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How Magic And Knowledge Make Up What And How Servitude Is

The Tempest by Shakespeare and *Doctor Faustus* by Marlowe both make use of specific servant characters, the ones more familiar with the world of which the plays take place and act as guides to foreigners. Caliban is familiarised with the workings of the realm of his island, while Mephistopheles is familiarised with the divine planes. Both servant characters serve two different parties throughout the play, Mephistopheles acts as a guide to Faustus while Caliban acts as a guide to both the newcomers on the ship and Prospero, who is his original master. Despite Caliban's superior knowledge of the island, Prospero is superior to him in terms of magical capacity, putting him above Caliban within the supernatural hierarchy and the physical hierarchy. However, Mephistopheles is not superior in knowledge of the realm nor in knowledge of magic compared to Lucifer, his true master. Within the supernatural realm, the servant characters are in the middle of the hierarchy of magical power between the two parties they serve. Both Mephistopheles and Caliban serve parties capable of magic, Lucifer and Prospero, whose capacity of magic is stronger than their servant counterparts, however only Prospero has Caliban as a servant as a result of his magic. The two servants also serve a second party through the plays, in which a difference is Caliban is superior to both parties in knowledge of the realm he's in while Mephistopheles is superior to only one party but in both magic and knowledge.

When Prospero, Caliban's master, first came to the island, it was Caliban who showed him how to live on the island. During *The Tempest*, he says he "show'd thee all the qualities o' the isle, [t]he fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile" (1.2.338-339). Later, Stephano and Trinculo meet Caliban. They are foreigners with no understanding of the island, much like

how Prospero once was. Caliban promises to serve the two, saying “I’ll swear myself thy subject” (2.2.149). Afterwards, Caliban says “I’ll show thee the best springs,” an exact repetition of what he said to Prospero, Caliban then, immediately, begins to show them the island (2.2.157). In a way, all those Caliban serves were at his mercy at the beginning, as he was the only one to teach them how to survive on the island. Caliban is not the only servant in the play but distinguished himself from the other through his role as a guide.

As Faustus searches for power, he seeks magical power through a pact with Lucifer, Mephistopheles serves Faustus partially by teaching him the divine realm, both heaven and hell, and guiding him through it. Mephistopheles serves Lucifer first and foremost, declining to serve Faustus at their first meeting by saying “I am a servant to great Lucifer and may not follow thee without his leave” (3.41-42). But he becomes Faustus’s servant after saying “he will buy my service with his soul,” which Faustus does (5.32). Mephistopheles’s guidance is of all divine planes, including heaven, such as when he teaches Faustus there are “the seven planets, the infirmament and the empyreal heaven” (7.60-61). The teachings from Mephistopheles are of all planes of existence, serving Faustus by answering his questions, which Faustus uses to help him to achieve greater magical power.

It is also magical power which separates Mephistopheles from Caliban. Mephistopheles is a demon, of which’s magic is the one Faustus, his master, intends to learn. It is also the same magic Lucifer, his primary master, is of. Like Mephistopheles, Caliban has a relation to magic, which he shows in *The Tempest* when he speaks of his mother and wish a curse from her of “a south-west blow on ye” showing he is related to someone of magic by blood (1.2.354). He even claims to have capacity for it when he says, “I know how to curse” (1.2.365). However, unlike Mephistopheles, Caliban has not shown to have any ability to do magic, when he tries to curse

nothing happens. One of Mephistopheles's first actions is changing his appearance at the bidding of Faustus, giving textual evidence he is able to perform magic. Even though both servants have more relation to magic when compared with their later masters, their magical abilities are different enough when Caliban is compared to Stephano and Trinculo, their abilities to actually perform magic are equal as all three are completely incapable.

Mephistopheles serves Lucifer, though not because Lucifer forces him through magic. Mephistopheles speaks of his damnation, such as when he says he is "tormented with ten thousand hells in being deprived of everlasting bliss" (3.81-82). The position he is in and the one he is in servitude towards is a result of him having "conspired against God", of which magical control is unrelated (3.73). The only evidence Lucifer's magic is superior in any way to Mephistopheles's is the fact the powers Faustus gains is from Lucifer and not Mephistopheles. It is not even known whether the difference in magical power between Lucifer and Mephistopheles's is even significant.

Caliban's servitude is only because of his master's magic. Prospero forces Caliban to serve him as he will punish him with magic otherwise, Caliban admits this saying "I must obey; his art is of such power" after such an incidence (1.2.373). He does not wish to serve Prospero and would overthrow him if he finds the magical power to do so. When he meets Stephano and Trinculo, he believes they have enough magical power to kill Prospero and moves to do so. Caliban and Mephistopheles are both below the hierarchy of magical capacity compared to their original master, but it only applies to the actual hierarchy for Caliban's case. However, both parties are incapable to overthrowing their masters, only for Mephistopheles, it is unrelated to magic.

Like Caliban, Mephistopheles also does not enjoy his current life. He is damned to hell and is tormented by it. However, he sees no opportunities to escape it. Despite his purpose being to get “[Faustus’s] glorious soul,” he also calls for Faustus to not make the mistake he did and be damned in the same way (3.50). Before Faustus makes the pact, Mephistopheles warns him against it, saying “O, Faustus, leave these frivolous demands, which strike a terror to my fainting soul” (3.83-84). Caliban, on the other hand, in attempting to overthrow Prospero, leads his new masters, Stephano and Trinculo, into being controlled by Prospero’s magic, the same way he was. The magical hierarchy does not matter to Mephistopheles’s relation with Lucifer, for it was something beyond it which caused the relation in the first place. As a result, Caliban searches for people who are superior in magic to Prospero to overthrow him, whereas Mephistopheles does not search for anything to remove him from the position he is in as what binds him to his master is beyond anything anyone other than God may be capable of, which he believes not to exist at all.

Mephistopheles and Caliban are both in between, based on magical power, the two parties they serve. However, the difference in magical ability only really establishes the actual hierarchy for Prospero and Caliban in *The Tempest* and in *Doctor Faustus*, for Mephistopheles and Faustus. What establishes the servitude of Caliban towards Stephano and Trinculo is actually Caliban’s perception of magical ability. Both servants act as guides, but Caliban does for both parties he serves while Mephistopheles only does for Faustus. This brings up a question of whether Caliban’s eagerness to overthrow Prospero is only because of the magical power he believes the two he meets has. Mephistopheles is resigned to his fate, whether because he is superior to Lucifer neither in knowledge nor magic or because what caused his situation is so beyond him. But Caliban’s reason for fighting his fate could be because of both differences in

magic and in knowledge the characters are shown to have. It could be possible his not accepting of Prospero as his master and his how quickly he believes others have the power to overthrow him are both a result of his original superiority in land knowledge compared to Prospero. It could be explored whether Caliban believes magic or knowledge to be more important in terms of who deserves power. Caliban and Mephistopheles are similar in the ways they are servants and the way they serve, but Mephistopheles's plea for Faustus to not make the mistake he did and Caliban using the strangers to break him out of servitude shows their differences in what servitude is to them and how it happened to them.