

# Restorative and Reflective Nostalgia

in *Doctor Faustus*, *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*

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*Abstract: In the paper nostalgia and their types will first be explained and revisited; then, three examples will be provided for early modern dramatic representations of the then-unnamed concept of the pain of missing one's homeland and the yearning to return safely to where one belongs. The frustration felt by various characters for the means of escape and for a safe return home, to be finally saved and recover/retrieve/reclaim their possessions, rights, original place, title, etc. (cf. the etymology of nostalgia from Greek nostos "homecoming," ultimately from PIE nes- "escape from, survive, be saved" + Greek algos "pain") can be seen to play a key role in each of the three plays under investigation. The plays investigated here are Doctor Faustus, Macbeth, and The Tempest, and the paper demonstrates that despite their generic and thematic differences all three represent the synthesis of two types of nostalgia—reflective and restorative—giving voice to both elements reflected in the etymology of the word: nostos and algos; thereby informing us of the striking abundance of nostalgic tendencies in the literature of the period.*

*You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting,  
With most admired disorder.  
(Lady Macbeth, 3.4.109–110)*

The etymology of nostalgia can enlighten us of the original meaning of the term, although we must be careful not to deduce too much from the Greek elements of it: nostos "homecoming," ultimately from PIE nes- "escape from, survive, be saved" and Greek algos "pain." The term nostalgia, in fact, is a much more recent coinage, thus only pseudo-Greek. Svetlana Boym in *The Future of Nostalgia* points out

that it is “nostalgically Greek” (24). The word was coined by Johannes Hofer in his medical dissertation in 1688 (Boym, *Future* 24). Boym remarks that “Swiss doctors believed that opium, leeches, and a journey to the Swiss Alps would take care of nostalgic symptoms” (*Future* 13), adding that “among the first victims of the newly diagnosed disease were various *displaced* people of the seventeenth century: freedom-loving students from the Republic of Berne studying in Basel, domestic help and servants working in France and Germany, and Swiss soldiers fighting abroad” (*Future* 24, emphasis added). As Boym further explains, “nostalgia . . . is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed,” it is primarily “a sentiment of loss and displacement” (*Future* 12). Later in her book she adds that “nostalgic longing was defined by loss of the original object of desire, and by its spatial and temporal displacement” (*Future* 66) and that nostalgia is “an ache of temporal distance and displacement” (*Future* 75).

Nostalgic longing and displacement of this sort can be found in all three plays of my choice: in *Doctor Faustus*, the title hero longs for the Golden Age of Antiquity and in his final moments, in despair, wants to be one with Nature, never to be found by God; in *Macbeth*, we sense the desire and backward-looking efforts to re-establish law and order in the realm during and after Macbeth’s reign; and in *The Tempest*, the image of a faraway island serves both as a desired place and the present location from where one longs to safely return to one’s homeland. These instances of nostalgia may inform us of some of the basic modes of Early Modern thinking regarding complex nostalgic sentiments. The scope of this paper does not reach beyond the Early Modern period. Given, however, that Boym’s notions and examples, on which my analyses rely, are almost exclusively modern, their usability in discussing Renaissance play-texts suggests that the discussed types of nostalgia are not historically determined.

As studies on nostalgia in the three early modern plays of my choice are rather scarce, instead of following in the footsteps of Judith Boss, who provided an elaborate system of types of nostalgia in her “The Golden Age, Cockaigne and Utopia in the *Faerie Queene* and *The Tempest*,” I chose to use the newer typology established by Svetlana Boym in *The Future of Nostalgia*. Boss found three traditions in the Renaissance, referred to in the title of her article, which are “similar in some respects and quite antithetical in others, though easily distinguishable by an audience familiar with all three, as modern critics apparently are not.” The works she examines, mainly *The Tempest* and *The Faerie Queene*, are both framed by “the harsh,

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corrupt reality of Elizabethan England.” All three traditions “were means of escape from or correction of this repugnant reality.” In Sidney’s terms, which Boss quotes, they were “what may be, or should be,” i.e. “the golden world” (145).

Boss’s first category is the Golden Age, and as an example she refers to Gonzalo’s commonwealth in *The Tempest*, which is described in this tradition (146). Tracing its origins, Boss recalls that this tradition “was introduced into pastoral literature by Virgil in his eclogues and later accepted as one of the universal constituents of the pastoral. The Renaissance writers, with their enthusiastic syncretism, thrust the fully developed conception of the Golden Age into the drama and the prose romance as well as the true pastoral, and even into the heroic poem” (146).

Next, she describes Cockaigne, which is antithetical to the Golden Age. The tradition of Cockaigne, Boss argues, “came from the idea that fallen man’s infected Will would tempt him to seek private benefits rather than public good in a paradise of sensual pleasures that explicitly contrasted with the tradition of Eden or the Golden Age. Its basic characteristics are complete lack of restraint and gratification of every selfish, sensual desire” (149). Among her many examples depicting Cockaigne are the fourteenth-century *Land of Cockayne*, Circe’s isle in the *Odyssey*, *The Satyricon* by Petronius, *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius, the poetry of Callimachus, Anacreon, Propertius, Ovid, Boccaccio, and Tasso (149). Boss concludes that “men dream of Cockaigne who have abandoned rationality and cultivated the vegetative and sensitive. The men who can live as if they were in the Golden Age have cultivated the rational, subduing the other faculties” (150).

Although Boss claims that “Cockaigne and the Golden Age are too antithetical to exist simultaneously in a fallen world where change is ruler,” her third category, Utopia,<sup>1</sup> is a synthesis of the first two types. The major purpose of the philosophers’ Utopia, she states, is “the incorporation of . . . disparate groups into a single society which is harmonious rather than self-destructive” (150). Utopia differs from the first two traditions mainly because of this incorporation, and because it envisions a class society as her examples, Plato, Montaigne, Erasmus, More, and Bacon clearly testify.

Boss only mentions nostalgia once in her analysis, in her discussion of the Golden Age, saying that “[t]he nostalgia for this lost age of innocence and the longing

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1 It is somewhat confusing that in her title Boss names the three traditions: The Golden Age, Cockaigne, and Utopia, and then in the article she talks about three Renaissance “Utopian traditions.” So all three are utopian to some extent but nostalgia is only mentioned in her discussion of the first of these.

for its return found expression also in the conceptions of Elysium, the Garden of the Hesperides, the Fortunate Isles, or simply the Earthly Paradise” and she emphasises that “the whereabouts of the other Eden was a burning question” in the Renaissance (147). My hypothesis, in contrast, is that nostalgia is much more fundamental in the literature of the period than this. Not only the Golden Age, but all three traditions discussed by Boss are interwoven with nostalgic ideas. As I see it, all three imagine or create possibilities for moving or being removed from the usual or original place, which is also a common definition of displacement. Boss does not consider the idea of displacement, which Boym has shown to be a fundamental state of the nostalgic.

Furthermore, Boss’s categories do not well describe the examples discussed in this paper. For instance, Mephistopheles’s summoning of Helen would not only fall into Boss’s category of “revisited myth of the Golden Age” but also in that of Cockaigne, i.e. a paradise of sensual pleasures. This sensual paradise is also invoked in *Doctor Faustus* in a more traditional fashion in the pageant of the seven deadly sins. I will focus on nostalgia as longing to return home to escape from pain, for which Boym’s categories are much more revealing. Boym differentiates between two types of nostalgia: restorative and reflective. The first emphasises *nostos*, i.e. home, and “attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home,” while the second “thrives in *algia*, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming—wistfully, ironically, desperately” (*Future* 19). One of her conclusions is that while restorative nostalgia protects absolute truth, reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt (19). In her later essay, “Nostalgia and its Discontents,” Boym adds that the “rhetoric of restorative nostalgia is not about ‘the past,’ but rather about universal values, family, nature, homeland, truth. The rhetoric of reflective nostalgia is about taking time out of time and about grasping the fleeing present” (“Discontents” 14). Before focusing on the future of nostalgia, Boym traces its history. She repeatedly stresses the importance of the new objective sense of time and space emerging in the Early Modern period, yet she does not illustrate the rise of the notion of nostalgia with examples taken from Renaissance literature. This discussion hopes to fill that gap.

In *Macbeth*, the nostalgia for lost order and law might be seen to coincide with Boss’s second category of longing for the lost age of innocence and the wish to find this earthly paradise again, but only with some qualifications. For one thing, in Shakespeare’s tragedy, this earthly paradise of innocence is not projected into something long lost and already turning into myth; instead, it is the immediate

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past that is recollected as such, i.e. the reign of the king killed in the past few weeks. Such an attitude, however, rewrites the past, forgetting about Duncan's responsibility for allowing civil war in the country and jeopardizing the safety of the kingdom by making the country vulnerable to outer attacks. Lady Macbeth's rebuke of her husband for disrupting the banquet with his unmanly folly of weird hallucinations can be extended to include not only the present scene (3.4), but also what Macbeth has done to Scotland in the most general sense. He has displaced mirth, broken the good meeting with his disorder. Hence, the order, mirth, and good meeting, i.e. feeling of belonging to an excellent community, have all been replaced by the violent act of murdering the king, the representative of all these values. Instead, their diametric opposites have taken their place: disorder and sorrow. As Macduff tells us,

Let us rather  
Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men  
Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom: each new morn  
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows  
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds  
As if it felt with Scotland and yell'd out  
Like syllable of dolour. (4.3.2-8)

This change is also marked by Macbeth's ever-decreasing number of followers and confidants; and after the Lady dies, and his last servant, Seyton disappears, Macbeth is left all alone, supported by no one, his life devoid of meaning. Finally, he, who used to displace others, becomes displaced in more than one sense.

The idea of utopia, clearly expressed in *The Tempest* and revealingly discussed by Boss in her essay, is certainly true to the tradition traced by her, but my emphasis here is rather on the *pain* experienced by the nostalgic person over his/her displacement. It is undeniably true for *The Tempest* as well that "the rational men must destroy the brutes or they must try to reform them." But Boss's conclusion that "Cockaigne and the Golden Age are too antithetical to exist simultaneously" and that "men dream of Cockaigne who have abandoned rationality and cultivated the vegetative and the sensitive" or that "philosophers' Utopias deal with the problem how these disparate groups might be incorporated into a single, harmonious society that can avoid self-destruction" can certainly be challenged (150).

It is true that in *The Tempest* we encounter several attempts at such incorporation, e.g. Gonzalo's ideal commonwealth, and Prospero's ideal world, which first failed twelve years before in Milan, then again it collapses on the island, yet leaves the opportunity open for a more successful accomplishment by Miranda and Ferdinand back in Milan again. Prospero is a rational man who subdues the "vegetative and sensitive" faculties in himself, and does try to reform the brute Caliban, but fighting the enemy outside, i.e. Caliban and Ferdinand, as well as Antonio and Sebastian, he delays acknowledging the brute inside until the very end ("this thing of darkness / I acknowledge mine" [5.1.275–276]). We find here a type of nostalgia, that may be grasped through Boyme's terms. According to these, the nostalgic "is never a native, but rather a displaced person who mediates between the local and the universal" (*Future* 35). Such a person will always feel the difference, the pain, which, in Boyme's phrase, means being homesick and sick of home at the same time (*Future* 83). I believe this well describes Prospero and his ambivalent feelings: he is not a native but rather a displaced, uprooted person trapped between the local and the universal.

The applicability of Boss's terms may be challenged in other respects as well. Several details in *The Tempest* suggest that Prospero has not forgotten Cockaigne, i.e. the sensual pleasures he could engage in. This can perhaps be seen in his instruction to Ariel to dress up as a nymph of the sea when no one else can see the spirit but the magician himself:

Go, make thyself like a nymph o'th'sea.  
 Be subject to no sight but thine and mine, invisible  
 To every eyeball else. Go take this shape,  
 And hither come in't; go! Hence with diligence! (1.2.301–304)

He also organises other pageants, the wedding masque and the "trumpetry"—the display of showy but worthless clothes to distract the drinking party—in act 4 scene 1. All this seems to confirm Prospero's preoccupation with indulging and satisfying the senses somewhat more than is proper for a person so much dedicated to the cultivation of his rational faculty.<sup>2</sup>

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2 This is not to deny the obvious metatheatricity of the play and the playwright's effort to satisfy the growing demand for spectacle, or the interpolation of the masque to "make the play appropriate to the celebration of the wedding James I's daughter" (Orgel 61).

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In Marlowe's tragedy we find the attempt to synthesise the rational and the vegetative/sensual. Faustus exclaims: "O, what a world of *profit and delight*, / Of power, of honor, of omnipotence, / Is promised to the *studious artisan!*" (1.1.55–57). We may hear in these lines "the note of sensual gratification and longing for sheer power, along with excitement" (Bevington and Rasmussen 11). Faustus seems to be both a rational man and a brute, both a sensible and a vegetative-sensitive creature who equally seeks knowledge and wants to indulge in earthly pleasures, if only by the help of the devil. So, much so, that the earthly will become synonymous with the devilish (as W. W. Greg has pointed out, "in this play a spirit means a devil" [106]), or at least deadly (cf. the parade of the seven deadly sins in act 2 scene 3), and despite or perhaps corollary to striving to become omniscient, that is a fully rational being, he yields to temptations and thereby destroys himself.

Therefore, Faustus cannot create a harmonious whole in the form of a new identity, and cannot but fail and destroy himself. All this seems to suggest that his utopia is in himself: he wants to make himself better—where better is not a moral term; to find a "good" place inside (eu+topos), which as he will learn the hard way, is nowhere to be found (ou+topos), confirming what appears to be the case in the play that hell is (also) a state of mind. Utopia presupposes displacement, a device with the help of which "the author can reflect the present in an imaginary future, in a non-existing time, or it can be confined in space, in a non-existing place, on an island, for instance" (Czigányik 305). If, however, one like Faustus searches for this place inside, then the displacement is also to be found within: he, similarly to Macbeth and Prospero, is divided inside, we could say he is divided against himself, which recalls the Biblical definition of Hell: a place divided against itself.<sup>3</sup> Faustus's nostalgia, therefore, is the pain felt over the loss of his dream of becoming both omniscient and omnipotent, over the abortion of his ambition to synthesise the rational and the sensual; an excruciating pain also shared by Mephistopheles, who cries over the loss of his access to Heaven:

Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it.  
Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God  
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,

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3 "Every kingdom divided against itself, shall be brought to naught, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. So if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom endure?" (*The Geneva Bible*, Matt. 12.25–26).

Am not tormented with ten thousand hells  
 In being deprived of everlasting bliss? (1.3.78–82)<sup>4</sup>

Division and the desire to overcome the gap between the divided halves/selves is the essence of nostalgic longing. Having been able to taste the joys of Heaven once and then being deprived of them could be the precise description of nostalgia, as a variation of the longing for and pain over the lost homeland. If Lucifer or Mephistopheles cannot have this, they will have to make do with trying to increase the power of hell by collecting lost souls.

Closely connected to this kind of thinking is the effort or inclination of Faustus to overcome time gaps, to reverse time to go back into the classical golden age, fighting the irreversibility of time. Boym describes “nostalgic desires” as trying “to obliterate history and turn it into private or collective mythology, to revisit time like space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition” (*Future* 15). Faustus wants to be at home physically—see his kissing and sleeping with the spirit of Helen—in a place purely imaginative, thus only approachable for the intellect and only through time-travel.

Similarly paradoxical is the effort of the nemesis-group in *Macbeth*, who want to get back to a state of law and order, a place they can call their home, as Malcolm later proclaims. The country is to be liberated, and the established order of succession is to be restored. Ironically, however, the nemesis-group can only achieve this by killing another king—albeit a tyrant and himself a regicide. Thus, even if we allow for the possibility that Malcolm does want to return to an ideal state of kingship, we may have our reservations. As Mack claims, “a crown seized is a different crown; now the king must *play at* being king” (189); and although Malcolm cannot be king in the old sense, we know from his earlier performance that he *is* a great actor/pre-tender, so he may just succeed.<sup>5</sup>

In Mack’s view, the word describing the process Macbeth undergoes is *imprisonment*, the “interior punishment exacted by his political crime” (190). In the play, Mack continues, we follow what happens “when a man violates a mode of traditional

4 The cry of anguish itself is the echoing of St John Chrysostom’s words, as pointed out by John Searle (quoted by Jump in Bevington and Rasmussen 130).

5 See his “first false speaking” in act 4 scene 3, esp. “It is myself I mean—in whom I know / All the particulars of vice so grafted / That, when they shall be opened, black Macbeth / Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state / Esteem him as a lamb, being compared / With my confineless harms” (4.3.50–55).



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authority” and extinguishes in himself “not merely the reality but even the dream of such a unity between microcosm and macrocosm as the old, nostalgic vision proposed” (190). This old nostalgic vision, or more precisely, the nostalgic idea of kingship, is best symbolised in *Macbeth* by “images of fertility and divine grace” and by Duncan being introduced as an ideal king for an ideal world (Mack 189). This nostalgic vision is to be re-established at the end of the play—at least verbally—first when Macduff greets the new king announcing that the time is free; yet his speech is framed in a way which creates an eerie link with both Macbeth and the weird sisters:

*Hail*, king, for so thou art. Behold, where stands  
Th’usurper’s cursed head. *The time is free.*  
I see thee compass’d with thy kingdom’s pearl,  
That speak my salutation in their minds;  
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine.  
*Hail, King of Scotland* (5.9.21–26, emphasis added)

The return of the word *hail* at the end of his speech replicates and recalls the prophetic greeting of the weird sisters, and functions, therefore, as an uneasy reminder that all is perhaps not well, or perhaps as ironic quotation marks or brackets around the most relevant issue: the liberation of time.

Then Malcolm utilises this new mood and mode, proclaiming

What’s more to do,  
Which would be *planted newly with the time*,—  
As calling *home* our exiled friends abroad  
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny,  
Producing forth the cruel ministers  
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,  
Who, as ‘tis thought, by self and violent hands  
Took off her life, — this, and what needful else  
That calls upon us, by the *grace of Grace*  
*We will perform in measure, time, and place.*  
So, thanks to all at once and to each one,  
Whom we invite to see us crown’d at Scone. (5.9.31–42, emphasis added)

In his accession speech Malcolm gives due emphasis to all the relevant aspects of a re-established ideal state, listing all the significant symbols of the old nostalgic vision propagandistically set against the all-too-black images of the dead tyrant. This is his typical mode of self-justification and self-affirmation: through a hyperbolic contrast in which black Macbeth will make Malcolm seem as pure as snow (cf. 4.3.50–54).

Prospero, too, wants to reverse time and return to the nostalgic ideal of kingship which can maintain “a stable, just, and energetic order through ordinary political acumen and force” (Mack 25). Prospero wants to see himself as such an ideal ruler, who is efficient enough to root out traitors and resolve civil and familial strife like Mack’s generic good king, and wants to be “a god on earth” (25). Yet he is vulnerable, almost inviting attack, warns Mack, because he might ignore his responsibilities, or blindly trust an ambitious relative (192). Prospero, therefore, can indeed be homesick and sick of home at the same time, and if he lives long enough, he can live to miss his island. His isolation both twelve years before in Milan and then for twelve years on the island parallel each other, although the difference is that the first was self-chosen, the second allotted to him, and whereas his enemies were always on his mind, thus populating the otherwise rather uninhabited island, once again back in Milan they will be there in their physical reality, which perhaps only means another kind of danger, not a lesser kind. This second Milan, however, might feel more like home; after all, this was what Prospero wanted to get back to. This is what he wanted to restore, and what he was reflecting upon all along; and this is supposed to be his final and permanent abode.

Beyond the simple structural method of juxtaposing the here and there, the now and then, the this and that, etc., however, there is in all three plays, I contend, a more basic underlying notion of finding a “place of permanent abode.” In Kállay’s view “both Wittgenstein and Shakespeare seem to allow for the possibility that we may arrive home *in or in spite of* our homelessness and neither of them lays an emphasis on an evenly structured and totalising narrative which would finally put everything to its proper place, while they both insist on the unravelling in things congealing into a fixture without, . . . , excluding the possibility of finding a place of permanent abode” (206). The image of “unravelling in things congealing into a fixture” might immediately recall Faustus’s congealing blood and his effort to find fixity. It might also suggest another kind of fixity, Prospero’s island, an image in which “spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole”,

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and where “time . . . thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history” (Bakhtin 84). In Prospero’s island, the “unravelling in things do congeal into a fixture,” and all this does not exclude the possibility of finding a permanent abode, if not here on the island, then maybe once back in Milan.

Cosmologists, Kállay continues,

have always wished to find a home in the Universe, too, they just started out by adopting a divine standpoint—they tried to look at the scenario from “God’s perspective,” mostly in the name of “reason”—rather than making their initial steps reckoning with their human limits. This is important to note because Shakespearean tragic heroes can also be seen as precisely marking out the boundaries between the divine and the human. (135)

Whether or not cosmologists wanted to find such a place both in the house and in the cosmos I cannot tell, although the odds are that they do, one may recall Pico’s famous lines, “[n]either a fixed abode, nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself have we given thee, Adam, to the end that according to thy longing according to thy judgment, thou mayest have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions thou thyself shalt desire” (“Oration” 224–225). The two playwrights I am discussing here, I argue, definitely did so.

The words “home,” “abode,” or “dwelling,” surely would have included both meanings, as in *Henry VI, Part I* La Pucelle says,

Then lead me hence—with whom I leave my curse.  
May never glorious sun reflex his beams  
Upon the country where you make *abode*,  
But darkness and the gloomy shade of death  
Environ you, till mischief and despair  
Drive you to break your necks, or hang yourselves.  
(5.3.86–91, emphasis added)

And in *Doctor Faustus* the title character cries out ecstatically on Helen’s re-entry,

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships  
 And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?  
 Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.  
 Her lips suck forth my soul. See, where it flies!  
 Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.  
 Here will I *dwell*, for heaven be in these lips,  
 And all is dross that is not Helena. (5.1.91–97, emphasis added)

Kállay and Mack would perhaps agree that, as the latter observes, “something in man seems to drive him to challenge authority and limitation,” yet at the same time something “in the world and within the challenger, makes action painful and destructive as well as exhilarating and informative” (192–193). One may be reminded of Yeats’s two antithetical gyres revolving against each other in the opposite direction: we both feel the need to challenge authority and limitation, and, at the same time, we long for authority, order, and limitation. It is this longing for authority, order, and limitation which informs the dream of the nostalgic world, which Mack notes “is easily deprived of whatever actual existence it may have had, but the dream of order on which it is based refuses to die” (192).

This dream aspect is perhaps the strongest (of the three plays discussed here) in *The Tempest*, where not only Gonzalo (“I’th’commonwealth . . . to feed my innocent people” [2.1.145, 162]) but many other characters as well have a dream or vision: Ferdinand has the masque, three men of sin have the harpy banquet, Caliban has the dream of music, Stephano and Trinculo have the “trumpery,” and the Boatswain and the crew have the vision of the renewed ship,<sup>6</sup> and the play itself is the testing of an ideal society in an ideal place at an ideal point of time.

The island *is* an ideal place for Prospero to test his magical skills, and so it is for Gonzalo, who is a dear old fool, but it proves to be a nightmarish place for others, like the three men of sin, as well as for the sailors, who feel fatally displaced and misplaced.<sup>7</sup> Prospero also feels misplaced and uprooted from his original appointed place of duke of Milan, as his bitter recollection clearly shows his anguish,

That he, in lieu o’ the premises  
 Of homage and I know not how much tribute,

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6 See Frye, *On Shakespeare* (177–178).

7 Cf. Frye on the spatially elastic nature of the island (*On Shakespeare* 177).

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Should presently *extirpate* me and mine  
Out of the dukedom, and confer fair Mila  
With all the honours on my brother; (1.2.123–127, emphasis added)

where “extirpate” literally means “uproot,” and can also mean eradicate, remove, exterminate or drive off (cf. Orgel 108), a continuation of the earlier tree metaphor “that now he was / The ivy which had hid my princely trunk, / And suck’d my verdure out on’t.” (1.2.85–87).

We may here introduce a relevant example from a somewhat different terrain. Tiffany Stern, writing on the second Blackfriars Playhouse as a place of nostalgia, defines one type of nostalgia as being not somewhere else or something else when she attributes the yearning in Shakespeare’s late plays to the melancholy of the Blackfriars atmosphere. She demonstrates that the inclusion of masques in the Blackfriars plays “show how problematic was, and is, nostalgia.” She argues how “cut down masques reprise aspects of a missed court production, but by so doing they also remind the audience that it is not actually at court—and that what it is seeing is a reduced and repositioned entertainment.” Nostalgia, she claims, is never satisfied, and “always has regret at its core.” Her conclusion being that “as ex-monastery, ex-parliament, ex-boy theatre and would-be court theatre, Blackfriars was always defined by being not somewhere or something else” (114).

Prospero, the ex-Milanese ex-duke, “sometime schoolmaster” (Bate 12), also ex-husband and ex-head of family, can also be defined by not being where he thinks he should be and not being what he is supposed to be. (There is some continuity provided, however, by his studies and by being a father to Miranda.) This discontent and regret originating from his uprootedness and misplacement is further highlighted by the series of masques characteristically conducted by Prospero within the play: the choice of genre confirming his conviction—in line with what Stern writes—that he should be somewhere else and someone else, as his reminiscences also bitterly demonstrate. He obviously considers his stay on the island only temporary,<sup>8</sup> a provisional arrangement, i.e. an interim. In the interim, the vacuum is filled with his revenge-plan to get back at his enemies and return home and restore his original condition—a motif similar to how Antonio seized the opportunity to fill the power vacuum created by Prospero’s being “rapt in secret studies.” What Prospero and

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8 Temporality is one of the key themes of the play, cf. Prospero’s “Of temporal royalties / He thinks me now incapable” (1.2.110–111).

the nemesis-group in *Macbeth* have in common is exactly this revenge-plan and the secondary task to restore something of the previous order in the state.<sup>9</sup>

This element, however muted, is not completely missing in *Doctor Faustus* either, where all Faustus is about to do and wishes to ever achieve can be interpreted as his revenge on God: if God cannot grant him omnipotence and omniscience, and a proper place in the universe where he can be himself, that is his own god, and fully utilise his ambitions and gifts, he will turn to God's enemy, Satan instead. In Marlowe's play then, nostalgia as displacement is most incisively demonstrated in Mephistopheles's looking back at his time in Heaven with anguish and frustration that he can never be allowed to enter again, as we have seen above. Faustus's desire to visit faraway lands and long-gone worlds, is another example of this attitude: a paradoxical wish to cure the pain over his lack of belonging by travelling—among other places—to the classical golden age where he again can only be a passenger passing through and an all-time outsider.

Beneath the surface similarities between the three plays regarding the characters' nostalgia for a one time "permanent" abode in the world and their wish to belong, there are some important differences of the types of nostalgia presented in them. As I have already mentioned above, Boym distinguishes two types of nostalgia: the restorative and the reflective. The first type "puts emphasis on nostos and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps," whereas the second "dwells in algia, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance" (*Future* 70). The first kind engages in "myth-making of history by means of a return to national symbols and myths" and reconstructing monuments of the past, while the second "lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time" (*Future* 70).

Given this wider and more refined context, it is perhaps safe to state that in *Macbeth* Shakespeare primarily presents the restorative aspect of nostalgia inasmuch as the play moves towards the final restoration of the unity and values of not only family and nation, but also of nature and time; yet it also takes time out of time and dreams of another place, another time,<sup>10</sup> as it can be seen in Macbeth's famous soliloquy in act 1 scene 7; therefore, reflective nostalgic tendencies also present themselves in that play.

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9 Cf. Frye, *Fools of Time* (17).

10 Cf. Boym's description of reflective nostalgia in *Future* (70).

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In *Doctor Faustus*, there is perhaps more reflection than actual attempt to reconstruct the one-time abode, as Mephistopheles's cry of anguish in act 1 scene 3 (quoted above) reflecting on his loss of home and his other utterances clearly testify. He replies to Faustus's "Was not that Lucifer an angel once?", "Yes, Faustus, and *most dearly loved of God.*" (1.3.66–67), or to Faustus's "And what are you that live with Lucifer?" he answers, "*Unhappy spirits* that fell with Lucifer, / Conspir'd against *our God* with Lucifer, / And are *for ever damn'd* with Lucifer" (1.3.71–74, emphasis added), which sounds like a bitter blame aimed at the Prince of Hell, a small-scale replication of Lucifer's rebellion against God.<sup>11</sup>

The surprising amount of irony (both verbal and dramatic)<sup>12</sup> in this play can also support the claim that it is reflective nostalgia that dominates in *Doctor Faustus*. As Boym points out, "restorative nostalgia takes itself dead seriously. Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, can be ironic and humorous. It reveals that longing and critical thinking are not opposed to one another, as affective memories do not absolve one from compassion, judgment or critical reflection" (*Future* 81–82).

In *The Tempest*, however, the two tendencies seem to be more balanced, as one plotline centres around the theme of conspiracy, which Boym finds typical of restorative nostalgia. This kind, she observes, incorporates two main narrative plots: "the restoration of origins and the conspiracy theory" (*Future* 72). "The conspiratorial worldview," she argues, "reflects a nostalgia for a transcendental cosmology and a simple premodern conception of good and evil. The conspiratorial worldview is based on a single transhistorical plot, a Manichaeic battle of good and evil and the inevitable scapegoating of the mythical enemy" (*Future* 72), which perfectly describes Prospero's and Malcolm's characteristic presentation of their enemies (Sycorax, Caliban and Antonio; Macbeth and Lady Macbeth) as all too black, highlighting their own "whiteness."

Beyond these restorative tendencies, *The Tempest* also incorporates reflective nostalgia, as in Boym's view, this kind "can foster a creative self" (*Future* 417). In her 2007 essay quoted above, Boym puts it slightly differently when paraphrasing herself, which I find both revealing and useful: "Instead of recreation of the lost home, reflective nostalgia can foster *the creation of aesthetic individuality*" ("Discontents" 15,

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11 Note the parallel between the possessive, "*our God*" and Faustus's repeated utterances, "My God" towards the end of the play, expressing his growing despair.

12 One relevant example is Faustus's famous exclamation, "Come, I think hell's a fable" (2.1.130) addressed to Mephistopheles, whom he has just conjured up from hell.

emphasis added).<sup>13</sup> Prospero's magic, which he also calls (his so potent) Art, can be seen as such an effort to create for himself a purely aesthetic individuality, which, however, he will have to relinquish at the end of his twelve years on the island.

Further distinguishing between the two types of nostalgia Boym writes, "if restorative nostalgia ends up reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland in an attempt to conquer and spatialise time, reflective nostalgia cherishes shattered fragments of memory and temporalizes space" (*Future* 81). In *The Tempest*, both of these can be seen, as Prospero manages to restore himself, his family, and his dukedom on the island and at the same time, he heavily reflects upon his memories, in which he incorporates the memories of others (Miranda, Ariel, Caliban). The island thus becomes a fixed place not only in space but in time as well: governed by his auspicious star on the horizon for a limited length of time, the play is very much time-bound. Moreover, the island functions as a chronotope, a space-time continuum, which is repeatedly confirmed as both the origin and end-point of dramatic discourse and is a key stage symbol in itself.

Time undeniably plays a crucial role in all three plays. Although out of the three characters discussed here perhaps Macbeth is the most obsessed with time, especially the future aspect of it, a similar effort to fix one's future can be seen on the part of Faustus as well, with the price very clearly fixed in the bond. Prospero also wants to fix the future especially as related to Miranda and the future of the dukedom. The past, however, is treated entirely differently in the three plays: it is most heavily burdened in *The Tempest*, where the years before the past twelve years is what matters the most; in *Macbeth*, it is the immediate past that has the heaviest impact on the action; whereas in *Doctor Faustus*, the protagonist has last minute regrets and treats the last day and every hour and every minute of the last day as if they were already over, seeing his future as if it was already over. In this respect we can find an ironic frame established by his beginning and end: "Consummatum est" (2.1.74, a-text) and "But mine [his soul] must live still to be plagu'd in hell" (5.2.112). And although the longest period of time lapsing, 24 years, is in this play, the nostalgia is not in that he looks back on his life as it was 24 years before—although his last pledge is, "I'll burn my books" (5.2.123)—as he never really belonged then and there. As we have seen before, the more poignant case in point is raised by Mephistopheles, who elucidates how he feels after having tasted and then lost Heaven in an anguished speech in which time is treated timelessly.

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13 This essay is adapted from her book *The Future of Nostalgia*.



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The nostalgic thus always seems to be stuck in an in-between state, neither here nor entirely there, neither entirely in the past, nor wholly living in the present, as if the *threshold* between the two times and places has expanded, gaining a third dimension to incorporate and embrace the nostalgic person. This may recall Boym's two types of nostalgia with their respective spatialisation of time and the temporalisation of space. But it may also recall Heidegger's discussion of pain as "the intimacy of the between which bears *world* and *thing* toward each other" (Caputo 151). In examining Trakl's poem, *A Winter Evening*, Heidegger writes that "[p]ain has turned the threshold to stone," and concludes that

pain indeed tears asunder, it separates, yet so that at the same time it draws everything to itself, gathers it to itself. Its rending, as a separating that gathers, is at the same time that drawing which, like the pen-drawing of a plan or sketch, draws and joins together what is held apart in separation. Pain is the joining agent in the rending that divides and gathers. Pain is the joining of the rift. The joining is the *threshold*. It settles the between, the middle of the two that are separated in it. Pain joins the rift of the difference. Pain is the difference itself. (Heidegger 202)

The basic experience of the nostalgic is pain, caused by the compulsion to be forever in-between, on the road, on the threshold. The pain is the difference, which at the same time defines the gap and makes it possible to overcome or bridge the gap; homesickness—note the origin of the German (Swiss) term *nostalgia*—can indeed take/bring you home. This pain or difference felt between the world and the thing on the threshold of coming home, or what Boym phrased as feeling homesick and being sick of home at the same time, this everyday feeling of longing to be home and when home longing to be elsewhere, this is what the three plays discuss from their respective angles. Both Macbeth and his opponents want to belong to an orderly state, both politically and mentally, yet Macbeth only feels the rift, see his "here, / But here, upon this bank and shoal of time / We'd jump the life to come" (1.7.5–7), as if the *here* was already cleft into two; Prospero stranded on the island repeats and is about to re-enact what he has done before at home, which can be called one way of managing homesickness; and Faustus also seems to suffer from the traditional confines of time

and space belonging wholly to neither.<sup>14</sup> Prospero is likewise constantly on the move, enroute in *The Tempest*, the sea being the perfect symbol of this constant change, like the flying Dutchman, or the Wanderer, looking back with pain on the land he left behind, and is compelled to always take his actual state only as something temporary, like the island, and he also looks forward to returning to the original home where so many things went wrong, and where he was wronged so badly.

All three plays tend to synthesise the two types of nostalgia—reflective and restorative—although in varying proportions, with *The Tempest* displaying the synthesis in its most full; and if not in the figure of the central character like Prospero, then divided between various characters like Malcolm and Macbeth or Mephistopheles and Faustus respectively.<sup>15</sup> Thus, we find here a complex and multi-faceted representation of both aspects of the term: *nostos* and *algia*. On the one hand, the image of the lost home and its potential and attempted reconstruction (*nostos*); and on the other, the topos of painful longing or reflexion itself (*algia*). A third aspect, however, should also be considered: the delay of homecoming, the temporal and spatial gap, this hiatus, distance, difference, or rift, which articulates the concept and that seems fundamental to the plays considered here. Delay, the temporal equivalent of the spatial concept of the threshold is essential in articulating the problem of nostalgia in all three plays: the interim makes the drama between losing the safety of one's homeland and the painful longing to recreate it. In other words, time-gaps—between present plans of rebellion in *Macbeth* and their future execution; twelve years in *The Tempest* between Prospero's banishment and his revenge; 24 years of vain pleasure in *Doctor Faustus*<sup>16</sup>—as well as spatial gaps—Milan vs. Prospero's island; and perhaps most complexly in *Macbeth*'s chronotopic image of “here, / But here, upon this bank and

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14 Boym comments that the “nostalgic feels stifled with the conventional confines of time and space” (*Future* 13).

15 I am aware that this conclusion is not unlike that of Boss, for her three categories were also found to be “similar in some respects and quite antithetical in others, though easily distinguishable by an audience familiar with all three.” This aspect of the approach I am ready to adopt.

16 About a week passes in *Macbeth*; in *The Tempest*, 12 years divide the prelude and the aftermath; and in *Doctor Faustus*, 24 years are given to the hero to find a “place of permanent abode.” That time is indeed problematised in all three plays as shown by the technique of compression and reflection as well: one week vs. ten years in *Macbeth*, four hours vs. 12 years in *The Tempest*, and in *Doctor Faustus*, the last of the last 24 hours vs. 24 years. In Holinshed, a decade passes between *Macbeth* becoming king and his further misdeeds, as Freud famously observed in “Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytic Work” (322).

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shoal of time / We'd jump the life to come"—both serve to connect and to divide, ultimately articulating in poetic language the complexity of the concept of nostalgia.

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