare’s previous maritime metaphor, twelve years prior to *The Tempest*, that “there is a tide in the affairs of men.” In *Julius Caesar*, Brutus’ meaning is that success is a matter of seizing good fortune when the circumstances are most favorable. But Antonio’s incitement of Sebastian, while essentially just as opportunistic, seeks to make the proposed act of violence seem natural because it is an image of a

³⁶ —or if it does, it is an ambivalent type of morality based not on human interactions but the apparent principle of nature at large, something similar to Edmund’s rationales and appeal to Nature as goddess in *King Lear* (1.2.1ff.)

³⁷ I mean “morality” on the work’s own terms— that is, Aeneas’s *pietas* and divine favor, and Prospero’s right to his dukedom (not necessarily to the island), as defined by himself.

similar past event.³⁸ Brutus' metaphor does not really imply a viewpoint on time;³⁹ Antonio's seeks to make clear that "one fire drives out one fire,"⁴⁰ that when the stars align and circumstances resemble each other, the past and present may become so similar as to be indistinguishable.

If Sebastian and his fortunes are "ebbing," they are thus due for a return, a consequent high tide; and while this metaphor might seem to apply equally attractively to Prospero or Aeneas, whose fortunes reach an all-time low before their fated restorations, the inexorable drive of destiny, the privilege conveyed by the form and fabric of the work itself, push back against such a comparison. Ultimately, the time-metaphor that wins out is not that of the cyclical tides, but that of the winds, which convey what they carry in a (more or less) fixed direction. Prospero, the erstwhile master of tempests, remains standing at the play's conclusion as the master of "auspicious gales."⁴¹ (5.1.318) But the real sense of epic time which is a hallmark of both play and poem is somewhere between these two models; after all, a significant percentage of Prospero's own dialogue consists of him remembering, though not reliving, the past. Yet he is granted the

³⁸ Brutus' maritime metaphor is more similar to Prospero's astrological: "My zenith doth depend upon / A most auspicious star, whose influence / If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes / Will ever after droop."

³⁹ —or if it does, it is linear in a hopeless sort of way: a single moment of potential crisis, whether realized or not, and then a long fading away of both time and opportunity.

⁴⁰ Coriolanus, 4.7.53.

⁴¹ He does partake himself in the tidal imagery, most notably at 5.1.79-82. Yet his image of his victims' return to their senses is an intellectual, not a general one—by which I mean that, unlike Antonio's earlier speech, it is not a generalization. It is nonetheless remarkable for suggesting an inverse relationship between Prospero's supernatural art and the processes of the natural world: as "the charm dissolves apace," (64) the natural swell of reason is allowed to proceed unabated. This is an especially significant aspect of the speech, coming as it does directly after Prospero's resolution to abjure his rough magic by which he suspended natural functions, and lends a special resonance to his decision to drown his book—not burn, tear, or otherwise destroy it, but to surrender it to the action of the tides—which, in this continuation of the speech, he so closely associates with *rationality* and *reason*.

realization that his "project" is not simply to enact the ebb and flow of vengeance, but rather to step forward on a distinct, if sometimes unclear⁴², linear path. Prospero's famous epiphany that "the rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance" is thus not only a triumph of "[his] nobler reason 'gainst [his] fury" but also an acceptance of this particular outlook on time. The past and present may be deeply intertwined but they are distinct, and Prospero must acknowledge this in order to proceed with his own epic of restoration,⁴³ to remember that "Time / Goes upright with his carriage." (5.1.3)⁴⁴

In what seems most eligible to be called true "epic time," the past is not repeated *per se* but instead "touches" the present through memory, speech, and action. I believe that this unique tension between cyclical and linear perspectives of time (one might even call it a hybrid sense of the two) is just as much a product of Vergil's influence on *The Tempest* as the several more readily visible episodic correspondences between the works. Indeed, the Vergilian material that directly

⁴² —in Gonzalo's words, "through forthrights and meanders" (3.3.3).

⁴³ On a different level, his realization is also that the circumstances of his former injury will never quite repeat themselves, that exact vengeance is impossible because changes brought on by time render no two situations identical. The clearest exemplar of this in the play is the presence of Ferdinand and Miranda, the younger generation, who render the old *status quo* between Prospero and his enemies obsolete, as they act independently of past wrongs and compel the adversaries to relate to each other in new ways. Though they are, too, moving parts within Prospero's "project," the independence of their desire marks them as different from Prospero's other pawns. (In other words, though they carry out Prospero's wishes, they do so because of their *own* desires, not upon some prompting from outside. Alonso's contrition, for example, requires the Harpy's prophecy first; while Ferdinand may have been enchanted by Ariel's music, his attraction to Miranda—and hers to him—is spontaneous. It is *coincident* with Prospero's wishes, not elicited by Prospero's will.)

⁴⁴ Even Caliban, who at the play's outset poses the greatest challenge to Prospero's intended monopoly over time-consciousness, is made to publicly accept Prospero's new awareness. His exchange with Prospero in 1.2 is a slugfest of competing narratives, as Caliban asserts his own memory (such a highly prized faculty in Prospero's earlier exchange with Miranda), the contents of which predate Prospero's arrival on the island. Yet the brief statement he makes before the assembly of characters at the play's end is one a definitive break with the past: "I'll be wise hereafter / And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass was I!..." (5.1.298-9) At least in public, and once again under Prospero's domination, he adopts his master's vocabulary of abjuring the repetition of past "vengeances" and seeking a future that is qualitatively different. His earnestness in saying this is another matter entirely; his very public endorsement of this view of time is what matters in the moment.

engages the tension between the repetitions of history (Antonio's "tides") and the forward motion required of the hero is *not* found in the sections of the poem from which Shakespeare's Vergilian *episodes* were adapted. Specifically, the *katabasis* of Aeneas in Vergil's Book 6 lays the two competing viewpoints side by side, as Aeneas observes the process of the constant rebirth of

souls⁴⁵ while learning the unique (that is, distinct from anything that has happened before) nature

⁴⁵ I admit that someone skeptical of this correspondence between Antonio's perception of time and the recycling of souls witnessed in Vergil's underworld might raise an important objection here. Antonio is aware that he is partaking in a reenactment of the past, and he must be; otherwise he could not use that awareness as a justification for his action. On the other hand, the souls purified and refined by punishment in the *Aeneid's* afterlife must, before they assume new bodies, drink from Lethe and thus relinquish all memory of their former life:

has omnis, ubi mille rotam uoluere per annos,
 Lethaeum ad fluuium deus euocat agmine magno,
 scilicet immemores supera ut conuexa reuisant,
 rursus et incipiant in corpora uelle reuerti. (6.748-51)

All of these, once the wheel [of time] has rolled through a thousand years, [a] god calls forth to the Lethean river in a great column, so that unremembering they may view again the sky-vault above, and begin to desire again to return in human flesh.

Thus the awareness of this great process of repetition in the world is not known to those who are cogs in the wheel, and is only perceptible to those outside of it (such as Anchises, who dwells in the Elysian fields), or Aeneas (who receives this information by supernatural revelation). Yet, in any interpretation, the time-scales involved in comparing Antonio's "past is prologue" theory with Vergil's wheel of time will be radically different. Ultimately it does not matter quite so much that Antonio is aware of repetition in the world as that, if things worked according to his will, such a process would happen regardless. Likewise, this process in Vergil *is* made visible to the privileged figures in the poem: Aeneas, Anchises, and the reader who shares in the view of the underworld as well.

of his own future.⁴⁶

Of course there is no descent to the underworld within *The Tempest*, but its protagonists have encounters no less significant than Aeneas' with the specters of the past. They come in the form of remembered "images" (discussed at greater length below) and ritualized retellings of the characters' histories. The hallmark of these encounters is an emphasis on the very incorporeality of certain vestiges of the past that nonetheless compel the protagonist to present action. In the *Aeneid*, the tension between a sense of the past repeating and of the future moving onward finds its ultimate expression in the speaking spirits of the dead which Vergil conjures both in falling Troy and in the underworld. The shades of Creusa and Anchises, whose speeches to Aeneas spur him reluctantly onwards to certain goals, are fully apparent but completely insubstantial. They

⁴⁶ Again, I would like to anticipate a possible objection to my reading. One might raise the point that the resettlement efforts of Aeneas and the Trojans are described repeatedly as an attempt to rebuild Troy, to resurrect what it had been and live in a new home just they had in their old. Aeneas himself uses this language in his very first speech to his demoralized troops on the shores of Libya:

tendimus in Latium, sedes ubi fata quietas
ostendunt. illic fas regna resurgere Troiae. (1.205-6)

We are bound for Latium, where Fate offers [us] peaceful realms: there must* the kingdom of Troy rise again.

Such terms as *resurgere* do seem to imply that the Trojans view their project as a repetition of the past, or at least one in which their past home becomes the blueprint for their future. This hoped-for continuity finds its clearest expression in the material items the Trojans carry with them, foremost among them the household gods (*penates*) of Troy (which, it might be argued, even exceed the 'material' level). But such phrases become fewer and farther between as Aeneas and his company followers approach their final destination, and especially after he is granted his vision of the future of Rome. The language then shifts to a different kind of continuity: not that "Troy will rise again (*resurget Troiae*)" but rather that "glory will follow the children of Troy," in which the verb becomes *sequi* ("to come after") and the subject becomes not Troy but her descendants (e.g., 6.756). The materials out of which a "new Troy" would be built, given much importance in the poem's opening (e.g., the loss of the ship carrying treasure and arms at 1.118ff.) take a backseat, eventually, to the actual individuals who will take part in establishing Rome—indebted to the past but unique. Likewise, in *The Tempest*, the primary focus in the concluding scene is not the material trappings of Prospero's dukedom (though they do make an appearance) but the future prospects embodied in Ferdinand and Miranda, the rising generation.

*There is no perfect way to capture the sense of *fas* in English, with its sense of divine sanction and personal piety.

are linked together in the same beautiful linguistic parallel quoted above (*ter conatus ibi collo dare bracchia circum / ter frustra comprehensa manus effugit imago*⁴⁷) juxtaposing Aeneas' yearning to make the past into the present with the reality that things have in fact changed.

A comparison of these spirits to Ariel is not altogether unwarranted. Though any firm description of Ariel's nature, more than his status as "an airy spirit," is difficult to establish, he bears more than a passing resemblance to these shades of the dead. Being somewhat incorporeal (though still able to effect action in the material world)⁴⁸, his primary method of interaction with Prospero is through speech— speech which, it seems, is often a ritualized retelling of the circumstances of his rescue by Prospero. ("I must / Once in a month recount what thou hast been / Which thou forget'st.")

In constantly reminding Prospero of the debt of freedom owed to him, Ariel too is the bearer of a promise, a prediction which is on the verge of being realized. Unlike the grand prophecies of future Roman glory given to Aeneas by Anchises and later illustrated on his shield, Ariel's expectations are instead similar to Creusa's, as they are realized within the scope of the work itself.

Creusa foresees no more than Aeneas' arrival in Italy and his acquisition of a new wife, the

⁴⁷ Since the same words are used for both Creusa's shade and Anchises'— the Latin requiring no differences for gender—the repetition of the same phrase gives a fleeting sense (similar to the shades themselves) of an event repeating itself, with a difference. The same might tentatively be said about the several repeated phrases within the epic which, if not stock epithets (e.g. *pius* or *infelix*; there are actual very few of those), recur from book to book. Of course the need to fill up every hexameter line necessitates sometimes the usage of a familiar formula, and thus we should avoid putting too much weight on the most minor linguistic parallels. That said, the repetition of the *ter conatus* lines regarding Creusa and Anchises is unmistakably significant and gives a powerful impression of the past's abiding power as well as its fleeting nature.

⁴⁸ A full analysis of exactly what sort of spirit Ariel is would be beyond the scope and purpose of this discussion, and would need to take into account contemporary opinions, for example, of what playgoers believed they were seeing in the representation of spirits on stage. Ariel fluctuates between an elemental force (1.2.190-216, a physically constrained entity (the remembered episode of Sycorax and the "cloven pine"), and one who can assist with mundane physical tasks as well (5.1.87.sd, "*Ariel...helps to attire him.*"). Even though Prospero clearly has power over some aspects of his physicality in a way that Aeneas obviously does not have over the shades, their dialogue is the key link between the figures.

struggle over whom makes up the epic's very last episode.⁴⁹ Similarly, Ariel's expected release from Prospero's service is the very last action of *The Tempest*.⁵⁰

Berger entertains a fascinating alternative to this reading in "The Miraculous Harp" by shifting the focal point of the play's Vergilian journeys from the inhabitants of the island⁵¹ to Alonso. I noted above that it should in no way be thought that Prospero's perspective and time-consciousness is authoritative or unequivocally dominant; Berger has this in mind in attempting to reorient the play's events around another figure. Though it is peripheral to his reading of the play, Berger attempts to view the play's competing senses of circularity and progress through the eyes of the character who is, after all, the one retracing the (physical) path of Aeneas, accounting for the voyage he has made from Tunis before the play's outset. In Alonso's daughter Claribel, Berger sees the beautiful but illusory ideals towards which colonizers such as Aeneas strive; in relinquishing her, Alonso has become an anti-Aeneas, traveling away from a fixed goal and into the "darkness" of the *Aeneid*'s opening storm:

⁴⁹ One might add, however, that even though Lavinia is mentioned in Turnus' final admission of defeat ("*tua est Lavinia coniunx...*"), she is somewhat upstaged by Aeneas' devotion to Pallas in the poem's concluding lines. Aeneas' victory seems to be more in his vengeance for Pallas rather than in the success of his claim to Lavinia, though it is in both. Of course much more has been said about the nature of the final lines and Aeneas' priorities in killing Turnus.

⁵⁰ My Ariel, chick,
That is thy charge; then to the elements
Be free, and fare thou well! (5.1.316-18)

I mean here that it is the last action according to the text. Prospero promises to answer Alonso's request for "the story of your life" at a time deferred until after the play's close, and the Epilogue presents its own complications (discussed in note __ below), but it seems uncontroversial to me to call Prospero's release of Ariel the play's final action. This is due in no small part to the ambiguity of Ariel's "charge," which in this context may refer to a) his entire term of service to Prospero, b) the events of the day, c) the tempest, or even d) *The Tempest* itself. Considering Ariel's earlier pleas for liberty in the context of this final action gives the sense that they are much more central to the play than they might seem at their first appearance in 1.2.

⁵¹ —Prospero, with his expectation of restoration, and Ariel, with his expectation of freedom.

We may entertain one more allegorical fantasy, in which Alonso's voyage is a reflection of his state: the civilized European soul compromising with darkness, surrendering its clear-beautiful ideals for the sake of expediency, and thereby reversing the forward direction of western man's arduous Virgilian journey. The voyage does not begin but ends, at least temporarily, with a Vergilian storm... (267)

The interpretation is fascinating, even if Berger's allegorical inclination to take Aeneas as a representative of "civilization" writ large (rather than as an individual) runs somewhat counter to my own reading. Berger is looking at the play with a wide lens, incorporating the events that precede and follow it into his interpretations; such an approach leads to valuable conclusions, but does not account for the nature of the play's structure. Rather, one might ask, how does the play's format of beginning *in medias res* alter its Vergilian resonances? By depositing certain preliminary events into "the dark backward and abysm of time," and certain resolutions into the play's unknowable aftermath, we are left with a voyage (Prospero's) that looks more like the individual journey taken in the poem than any of its allegorical valences.

But in a way Berger's allegory is no less apt. The "paragon" Claribel (2.1.73) is excluded from the play proper just as that towards which Aeneas and Prospero strive is delayed until after the close of their respective texts. The key is to treat these things, which are outside the scope of their texts, *as being outside* when interpreting time in the play.

After all, though Alonso is not the most forgetful of the play's characters, his active attempt to suppress his memory of the long-ago coup makes him vulnerable to Prospero's manipulation. His petrified response after the Harpy's doom-laden speech is brimming with the return of guilt

(read: memory) long suppressed, and even leads him to attempt suicide.⁵² Since he already sits atop the social structure of the play, his own voyage cannot be likened to that of the epic hero, who keeps the past constantly in mind as a means of motivation for a fated restoration of future fortunes.

The Vergilian resonances that “shimmer across” the play are the direct results of Shakespeare’s decision, whatever motivation may have been behind it, to set the play on both a geographical and temporal island. Berger and Kermode comment that what is striking about this “island of time” is that it is such a break from the other late plays which surround *The Tempest*, flouting as they do unities of time and place. These other late plays (including *The Winter’s Tale* and *Pericles*) reflect the influence of classical epic in different ways but do not come nearly as close as *Tempest* does to approximating its time-consciousness. For in the absence of the spatial and temporal unities, and with the miraculous reversals and reappearances that populate those

⁵² Upon hearing Prospero’s name and falling into his “strange stare,” Alonso’s only interpretive options are 1) the apprehension of a grand cosmic justice that has condemned him *and* can communicate with him or 2) that he has hallucinated the episode. Interestingly, we never know exactly *what* the king and his retinue comprehended of Ariel’s performance, either auditory or visual. Gonzalo hears nothing at all, not numbered among the “men of sin,” but seems to perceive that their “great guilt” is working upon them. (103-106) Sebastian and Antonio give no comment on what they’ve *heard*, but believe they’ve encountered “fiends.” (102) Alonso, finally, leaves open the possibility that he heard only the winds and waves and a deep utterance of Prospero’s name, seeing nothing:

O, it is monstrous, monstrous!
 Methought the billows spoke, and told me of it;
 The winds did sing it to me; and the thunder,
 That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc’d
 The name of Prosper: it did bass my trespass.
 Therefor my son i’ th’ ooze is bedded; and
 I’ll seek him deeper than e’er plummet sounded
 And with him there lie mudded. (3.3.95-102)

Here, then, in Alonso’s remembrance, we find a counterpart to the system set up by Prospero and Miranda in their first didactic exchange of 1.2. I have described this process as a translation of recalled *images* (internal) into *speech* (external). For Alonso, *speech* (external) elicits an internal recollection. The ‘externality,’ the vast scale of the billows, winds, and thunder, make the terrible ‘internality’ of guilty memory all the more unbearable. It is the difference in scale (or alternately, the apprehension that the vast cosmos is aware of his own internal thoughts) that breaks Alonso.

other late plays, the characteristic sense of Vergilian time is lost. When events are resolved within the play's boundaries, when all restorations are complete and all that was lost is found, the drama loses the ambivalent sense of looking forward into the future—which is also a hallmark of the Vergilian gaze into the past. Prospero's restoration to the dukedom is by no means certain; Aeneas' foundation of his promised city will have to wait for another poem.⁵³ By presenting us with the crisis alone, and leaving both the ultimate cause and ultimate effect of the action outside the play's scope, *The Tempest* is temporally “suspended” in a way that no other play in the canon is. This sense is best illustrated by the image that opens Vergil's Book 5. Setting sail from Carthage, the main “site of retelling” that seems more analogous to *The Tempest*'s island than any other locale in the poem, Aeneas finds himself bounded physically by past and future. Behind him Dido's pyre burns, lighting up the city walls—a seeming repetition of all the other burnings he has witnessed and survived. But his gaze is not focused on that image of the past, but forward, into another storm on the horizon. As his protagonist breaks out of the cycles of the past

⁵³ Prospero does declare in the Epilogue that “I have my dukedom got,” yet interpretations involving this line may hinge upon what exactly one considers the Epilogue to be. If it is out of the play's time-frame completely, not just outside of the play's spatial world (the fourth wall is unarguably down, signaled by Prospero's direct address to the spectators, “Please you, draw near”), he may seem to be speaking from some indeterminate future point by which his return to power has already been finalized. Such an interpretation, however, seems to me both unsupported by the text and not in keeping with the rest of the play. Prospero's appeal to the spectators is for his own release from the island, which signifies both the play's setting as well as the “island” of the stage-world from which the actor (still in character) is speaking. On the former level, Prospero the character never appears anywhere other than the island, and the possible (temporal) implications of him speaking from somewhere else are thus foreclosed. Even if the spatial situation of the Epilogue were more indistinct, the *contingency* of the speech (it all depends upon the reaction it elicits) provide the sense of indeterminacy and ambivalence I have described. Not until the spectators applaud (which must occur after the speech's—and the play's—close) will any sort of resolution come about. On a more literal level, what Prospero means by saying that he has “got” his dukedom is no more determinate than Turnus' submissions to Aeneas in his final speech (e.g., “*tua est Lauinia coniunx*”—we never actually see, for example, Aeneas wed to Lavinia with no other living rivals). He no more “has” his dukedom than he has the verbal recognition of such title from the king's party. Antonio, too, makes no response to Prospero's “requirement” of his dukedom, a demand made in language strikingly intense (“perforce / Thou must restore [it]”) after his ostensible decision to pursue “virtue” alone.

and accepting upon himself a time-consciousness of forward, if ambivalent, movement, Vergil imparts to both the opening and conclusion of *The Tempest* a quality underlying the level of simple episodic correspondences. By attending to these deeper resonances between source and text as a way of complementing and complicating traditional source study we might move to a richer understanding of the way literary lineages are perpetuated— of the way that Shakespeare's plays engage, like Prospero and Miranda, with their own memories.

Bibliography

- Baldo, Jonathan. "Exporting Oblivion in *The Tempest*" in *Modern Language Quarterly* 56:2, 1995.
- Berger, Harry Jr. "The Miraculous Harp: A Reading of Shakespeare's *Tempest*" in *Shakespeare Studies*, 1969, p. 253
- Brown, Sarah Annes. "Ovid, Golding, and *The Tempest*," in *Translation and Literature*, Vol. 3 (1994), p. 3-29.
- Burrow, Colin. *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Kastan, David Scott. *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1982.
- Kermode, Frank. *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the theory of fiction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Hamilton, Donna B. *Virgil and The Tempest: The Politics of Imitation*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990.
- Martindale, Charles. "Shakespeare and Virgil," in *Shakespeare and the Classics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. pp. 89-108.
- McDonald, Russ. *Shakespeare's Late Style*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. William S. Anderson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.
- Quinones, Ricardo J. *The Renaissance Discovery of Time*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972.
- Scott-Okamura, David Wilson. "Virgilian Models of Colonization in Shakespeare's *Tempest*," in *ELH*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (2003), 709-737.
- Seider, Aaron. *Memory in Virgil's Aeneid*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*, ed. Frank Kermode. London: Methuen, 1954.
- Sidney, Sir Philip. *Selected Prose and Poetry*. ed. Robert Kimbrough, 2nd ed. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.
- Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

Sypher, Wylie. *The Ethic of Time: Structures of Experience in Shakespeare*. New York: Seabury Press, 1976.

Tribble, Evelyn. "The Dark Backward and Abyss of Time: *The Tempest* and Memory," in *College Literature*, Vol. 33, No.1 (2006), 151-168.

Vergil, *Aeneid*. ed. R. Deryck Williams. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2009.