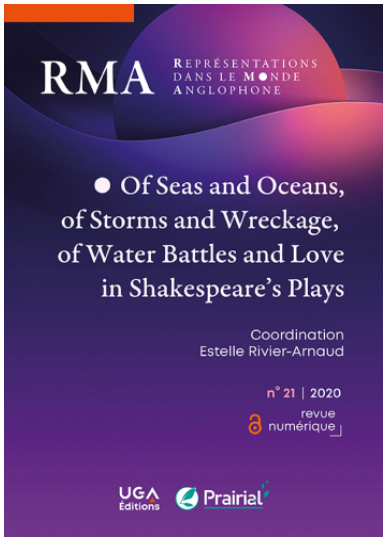

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Of Seas and Oceans, of Storms and Wreckage, of Water Battles and Love in Shakespeare's Plays

Edited by Estelle Rivier-Arnaud

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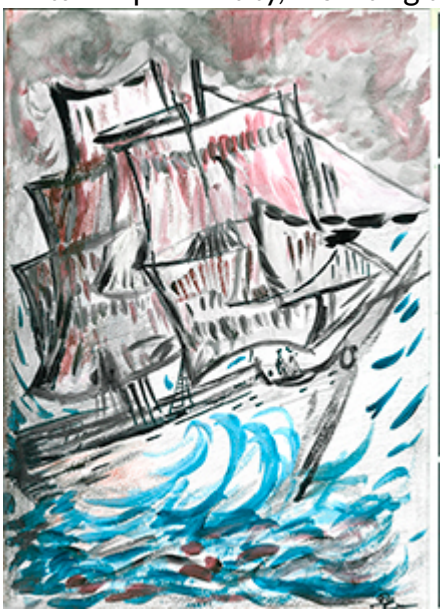
INTRODUCTION

Perhaps because Shakespeare's homeland was surrounded by the ocean, water is a constant source of inspiration in his plays. In Early-modern times, sea lanes represented voyages, escapes, explorations and conquests. They were a means to protect oneself from the enemy and a source of pride (remember Elizabeth's victory over the Invincible Armada). In the poet's canon, the sea conveys a vast palette of images and emotions such as dilemmas, loss, love, battles, success and fate. It also provides the script with a rhythmic pattern possibly reflecting the ebb and flow of waves on the shores.

The sea can be on- and off-stage; it is a structuring device often used for characterization; it can also embody human qualities—like ambition and force—and, last but not least, it is the emblem of Shakespeare's unfathomable imagination. In his final romance, *The Tempest*, which is central in this volume, the sea becomes a climactic symbol of regeneration: it "permeates the essence of the play […], and leaves the characters and audience convinced that 'though the seas threaten, they are merciful'", to quote Tony Jason Stafford in *Shakespeare's Use of the Sea*, 1996 (3–4). In this play, the sea translates the author's mature art and his elaborate vision of a world that has changed and which the theatrical space can hardly encompass. And yet, what Shakespeare's company did and the stage-directors still try to do today was to represent this kaleidoscopic and metamorphic entity, resorting to another bondless tool: the art of performance.



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ISSUE CONTENTS

Of Seas and Oceans, of Storms and Wreckage, of Water Battles and Love in Shakespeare's Plays

Introduction

Où il est question de mers et d'océans, de tempêtes et de naufrages, de guerre et d'amour sur les flots dans les pièces de Shakespeare

Estelle Rivier-Arnaud

DOI : 10.35562/rma.906

TEXT

Fragment of ship 1

Original sketch by Baptiste Arnaud.

> **Viola**
> What country, friends, is this?
> **Captain**
> This is Illyria, lady.
> **Viola**

> And what should I do in Illyria?
> My brother he is in Elysium.
> Perchance he is not drown'd: what think you, sailors?
> **Captain**
> […] To a strong mast that lived upon the sea;
> Where, like Arion on the dolphin's back,
> I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves
> So long as I could see. (*Twelfth Night*, I.2.2–4/13–16)

Fragment of ship 2

Original sketch by Baptiste Arnaud.

1 This collection of essays results from a seminar that was held in Rome on 9–12 July 2019. It was organized by ESRA—the European Shakespeare Research Association—and convened by Dana Monah from the University of Iasi (Romania) and myself. As the theme of the whole congress was entitled "Shakespeare and European Geographies: Centralities and Elsewhere", this seminar, mostly dedicated to Shakespeare's plays that involve maritime events (such as tempests, wreckage or voyages), and to their scenographies, welcomed specialists in performance-studies, gender and blue-studies as well as linguists and archivists. A selection of papers has been included in this volume, in particular those that focused on idiosyncratic productions of Shakespeare's "liquid" narratives.

2 The various contexts in which Shakespeare's plays are set cross borders. Some places are easily spotted on maps, some others are imaginary and insubstantial. As we read the plays, our minds travel; as we attend the performances, our eyes explore materialized areas thanks to either elaborate or suggestive décors. Shakespearean characters are often attracted by the outside, either to conquer new territories or to flee from their own. Whether in tragedies, histories, romances or comedies, these unknown places contribute to shape new horizons, beyond the stage scope and the sixteenth-century audiences' imaginary borders.

3 How did Shakespeare describe the places that neither he nor his audience knew? How did different practitioners position themselves with respect to the "showing" *versus* "telling" dichotomy or to the relationship between the verbal and the non-verbal component of theatre performance? These essays tackle the sea routes and turbulent voyages from a textual and metaphorical approach as well as from the performative angle.

4 **Fiammetta Dionisio**'s "Shakespeare's Imperfect 'Art of Navigation'. Controlling the Forces of the Sea in *The Tempest*" opens the volume. Her analysis explores three geographical and temporal periods: John Dee's philosophical observations on sea navigation—*The General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation* dating from 1577—and their benefits (including those involving imperialistic goals). Then Shakespeare's *Tempest* (1611), and more particularly Prospero's own art of navigation, that both mirrors and contradicts Dee's views. And finally the production of *Nella Tempesta* by Motus Theatre Company presented at the TransAmérique Festival in Montreal (2013). Her essay convincingly displays the theories of the 1570s that might have served as a backdrop to Shakespeare's *Tempest* and to the exploration of America by Early modern ships. It also provides a thorough insight into the role and identity of Prospero in the play, and in the meaning of the various storms that humanity may go through, including that of the Self in opposition to the Other (i.e. Caliban—the colonized). The work of Motus uses abstract notions (Prospero stands out of Dee's so-called "perfect" sea route) to be experimented physically on stage. The result sounds rather fascinating and proves how the stage informs Shakespeare's play in its historical context, and *vice versa*.

5 The next chapter, written by **Patrick Le Bœuf** and entitled "A Shipwreck with No Ship and No Sea: Craig's Ideas on *Tempest* I.1", also explores the possibilities that Shakespeare's *Tempest* provides the stage with. In this essay, the author minutely accounts for the scenographies that Edward Gordon Craig drew and imagined between 1905 and 1956. As he explains, Craig never actually produced the play but shared his views with John Gielgud and Peter Brook who staged it with the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1957. Craig's final and ideal project was a tempest with no sea and no ship: the storm occurred in Prospero's mind who was seen rocking on a chair on stage. Craig's views were rather idiosyncratic in the first half of the 20th century, but they no longer sound fanciful today. The essay thus highlights the way in which the artist, born in 1872, had very clairvoyant opinions on the way in which Shakespeare's tricky devices —such as creating a storm—could be practically and efficiently performed.

6 In "Toward a Blue Gender Studies: The Sea, Diana, and Feminine Virtue in *Pericles*", **Alexander Lowe McAdams** looks at the Shakespearean play—*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*—from the angle of gender and blue cultural studies as well as eco-critical studies. The figure of Diana is central in this study as the Goddess controls the tides and is summoned by the various characters of the play to confront the dangers of the sea. She protects Marina's virginity when in the brothel, and helps present the shipwreck as a rather positive event. Indeed there, the eponymous protagonist meets Thaisa, his future wife, once she has been "driven upon shore" (see II.3.79–82). As a female, Diana (Poseidon being the Greek male counterpart and Neptune, the Latin one) embodies benevolence that eventually overpowers masculine destructive force. The author writes: "The goddess functions as a 'dynamic agent' in the course of the sea's vicissitudes and provides a prevailing logic over a watery world otherwise bereft of meaningful pattern." The essay sheds a worthy light on the gender implications of *Pericles* and shows how both ambiguous and paramount the sea is in this romance.

7 Another maritime play, *The Comedy of Errors*, is the main focus of **Efterpi Mitsi**'s article—"The Travails of *The Comedy of Errors* in Athens". Just like *The Tempest*, the play begins with the description of a shipwreck. The setting—the port city of Ephesus (which differs from

the Adriatic in the main source, i.e. Plautus's *Menaechmi*)—underlies the Athenian production directed by Katerina Evangelatos (2018–19) that the author precisely analyses. A variety of styles and influences have fed this production: the circus, the ballet, slapstick comedy, silent movies and masks. Such variety has also served to address the themes of optical illusion, loss of identity, and double images. To draw a parallel with Alexander Lowe McAdams' approach, "because the sea has separated the twins [the two Antipholuses and the two Dromios] from the beginning of the play, [It] is not merely portrayed as a destructive force but also implies that the very notion of individuality is fluid and elusive", the author writes at the beginning. Efterpi Mitsi's essay finally questions the frenetic rhythm of Evangelatos' production and the excessive mixture of comic genres that shape new horizons for the Greek audience, exposing the composite material and lineage of the text.

8 With **Dana Monah**'s contribution—"Metatheatrical Storms in Georges Lavaudant's *Une Tempête…* (2010) and Oskaras Koršunovas' *Miranda* (2011)"—we further explore *The Tempest*. The author compares a French and a Lithuanian production and explains that the very different sets (a bare stage *versus* an indoor bookish décor) and cast (ambitious on the one hand and minimalist on the other) however seemed to proceed alike. They both emphasized the metatheatricality of Shakespeare's play and showed how the magic is quintessential in the poet's art. The two key stage directors compared by the author proved that modern stagecraft is not synonymous with complexity. Despite their singular choices, they created the illusion of the tempest with simple means and, as Dana Monah stresses, presented the performative event as though it was "negotiated in the very present of the stage, under the spectator's eyes, as part of a ritual (Korsunovas) or as [a kind of] theatrical improvisation (Lavaudant)".

9 These two examples can be linked to another very daring production of the same play that further questions the limits of theatrical experience. In "Mors Bona, or, Storm in a Tea Cup? Shakespeare's *Tempest* in a Puppet and Live-Actor Production", **Gabriella Reuss** minutely analyses Hungarian director Rémusz Szikszai's puppet *mise en scène*. After explaining how puppetry has been part of the country's artistic tradition for ages, the author sheds a new light on

how the latter enables the actors and the viewers to reach the confines of the Shakespearean source. The imagery can be expressively conveyed by the fake bodies of the marionettes who figuratively mirror the inner moods that the actors enliven. Interestingly, the author wonders why Szikszai, who "meant to target an adult audience with the subject of leaving the worldly stage, chose the puppet medium to convey his message in a culture where puppetry in people's minds still equals the somewhat low and silly entertainment for little children". Here however, the mixture of puppets and live-actors in a rather sophisticated set managed to raise matters of alterity (the encounter between several nations) and offered clever solutions (such as ventriloquism, multiple focuses, etc.) to the various "problems" linked to bringing water on stage, thus creating a believable storm, even though in a "teacup".

10 Curiously, the set elaborated by Szikszai was reminiscent of Doran's 2016 production with the RSC, i.e. the ribs of the giant wreck of an admiral vessel. This other grandiose production of *The Tempest* is part of the study written by **Estelle Rivier-Arnaud** in "Doran's and Taymor's *Tempest*: Digitalizing the Storm, a Dialogue between Theatre and Cinema". Even if she mainly concentrates on the way the storm in I.1 was designed in both productions, one on stage and the other on screen, the author also questions the symbiotic means theatre and cinema use to converse, influence each other and eventually fuse. Doran worked with Intel Pentium to create a digital production, resorting to an orgy of stage effects (among which CGI). The result was technically astounding as well as beautiful. Julie Taymor also used elaborate techniques and camerawork (between handheld and steady camera) to create beautiful tableaux. Still, both productions do question the limits of art or the limit *between* arts. For indeed, what is expected in a theatrical performance in comparison with a cinematographic adaptation? Shakespeare is popular in both, but to what extent can new technologies convey the poetry of the script when the latter is so overwhelmed with the aesthetical attractiveness of images?

11 Finally, **Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine**, in her "Pascal Rambert's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1995): Deep in Love and in Water", guides us towards other shores, back in French theatrical tradition when in the late 20th century, the excessive use of water to stage some famous

episodes of *Antony and Cleopatra* was unconvincingly viewed by the audience, the actors and the reviewers alike. The author remembers her own experience as a spectator and underlines the difficulty she had to retrace the various steps of the production, the archives of which having ironically drowned in a flood since! As a matter of fact, rather minimalistic effects were used in this otherwise demanding play until the second half of the production when the stage became a pool of water. Alas, it was neither innovative (Pina Bausch and Patrice Chéreau had already done it) nor beauteous (the actors, soaked to the bone, looked rather ridiculous in the end). This lively analysis draws the volume to its close in a rather entertaining way, even if it also triggers and answers puzzling interrogations such as the showing *vs* telling dichotomy that is at stake whenever Shakespeare's plays are staged.

12 In this volume, as the reader will discover, the papers thus focus on the impact of seas and oceans in Shakespeare's plays, and raise a variety of issues linked to these natural elements: how for instance are water battles (against the enemy or against nature) dealt with, on page and on stage? How do female compared to male characters (whether they are drawn from the mythology or not) react when they are the victims of a shipwreck and, as a consequence, when they are lost and exiled? How are the sea routes key elements in the praxis? How were they possibly performed in Shakespeare's time and after? How do they inform us about the European geography Shakespeare and his contemporaries had in mind? How can new technologies in stage scenery today produce images that convey the illusion that the performance transcends the borders of representation? And finally how do all these stage devices address cultural and political issues of the performance?

13 To answer these questions, as the volume exemplifies, a play is undoubtedly central: *The Tempest* even though, as some of the chapters prove, it is far from being the only play to speak of storms, wreckage, loss, gender, identity and love. But Prospero's magic spells (see below) are so breath-taking and challenging for who listens to them carefully that any stage-director who would not attempt to actually *show* them might sound unimaginative, at least unambitious.

> **Prospero**
> Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,
> And ye that on the sands with printless foot
> Do chase the ebbing Neptune and do fly him
> When he comes back; you demi-puppets that
> By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
> Whereof the ewe not bites, and you whose pastime
> Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
> To hear the solemn curfew; **by whose aid,**
> **Weak masters though ye be, I have bedimm'd**
> **The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,**
> **And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault**
> **Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder**
> **Have I given fire and rifted Jove's stout oak**
> **With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory**
> **Have I made shake and by the spurs pluck'd up**
> **The pine and cedar: graves at my command**
> **Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth**
> **By my so potent art.**
> (*The Tempest*. V.1.33–50. My emphasis)

Fragment of ship 3

Original sketch by Baptiste Arnaud.

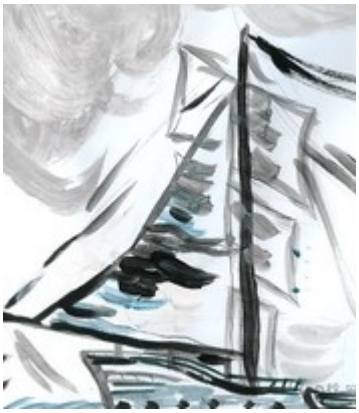
14 **Acknowledgments**

I owe many thanks to all the contributors of this volume. Their constant support to both the seminar in Rome and the publication of their research paper in the present journal has been very encouraging and inspiring. I am also very appreciative of all those who presented at the seminar, including those whose papers are not included in the current volume. They all played a crucial part in the Congress.

It must be added that this international volume fuelled by the experience and analysis of such a variety of scholars would not have been possible without the financial and moral support of the ILCEA4 (UGA), which I deeply thank too.

And finally, I wish to thank Dana Monah and Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine who were also particularly helpful in the whole process, as well as my son who accompanied me on the way to Rome where he designed the illustrations scattered on these pages while listening to remote tales of storms and oceans in a language that he did not know.

Fragment of ship 4



Original sketch by Baptiste Arnaud.

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Mots-clés

Shakespeare (William), mise en scène, eau, mer et océan, naufrage, poésie, illusion, scénographie

Keywords
Shakespeare (William), performance, water, sea and oceans, wreckage, poetry, illusion, scenography

AUTHOR

Estelle Rivier-Arnaud
Estelle Rivier-Arnaud is a professor at the University Grenoble Alpes, France, and a member of the CEMRA (ILCEA4) as well as of the Performance Lab (Idex), of ESRA (European Shakespeare Research Association) and of the Radac scientific society (Recherches sur les Arts Dramatiques Anglophones Contemporains). She has published various books and articles on the scenography of Shakespeare's plays, among which *Shakespeare dans la maison de Molière* (Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012), *Shakespeare in Performance* (co-ed. Eric C. Brown, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013). She also currently works on contemporary drama, in particular on the adaptation of Shakespeare's plays (*Rewriting Shakespeare For and By the Contemporary British Playwrights* (co-ed. Michael Dodson, Cambridge Scholars P., 2017). She has recently co-edited an online collection of essays entitled *Romeo and Juliet: From Page to Image* (co-ed. Eric C. Brown and Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine), *Cahiers Shakespeare en devenir*, no. 14, December 2019, dir. Pascale Drouet, <https://shakespeare.edel.univ-poitiers.fr/index.php?id=1563>).
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Shakespeare's Imperfect "Art of Navigation": Controlling the Forces of the Sea in *The Tempest* (1611)

L'art imparfait de la navigation : contrôler les forces marines dans The Tempest *(1611)*

Fiammetta Dionisio

DOI : 10.35562/rma.919

OUTLINE

I. John Dee: Prospero's model and *The Perfect Art of Navigation* (1577)
II. *The Tempest* (1611): Shakespeare's Imperfect "Art of Navigation"
III. Motus' *Nella tempesta* (2013): reclaiming the forces of the sea for a socially engaged art
Conclusion: from ancient illusions to contemporary utopias

TEXT

Acknowledgements
This article stems from my contribution to the seminar "Of Seas and Oceans, of Storms and Wreckages, of Water Battles and Love in Shakespeare's Plays" convened by Dana Monah (University of Iasi) and Estelle Rivier-Arnaud (Grenoble Alpes University) at the University of Roma Tre during the 2019 ESRA *Congress. I am grateful to my postdoctoral mentor Maria Del Sapio Garbero (University of Roma Tre) for her essential advice and support throughout the delicate phase of conceiving this study. I am also grateful to Giulia Mattioli for inviting me to see Motus' performance MDLSX in* 2015*, thus introducing me to the company to whom the third section of the article is dedicated. I would like also to record my gratitude to Peter Douglas (University of Roma Tre), as his generous help in the latter phase of my work has been more precious than he might think.*

I. John Dee: Prospero's model and *The Perfect Art of Navigation* (1577)

1 While discussing Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in 1972, the Italian scholar Furio Jesi proposed that the magnificent character of Prospero might have been inspired by a real person. Indeed, in an issue of the journal *Comunità* (1972, 272–303), he proposes that the overthrown Duke of Milan is based on Queen Elizabeth's personal astrologer, John Dee (1527–1608).

2 Not merely an astrologer, Dee was also a hermetic philosopher, an astronomer, a mathematician and a geographer, as well as an early imperialist. His wisdom reflected the dynamic dialogue of the early modern period that still connected various spheres of knowledge before the separation of philosophy and science occurred in the modern age. Dee's polymathic familiarity with different fields of knowledge is what makes him an undisputed representative of the ideal Renaissance man. An enthusiast admirer of Vitruvius, whose *De Architectura* had been rediscovered in 1414, Dee adheres so strongly to the Renaissance model of humanism that we can imagine him corresponding fully to the Vitruvian man that Leonardo drew at the end of the 15th century. Fitting perfectly into the geometric figures of square and circle, every part of this ideal body is integral to a universal design based on harmonious correspondence. Similarly, Dee is a supremely early modern figure, who strove to unite the human microcosm and the universal macrocosm by means of systematic knowledge. Considered in this light, even the philosopher's tireless efforts to communicate with the "angels" reflect the intensity of his thirst for wisdom. Conceived as benign intermediaries between the human and the divine spheres, these celestial entities were the ultimate beings, capable of delivering God's truth to a devoted scholar.

3 However, largely on the basis of the mysterious continental mission he undertook with his partner Edward Kelley, Dee's reputation has been overshadowed for centuries by charges of sorcery, his influential persona reduced to that of an obscure conjurer of demons.[1] Like Prospero, who was deposed by his own brother while "rapt in secret studies" (1.2.77), the English magus apparently

ventured so far in his "Art" as to be judged unfit for his role at court, leaving him feeling that he had been betrayed by the people he trusted the most. Like Shakespeare's hero, Dee was a castaway, a victim of the political and religious upheavals that marked many European countries between the 16th and 17th centuries. Nevertheless, throughout his life, Dee managed to survive the various witch-hunts that occasionally broke out, and to move nimbly across the shifting political and religious sands of early modern Europe. Yet the fact that he was able to survive while others perished is only one of the specific features that link Dee to the hero of *The Tempest*. Indeed, in *John Dee e il suo sapere* [John Dee and his wisdom], Jesi also suggests that Uriel, the name of one of the angels that Dee conjured up during his *séances* with Kelley, bears a striking resemblance to that of Ariel, the airy spirit that Prospero recruits as his assistant. Moreover, Jesi reminds us that an episode curiously reminiscent of Prospero's masque in 4.1 took place while the young Dee was at Cambridge. Indeed, Dee distinguished himself as a talented director at Trinity College, and when he presented a performance of Aristophanes' *Pax*, his handling of the stage machinery was so expertly done that the astonished public suspected him of recurring to magic. Jesi also emphasizes that, like Prospero, Dee was the owner of an immense library, which was actually Elizabethan England's most extensive collection of books. This collection was so enormous that the philosopher's house at Mortlake became an important centre for contemporary students and scholars between the 1570s and 1583, the infamous year when, with their owner away on the Continent, the library was ransacked and many of the books stolen. However, as the library catalogue Dee carefully compiled testifies, he managed to circumvent some of the loss as he had taken what he believed to be his most precious books with him on the ship that carried him across the Channel. [2] This fact might well be echoed in Prospero's recollection at the beginning of *The Tempest* when he says that before being exiled he was "furnished / from [his] own library with volumes that / [he] prize[d] above [his] dukedom" (1.2.166–168; Jesi 272–303).

4 Among Dee's collection, which amounted to 170 manuscripts and 2,500 printed books (Sears 125), there was certainly a number of texts that he might have had in common with Prospero. Indeed, Dee's library catalogue included many works pertaining to Neo-Platonism

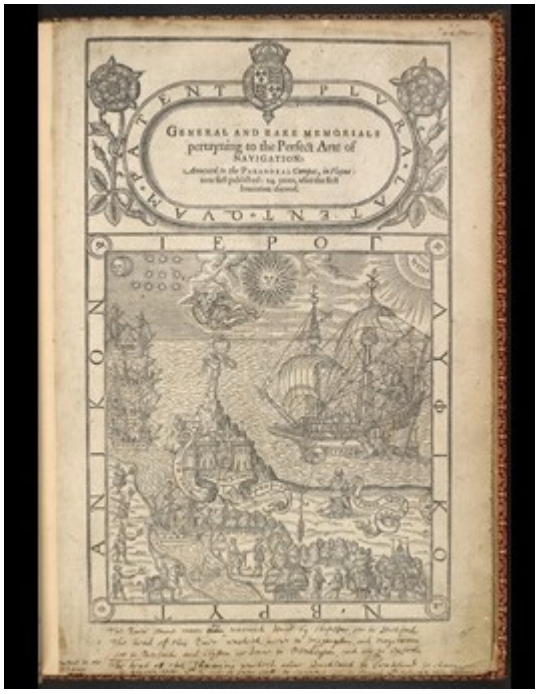
and Hermeticism, including Plato, Zoroaster, Orpheus and Iamblichus, the *Corpus hermeticum*, once attributed to the mythical Hermes Trismegistus, Cornelius Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*, Francesco Giorgi's *De harmonia mundi*, and writings by Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, as well as works by Galen and Paracelsus. Dee's library was not limited to texts produced for those intent on exploring magic and Hermeticism; it also included an extensive collection of works of ancient poetry and drama, as well as an enormous amount of books pertaining to science, geography, astronomy and mathematics (French 40–61). Moreover, the shelves of his library must have also held a series of manuscripts and printed books that he himself had written. Among these works were less widely-read books, like the highly esoteric *Monas Hieroglyphica* (1564), as well as more popular works, like the *Preface* to Henry Billingsey's translation of Euclid (1570), and a later treatise entitled *The General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation* (1577).

5 Both in the *Preface* and in the *Memorials*, the author offers practical advice to navigators, artisans and specialists that is based on his deep knowledge of mathematics, geometry, architecture, geography and navigation. It is precisely Dee's knowledge in these fields that provides us with another important link with Prospero. This link, as we will see, will enable us to extend Jesi's comparison between these figures from the discourse of Renaissance occult wisdom and magic to the more practical field of navigation and, consequently, to early modern ideas of imperialism and colonization. A friend of the Dutch cartographers Abraham Ortelius and Gerard Mercator, who published the *Theatrum orbium terrarum* (1570) and the *Atlas sive cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica mundi et fabricati figura* (1585) respectively, Dee himself was an experienced cartographer. Indeed, he was one of the leading authorities in map making and topography in the Elizabethan period, and would organize specific training schemes for navigators, furnishing them with precise instructions for their overseas expeditions. [3] Not only was Dee actively engaged in advising travellers in order to guarantee them successful expeditions, but, as his private *Diary* intriguingly testifies, he also cultivated a personal interest in the lands that his pupils were meant to discover. In 1580, Dee made an agreement with

Sir Humphrey Gilbert who, being about to make an expedition to North America, would grant any new land discovered north of the 50th parallel to his expert adviser. Two years later, Sir George Peckham and Sir Thomas Gerrard assured him a property of 5,000 acres in a colony they were planning to set up on the North American coast (Fenton 8, 46). These expeditions were not successful, and Dee never came into possession of any of the lands he was promised. However, these failures were not enough to discourage him. In fact, in 1583 he went so far as to draw up an alliance with Gilbert's brother Adrian and the explorer John Davis, whose aim was to explore and occupy the lands that Sir Humphrey had not managed to reach (French 179).

6 Dee's interest in New World discoveries was not limited to giving individual advice and taking a share in eventual settlements; on the contrary, he was concerned with the complete education of English adventurers. As we will see, it is precisely through the *Memorials* that he intended to offer them the most useful and updated compendium on navigation that the Elizabethan era had to offer. [4] Indeed, in the opening pages of the book, not only does the author invite the Queen to extend the limits of her realm to overseas, but also announces that he will provide the monarch and her subjects with all practical means for this to be accomplished. In Dee's view, and in the light of his extensive studies on mathematics, geometry, geography and cartography, navigation is a perfectly practicable skill, and the sea a dimension where seafarers, if adequately trained, can feel particularly at ease. Dee's beliefs on the control of the seas are epitomized in the beautiful frontispiece of the treatise, a drawing in his own hand that he also defines as a "ΙΕΡΟΓΔΥΦΙΚΟΝ ΒΡΥΤΑΝΝΙΚΟΝ" (Figure 1).

Figure 1. – Frontespiece of John Dee's *The General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation* (1577).



British Library Board, General Reference Collection 48.h.18.

7 Here, Elizabeth I is represented sitting at the helm of an imperial ship labelled "ΕΥΡΩΠΗ", turned towards a naked *Occasio* standing on a fortified citadel and offering the Queen a laurel crown. A kneeling figure in front of the ship, we are told in the text, represents the "RES PUBL.[ICA] BRYTANICA" (53). Holding a paper scroll, she humbly petitions the Queen for the construction of a powerful navy. Ten stars, the moon, the sun, and a burning sphere bearing the Hebrew Tetragrammaton appear in the sky, along with the archangel Michael, the combined symbols of divine and astral benevolence. Near the citadel, which is being approached by a large fleet, two figures seem to be making a deal, as if to conclude a treaty, while a skull is half-visible on the right side of the image, as if to warn of the misfortunes that await if the monarchy does not rise to this "OCCASION" (53). The ordered presentation of the elements that make up this harmonious image reveals Dee's confident beliefs in the exercise of navigation and sea control, a confidence that is also underlined by the marginal position given to the skull in the layout of

the composition, thus confirming the far-reaching colonial plans that he had in mind (French 182–187).

8 Indeed, while being only one of the several books on navigation that were published in the Elizabethan era, the *Memorials* also represent a compendium of Dee's theories about what he conceived the British imperial mission to be. It is in these very pages that Dee gives voice to the idea of an emerging "Brytish Impire" (3), which is viewed as the result of a large-scale colonial enterprise. The imperialist project Dee argues for closely mirrors the narrative thrust of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* with its claim that the British people belonged to the ancient lineage of the Roman Brutus, a legend appropriated to support Elizabethan expansionist plans. [5] However, Dee's imperial project is not limited to the newly discovered lands of "Atlantis", as the philosopher termed the Americas (2). As his biographers have demonstrated, territorial conquest was only part of a more far-reaching plan that encompassed the spiritual domain of the American Indians, this further goal being to disseminate a reformed Christian faith among the populations inhabiting their lands (French 179). Conceived in an epoch of great religious controversy and bitter intolerance, Dee's vision of Christianity is generally considered to be very inclusive, aimed at softening the contrasts that lacerated the consciences of the faithful in 16th century Europe. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Dee's tolerance in this respect is replaced by distinctly narrow views when it comes to non-Christian religions. In line with contemporary ideas with regard to native peoples, Dee saw the American Indians as heathens who were naturally in need of conversion. On the receiving end of an apparently magnanimous mission, the native in Dee's imperialistic vision is irreparably disconnected from the European. A mere instrument in the economy of an expansionistic plan that has the incontestable conversion of the pagan to Christianity at its core, the colonized individual stands as the heedless object in a discourse in which the European is the Self, while the native is the Other. For Dee, the Other, just like the seas and oceans he was so eager to chart, is conceived as a category entirely subject to the control of the Self. A control that if, on the one hand, it purports to be a large-scale mission aimed at the enlightenment of individual conscience, on the other, is the outcome

of an enterprise conceived from an exclusively Eurocentric perspective, and thus from an inevitably biased one.

II. *The Tempest* (1611): Shakespeare's Imperfect "Art of Navigation"

9 The cultural and political premises underpinning Dee's *Memorials* throw light on, and encourage, a specific reading of *The Tempest*, especially as the character of Prospero has often been interpreted in the light of issues connected to British imperialism. This reading is rooted in the play's colonial politics, which, particularly since the rise of Postcolonial studies, [6] have been investigated by many critics. In effect, if Dee played such an important role in promoting the British colonial project, and if he himself has often been considered a possible model for Prospero, it might also follow that Dee's role in early British colonial efforts influenced Shakespeare in creating his hero. Empowered by his precious books, which allowed him to extend his knowledge to the most disparate disciplines, and convinced that his "burden" has committed him to the education of "wild" natives and "fluttered folk", [7] Prospero is certainly not exempt from exercising the psychological oppression that is associated with the white colonizer. However, what the present paper argues is that even though Dee might well have been Shakespeare's model for Prospero, *The Tempest* depicts attitudes to the sea, to journeys of exploration and to Otherness that do not always coincide with those of the Elizabethan philosopher. As we will see, Shakespeare's hero has a distinctive way of dealing with overseas experiences and issues of colonization, both of which are inextricably linked to his own perception of the Other. This is the reason why, notwithstanding the similarities between Prospero and Dee, the "Art of Navigation" that Shakespeare portrays in this late play is actually far from a "perfect" one.

10 It is undeniable that, like the author of the *Memorials*, Prospero does his best throughout the play to present himself as able to keep absolute control of the forces of sea and water. Already during his long conversation with the astonished Miranda in 1.2, Prospero's

confidence in his "Art" is such that the tempest that occurred in 1.1 is claimed as purely his own doing. There are also many scenes in the play where the hero, assisted by the diligent spirit Ariel, again demonstrates that he is the uncontested "director" of the survivors' destinies, not only for the time that they spend on the island, but also in their future lives. Indeed, he meticulously orchestrates a series of encounters and events with the aim of achieving his personal goals, i.e. to regain his position in Milan and have his daughter marry Ferdinand in order to ensure a new kingdom with royal progeny for his family. It is through his magic that Prospero prepares the inviting banquet that is destined to vanish simply in order to deceive Antonio and his attendants in 3.3. Similar "trumpery" (186) will allow him to capture Caliban and the other conspirators in 4.1. In the same scene, it is through magic, that he sets up the elaborate masque to celebrate his daughter's betrothal. Indeed, Prospero's directorial abilities seem to culminate in this moment, when he conjures up the goddess Iris, equipped with her rainbow, creating a wonderful emblem of restored elemental harmony that might majestically draw any storm to its conclusion. In 5.1, having reunited all the characters near his cell, he dramatically opens a curtain to show Ferdinand and Miranda chastely playing chess together. Finally, having regained his position, he delivers his famous closing speech before setting off on a final sea journey to Milan.

11 Nevertheless, when considered from a wider perspective, the "Art", and in particular the "Art of Navigation" that Shakespeare portrays in *The Tempest*, does not appear to be a "perfect" one. If Dee's confidence in the human power of governing the forces of the sea was epitomized in the elaborate frontispiece of his *Memorials*, Shakespeare's position regarding such powers might be symbolized by a rather different image: Théodore de Bry's engraving of *Fortuna* in the *Emblemata* (1593) below.

Figure 2. – *Fortuna*, Theodore de Bry's *Emblemata* (1593).

Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

12 Here, the all-controlling figure of "Fortune", apparelled as a pagan sea goddess, [8] stands at the centre of the engraving, dividing the space into two separate sections. On her left are those that she addresses as a benevolent mother, to whom she assures prosperity both on sea and on land. On her right, however, are those she addresses as a cruel stepmother, who have their ship wrecked and their city burned. Marked by an uncanny symmetry, the image evidences that there is no way of predicting which face the goddess will show to seafarers. Mysterious and inscrutable, the will of de Bry's "Fortune" is entirely beyond human control.

13 It is indeed such a sea goddess who holds sway over the waters surrounding the island in *The Tempest*. Notwithstanding Prospero's later claim of having instigated it, the play opens with a storm that throws an entire crew into the sea (1.1). Soon afterwards he recalls another shipwreck, the one that he and his only daughter survived

only accidentally (1.2), while the play also ends with Prospero preparing for his departure on a journey whose destination is announced but not witnessed (5.1 and *Epilogue*). Yet these tempests are nothing compared to another tempest: that which occurs towards the end of the drama (4.1), and which this time is an inner storm that Prospero is completely unable to control. Shaking the hero to his very core, the principal tempest in *The Tempest* seems to be aroused by a problematic encounter with the Other. To be more precise, what Prospero finds particularly difficult to face is a rather "amphibious" kind of Other: it is as though water is inextricably linked to an unknown domain, and a "Perfect Art of Navigation" is the only way for the hero's Self to remain afloat in a dangerous ocean seething with Otherness.

14 The Other *par excellence* is epitomized in *The Tempest* by Caliban—a character that boasts a particular connection with the sea. Caliban is repeatedly described as a "fish", or a creature that "smells like a fish". More precisely, he is referred to as "[a] strange fish" (2.2.25–27), "[l]egg'd like a man! And his fins like arms" (32–33), or even as "half a fish and half a monster" (3.2.28). Conceived in Algiers by Sycorax, a woman Prospero has never met, but that he does not hesitate to call a sorceress, and by an unknown father, who Prospero ambiguously refers to as "the devil" (1.2.263, 320; 5.1.269), Caliban was born shortly after his mother's exile to the island. He was therefore carried in her womb on the journey that brought them to the island where he was born, the gestation interestingly coinciding with a wretched sea crossing that led to his life-long expiation of an unnamed crime committed by his mother. [9]

15 In virtue of his indigenous and uncivilized status, as well as of his symbiotic relationship with Sycorax, Caliban not only boasts a particular connection with the sea, but also with the land, which means that he lives in perfect harmony with the luxuriant—but sometimes also problematic—nature that surrounds him. The young creature's sense of belonging to the places where he long lived alone with his mother is so profound that it seems to exemplify Julia Kristeva's description of the "semiotic *khôra*" in *La Révolution du langage poétique* (1974). With this phrase, Kristeva intends the realm of primordial, indistinct impulses, the all-embracing maternal body, which nourishes the child and, for the first months of the baby's life,

coincides with the entire known world. This stage in the development of the child, which she also refers to as the "semiotic", contrasts with the "symbolic" order, which comes to the fore when the child is separated from the mother and is pitched into the "ordered" domain of the father. Here the organized structure of language emerges as a substitute for the loss of the ambiguous, all-encompassing maternal body/world. However, in contradistinction to the typical development of the child, and having no paternal figure to identify with, the "salvage" (*The Tempest*'s List of roles, Vaughan and Vaughan 162) Caliban seems destined to remain caught in the maternal sphere for the whole of his life.[10] Raised only by his mother, and with her "suffocating" influence over him unabated in the delicate phase of his growth, *The Tempest*'s "abhorred slave" (1.2.357) becomes "the final register of Shakespeare's ambivalence toward what it means—from Hamlet on—to be a mother's son" (Adelman 238).

16 When Prospero and Miranda land, Sycorax has been dead for about 12 years, making Caliban the only human being on an otherwise uninhabited island, and thus its only master. However, even after his mother's death, traces of her "wicked" presence seem to haunt the land she owned, whose sounds, animals and vegetation appear to be mysteriously connected by a deep, inextricable network of correspondences. The ambivalence emanating from an isle that is as fertile as it is dangerous is linked to the fact that it is ruled by a man who was raised without a father. Indeed, having never been separated from the maternal realm, the adult Caliban still enjoys the primordial bond with the world around him that is typical of the "semiotic". This makes his environment a place where all kinds of ambiguity hold sway.

17 Yet the pervasive presence of Sycorax, however disturbing, is also an important influence on Prospero's designs for the education of his daughter, an education that has apparently been shaped in stark opposition to the model provided by the Sycorax-Caliban dyad. Indeed, just as the witch's authority over her son has long remained unquestioned, the hero's daughter has been raised in absolute absence of a mother, with Prospero's all-embracing influence making her, of all Shakespeare's heroines, the purest example of the "father's child". But how did Prospero achieve such an ambitious goal? The answer is partly thanks to his ambivalent regard for Sycorax. On the

one hand, having raised Caliban alone, her maternal role has been magnified to such an extent that Prospero cannot but envisage her as a terrifying sorceress. Being so strongly interconnected with her dangerous maternity, Sycorax's femininity is also viewed as extreme, which makes her the embodiment of unbridled passion and unrestrained lust. Therefore, by association with her son Caliban, as well as her status as woman and mother, Prospero also considers Sycorax in terms of Otherness. As Maria Del Sapio Garbero suggests, "Sycorax is the Other that Prospero continually confronts in his attempt at affirming himself as the matrix of everything"; her malformed amphibious son is the result of a development thwarted by the awkward presence of the mother, inevitably resistant to Prospero's "male and royal will of giving shape, i.e. of conceiving, and conceiving himself". On the other hand, it is precisely in order to achieve this aim that the eerie figure of Caliban's mother takes on such a crucial role. Indeed, "Miranda is brought to the world by means of what Prospero's tongue deletes or, by how he administers the ghost of Sycorax". It is thus "Sycorax's ghost" that is the agent that paradoxically "renders Miranda's mirror almost clear". In line with the theories expressed by Luce Irigaray in *Speculum : de l'autre femme* (1974), Del Sapio Garbero claims that the spectre of the witch guarantees Prospero the exceptionally "good mimesis" that he fiercely yearns for throughout the play. "Miranda's virtue", in effect, "consists in her being absolutely identical to the spotless image that is reflected in the mirror held by her father", and therefore in opposition to the wicked female figure that he evokes for his own purposes (242–243, 248, translation mine).

18 This management of Sycorax's ghost is thus instrumental in Prospero's attempt at shaping his daughter's identity to produce the clearest reflection of his own image. However, notwithstanding the efforts he makes in order to subdue the sorceress' haunting presence, the dangerous potential her spectre represents is never entirely domesticated in the play. On the contrary, it often appears destined to re-emerge like a tide that nobody is able to control, not even Prospero, who has previously declared his power over the sea. Like de Bry's "Fortune", Sycorax often surfaces from the waters surrounding the island like an unpredictable goddess, whose face, rather than that of a benevolent mother, is that of "a witch, and one

so strong/ That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs, / And deal in her command without her power" (5.1.269–271). The first re-emergence of Sycorax's unchecked passions occurs in 1.2, when her son, who was initially obliging and thus treated affectionately by the newcomers, is described as prey to unexpected change. Prospero recalls that after a few years of peaceful coexistence, and just as Miranda was passing from girlhood to womanhood, Caliban had attempted to rape her, and, consequently, was isolated and enslaved in a narrow, rocky area of the island. What drives Prospero to such harsh measures against the young man is an uncontrollable fear of miscegenation linked to the resurfacing terror of what he perceived as Sycorax's unrestrained sexuality. These risks are made insufferably explicit when a resentful Caliban replies to Prospero's accusation of having tried "to violate / The honour of my child" (1.2.348–349), that, had his seduction of her not been prevented, he would have "peopled else / The isle with Calibans" (351–352). The "[h]ag-seed" (1.2.347) Caliban, openly admitting that he wants to fill the island with children identical to himself, thus emerges as the most dangerous threat to the integrity of the daughter's reflection in the paternal mirror.

19 Caliban's resentment has continued to grow following his imprisonment, culminating in 3.2, when, supported by Trinculo and Stephano, he clumsily conspires against his master. An overwhelming impulse to neutralize Caliban's scheme is therefore the reason for Prospero's inner perturbation that, as we have seen in 4.1, undermines his self-confidence to such a degree that he abruptly interrupts the masque he had carefully organized to put the seal on Miranda and Ferdinand's engagement. It is curious to see to what extent the certitudes of a man, who had declared himself able to instigate a storm, are now shaken by the plot of an unkempt trio of drunkards. The very man who had shown that he is capable of sophisticated revenge on his disloyal brother Antonio, just before the final act where he is certain that he will regain his position, is now so upset that he is unable to complete the celebrations for his daughter's betrothal. Prospero's anxieties thus resurface, culminating when Caliban threatens to usurp his authority on the island and even to appropriate his paternal power. Caliban's plan to marry Miranda to a man of his choice—the butler Stephano—again causes Prospero to

envisage a potentially deep crack in his mirror's otherwise smooth surface.

20 However, there is more at stake in *The Tempest* than a threat to the integrity of the hero's ideal mirror image. Indeed, in a drama where almost all the characters undergo a "sea-change" (1.2.401), Prospero himself is not exempt from transformation. Moreover, what is particularly surprising is that the unexpected change that he is subject to is linked to the very element that he had been preoccupied with controlling throughout the play: water. In particular, something is finally triggered in Prospero's mind in relation to the fish-like Caliban and his ambiguous mother. A significant clue that a transformation is occurring is given in Prospero's "renunciation speech", which, rather than distancing the hero from his "Art", as is his supposed intention, actually seems to draw on the very kind of magic he has always stated he despises, i.e. black magic. Indeed, by appropriating the words of the Ovidian Medea, herself a literary precursor of Sycorax,[11] Prospero seems to reveal that his purpose is tinged with a deep sense of uncertainty. In the same speech, he also announces that he will "drown" his books in the sea (5.1.57), possibly surrendering to a primordial desire to reunite with that female element that he has so far kept totally separate from himself. In so doing, he would allow the "symbolic"—epitomized by his refined culture—to mingle again with the original, undifferentiated domain of the "semiotic"—represented by water. As we have seen, traces of Prospero's new consciousness can also be found in his sudden interruption of the wedding masque, when his preoccupation with Caliban's plot appears so uncontrollable that it cannot but raise questions in the audience. Indeed, what Prospero sees in such a threat is not only the danger of his usurpation, but also a grotesque parody of his own patriarchal appropriation of his daughter's decision to marry a specific husband; this reduces the woman to a mere commodity in an utilitarian discourse between men. By suddenly presenting Caliban as Prospero's dark double, the play intriguingly throws light on an uncanny similarity between the slave's apparently barbaric behaviour and the master's seemingly evolved habits. Thus finally, at the very end of the drama, when Caliban's plot has been defeated, at the very moment when Prospero publicly denounces his servant's intentions, the awakening of a new consciousness seems to

motivate his apparently bizarre admission: “this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine” (5.1.275–276). Strikingly, the “misshapen knave, / [whose] mother was a witch” (5.1.268–269) is now overtly recognized by Prospero as something of his own.

21 At the end of *The Tempest*, the ambiguous, even destructive, potential embodied in the “mother’s son” (Adelman 238) seems to have been paradoxically absorbed by Prospero himself rather than domesticated. Shakespeare’s drama therefore closes with an intentional, deep crack in the reflection of the paternal image in Prospero’s mirror, a crack that, if not explicitly, at least implicitly clears the way for the possible liberation of the daughter from the spectre of sameness with her father. To Alonso, who still believes that he has lost his son Ferdinand in the shipwreck, Prospero states emphatically that he has lost his child too (5.1.147–148). Yet he also specifies that such a tragedy occurred “[i]n this last tempest” (5.1.153), thus making implicit reference to his own discomposure rather than an actual event. Not only is his daughter freed, however, from such a fate. As mentioned above, it is the father who undergoes the most dramatic change at the end of *The Tempest*. Indeed, the Other, obsessively kept to the margins throughout the play, finally makes its incursion in act 5, where Prospero explicitly acknowledges it as part of the Self. Among the consequences, this shift not only implies the loss of his beloved daughter, but of what Prospero most perceives as his own; it is replaced by the discovery of his own complexity and ambivalence.

22 The preoccupation that leads the tormented Prospero to state that what he had previously rejected is nothing less than part of his composite being also allows us to read this unexpected turn in *The Tempest* in the light of what Robin Kirkpatrick identifies as the dramatist’s concern “with the problematics of our encounters with others”. It is an encounter that, in the present analysis, has often coincided with control over water. Indeed, “[i]n the closing moments of *The Tempest*”, it is as though “Prospero is revealed to be as strangely two-fold as the amphibious Caliban”, a character tinged with incertitude and obscurity, whose “darkness” Prospero finally acknowledges as his own. Notwithstanding his similarity to John Dee, we can therefore conclude that the portrayal of Prospero that the audience is finally offered is that of “no confident self-fashioner, no

clear-cut Vitruvian man, inhabiting the geometry of his own perfect performance. Prospero, rather, is a figure stretched ambiguously across a gamut of extreme and unresolved possibilities", a newly discovered ambiguity in which he is no longer positioned as an indisputable master of the seas, nor as an all-controlling director of his own plots, but "increasingly as a spectator on the margins of the drama he has created" (Kirkpatrick 84, 96, 89, 94).

23 So far, the aim of this paper has been to read *The Tempest* in the light of Dee's treatise on navigation, while focusing on how the dramatist partly reshaped, but also reacted against Dee's firm beliefs regarding mastery over the sea. The analysis does not necessarily imply that Shakespeare read the *Memorials*, because the ideas conveyed in Dee's work were well in circulation not only in Elizabethan, but also in Jacobean London, when the play was written. In particular, when the treatise was published, England's colonial efforts were at their very beginnings, and an atmosphere of humanistic optimism surrounded them. In the Jacobean era, in contrast, there would have been a more mixed attitude to such issues. The already well-established ideas of Dee might well have been accompanied—and tempered—by a more troubled state of mind, typical of the late Renaissance, as well as by additional information about recent discoveries and shipwrecks, not least the notorious loss of the Sea Venture on the expedition of 1610. [12] In fact, in Shakespeare's later years, pamphlets and reports about tempests and shipwrecks concomitant with various explorations overseas might have actually contributed to a darkening atmosphere of anxiety that gradually replaced the climate of enthusiasm more typical of the 1570s. It is also possible that Dee's death in abject poverty, which preceded the first recorded staging of the play by only a couple of years, might have influenced the playwright. It is indeed the very concurrence of historical and cultural events that makes Shakespeare's tribute not merely an intriguing memorial to the great Renaissance polymath Dee, but also a complex re-evaluation of him, written in a later period when both experience in navigation and the rise of a new artistic sensibility were putting the latter's ardent beliefs to the test.

III. Motus' *Nella tempesta* (2013): reclaiming the forces of the sea for a socially engaged art

24 It is where our discussion of *The Tempest* concludes that our analysis of a recent Italian production of the play may start. Indeed, the gradual marginalization of the hero that occurs towards the end of *The Tempest* is exactly what allows us to pinpoint a significant link between the original play and a thought-provoking version of it that was staged between 2013 and 2016 by the Motus Theatre Company. The first part of the present paper presented the portrait of a very self-confident Elizabethan man, which was gradually deconstructed in the second part. The third and final part concentrates on an experimental performance, in which the character of Prospero is downgraded to such an extent that he is reduced to an invisible camera. As we will see, it is indeed when the hero's all-embracing Self becomes peripheral that space is finally given to the Other. Yet, before discussing the way in which Motus deals with the character of Prospero, it is useful to introduce the reader to the aims of the theatre company and to the main features of the production.

25 *Nella tempesta* [Into the Tempest], which premiered at Montreal's 2013 Festival TransAmérique, is the "third movement" in the cycle of Motus *Animale Politico Project 2011>2068*. It was preceded by *The Plot is the Revolution* (2011) and *Where* (2012), which in the first case deals with the possibility of imagining and creating utopic spaces where a challenge to the present is conceivable, and in the second with the state of surveillance surrounding us in everyday life. The later *Caliban Cannibal* (2015) builds on one of the main issues in *Nella tempesta*: the rebellion against slavery. Under the direction of Enrico Casagrande and Daniela Nicolò, Motus—or "movement"—is not only an independent company, but also a radical research group that was founded in 1991 in Rimini with the aim of creating an experimental form of theatre where contamination of the theatrical experience beyond traditional genre boundaries is possible. While specifically favouring self-governing cultural centres and independent theatres in Italy, Motus also debuted on the

international scene in 1996, and since then has often been on tour in various European and North American countries. Indeed, one of the aims of the company is to provide a "bridge" between the more "bourgeois" traditional theatre, and other, more independent, and less establishment forms of theatrical experience. These aims are shared by the founders of the company and actors alike. Ethical and aesthetic concerns always blend in Motus' productions, all of which reveal a strong concern with contemporary issues of equality, racism, control, gender difference and respect for human rights.[13] It is again where Shakespeare's *Tempest* ends, i.e. with Prospero finally acknowledging that Caliban is indeed a part of himself, that Motus' production begins. Indeed, the idea that the Other is part of the Self is the very premise upon which the entire 2013 performance revolves.

26 It is now useful to examine the main features of *Nella tempesta* in order to gradually perceive the reasons why I consider it a suitable point of arrival in our discussion on the control of the seas. The script of this production is not determined in advance by the directors; on the contrary, it gradually takes shape during rehearsals after scholarly research, and continual dialogue between the actors first, and then between the actors and the directors, which privileges improvisation, rethinking, and the addition of elements from the actors' lives. In the Motus production, therefore, verses of *The Tempest* are spliced with quotations from the Martinican author Aimé Césaire's 1969 Postcolonial rewriting of the play, *Une tempête*. There are also unexpected details taken from the private lives of the actors, and references made to Motus' other productions as well as video projections that all become an intrinsic part of a dense, metatheatrical exchange of voices, perspectives and media.

27 As if in opposition to the intensity of the dialogue on the stage, the scenery in *Nella tempesta* is strikingly absent. Except, that is, for the piles of blankets, which the public has been explicitly asked to bring, and that will be "donated" to independent associations that care for the needy after the performance. The extreme flexibility of these items offers various opportunities for the company to enact the infinite metamorphoses that materialise on an island that is envisaged as a place where change can actually happen. From a quickly assembled Prospero's cell where Miranda and Glen[14] temporarily find refuge, to an unstable skyscraper soon destined to

collapse, or the massive writing "this island is mine" (1.2.332) gradually becoming the provocative final question "and us?", the play's unusual scenery suggests that material transformation is possible when accompanied by a change in our perspective.

28 *Nella tempesta* is therefore a true piece of cross-genre experimental theatre. Much appreciated in the international press, the production was deemed able "to convey the belief that nothing will come of nothing […] that stasis breeds only more stasis". Hailed by *The New York Times* as "the most truly revolutionary troupe in town", Motus astounded a journalist to such an extent that the latter concluded that "as long as this determined, resourceful company, is in extravagant motion on stage, you may even believe that world-shaking change is possible after all" (12.12.2014).

29 One of the most interesting features of the production is its location or rather, its multiple locations. Indeed, in the first part of *Nella tempesta*, Shakespeare's uninhabited island becomes [15] the Mediterranean isle of Lampedusa, while in the second part the focus moves to various areas of Rome. Why the unusual link between Lampedusa and Rome? The reason for this choice brings us back to Motus' preoccupation with contemporary issues of human rights, especially Italian immigration policies with regard to the thousands of refugees undertaking the long journey from Africa to find a new life in Europe. For many migrants Lampedusa represents the first safe haven, a refuge often reached after months, sometimes years, of devastating journeys and terrible disasters at sea that frequently cause the death of hundreds of people, many of them children. In fact, in the very year that *Nella tempesta* was first performed, there was a large increase in migrants landing on the Italian coasts, with 14,753 people in Lampedusa alone. [16] Moreover, a dreadful shipwreck occurred just off the coast of the island in 2013. This became known as "the massacre of Lampedusa"—a tragedy with 368 victims, including many children (Leogrande 147). However, Lampedusa is only a crossing point for migrants who make it to Italy. Also in 2013, many survivors of the Lampedusa massacre moved to Rome, where they found another haven, this time in Palazzo Salaam, an abandoned area that once housed the University of Tor Vergata. It is in this "island" that hundreds of people seeking political asylum waited, sometimes for years, hoping that one day they would be granted a residency

permit. In the face of the prejudice that characterizes certain sections of society, self-governed areas like Palazzo Salaam actually serve as micro-societies run by the alternative principles of inclusion, mutual assistance and respect for cultural difference. Moreover, they temporarily allow migrants to steer clear of the CIEs [Centres for Identification and Expulsion], highly contested institutions found in some Italian cities [17] where the intention is to "contain" undocumented migrants until they can be officially deported.

30 The Lampedusa shipwreck, along with the storm that caused it, therefore lies just below the surface of the Motus production. However, far from being a play about mourning, *Nella tempesta* suggests that we reimagine the Lampedusa setting as a "different ZONE" [18] where new encounters with the Other and new forms of hospitality can take place, and where storms can be valuable opportunities for welcoming unexpected changes in our society. It is thus in order to promote a new way of thinking—and acting—that the Motus production reclaims the disconcerting power of the storm, a power that corresponds with the artists' ability to incite a revolution in the domain of ideas. Indeed, as remarked in *The New York Times*, "[t]empests may destroy, but they have the virtue of sweeping people into action", because "[y]ou can talk all you like about ideals and class resentment", "[b]ut the ingredient most essential to getting a revolution off the ground is energy, the kind that incinerates as it moves" (12.12.2014). The personal backgrounds of the members of the theatre company, with their "life experience in the nomad, vagabond, unstable and […] pirate community that we 'uprooted' artists are a part of", [19] is certainly of help in the effort to create this new sensibility. Accordingly, the production sets out to achieve this goal from the very first scene, where the words of Judith Malina, the founder of the iconoclastic New York Living Theatre, are quoted, stating that "we do not have to protect ourselves from the storms: we have to instigate them". In 2011, while Motus was staging *The Plot is the Revolution* at the Living Theatre, which featured an intense dialogue between Malina and Silvia Calderoni—also the leading actress in *Nella tempesta*—they were beset by Hurricane Sandy. It was on that remarkable occasion that the German-American director had told the Italian actress-activist of the need to welcome change. "Tempest" certainly stands for "revolution" in Motus'

production, although this revolution is not physical in origin. It is primarily a revolution in the eyes of the observer, a revolution of the mind, which can then lead to a series of revolutionary actions.

31 Yet what exactly happens on the stormy island that Motus reproduces so elliptically on stage? With the character of Prospero reduced to an omnipresent camera that aggressively shines its spotlight on the stage, *Nella tempesta* opens with a dystopic reversal of the hero's role. No longer a director, not even "a spectator on the margins of the drama he has created" as Kirkpatrick defined him (94), Prospero in Motus' production has become subject to a process of reification that transforms him into a downgraded Orwellian means of surveillance. However, even though the physical character disappears, a voice-over later alerts us that this does not mean that there has been a total loss of power. Echoing Foucault's argument in *Surveiller et Punir*, the voice warns us that power's most dangerous trick is its ability to disguise itself, because when it is not recognizable nobody knows against whom to fight. Nevertheless, the audience will soon be given a demonstration of how Prospero's wide-ranging invisible power can be gradually replaced by another, self-conscious power: this, as we have seen, is our own power to evoke tempests—and revolutions.

32 Intermittently captured by the camera's "eye", the show is dominated by an androgynous Ariel—majestically interpreted by the aforementioned Silvia Calderoni—torn between her role as Prospero's slave, her status as an actor and her longing to leave the stage and move freely in the real world. Throughout the performance, she provocatively questions other characters, while also questioning herself, until the decisive moment when, in a visual correspondence between her desires and actions, the stage is physically taken over by a long video projection. With this video, the audience accompanies Ariel to Rome, first to the city centre, to follow a protest march for the rights of African migrants, then to the outskirts, to Palazzo Salaam, where hundreds of those people have found a temporary refuge. Here, Ariel picks up a small tree, evocative of the pine tree where Prospero finds her in Shakespeare's text, but also emblematic of her new opportunities. She holds the same tree at the end of the performance, thus establishing a symbolic continuity between what

happens on the ideal island of the play and what *may* now happen in the material world (see Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. – A scene from Motus' *Nella tempesta* (2013).

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Figure 4. – Another scene from Motus' *Nella tempesta* (2013).

© Tiziana Tomasulo.

33 In fact, it is seeing again this physical object on stage that we come to realize that ethical and aesthetic concerns might coincide not only on stage, but also offstage in a problematic city like Rome, and that attending Motus' performance may actually lead us to a stronger commitment to, and a more active support of, the rights of migrants.

34 Indeed, the task of *Nella tempesta* does not conclude with the end of the drama, as it is intended that the performance is followed by a series of parallel workshops and events. These follow-ups are meant to take place in particular areas of the cities where the play is performed, according to the specific questions raised by the audience after the show. After the premiere in Montreal, for example, the company was asked to organize a public action at the Hôtel de la Ville, the city hall. Here a law that establishes that, if more than fifty people meet in a public space without authorization, they are liable to arrest was animatedly discussed. Considered from the wider perspective of Motus' public actions, the issues raised during the

show are not merely aesthetic, but clearly invite the public to contribute to the company's goals beyond the performance. [20]

35 The aim of the Motus production is therefore to raise a series of questions that encourage the public to believe that a dialogue between ethics and aesthetics is possible, not only on the imaginary island that they have created on stage, but also in the complex dynamics of contemporary life. In fact, the goal of *Nella tempesta* is made explicit on the Motus website, which includes Agostino Lombardo's definition of a theatre "not intended as a show, but as an experience, not as an imitation, a reflection, a suspension, or a flight from life, but theatre as life in itself" (L, translation mine). [21]

Conclusion: from ancient illusions to contemporary utopias

36 In the present analysis, Dee's *The General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and Motus' *Nella tempesta* stand as three examples of ways of dealing with the force of the sea, a force which can be seen as epitomizing the fluid, unknown domain of the Other. The illusion, perhaps more typical of the early Renaissance, that human power can extend beyond the limits of our experience without calling into question our cultural bulwarks, is evident in Dee's extremely optimistic treatise, but is seriously put to the test in Shakespeare's play. A genuine product of the late Renaissance, *The Tempest* presents the shattering of illusions that were hitherto pervasive, painfully questioning the assumptions of a culture caught in the grip of a dramatic identity crisis. *Nella tempesta*, staged some 400 years after the original play was written, is entirely reimagined as a way of relating with the Other, there being no reason to continue to pursue ancient illusions. Indeed, what Shakespeare himself had finally revealed as a chimera in his play is explicitly dismissed in the 2013 production, and the narrow-minded belief that the Other represents a menace to the integrity of the Self is replaced by a new vision. Conceived in a world that has to face apparently incontrollable waves of migrations, which are essentially nothing but the drawn-out consequences of a phenomenon that was emergent in the Elizabethan and Jacobean age —i.e. colonialism—the Motus Theatre Company passionately strives

for the chance to create a "different ZONE".[22] Here the Other and the Self, stimulated by the powerful changes brought about by contemporary "tempests", can finally set us free from narrow-minded power dynamics so that we can peacefully enjoy mutual enrichment and concerted growth.

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NOTES

1 Meric Casaubon's A *True and Faithful Revelation of What Passed for Many Years between Dr. John Dee* [...] *and Some Spirits* (1659) is largely responsible for Dee's unfortunate reputation among scholars.

2 John Dee's *Library Catalogue*, edited by Julian Roberts and Andrew G. Watson, was published by the Bibliographical Society in 1990. In 2009 Roberts and Watson published their latest updated version online on the Bibliographical Society's website: <http://bibsoc.org.uk/content/john-dees-library-catalogue>.

3 As early as the late 1550s, Dee was instructing the brothers Stephen and William Borough on the Muscovy Company expedition of 1559. In 1576, he advised Martin Frobisher and Michael Lok, again of the Muscovy Company,

as they prepared for their expedition to the Northwest Passage. In 1580 he was asked by the Queen to give his opinion concerning Francis Drake's circumnavigation of the world, an enterprise that the explorer might have possibly undertaken based on Dee's training (French 178).

4 Even though only the first volume of the *Memorials* was actually printed, Dee's work originally consisted of three additional volumes, which only partly survive in manuscript form. In the first, entitled "The British Monarchy" or "The Petty Navy Royall", Dee displays a dual preoccupation: in the first place, the defence of the nation, a programme that he considers achievable through a proper strengthening of the British Navy; in the second place, he encourages the Queen to launch a glorious policy of overseas expansion, which will soon grant her unprecedented domains throughout the world. The second volume was to have been a collection of navigational tables, entitled "Queen Elizabeth's Gubernautike Arithmetical Tables", which Dee had calculated using a particularly precise instrument, called the "Paradoxical Compass" that he had invented in 1557. These tables would have allowed sailors to navigate in northern latitudes, thus permitting explorers to sail to areas where nobody had hitherto dared to go. However, it appears that the size of the manuscript must have dissuaded any editor from publishing it. The third volume, which probably included a series of historical reasons demonstrating Elizabeth I's rights to North America, must have been deemed dangerous reading by the Privy Council. Indeed, as Dee himself declares in his *Advertisement to the Reader*, it would soon have been suppressed or burned. The fourth volume, partly surviving in the compiler Samuel Purchas' work *Purchas His Pilgrims* (1625), was a history of the 1,200 years of expeditions to the northern seas, probably written with the aim of entitling the Queen to claim her rights to the North American territories.

5 Not only was part of the lost third volume of the *Memorials* dedicated to this subject, but also the (surviving) third volume of *The Limits of the British Empire* (1577–78), another work by Dee. The arguments here are strongly linked to the topics put forward in the previous treatise, and the Queen's rights to North America are openly discussed.

6 Much has been written on Prospero as an archetype of the white imperialist, from Octave Mannoni's pioneering essay "Prospero and Caliban" (1950) to more recent New Historicism studies on the importance of the issue of colonialism in this late play. Chief among these is Stephen Greenblatt's celebrated essay, "Learning to Curse" (1990).

7 I am quoting here from Rudyard Kipling's renowned poem "The Burden of the White Man: The United States and the Philippine Islands" (1, 6). These lines, written in 1899 at the beginning of the Philippine-American War, represent a heartfelt exhortation to the United States to annex the Philippines on the basis of the presumed civilizing mission that was commonly seen as the role of Western countries at that time. The poem became subject to various interpretations in the following decades, culminating in the Postcolonial readings of the second half of the 20th century, which investigated how the "discourses of otherness and evolution" upon which "European/Western identities were constructed during colonialism" legitimated "the white man's burden—to civilize and develop the underdeveloped" (Baaz 35, 37).

8 The iconography that de Bry draws upon in his "Fortune" is that of the *Venus euploia*, i.e. the protectress of seafarers. In the 1593 image, however, the goddess has a disquieting double face.

9 An interesting hypothesis about the entity of the crime committed by Sycorax in Algiers is suggested by Maria Del Sapio Garbero, who proposes that her guilt may be linked to the Ovidian myth referenced in Prospero's mention of the tree where Ariel had been imprisoned before his arrival. Considering that in the *Metamorphoses* the transformation of the princess Myrrha into a myrrh tree is the punishment for an act of sacrilegious love that the princess committed with her own father, the King of Cyprus, Del Sapio Garbero argues that Sycorax's expiation might have also originated within the disquieting framework of incest (243–245).

10 Caliban's entanglement within the mother's sphere entails a twofold effect. On the one hand, the young native enjoys a 'uterine' identification with the 'maternal' land he inhabits. On the other hand, he also receives the unexpected gift of being able to recover the original, maternal dimension beyond the organized structure of language, by means of the unbridled poetic word. Indeed, in line with the discussion put forward in *La révolution du langage poétique*'s, it is Caliban's closeness to the indistinct, maternal realm of the island that allows him to utter *The Tempest*'s most penetratingly beautiful poetry.

11 For an analysis of the connections between Sycorax, Circe and Medea, see Marina Warner, "'The Foul Witch' and Her 'Freckled Whelp': Circean Mutations in the New World", in Hulme and Sherman (2000).

12 Reports of the Sea Venture expedition are among the few sources that are said to have had an undeniable influence on *The Tempest* (Vaughan and Vaughan 43).

13 Among Motus' most striking productions, it is worth mentioning *Syrma Antigones*, which premiered in 2009 at the Officine Grandi Riparazioni during the Turin Festival delle Colline. In a daring adaptation of Sophocles' work, the tragic events of Oedipus' daughter's life dramatically intersect with the disturbing facts that occurred on the occasion of the G8 summit in Genoa (20–22 July 2001), during which anti-global demonstrations were followed by a series of clashes with the police. Several attacks on the protesters by the police took place, and in one of these the young activist Carlo Giuliani was killed. The restless spectre of Giuliani thus hauntingly shadows that of Antigone's murdered unburied brother Polynices, whose disfigured body deserves, according to his intrepid sister and notwithstanding the strict legal restrictions in force, a fitting burial on the basis of higher obligations grounded in respect for human rights.

14 A newly introduced character who embodies the problems of the actor who plays him: a young immigrant from Albania haunted by his own past.

15 Or remains, given that some critics have hypothesized that it is a possible location of *The Tempest* (Vaughan and Vaughan 48).

16 "[T]he migrants who landed on the Italian coasts in the past year [2013] amount to 42,925, i.e. a 325% increase compared to the previous year; 3,818 were unaccompanied minors, 2,500 of whom landed in Sicily. […] On the island, in fact, 37,886 migrants either landed, or were transferred after sea rescue operations, i.e. 88% of the total annual number of migrants, 14,753 of whom on Lampedusa alone." Deposition given by Vice Minister Sen. Bubbico at the Migration Commission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council, Rome, 4 February 2014 (translation mine).

17 In Rome there is one in Ponte Galeria.

18 <www.motusonline.com/en/2011-2068-animale-politico-project/nella-tempesta/>.

19 <www.motusonline.com/en/2011-2068-animale-politico-project/nella-tempesta/>.

20 <www.klpteatro.it/motus-nella-tempesta-la-videointervista>. It is possible to see the entire performance on <https://vimeo.com/92512775>.

21 See also <www.motusonline.com/en/2011-2068-animale-politico-project/nella-tempesta/>.

22 <www.motusonline.com/en/2011-2068-animale-politico-project/nella-tempesta/>.

ABSTRACTS

English

This paper focuses on *The Tempest*, which is interpreted in the light of John Dee's 1577 treatise *The General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation*. Here I concentrate first on Shakespeare's characterization of Prospero with regard to the template Dee provides as an early imperialist —a side of his persona that is clearly testified in his treatise. A commitment to the idea of an emergent empire is thus what we might have expected Shakespeare to convey in the very play where a character similar to Dee is depicted. What the paper brings to the fore, however, is the way in which Shakespeare appears to react against the imperial myth promoted by Dee. Indeed, if considered from a different perspective, the "art of navigation" that Shakespeare appears to portray in *The Tempest* is far from a "perfect" one. The play opens with a storm that scatters an entire crew into the open sea, and soon after there is reference to an earlier shipwreck that involved the main character and his only daughter. It ends with Prospero's departure on a journey, the destination of which is announced, but not witnessed. In the end, these tempests are nothing compared to that other, "last tempest": the one that occurs in 4.1 evidencing Prospero's inner perturbation that he is completely unable to control. Shaking the hero to the core, the main storm in *The Tempest* appears to be caused by a problematic encounter with the Other. The aim here therefore is not only to detect the impact of Dee's navigation treatise on Shakespeare's last play, but to focus on how the dramatist shaped, by reacting against, the former's firm beliefs on the control of the seas and the imperialist myth he purveyed.
This analysis is accompanied by references to the Motus theatre group's *Nella tempesta* [Into the Tempest], an Italian production that premiered at the TransAmérique Festival in Montreal in 2013. In my reading of the performance, I focus on the techniques employed by the company in reshaping an encounter with the Other that is not (only) marked by anxiety, but also by a desire to make this meeting an invaluable opportunity to recognize the Other as part of the Self.

Français

L'article se concentre sur *La Tempête* de William Shakespeare interprétée à la lumière du traité de John Dee : *The General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation* (1577). J'analyse ici la manière dont le dramaturge a façonné le personnage de Prospero à partir de celui de John

Dee, que le traité présente comme un impérialiste avant l'heure. On peut ainsi supposer que Shakespeare a voulu transmettre l'idée d'un Empire britannique en puissance dans *La Tempête* où le personnage principal ressemble à Dee. Cependant, je voudrais souligner en particulier la façon dont le dramaturge réagit aussi contre le mythe impérial promu par Dee. En réalité, si le point de vue de Shakespeare est pris en compte selon un autre angle, l'« art de la navigation » envisagé par le dramaturge dans la pièce est loin d'être parfait. Celle-ci s'ouvre avec une tempête qui jette un équipage entier dans les flots, puis fait référence à un autre naufrage impliquant le même protagoniste avec sa fille, avant de conclure sur le départ de Prospero vers une destination jamais effectivement représentée et peut-être jamais atteinte. Finalement, ces tempêtes ne sont rien comparées à celle qui a lieu à l'acte 4, scène 1 et qui symbolise une perturbation que Prospero est totalement incapable de contrôler. En agitant rien moins que l'abîme de l'esprit du héros, la tempête principale dans la pièce éponyme semble être suscitée par une rencontre problématique avec « l'Autre ». L'objectif de cette étude est donc de déceler l'impact du traité de Dee sur l'art de la navigation dans la dernière pièce de Shakespeare, en se concentrant sur la manière dont le dramaturge a façonné, mais aussi réagi contre, les convictions inébranlables de Dee à propos du contrôle des océans.

Mon analyse sera accompagnée de références à la mise en scène de *Nella tempesta*, par la compagnie théâtrale italienne Motus, au Festival TransAmérique de Montréal en 2013. Dans mon interprétation de la pièce, je me focalise sur les techniques employées par la troupe pour refaçonner une rencontre avec l'Autre, marquée par l'anxiété, mais aussi par le désir de se transformer en une précieuse occasion de reconnaître l'Autre comme une partie de soi.

INDEX

Mots-clés

La Tempête de Shakespeare, Dee (John), Nella tempesta de Motus, navigation, altérité, impérialisme, spécificités culturelles, migrations, adaptation théâtrale

Keywords

Shakespeare's The Tempest, Dee (John), Motus' Nella tempesta, navigation, otherness, imperialism, cultural differences, migrations, theatrical adaptation

AUTHOR

Fiammetta Dionisio
Fiammetta Dionisio is an independent researcher in English literature. In 2018–2019, she was *Cultore della Materia* at the University of Roma Tre, where she conducted her post-doctoral studies on Shakespeare and the European Renaissance. In 2016–2017, as a research fellow at Roma Tre University, she carried out a project about Shakespeare and the visual arts. Her PhD in Comparative Cultures and Literatures, achieved in 2015 with the European Label at the University of Roma Tre, is also the result of a period as a visiting scholar at the University of Aberystwyth, Wales. She is the author of *New Women. Ansie di degenerazione e profezie di rinascita nell'Inghilterra* fin de siècle (Aracne, 2017), which focuses on the interface between literature and science in late Victorian women writers. She also wrote the article on Shakespeare and the visual arts "'Be Her Sense but as a Monument': Lost Icons and Substitutive Figures in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*" in *The Art of Picturing in Early Modern English Literature*, edited by Camilla Caporicci and Armelle Sabatier (Routledge, 2020). Her research interests include, but are not limited to, Renaissance studies, late Victorian literature, feminism, gender studies, literature and science, and literature and the visual arts.
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A Shipwreck with No Ship and No Sea: Craig's Ideas on *Tempest* I.1

Un naufrage sans navire ni mer : le projet de Craig pour La Tempête, *acte I, scène 1*

Patrick Le Bœuf

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OUTLINE

TEXT

1 The British actor and director Edward Gordon Craig (1872–1966) is known to have published more theoretical writings on the theatre and exhibited more set designs, than he actually produced plays: he took part in only 13 productions, either as a director or a set designer. Only 3 out of these 13 productions were stagings of plays by Shakespeare: *Much Ado about Nothing* in 1903, *Hamlet* in 1912, and *Macbeth* in 1928. Shakespeare was nevertheless one of his favourite playwrights, and he was obsessed with thinking about how to best put on his plays. *The Tempest* is just one example of a Shakespearean play to which he returned over and over again throughout his life, jotting down notes as to how he would stage it, should the opportunity present itself. He collected many of those notes in 1939 in a single manuscript, held by Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter abbreviated: BnF), département des Arts du spectacle (Performing Arts Unit, hereafter abbreviated: ASP), under shelf mark: EGC-Ms-B-18. This manuscript cannot be regarded as some sort of a prompter book for a complete, consistent *mise-en-scène*, as Craig never bothered to homogenize his ideas about the play, which makes

this manuscript all the more interesting to study. As Craig took pains, in most cases, to indicate the date of each individual annotation, it makes it possible to follow step by step the evolution of his conceptualization of a possible production. Most notably, it shows how Craig changed his mind about the treatment of the opening scene, in which Shakespeare depicts the tempest properly and the shipwreck that ensues, shifting over time from an almost realistic rendition of a ship, to radical stylization and abstraction through which Craig disposes of both sea and ship altogether.

2 But before focusing on act I, scene 1, it is important to have a clear overview of what *The Tempest* meant to Craig, and how he envisioned it as a play.

The place of *The Tempest* in Craig's thought

3 When Craig was a young actor, in the 1890s, he had no liking for Shakespeare's supernatural comedies such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest* or *The Winter's Tale*, nor for the character of Ferdinand, in which he could easily have been cast. In a later writing (*Woodcuts*, 12), reflecting on his youth, he claimed that at that time he did not "comprehend what [these] plays were about. They seemed too vague, mystic, bodiless". This did not prevent him, however, from suggesting in September 1904 that he could produce *The Tempest* with Max Reinhardt (1873–1943), first in Berlin and then on a tour in England.[1]

4 By 1911, his interest in the play had grown to the point that he selected it for his demonstration that it is quite possible to produce a given script "in ten or even twenty different ways, and that each interpretation can be right" (Craig, *Theatre Advancing*, 192). In the same article, he highlighted the importance of understanding correctly such a play in order to give a good performance of it:

> […] the very best actors cannot hold up the weight of a great play like *The Tempest* if they are surrounded by what is called "noisy" scenery, by restless lighting or costumes, and if the stage manager has not understood and explained to his staff and performers the meaning of

> the play and the whole effect of the production. This meaning of the play is one of the things so often forgotten. (Craig, *Theatre Advancing* 192)

Is Craig sincere in this text, when he describes *The Tempest* as "a great play"? One can doubt it. The volume in which he collected all his staging ideas is filled with harsh criticism. On the whole, Craig does not deem the play worthy of Shakespeare, and he is convinced that Shakespeare simply strove to improve a poor play written by some inexperienced playwright (EGC-Ms-B-18, 9r):

> This is an old play rewritten by Shakespeare [...] I bet that it is a play by a *young* man—very young—taken by S[hakespeare] who can invent no more plots but who can write as well as ever. Shak[espeare] comes across this and *likes*—rather likes—the boldness of the youth in taking fairy people, spirits, and *magic* for his stage. [2]

5 Elsewhere in the volume, Craig describes the play as "a queer piece, a thing of shreds and patches" (EGC-Ms-B-18, 8r) [3] and "a very inferior affair" (EGC-Ms-B-18, 9r). [4] He affirms that it was written by "two authors-muddlers: one poet attempting to link, to smooth, to save, [and] one Burbage bustling about, butting in, trying to 'pull it together'; net result: a failure, a poor play, rich in some passages" (EGC-Ms-B-18, 114v). [5]

6 Other sources reveal that Craig suspected the play was not performable. On a copy of Horace Howard Furness's *variorum* edition of *The Tempest*, he wrote that it is "a mysterious play which seems to deny all approach to it" (4-EGC-942(7), unnumbered half title page). In his daybook for 1957, Craig wrote (EGC-Ms-B-541(3), 55):

> It's well-nigh an impossible play to stage—it's not of a piece—it has not the clearness of *Hamlet* or *Othello* or *Midsummer Night's Dream*—it's another dream and *all* dream [...].

7 In a draft letter intended for Peter Brook (born 1925), and written on 20 April 1956, Craig called for a staging that would "lead to the massacre of the awful rubbishy lines and ideas", and expressed his empathy for Shakespeare who had had to devote time and energy to

improving such a bad play (EGC-Ms-B-18, 123v): “What Sh[akespeare] must have suffered over this horrible work is a crushing thought.”

8 If Craig held *The Tempest* in such low esteem, why was he so much interested in rereading and annotating it, in the first place? Precisely because of the challenge it represented for stage directors. As a play that deals primarily with dream—“We are such stuff as dreams are made on”—it compels directors to surpass themselves in imaginative qualities, and to surpass the Bard himself in poetic qualities. In 1924, Craig published an article in which he elaborated on the potential that *The Tempest* represents for an audacious stage director. In that article, Craig fancies that the action of *The Tempest* takes place undersea, and that all the lines delivered by the characters in act II, scene 1 “are issuing like bubbles from the mouths of six drowned live men sunken to the bed of the sea and wearily talking in their deadly sleep” (“On *The Tempest*”, 161). In other terms, the world expounded in *The Tempest* is the world of the afterlife, and the stage director is in the tricky position of having to materialize on stage all the wonderful beauties of that uncharted world (“On *The Tempest*”, 163–164):

> *In such an isle full fathoms five indeed our fathers lie.* […]
> Something very beautiful to see and to hear must have been what [happened there].
> […] What happened under the sea in an island […] is what I should like to make visible in *The Tempest* upon a stage, were I content to work to no purpose, to fashion what I fear would for ever fail to please you […].

9 Set designs drawn by Craig and now held in Paris, Vienna, and Osaka, show that as early as in 1905 he had intended to locate the action of *The Tempest* at the bottom of the sea. Such a reading of the play implies that the shipwreck depicted in act I, scene 1 is an actual event: unless a ship has actually wrecked, there is no obvious reason why all her passengers should have drowned. But this is not the only reading of the play that Craig had in mind. As already mentioned above, Craig opined that *The Tempest* can be produced “in ten or even twenty different ways”, and he had at least two other understandings of the play: one in which the ship actually exists, but the shipwreck only took place in the imagination of the protagonists; and one in

which the ship herself is no physical object, but only part of Prospero's dream. In both cases anyway, there is no need to *show* the shipwreck, as it never took place. At an unknown date after 1936, Craig wrote, referring to Miranda (4-EGC-942(7), 22): "She (as they in the ship) is possessed by this *dream of a wreck*—where none was in reality." [6] On 18 December 1956, Craig made it explicit, in a draft letter intended for his cousin John Gielgud (1904–2000), that "since that old magician [i.e. Prospero] kept all the wreck neat and trim it was and could only be in idea that the dam[n] wreck ever existed" (EGC-Ms-B-18, 17r).

10 Craig had therefore, it seems, at least three possibilities in mind: 1. A real ship and an actual shipwreck, both being only suggested; 2. A real ship, but no shipwreck; 3. No ship and no shipwreck.

11 He never really made his choice between these three radically distinct ways of envisioning the play. Of course, had he had an opportunity to stage it, he would have had to make a decision; but as the mise-en-scène of *The Tempest* remained throughout his life a mere exercise for himself, he felt free to experiment with all kinds of ideas, without the necessity to pick one and develop it. In all cases anyway, Craig felt challenged by Samuel Taylor Coleridge's (1772–1834) assertion that *The Tempest*

> [...] addresses itself entirely to the imaginative faculty; and although the illusion may be assisted by the effect on the senses of the complicated scenery and decorations of modern times, yet this sort of assistance is dangerous. (66)

12 Such an assertion seems to ruin all stage directors' efforts to put on the play. Of course Craig could not be contented with such a notion, and felt all the more compelled to strive to find several ways of directing it. He commented on Coleridge's words as follows (4-EGC-942(7), 9): "Yes, but you should tell us *how* to deal with act I, scene 1, for example—for after all we have only our eyes and ears to help us when in a theatre."

13 Act I, scene 1 of *The Tempest* becomes thus the issue at stake: how to present it on a stage without jeopardizing the whole play's spiritual value? How to avoid the lavish sensationalism of 19th-century productions, while appealing to a 20th-century audience's senses?

Quite obviously, the huge difference between Craig's three readings of the play resulted in three distinct strains of practical solutions when it comes to the staging of this particular scene. These three strains can be reduced to two: one in which the ship is to be seen, one in which there is neither ship nor sea on stage.

1905–1939: the actuality of a ship

14 In Craig's earliest preserved sketch of a set design for *The Tempest*, dated 1905, the ship is not only present, she is even treated in a relatively realistic way (EGC-Ms-B-18, 130r). Although the pencil strokes are rather faint and difficult to interpret, there is one prominent, easily distinguishable detail: several lines clearly depict parts of the rigging of a ship. Those rigging elements form a diagonal across the sheet, dividing it into two distinct, equal sections. These two sections are unfortunately virtually indecipherable. The overall impression conveyed by this sketch is however somewhat reminiscent of Craig's 1906 design for *Dido and Æneas*, published in *Towards a New Theatre*, in which a dozen sailing ships are visible (*Towards* …, 56).

15 When Craig copied his stage directions in a single volume in 1939, he introduced the various ideas he had had so far about act I, scene 1 as follows (EGC-Ms-B-18, 13v):

> This [scene] can be done several ways—excluding the building up of a facsimile of a ship (*Italian*) of the period and putting it through its paces on the stage. We are left with: 1. *Suggestion* by lights and this and that of a storm and wreck; 2. The hypnotic powers of Ariel seen at work upon the 8 or 10 [or] 20 more passengers. I have not heard of, nor seen, either of these two possibilities attempted.

The stage direction that elaborates on the first possibility has no less than 4 distinct dates attached to it (1905, 1921, 1930, and 1939). The set represents either the interior of a cabin or some portion of the deck—Craig does not choose between these two locations—and a lantern swings in all directions. It is the only source of light against a background characterized by Craig as "pitch black". As a consequence, dancing shadows are cast erratically throughout the scene. In addition to the constant movement of light and shadows,

the floor itself is designed so as to move beneath the characters' feet: it consists of "a double-way which clanks this and that way [i.e. from front to back, and from left to right] and […] all four slides slope a little towards centre—result effect of some sort of bridge all dusk and indigo […]" (EGC-Ms-B-18, 13v).

16 This production concept relies therefore entirely on light and motion: the details of the set are not visible, and the storm is suggested through the characters' wild gestures inevitably induced by the moving floor, and the wild dancing of their shadows cast by the constantly swinging lantern. Although Ariel is not listed among the characters in this scene, Craig insists that his lines in scene 2: "I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak, / Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin, / I flamed amazement" (Shakespeare 109, I.1.196–198), clearly indicate that he has to be present in scene 1 as well, and the lantern symbolizes Ariel's presence on the ship. Most certainly, Craig draws here on Francis Douce's (1757–1834) interpretation of Ariel's lines in scene 2. Douce commented on those lines as follows: they are, he says, "a very elegant description of a meteor well known to sailors. It has been called by the several names of the fire of Saint Helen, Saint Elm, Saint Herm, Saint Clare, Saint Peter, and Saint Nicholas" (vol. I, 3).

17 Craig was particularly interested in Douce's remark concerning the fire of Saint Elm that "is also supposed to lead people to suicide by drowning" (vol. I, 4).[7] Perhaps he felt that this remark could provide some logical justification for a production concept in which it was possible to show the passengers of the ship as drowned people on the seabed, while no shipwreck had occurred.

18 The other production concept, based on the "hypnotic powers" of Ariel, is dated either 1922 or 1939 (this is unclear from the manuscript). In this concept, Ariel is physically present, and is accompanied by a group of musicians and singers. The scene takes place by day light, under a "pale blue sky" in which "white clouds" are to be seen; the rest of the set consists of "yellow sands" on the foreground, and "hills" in the background. In this setting, here is what the audience is shown (EGC-MS-B-18, 13v):

> [C]haracters all lined up on deck (about 20) and Ariel with his musicians creating in the hypnotized 20 a sense of storm, calamity and wreck. *They sway* like waves with chorus of voices. […] They listen as the boatswain *prone* calls to his men to do this, do that. All whisper or yell or chatter as in their sleep.

The overall effect is totally different here: this concept does not rely so much on the visual elements as on the sounds; the only movement that can be seen on stage comes from the swaying of the hypnotized passengers. The immobile boatswain seems to be a mere instrument through which Ariel communicates with the other characters and creates in them the sensations provoked by a storm. Craig was aware of the difficulty that actors might have experienced in performing his stage directions: he made the remark, in 1939, that "perhaps only the Habima group could carry out this idea seriously and well", referring to the Hebrew-speaking company that had operated under the auspices of the Moscow Art Theatre from 1918 to 1926, and that he admired very much. In 1956, he added the following words to that remark: "helped by Peter B[rook]", the young and innovative stage director whom he had just met.

19 In two drawings dated 1935 (EGC-MS-B-18, 16r), Craig seems to return to a more "realistic" treatment of the ship: two distinct levels are clearly materialized, the lower level corresponds to the cabin, the upper level corresponds to the deck, on which a mast is to be seen. A winding staircase leads from one to the other, and the noble passengers use it throughout the scene, "running up and down all the time", according to Craig's specification. This almost realistic production concept contrasts sharply with everything else Craig has ever envisioned for the opening scene of *The Tempest*.

1942–1956: the empty stage of Prospero's mind

20 During World War II, Craig had the revelation of a completely different treatment. This was on 3 May 1942, in Paris; Craig subsequently copied his new ideas in his *Tempest* manuscript by the end of November 1956 (EGC-MS-B-18, 16v, 18r). [8] This treatment is

based on the notion that the opening scene is one "where the words must all be heard above any howl of the winds and the roar of the waves—for the words are the Essence of the scene". The focus is therefore once again here on the textual and sonic aspects, rather than on the visual elements. Prospero himself becomes the main protagonist of act I, scene 1; Ariel is "nearby"; in a later drawing, dated 1956, Ariel is absent, but in his stead Miranda is represented sitting on the floor, asleep, her back leaning against the armchair in which Prospero "can (if he wish) sprawl". Craig's vision for the scene has changed radically: "Now I see no more a ship (mast, sailors, etc.), I hear no more howls and roars nearby." The action does not take place aboard the ship, but on the island. What Craig wishes to highlight is how Prospero is responding to the events that are happening in the distance:

> I see Prospero, Ariel nearby; Prospero alone on his island, and *afar off* the howls, roars, cries, diminuendo.
> *Rather nearer*, the voices of the mariners, crew, boatswain, etc., and the passengers, there to tell clearly the tale of the Disaster. The face and movements of Prospero tell us of his reaction to the unseen action going on *off the stage*.
> *Prospero as he listens in…* [9]

21 At this point however, Craig changes his mind and thinks suddenly of another possibility, far more radical, far more audacious: he imagines that, perhaps, Prospero himself could deliver the text of act I, scene 1, as:

> […] a receiving instrument speaks in a room. *As he listens in, as he looks on*, hearing and seeing and *reporting* as one who is mesmerized reports in regular, quiet, unemotional tones—a monotone—till the climax comes: "We split—we split—we split."
> A wail (recorded on gramophone).

22 The term "gramophone" makes him change his mind once again, and he thinks of a third possibility, less radical, making use of state-of-the-art technical devices, and questioning the very notion of liveness in performance: "In fact, we will try the whole 65 lines of text as a

record—and let it slowly out (close to Prospero) who notes each sentence: *Prospero the listener…*"

23 The use of the adverb "slowly" in this context is rather puzzling: what does Craig mean here? Should the recorded text be at lower speed, or is it just a loose, incorrect way of meaning that the sound should not be too loud? Craig may also indicate here that the recorded text should not be heard all at once, but that the lines should be interspersed with silence; in a following sentence, he makes it explicit that there should be "short or long pauses between the several bursts of speech". As a matter of fact, Craig admits that the actual sonic qualities of the recording are relatively unimportant, as long as the audience's attention is focused on Prospero: "Slow or rapid, loud or soft, jerked or smooth; maybe something in the lights, colours, shades coming and going. But Prospero remains still, and the commanding presence."

24 Although Craig does not choose between those three scripts, he is confident that "this way we can reveal the idea in Shakespeare's mind". But he does not make explicit what Shakespeare's "idea" consists of, according to him. Does the shipwreck actually take place, and Prospero hears the noise it makes and responds to it? Or is the shipwreck entirely imagined by Prospero? Should Craig's production concept be staged, both interpretations would be possible for the audience.

25 This ambiguity was solved fourteen years later, when Craig met Peter Brook in 1956. Peter Brook and Natasha Parry (1930–2015) had come to visit Craig in Southern France in April 1956, and Craig was completely under the young couple's spell, to the point that he shared some of his secret ideas about *Macbeth* with Brook, and allowed him to use them in his own production, if he was ever to direct that play (EGC-Ms-B-540(2), 5). Encouraged by that mark of confidence (quite unusual from Craig), Brook, who was to direct *The Tempest* at Stratford-on-Avon in 1957, and who by then had not yet become a convinced Artaudian, sent him a letter in August 1956, asking for a piece of advice, and Craig pasted that letter on his own note-book (EGC-Ms-B-18, 127–128):

> Have you any wise words on the play you'd care to drop this way? It's fearfully difficult. Somehow all the masques have to be unified into the whole structure / conception of it. A lot of it must be very moonstruck and sinister, I feel. It ends in harmony, but surely should not be too harmonious from the start. It seems to me a mistake for the island to be peaceful and idyllic as soon as the first scene is over. And unless Prospero is a bit of a black magician tempted by his power he's just Father Christmas. And how to *suggest* an island without depicting, without illustration? A ship can easily be evoked by its movement—a city by the essential lines of architecture, and so on. But an island—what is its essence? It forbids all constructions, scaffolds, bridges, steps—all *un*islandy. Perhaps I'll have to knock down the back of the theatre and let in the Avon!
> Send me a clue!

26 Craig's draft response to Brook, dated 20 August 1956, is part of his *Tempest* manuscript. It is impossible to determine whether the letter he actually sent Brook was identical with this draft, and we do not know how Brook reacted to it, as there is no trace in the archive of a letter Brook would have sent Craig in response. In his draft letter, Craig suggested the play should begin with "my stage absolutely *empty*;[10] not dark, not light: sleepy light" (EGC-Ms-B-18, 121r). Then Craig elaborates on his 1942 idea for scene 1, making it clear that the shipwreck only occurs in Prospero's dream (EGC-Ms-B-18, 121–122):

> All is still—but unbearably still; and then a figure, Prospero—not a ship, not a storm; scene 1: all the words printed as act I, scene 1 are *now* spoken by the mouth of Prospero, and since *he* makes the wretched wreck *he* will be at home. *He seems to be … asleep*: he (as 'twere) talks in his sleep … He seems to me to be seated, sprawling in a rocky armchair, his elbows on the arms and his hands held in air; I see them swinging gently from side to side […].

While Prospero is delivering the text of scene 1, visual elements appear in the dim light, transforming the empty stage into Craig's recollection of the theatre on the boards of which he had learnt the skills of acting, many years before (EGC-Ms-B-18, 121–122):

> […] the whole of this stage is an island; you see *boards*, and ropes, and litter: it's only your fancy, it's the empty Lyceum Theatre […].

> A big stage—pale, *grey*, *brown* shot with all the undersea pale greens and blues and crimsons. Yellows here and then—*shot*—with these—not spread. Fish seem to be swimming in and out of the ropes …
> I saw them anyhow. All vague apparitions. Dream place.
> But I saw the figure in the rock seat and *only later* the bits of wreckage did form slowly, imperceptibly drift into a sort of undersea scene […].

27 There is no trace in the archive of any further conversation about the play between Craig and Brook, but Craig pasted into his *Tempest* manuscript a second draft letter, dated 18 December 1956, which he wrote to his cousin John Gielgud, who was to act as Prospero in Brook's production the following year. Here, Craig confirms even more forcefully that neither the ship nor the wreck ever existed outside Prospero's mind, and he insists that all the value of the opening scene relies entirely on the actor's skills (EGC-Ms-B-18, 17r):

> Prospero (stands) or sprawls sleeping, alone on the stage … He moves a hand, maybe; he is such thing as *Dream* is made of, and he dreams the wreck.
> The words are shot out by several voices; all the scene is in sound only: mumblings and cries, the words, maybe noises and music: hautboys, flutes, and *singing*, the voices do everything. Prospero listens in his sleep; his *face* (some acting for J[ohn] G[ielgud]—what!), rather a wicked face; he is motionless; the sounds increase; he laughs; he does what you will; but he does not move.
> The dam[n] silly *imitation* of a wreck on the boards is swept away—the labour, the expense, the puzzlement all avoided.

28 Once again, Craig has changed his mind: here, the text is no longer delivered by Prospero himself, but by external voices, in the wings. The visual elements are focused on Prospero's face. There is something Beckettian about this production concept: this Prospero looks indeed like some forerunner of Winnie in *Happy Days*, the Woman in *Rockaby*, Joe in *Eh Joe*, or the Listener in *That Time*. Craig was aware of Samuel Beckett's (1906–1989) beginnings: he possessed a copy of *Waiting for Godot*, and in his daybook for 1957 he entered as an important fact that, on 8 April, he read a "report about Beckett's new play" in *The Sunday Times* (i.e. *Endgame*; EGC-Ms-B-541(1), 71).

29 How did John Gielgud react to his old cousin's suggestions? No reply from him is preserved in the Craig Collection in Paris, although we can infer from Craig's daybook for 1956 that Craig did send him his letter. [11]

30 There is no evidence that Craig ever worked again on *The Tempest* after 1956. On 29 April 1957, he entered in his daybook (EGC-Ms-B-541(1), 88):

> Then this evening looking at a line of *The Tempest*, I read on and on and on, the hour glided by. What Brook thinks he can make of this poem on a stage quite beats me. I wrote him it's all a *dream*, nothing actual, till I suppose a dull quiet awakening at the end.

31 After Brook's production opened at Stratford, Craig was eager to read reviews in the press, and was disappointed by the apparent lack of enthusiasm on behalf of critics, which he tried to explain as follows, in an entry dated 24 August 1957 (EGC-Ms-B-541(3), 55):

> If the press notices on Peter and John's attempts on Shak[espeare]'s *Tempest* do not read that hearty as they might, it's because *Tempest* is a real problem for the stage, and I have doubts about P[eter]'s and J[ohn]'s ability to solve this problem. […] it's another dream and *all* dream and Peter has failed to see this.

However, he also had the satisfaction to learn from the reviews that Peter Brook had perhaps used one of his ideas for the most difficult scene in the play, the opening scene, about which he had been thinking for so many years and for which he had envisaged so many distinct solutions (EGC-Ms-B-541(3), 55): "He seems to have used my idea of the swinging lantern in scene one."

By way of conclusion

32 The earliest known drawing by Craig for act I, scene 1 of *The Tempest* is dated 1905, and his draft letter to John Gielgud about "how to open the play" is dated 1956. Craig spent thus over fifty years of his life thinking now and then about the difficulty of putting on this particular scene, the traps of a realistic treatment, and the necessity of avoiding the literal imitation of a shipwreck at sea. In an effort

toward maximal abstraction and symbolism, he finally came up with a production concept akin to what he had wished to achieve with his 1912 *Hamlet* in Moscow, co-produced with Konstantin Stanislavsky (1863–1938). His *Hamlet* was to be understood as a monodrama; he insisted that the audience should be made aware that what they were witnessing were not actual events in Hamlet's life, but how those events resonated within Hamlet's psyche, in his inner world. [12] With *The Tempest* act I, scene 1, Craig reached another level of abstraction: Prospero is treated as some Beckettian figure *ante litteram*, whose dreams and thoughts the audience is invited to look directly in. While Craig is often perceived and introduced as a deadly foe of both playwrights and actors, here he relies entirely on Shakespeare's poetic words and on the actor's skills to convey the essence of the dream of a shipwreck, with no ship, and no sea: just with the sound of the words, and the mimics of a human face on stage.

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NOTES

1 "Will not Reinhardt ask me to produce *Hamlet* and another Shakespeare play—say *The Tempest*?—immense; and visit England with this last […]." (Newman 26)

2 This annotation is dated 1922.

3 Undated.

4 Dated 1955.

5 Undated.

6 Craig acquired this copy in 1936, hence the *terminus post quem*. The italics are Craig's.

7 On his copy of Douce's book, Craig drew a pencil stroke in front of this sentence.

8 All the subsequent quotes will be taken from this manuscript.

9 All the italics are Craig's.

10 The italics are Craig's. This phrase seems to be echoed, at twelve years' interval, by Peter Brook's *The Empty Space*.

11 "I've written him a letter about *The Tempest*—and how to open the play" (EGC-M-B-540(4), 64).

12 "Craig wasted no time in declaring that Shakespeare had no interest in everyday life or historical reconstruction. *Hamlet* was a mystery play, a monodrama about the conflict between spirit and matter. […] The tragedy took place within Hamlet's soul, and the other characters were to be psychic emanations of his loves and hates. Means other than straightforward characterization had to be found to convey this interpretation." (Senelick 45)

ABSTRACTS

English

The stage director, set designer and theatre theoretician Edward Gordon Craig (1872–1966) loathed Shakespeare's last play, *The Tempest*, which he thought was the work of a younger playwright, reread and polished by the mature Bard. However, as much as he loathed it, he seems to have been equally fascinated by it, since throughout his life he jotted down stage directions about it, and drew sketches as though he had had a plan to produce it. This paper highlights the ideas he developed over time for the opening scene, the tempest properly said. That scene seems to have represented a particular challenge for Craig, who considered a variety of treatments for a passage that, in the tradition of the 18th and 19th centuries, had always been regarded as a pretext for some lavish and spectacular pageant. Craig rejected that notion, and strove on the contrary towards a maximal stylization of this scene. Eventually, in 1956, as his cousin John Gielgud (1904–2000) was to act as Prospero at Stratford the following year, he wrote a letter intended for him (although it is uncertain whether he sent it or not), in which he synthetized his ideas for a purely abstract conception of the scene. In this conception, as he is obviously very satisfied to announce, "The dam silly imitation of a wreck on the board is swept away […]".

Français

Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966), metteur en scène, scénographe et théoricien du théâtre, détestait la dernière pièce de Shakespeare, *La Tempête*, dont il pensait qu'elle était l'œuvre d'un dramaturge plus jeune, relue et polie par le Barde dans sa maturité. Cependant, en dépit de cette aversion, il semble qu'il ait également été fasciné par cette pièce, puisque tout au long de sa vie, il nota des ébauches de mise en scène et dessina des croquis comme s'il avait le projet de la monter. Cet article examine les idées qu'il développa au fil du temps pour la scène d'ouverture, la tempête proprement dite. Cette scène semble avoir représenté un défi particulier pour Craig, qui envisagea toutes sortes de traitements pour un passage qui, dans la tradition des XVIII^e^ et XIX^e^ siècles, avait toujours été considéré comme prétexte à une débauche d'effets spéciaux spectaculaires. Craig rejetait cette conception, et tendait au contraire vers une stylisation maximale de cette scène. Finalement, en 1956, alors que son cousin John Gielgud (1904-2000) devait interpréter Prospero à Stratford l'année suivante, il écrivit une lettre à son intention (bien que rien ne confirme qu'il l'ait envoyée), dans laquelle il synthétisait ses idées pour une conception purement abstraite de la scène. Dans cette conception, comme il était manifestement très satisfait de l'annoncer, « l'imitation imbécile d'un naufrage sur scène est balayée… ».

INDEX

Mots-clés
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AUTHOR

Patrick Le Bœuf
Patrick Le Bœuf is a library curator; he is the head of the Archival and Printed Materials Unit within the Performing Arts Department at the National Library of France (BnF). He is more particularly in charge, among others, of the Edward Gordon Craig Collection. On that topic, he has extendedly published articles and monographies such as *Craig et la marionnette*, Paris, Actes Sud, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2009 ; "On the Nature of Edward Gordon Craig's Über-Marionette", *New Theatre Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2010, pp. 102–114; "Tu sais toutes ces choses, dis-tu : Gordon Craig, Isadora Duncan et l'enseignement de François Delsarte", *Revue d'histoire du théâtre*, no. 251, 2011, pp. 243–256; "Gordon Craig's Self-Contradictions", *Revista brasileira de estudos da presença / Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2014, pp. 401–424; "Two Unknown Essays by Craig on the Production of Shakespeare's Plays", *Mime Journal*, vol. 26, 2017, pp. 123–134, among others.
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Toward a Blue Gender Studies: The Sea, Diana, and Feminine Virtue in *Pericles*

Vers les études de genre bleu marine : la mer, Diane et la vertu féminine dans Périclès

Alexander Lowe McAdams

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OUTLINE

TEXT

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1 “Perform my bidding, or thou liv’st in woe” (5.1.242). These are the ominously terse lines the goddess Diana delivers to Pericles in act 5 of William Shakespeare and George Wilkins’s play by the same name. The titular character hears the music of the spheres and lapses into a deep sleep. Pericles’s companions exit the stage, and down descends the goddess Diana to dispel and rehabilitate the misrule of the sea’s

fatal blows. She cautions the incumbent king to “perform my bidding” and return to her temple at Ephesus, where Thaisa, Pericles’s wife long thought to be dead, resides as a priestess. This is no empty gesture. As Diana makes clear, the difference between happiness and “woe” is at stake, and her transcendental powers reign supreme (5.1.241). Pericles, shaken and awed by this “goddess argentine”, obediently replies to “Celestial Dian” and makes haste for the near-East city after he awakens from his slumber (5.1.237). This vision stands in stark contrast to the “crosses”, or tribulations, of Pericles’s life and loss to “masked Neptune”, whose whims have ripped the Prince of Tyre from his wife and child (3.3.37). Diana’s vision as a “Celestial” goddess also reinforces the deity’s place in the cosmic system of the play. Not only is she aware of Pericles’s “woe”, but she is also able to quell it by the power of her “silver bow” (5.1.235). This theophany scene reinforces Diana’s exceptional influence over the environment in *Pericles*, even as the chaos of the sea’s vicissitudes reach their climax.

2 At first glance it would appear that the sea and moon act independently of one another in *Pericles*; admittedly, the push-pull dynamic between Diana and the sea throughout the play is not immediately obvious. However, the play’s emphasis on tides strongly recalls the specter of the moon, one of Diana’s three identities in early modern mythology, and its hidden influence on the earth below. Certainly, if current critical trends are any indication, then studying the sea’s vicissitudes is of utmost analytical importance. For example, so-called “blue humanities” has led the charge of understanding in greater depth the porous ontological divide between human and inhuman life forms and the instability that arises from human interaction with an environment hostile to human life. This field of inquiry has recently turned critics’ attention to the vast literary works that take place on the wide expanse of the ocean, breathing new life, so to speak, into Shakespeare’s “blue” plays, [1] *Pericles* among them. Moreover, in the past two decades, *Pericles* has received an unprecedented amount of attention in comparison to its prior critical treatment. At the turn of the twenty-first century, David Skeele, the editor of *Pericles: Critical Essays*, saw fit to sincerely defend the work after detailing the multifarious ways in which it has been disparaged and praised, razed and rehabilitated, over the course

of four centuries. In part, this critical ambivalence about the play has been a product of uncertainty about how it should be epistemologically categorized: is it romance or tragicomedy, and does it matter? “The need for a respectable paradigm that could accommodate the play’s strangeness”, Skeele writes, “was apparent in much of its earliest criticism as some of the most egregious faults found by commentators were later admitted to be quite natural to the genre of romance” (14). These supposedly “egregious” errors mimic the play’s tidal rhythm, once seen as a deficit. The play’s supposed deficiency—namely its refusal to adhere to the neo-classical unity of time—has instead become the merit of *Pericles*’s dynamism. Its multi-year saga across time and space mimetically underscores the tidal metronome of the play’s most formidable foe: the sea itself. Therefore, *Pericles* has attracted a large amount of scholarly attention, and as critical conversations have shown, the preoccupation with *Pericles*’s need for a “respectable paradigm” is itself worthy of study and remains far from settled.

3 More recently, Shakespeare scholars have sought to understand the environmental past through our environmental present with respect to what Dan Brayton calls a “thalassalogical” turn. Brayton’s 2012 book *Shakespeare’s Ocean* maps the historical, textual, and material intersections into Shakespeare’s works and the increasingly “global ocean” (1); this oceanic turn builds upon the magisterial studies that Steve Mentz has proffered in the past decade. Mentz has dubbed this emerging field the “blue cultural studies”, which he reiterated recently as the “off-shore trajectory that places cultural history in an oceanic rather than terrestrial context” (28). Mentz’s vision for a blue humanities seeks, like the genre of romance itself, to elevate the critical allure of stories that center unlikely heroes portrayed in the throes of nature’s violent trials. This line of thought has been useful for twenty-first-century scholars to think through the issues that impact our increasingly interconnected world as we begin to see the devastating consequences of a globalized industrial economy affected by climate change: famine, extreme weather, and above all else, rising sea levels. As recently as 2019, literary critic Joseph Campana reminds us of the immediate importance that studying Shakespeare’s oceans affords. As his city (and mine) found itself embroiled in the long recovery of Hurricane Harvey’s catastrophic flooding, Campana turns

to the English playwright: “Shakespeare’s most often-troubled waters, with their dramatic storms and shipwrecks, force us to wonder what to do with our own taste for exotic seascapes and terrifying encounters. In so doing they both tap into ancient preoccupations and precondition subsequent seaside contemplations” (419). This prescient reminder of “ancient preoccupation” recalls *Pericles*’s setting in the late antique Mediterranean basin, in a time when the vicissitudes of nature were deeply tied to the reciprocal, yet often senseless interactions between man and god, between mundane and supramudane.

4 Amid all these interventions, however, there persists in *Pericles* a troubling aspect of the sea, the “blue”. It is not news that the sea’s characterization as a rapaciously violent entity bears striking resemblance to the lechery endemic to the Roman sea-god Neptune. Ignoring this crucial aspect of the sea, however, is potentially dangerous. Not only does this erasure elide the very real linguistic coding of sexual violence that the sea brokers throughout the play, but it also flattens the gendered implications of early modern nature into one amorphous, asexual identity. To mediate this potential pitfall, this essay offers an alternative: by refocusing our attention on the lunar goddess and her ability to control the sea’s fickle behavior, I argue that Diana’s repeatedly invoked presence in the play offers a mollifying balm to the narrative’s ongoing trauma. Moreover, I aver that it is the goddess’s association with the moon in particular that accomplishes this dramatic feat. Remarkably in *Pericles*, the masculine sea ultimately cedes power and control to Diana’s vestal femininity when the sea, for once, cooperates and delivers Pericles and Marina, his and Thaisa’s daughter, to Diana’s temple at Ephesus. I do not see this episode as a coincidence, for *Pericles* was likely first performed around 1608, during the very era that natural philosophical understandings of the moon’s relationship to the earth began to shift. Following Brayton’s and Mentz’s leads, this paper thus rides the thalassalogical wave of the emerging blue humanities, while at the same time acknowledging the danger of flattening the sea into a sexless monolith.

5 At stake here is the potential elision of language that intently describes the impending threat of violence against women. In our commitments to studying this “off-shore trajectory”, I do not want to

take this characterization of the sea for granted. Rather, I highlight the gendered significance of the tidal economy in *Pericles* to draw attention to the gender theories that early modern mythological conventions provide. Indeed, the sea in *Pericles* is constantly figured as a concupiscent force threatening to upend the virginity and chastity of Marina and Thaisa, respectively. Thus, I propose an addendum to our current "blue cultural studies" model by offering a blue *gender* studies: an expansion of our current critical vocabulary that acknowledges the dangerous associations of the sea with sexual violence at the same time that it refuses to accept its ominous presence as mere symbolic convention. This essay thus endeavors to understand the undercurrent of Diana's influence more fully. Diana's powers firstly protect Marina from sexual violence, secondly cloister Thaisa in the vestal stasis of Diana's Ephesian temple, and thirdly rehabilitate the bonds of family in the final act of the play. With these events in mind, I show how the tripartite Diana's identity as the lunar deity deserves sustained critical attention, especially with respect to her antidotal counteraction to the sea's menacing violence. This article investigates early modern perspectives on the moon's relationship to the earth's oceanography, and in turn, as will hopefully become clearer, it will reveal the ideological importance of Diana's supreme, yet quiet governance as the play reaches its narrative apogee in act 5. To put it simply, I take Diana's powers referenced throughout the play literally and read them as an occulted agent that pushes and pulls the characters across the tempestuous Mediterranean basin.

Romance as a feminized genre

6 Given that the genre of romance itself addresses the constant quest-driven wanderings of an errant individual, the critical disagreement over *Pericles*'s categorization might be the most beneficial place to start. Genre studies has been a fruitful avenue for literary critics to investigate *Pericles*. Literary critic Lori Humphrey Newcomb, for example, carefully examines Shakespeare's potential sources for *Pericles* in an attempt to understand how the genre is feminized in comparison to other genres. Linking Shakespearean feminist scholarship to the romance genre, Newcomb reminds us that romance "challenges traditional literary values with its loose formal

structure, its apparent freedom from political or didactic purpose, its proliferation of related tales across space and time and vernaculars, and its allegedly addictive grip on readers" (22). For Patricia Parker, romance is "inescapable" and refuses to be restrained to one specific generic convention. Barbara Fuchs' poststructuralist critique of romance, moreover, renders the genre as a procedure that invites "idealization, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering and obscured identity [...] [to] pose a quest and complicate it" (9). This commitment to "idealization" throws the genre in stark relief to Shakespeare's canonical plays like *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, or *Macbeth*—all three of which eschew the "marvelous" quest-based narratives in favor of positing political theology, as well as portraying the fragile human subject under mental and existential siege. As a result, Newcomb contends that over the long arc of critical history, Shakespearean romances have been feminized and discarded: they exhibit a genre of mere "stories" and "tales", meant to dazzle the senses, not engage in what is conceived as more serious, and therefore masculine, inquiry (22).

7 Newcomb also exposes some potential "gender trouble" when looking more critically into the language of source studies, the nucleic core of romance. Because source studies begin with the inclination that lesser sources combine to make a greater whole, an immediate binary emerges: "their allegedly immature or feminine prose counterparts", or romance, inevitably graduates to "Shakespearean *virtù*", or a more masculine identity (22). This "feminization" of romance as a literary category, Newcomb argues, is what has hindered earlier scholars from a more productive analysis of *Pericles*. Adding to the mix of this troublesome play is the fact that the work is encoded with an invisible feminine force that refuses to fall prey to the violent and rapturous effects of the sea. I maintain that this encoding is endemic to Diana's feminine powers, and as I demonstrate in the following pages, Diana's associations with the moon explain both the characters' frequent appeals to the goddess at the same time that *Pericles* is massively preoccupied with the sea's vicissitudes.

8 In my quest to understand feminine agency, it might seem unusual to discuss a play that is centered almost entirely around the male titular character Pericles. However, if romance as a generic convention problematizes "traditional literary values", as Newcomb puts it, what might this intervention reveal about *Pericles* and the persistence of

the female characters throughout it? The play's emphasis on the revival and protection of female characters makes studies in gender, sexuality, and masculinity particularly opportune for scholarly advancement. More specifically, ecofeminist theory has much to offer a work like *Pericles*. Literary critic Miriam Kammer argues that the play functions as an ecodrama, a production that highlights the potent connections between the human and natural worlds: "The play is not an individualized tale of one man's life but rather a more complex story of multiple agents moving in and through an ecological system" (30). This complex interrelation between human, nonhuman, and environment—"multiple agents"—is on full display in a play as disorienting as *Pericles*. Therefore, Kammer emphasizes the importance of ecofeminist theory as a way to "interrogate a range of connections and entanglements between culture and nature while keeping gender—and the perils associated with it—in close consideration" (30). To accomplish this interrogation, we must keep in mind these enmeshed discourses between gender and nature as we read the play. In turn, if we interrogate this "range of connections and entanglements" between nature and gender, we then become equipped with the ability to avoid those associated "perils".

9 As Kammer also explains, our gendered humanness often disrupts the feminist critique of nature, a topic in which a number of scholars are invested. Material-feminist Vicki Kirby avers that nature and the body have so often been conflated with "woman, the feminine, the primordial, with unruly passion and the 'dark continent'—all signs of primitive deficiency" that we run the risk of backsliding into a system that relies on the supposedly "more rational and evolved presence" of masculinist control and subjugation (215). As an alternative strategy, ecofeminism promises to provide a countermove for advancing a new understanding of nature as a "dynamic agent", an entity that has the capacity to act upon human subjects rather than recede into the background as "inert, static", and therefore dominated, "matter" (Kammer 31). Kammer's work reminds us that an ecofeminist interpretation of Shakespeare's works can also mitigate these potential shortcomings. In particular, ecofeminist critique provides an alternative philosophical history to Western philosophy, offering an alternative to fundamental dualism, rationalism, and humans' superiority to nonhuman life forms. I see these facets of ecofeminist

critique taking place not just in Diana's theophany scene, but in her occulted machinations throughout the play as well.

10 What is more, Mentz's prolific scholarship on early modern ecology has offered a potentially holistic understanding of an ecofeminist ecology, one that prevails on the "triple pillars of ecological cognition —interconnectedness, persistence in space, and the decentering of heroic individualism" (168). Diana, I would argue, accomplishes all three. Mentz's work also reveals the ecological interdependency between biotic and abiotic elements that are necessary to sustain life and ensure environmental stasis. Furthermore, this impulse to decenter also speaks to the growing body of research in an adjacent field of inquiry, posthumanism. As Campana and Scott Maisano show in their magisterial introduction to *Renaissance Posthumanism* (2016), contemporary posthumanists have assumed that the early modern period and its development of humanist curricula provide a static, closed-circuit set of ideas. The assumption among these theorists, they argue, is that because these thinkers ascribed to humanism, they were also ignorant of the human's fragile position in a massive universe. Instead, Campana and Maisano remind us that "ideas of 'the human' [were] at once embedded and embodied *in*, evolving *with*, and de-centered *amid* a weird tangle of animals, environments, and vital materiality" (3). My reading here of *Pericles* addresses this "weird tangle" at the same time that it draws our attention to the early modern understandings of nature and its analogic relationship to ancient Roman mythology. It also leads us to investigate the more ephemeral, nonhuman agents in the play, such as Diana's incredible divine power and influence throughout the duration of the play's drama.

11 This article thus takes these threads of current conversations in *Pericles* and pivots them to argue that the "natural forces" in the play are not the amorphous actions of an asexual sea, as blue cultural studies might currently portray. Rather, I suggest that Diana's motive, divine intervention functions to further elevate the status of feminine virtue in the play, a counteraction to the brutality of the masculine sea. To make my case, I turn to Diana's main purpose in the narrative: to shield the women in *Pericles* from harm, rape, and further trauma. Moreover, I suggest that Diana's association with the moon is perhaps her most influential side of the goddess's tripartite identity; the

moon, for example, controls the tides, a cryptic side of Diana's powers that has escaped sustained critical attention in literary studies with respect to *Pericles*. This lunar bond between Diana and the sea not only suggests a feminine-masculine dualism at play in *Pericles*, but also offers a reading of Diana's agentive sovereignty as moon deity, the powers of which appear to fundamentally hold the sea's violence in check throughout the second half of the drama. This reading of Diana further links ecofeminism to studies in blue Shakespeare by explicitly engaging with Diana's control over the mundane world. In so doing, my reading emphasizes the sea's rapacious masculine appetites that Shakespeare deploys. It also suggests that a feminine virtue, Diana's, flows throughout the play's chance encounters, familial reconciliation, and tidal raptures, the interconnected relationship between literary descriptions of the sea and early modern expressions of masculine desire.

Of moon and man

12 In late Elizabethan and early Stuart English texts, it is common to see Diana referenced in distinct opposition to the sea. Drawing on a wide range of classical and post-classical sources, writers define and understand Diana and her tripartite associations with the moon, earth, and the underworld within the context of the natural world. Take, for example, Robert Allott's compendium of English poetry, *Englands Parnassus, or the Choysest Flowers of Our Moderne Poets* (1600), in which printed excerpts from various poetic works are collated and organized under topic heads (378). Several contemporary poems take up the relationship between Diana and the notoriously lecherous Neptune in an attempt to blend expositions of the natural world by pairing "*Mountaines*, *Groues*, *Seas*, *Springs*, *Riuers*" with poetical "*Bewties*". On Neptune, English poet and clergyman Charles Fitzgeoffrey writes:

> O Neptune, neuer like thy selfe in shew,
> Inconstant, variable, mutable,
> How doost thou Proteus like thy forme renewe,
> O whereto is thy change impu[t]able?
> Or whereunto art thou bent sutable?
> Rightly the Moone predominateth thee. (p. 372)

13 In the propensity to "neuer like thy selfe […] shew", Fitzgeoffrey's Neptune resembles the "masked Neptune" that tortures Pericles in act 3. Similar to his offspring Proteus, Neptune is unpredictable —"inconstant, variable, mutable"—and dangerous. Neptune's metamorphic characteristics baffle the speaker, who asks from where the sea-god's changes shall be "impu[t]able", or held accountable, and how his behavior, "thou bent", will be constrained. The "Moone", the speaker resolves, "rightly […] predominateth" him. Diana's capacity to bend Neptune to her will offsets the frightening reverberations of a tempestuous sea that had the capacity to rend massive merchant ships completely in half. As the spirit Ariel describes to Prospero in *The Tempest* act 1, "most mighty Neptune / Seem[s] to besiege and make his bold waves tremble", while shaking his "dread trident" and swiftly overthrowing the ship containing Prospero's political enemies (1.2.204–206). Is it any wonder that early moderns looked to external influences in hopes that the sea could somehow be contained and mitigated?

14 What is more, Fitzgeoffrey's reading of the protean water-deity recalls another early modern poetic work, Edmund Spenser's 1590 *Faerie Queene*, wherein Proteus suddenly rescues Florimell from some fishermen eager to rape her. As soon as he rescues the maiden, however, Proteus's demeanor changes quickly from savior to assaulter. The sea-god, "that old leachour", ties "the virgin" to his chariot "with bold assault" (FQ 3.8.62). Here, in both Spenser and Fitzgeoffrey, Proteus and Neptune are collapsed into one entity. As Spenserian critic Supriya Chaudhuri comments in the *Spenser Encyclopedia*, Spenser's Proteus "combines the behavior of father and son", turning both sea-gods into lecherous assaulters (560). Two decades ago, Katherine Eggert emphasized the importance of identifying allegorical rape as a major component to the *Faerie Queene*'s poetic project, "a metaphorical vector [that] is meant to redirect our attention […] from one literary form to another" (4). In *Pericles*, the inverse appears to be true; rather, the *absence* of rape is what drives forward the play's narrative suspense.

15 Gervase Markham, an Elizabethan- and Stuart-era poet and writer, describes "the siluer Moone" as "dread soueraigne of the deepe", which echoes Leontes's description of the sea as the "dreadful Neptune" in *The Winter's Tale* (5.1.153). By the moon's "waine", the

"ebs" of the sea follow suit in Markham's telling (p. 355). Similarly, George Chapman describes the female deity as "Natures bright eye-sight" and the "soule" of the night. With her "triple forhead"—or tripartite nature as Cynthia/Phoebe, Diana, and Persephone—she "doost controule / Earth, seas and hell" (p. 356). The goddess is again described as ameliorative, a "Glorious Nurse of all this lower frame", in poet-clergyman Nathaniel Baxter's *Sir Philip Sydneys Ouránia That Is, Endimions Song and Tragedie, Containing All Philosophie* (1598). Baxter similarly describes Diana as a supreme sovereign authority, where "All things upon, and all within the round, / Vnto her Soueraigntie are deeply bound" (p. D1r). He continues:

> She waggoneth to Neptunes Pallace than
> That wonneth in the mightie Ocean:
> She views the Creekes, Ports, Havens and Towers,
> And giues them Floods and Ebbs at certaine hours. (sig. D1r)

16 Once with Neptune, Diana becomes benthic: she searches "the Cauerns of the deepe" and "views the bottom of the Ocean, / Where never walked mortall living man" (sig. D1v and D1r). Baxter's poetry makes clear that Diana as the moon controls the sea, to which she alone "gives dayly motion". Her power to "ebbe and flowe to voyde corruption" is particularly intriguing to my argument, especially given Diana's sudden appearance in act 5 that undoes the corroded familial bonds between Pericles, Thaisa, and their daughter Marina. To further illustrate the goddess's powers, everything Neptune has "said, or done", is for the sake of Diana's glory. In Baxter's words, Neptune exists to "demonstrate the glorie of the Moone", Diana herself (sig. D1v). Lastly, as Baxter's speaker makes clear, "no man, or woman / Nor any thing" on earth is above the power of Diana's reach of her "mighty power" (sig. D2r). Diana is supreme authority.

17 The moon's sovereign powers over the sea are well documented elsewhere in Shakespeare's oeuvre. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Titania describes the moon as "the governess of floods", an ameliorative power able to "wash[ ] all the air" from "rheumatic diseases that do abound" (2.1.103–105). Camillo, King Leontes's servant in *The Winter's Tale*, tells Polixenes, "You may as well / Forbid the sea for to obey the moon", than succeed in assuaging the monarch's jealous rage. The moon is also such a powerful force over

Earth's natural causes. In *The Tempest*, Prospero shows a rare moment of vulnerability when he admits his envy of Sycorax, Caliban's mother. The "witch", he says, is able to harness her powers from the moon's tidal influence:

> His mother was a witch, and one so strong
> That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,
> And deal in her command without her power. (5.1.269–271)

18 The relationship between the moon, who "make[s] flows and ebbs" in *The Tempest* is also reflected in *Hamlet*. Horatio, Hamlet's schoolmate, describes the cosmological signs that portended Julius Caesar's death in ancient Rome: the moon as "moist star" exerts her "influence" upon "Neptune's empire" (1.1.117–118). This reading of the moon's influence is not limited to the fancies of Shakespeare's romances and comedies. For example, Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III* admits to "being governed by the watery moon", the influences of which "send forth plenteous tears to drown the world" in fashion similar to Neptune's waves (2.2.69–70). Moreover, Falstaff in *King Henry IV, Part 1* speaks of "being governed, as the sea is, by […] the moon" (1.2.27–28), and Olivia in *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* alludes to "that time of moon" that so clearly makes humans act in "lunacy" (1.5.195n). Moreover, these examples serve to show how the celestial realm was thought to control the natural world, as well as the scientific role astronomy and astrology played in the early modern English imagination. John D. North showed years ago that celestial influence "had an important, even crucial, intellectual binding power within the cosmological systems that incorporated them" (North 100). That "binding power", as I argue throughout this essay, clearly impacts the tidal flow of *Pericles*'s narrative events.

19 Diana's lunar powers, moreover, serve to highlight the preeminence of female agency throughout the play. Diana's lunar "influence" does not just affect nature; it also affects humans and other beings, especially with respect to male desire. Oberon tells us in *Midsummer* that the "chaste beams of the wat'ry moon", Diana's seat of power, "quenche[s]" the "young Cupid's fiery shaft" (2.1.161–162). Her "mighty power" described in Baxter's long narrative poem underscores the potency of her eminent presence in a play like *Pericles*, which was likely written within two years of *Endimions Song*. Though by no

means comprehensive, these contemporary examples serve to illustrate how early moderns conceived of the goddess's properties as moon deity. In all of these works, Diana's powers as moon-goddess control the tides, thus leading one to ask precisely what her function is in a work so captivated by tidal ebb and flow, like *Pericles*.

20 Baxter's, Fitzgeoffrey's, Markham's, and Shakespeare's understandings of the tides were not just fodder for imaginative poetry or drama either. They were increasingly becoming scientific reality. By 1609, the same year that the first quarto of *Pericles* appeared in print, German astronomer Johannes Kepler had developed a theory of the moon's effects on the earth's tides in *Astronomia Nova* "to make more credible the ocean tide and through it the moon's attractive powers". Kepler understands this influence as gravity, though different from how Isaac Newton would later define it. For Kepler, gravity is "a mutual corporeal disposition among kindred bodies to unite or join together" (55). This "corporeal disposition", however, is hidden from the human eye. It is through this occult understanding of gravity that Kepler explains the tides: "The sphere of influence of the attractive power in the moon is extended all the way to the earth […] This is imperceptible in enclosed seas, but noticeable where the beds of the ocean are widest and there is much free space for the waters' reciprocation" (56). It would appear that Shakespeare anticipates Kepler's occult understanding of the tides, and this so-called "sphere of influence" is recalled in the theophany scene when Diana descends from the heavens. Pericles asks twice of Helicanus and Marina, "What music?" before answering himself that it must be "the music of the spheres" (5.1.212–217). Pericles goes on to comment, "Most heavenly music, / It nips me unto listening, and thick slumber / Hangs upon mine eyes" (5.1.220–222). Arden 3 editor Suzanne Gossett postulates in the notes to this scene that Shakespeare might be referring to Ptolemaic cosmology, where "music was caused by the rotation of the concentric spheres on which the heavenly bodies were arranged" (5.1.217n). But it seems to me that this "music" that Pericles hears is not just the harmonious circulations of unnamable "spheres", but one in particular: the moon's. Given that Diana descends into the scene shortly thereafter, it is difficult to deny my suspicion.

21 My reading here is divergent from traditional interpretations of Diana as a pagan deity in Shakespeare's works. F. Elizabeth Hart asserts

persuasively that "Shakespeare and his audience would have recognized this Diana as distinct from Ovid's Diana, the chaste huntress and goddess of the moon" (Hart, "Music" 321). Perhaps, however, this assessment is a bit hasty, especially if we take into account the historical record of ideas in natural philosophy. In similar fashion, Gossett does not take into account Kepler's neo-Pythagorean cosmology, which builds substantially upon the mysticism of Ptolemy's *Harmonics*. As such, Kepler's updated model combines Copernican cosmology with spherical harmony of Ptolemaic symmetry. Moreover, Kepler's direct spiritual predecessor, Nicolaus Copernicus, writes that this "motion […] of the Spheres" renders visible the "admirable symmetry of the universe"; in turn, this music and spherical harmony legitimize the mystical reciprocity of celestial bodies, like the constant interplay between earth and moon. No one took this "clear bond of harmony" more seriously than Kepler (Copernicus 36). As intellectual historian Charles H. Kahn writes, Kepler's aims in "deciphering the riddle of the universe" means that he was able to provide "the underlying mathematical structure of the Copernican system of the Heavens" in his 1597 *Mysterium Cosmographicum* (163). In this "deciphering", Kepler unifies ancient Pythagorean reverence for mystical, divine numbers with emerging observational astronomy and mathematical calculations. While some of Kepler's ideas in this earlier work led no farther than speculation, the undergirding philosophy that a divine force tethered the bonds of fate led him ultimately to proffer a mystical theory of the tides in 1609, thus further aligning his early modern cosmology with *Pericles*'s "Celestial Dian". Kepler's mystic cosmology, then, aligns just as much with Ptolemaic spherical influence in the *Pericles* act 5 theophany scene. [2]

22 Diana's role in this "sphere of influence" provides yet another example of her celestially influenced navigational prowess. Her largely occulted influence in *Pericles* drives not only the ecodrama of the play, as Kammer suggests, but also binds her to studies in occult philosophy and women's secrets, what Mary Floyd-Wilson has described as an "occult logic" of the early modern period: mysterious natural occurrences that were "idiosyncratic, peculiar, and often at odds with the observable, elemental world" (7). This binary between the seen, masculine world and the unseen, feminine realm exposes

the epistemological fissures of the era. Further, the "occult logic" of Diana's "influence" closes the yawning chasm between the seen and unseen in *Pericles* after the goddess renders herself visible in the material world. Indeed, when she announces herself in Pericles's dream, Diana thus makes visible the occult, or hidden, forces that have driven the tidal logic of the play. This logic, I argue, is ruled by Diana, who is responsible for the tidal action of the play that eventually leads to the tearful hard-won family reunion in act 5.

Of tides and pirates

23 As the "rapture of the sea" in *Pericles* threatens to "swallow" and "ravish[ ]" those who dare to travel across it, the characters frequently call upon Diana to intervene (2.1.151, 4.4.39, and 4.1.98). The first invocation to the goddess in the play takes place when Thaisa wakes from her burial at sea. After magician-necromancer Cerimon revives the queen from her short-term death, Thaisa exclaims, "O dear Diana, where am I?" (3.2.103). This scene serves to illustrate the marked confusion between Diana's fortuitous interventions and Neptune's violent "rapture". We see evidence of this misunderstanding when Cerimon and his servant posit the origin of such rich bounty. When Thaisa's coffin makes its way to the shore, Cerimon's servant comments that he "never saw so huge a billow, sir, / As tossed it upon shore" (3.2.53–54). They interpret the "sea's stomach" as a source of such riches because it "belches upon" Cerimon and his men a treasure trove of gold, as well as the lifeless Thaisa. After Cerimon performs his necromancy and revives the queen, Thaisa resolves to stay chaste and find a "vestal livery" to live the rest of her life (3.4.9), yet another reference to Diana. Cerimon then advises Thaisa that "Diana's temple is not distant far, / Where you may abide till your date expire" (3.4.12–13). In further associating Thaisa with the goddess and her proximity to Ephesus after washing ashore, evidence of Diana's occulted influence grows all the stronger.

24 Literary critics Caroline Bicks and Hart have already shown how focusing on Diana transforms *Pericles* from a male-centric dramatic narrative into one that makes considerable space for women and gender. On the one hand, Bicks argues in her essay that by the time Diana mythology reached the early modern era, the goddess was

a host of contradictions: “As the Greek Artemis and the Roman Diana, she protected virginity; as Hecate she embodied the mysteries of female power; her association with the procreative Amazons and the ancient fertility goddess led to her formulation as Luna, goddess of the moon, and Lucina, the Roman goddess of childbirth” (207). Amid this enmeshment of ancient mythological and religious traditions, Bicks argues, was an early modern tradition that preempted a heated religious debate between the maternal bodily mysteries of pagan ritual, and the ever-increasing divide between Protestant and Catholic religious practices. These incendiary conversations thus converged around the issue of “churching” women, or purifying the maternal body through religious ritual after childbirth. Similar to the Ephesian Diana, the “churching community” in early modern England would affirm both the “miraculous *and* material” processes of childbirth and recovery—both of which Diana in *Pericles* uncoincidentally represents (208).

25 On the other hand, Hart explores Diana’s genealogy further when she claims that the Roman mythology became syncretized with near-East fertility goddesses in the late antique world. Diana’s authority as “providential God-as-Mother” in *Pericles* “owes as much of her persona to Asian fertility rites as she does to Greco-Roman concepts of female chastity” (Hart, “Diana” 348). These fertility goddesses were then enveloped into Roman mythology, and then again with Mary, Mother of God, who is similarly and contradictorily virginal yet fecund. These discrepancies between pagan and Christian religions become further confused when Ephesus as a site of “model Christian community” is added to the fray (Bicks 210). Early moderns would have recognized the potency of Diana’s invocation from the New Testament book of Acts describing the tense standoff between the Apostle Paul and the votaries in the Ephesian temple to an Artemis-Diana proxy: “Our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians” (Acts 19:27–28). Bicks’s research shows early modern Christianity’s contentious relationship with Ephesian comparison. On the one hand, midwives associated the Ephesian goddess with the blessings

of safe childbirth. On the other hand, Ephesus was an ancient city intensely associated with pagan and Catholic excesses of idolatry for English Protestants. In Protestant minister Sampson Price's words, "*Ephesus* is fallen […] Here *John* and the *Virgin* lived" (19). This confluence of pagan, Catholic, and the apostolic origins became a city synonymous with, in Bicks's words, "the Protestant Church of England and its post-Reformation conflicts […] [resting] on shaky foundations" (207). If the city of Ephesus was a reminder to English Protestants of backsliding into Catholic or, worse, pagan idolatry, Diana held an even more contentious position because of her associations with Roman pagan ritual.

26 I do not challenge traditional interpretations of Diana as protectress of vestal virginity and chastity; rather, I suggest an extra layer of complexity to the goddess figure in *Pericles*. More to the point, it would appear that she is able to *embody* the women who call upon her for assistance. This intricacy is further enhanced when we also read closely Marina's dialogue with various lecherous men. Born amid a raging tempest, Marina, daughter to Thaisa and Pericles, is unsurprisingly associated with water "for she was born at sea" (3.3.13). Her name in Latin literally means "belonging to the sea", and yet, as she persistently reminds the licentious men around her, even if she was born into and amid the sea's violence, she is not of it. Marina's language thus appears to anticipate current ecofeminist conversations about gender, environment, and embodiment. Moreover, the rhetoric of ecofeminist embodiment offers us a helpful vocabulary for reading Marina's feminine virtue. N. Katherine Hayles writes that ecofeminist embodiment "enables us to see that embodied experience comes not only from the complex interplay between brain and viscera [but] also from the constant engagement of our embodied interactions with the environment" (298). In *Pericles*, the most conspicuous "embodied experience […] with the environment" is not always a positive one: Marina, for example, is constantly pushed and pulled by the sea's vicissitudes. First, her birth during a storm solidifies her identification with the sea. Second, Pericles shirks his parental duty and quite literally ships her to Dionyzia and Cleon's malignant grasp. Third, Marina is captured by pirates and sold into sexual slavery at a Mytilene brothel. And fourth, she must once again face the sea's violence when she escapes to

Ephesus. Yet despite these notable similarities with the sea's lechery, Marina is still able, somehow, to maintain her maidenhood in the face of repeated and increasingly more alarming threats of sexual violence.

27 I thus contend that what we see in Marina is another kind of embodiment, that of Diana's fortitude and commitment to virginity. Hayles's understanding of ecofeminist embodiment reveals the "visible results of the dynamic ongoingness of flux" in the natural world. At first blush, Hayles's rubric suggests that this tidal flow, this "dynamic ongoingness of flux", is redolent of Neptune's dominion (298). However, if we keep in mind not only Diana's occulted power as the goddess of the moon, but also early modern conceptions of Floyd-Wilson's female-centric "occult logic", we can begin to uncover the subtle workings where Marina embodies Diana. We see an example of this phenomenon when Marina is sold into prostitution. She tells Bawd:

> If fires be hot, knives sharp or waters deep,
> Untried I still my virgin knot will keep.
> Diana, aid my purpose! (4.2.138–140)

As we see here in her powerful proclamation, Marina compares the reputability of her "virgin knot" to the "waters deep". To "aid" this intention, Marina thus calls upon Diana to protect her. If Marina's determination to hold onto her virginity is inextricable from the "waters deep" of the sea, then her prayer to Diana makes sense, not only because the goddess protects virginity, but also because she can intervene on the "rapture of the sea". Pericles says as much in the second act of the play when he talks to the sea itself:

> [R]emember earthly man
> Is but a substance that must yield to you,
> And I, as fits my nature, obey you. (2.1.2–4)

This lament shows Pericles's full display of powerlessness, as well as the need to submit himself to his fickle imprisoner. When Pericles wails that "earthly man" is subject to immense vulnerability—that is, the state of woundedness—it is important to remember that the women in the play are far more susceptible to the sea's ills.

Embedded within this language of "rapture" or a violent, forceful seizure, of course, is the latent suggestion of rape and sexual violence. The very root of the English words "rape" and its close etymological variant "rapture" are both derived from the Latin verb *rapere*: to steal, to plunder, to violate sexually. Thaisa's and Marina's status as women without nearby male protectors, whether they be father or husband, threatens to undermine their agency. However, Diana's protecting powers of "Soueraigntie" over Neptune undermine this potential fate. Diana's example of vestal virginity is a model that Marina copies to shame the brothel's clientele; in Thaisa's case, the goddess's Ephesian temple serves as a respite from sexual advance, and the "unwoeful queen" tucks herself away in Diana's temple as a "votaress" to guarantee that her female chastity and marital bond to Pericles remain intact (4.0.3–4).

28 If Diana can embody women to stave off sexual violence as I suggest, then it also follows that Neptune can similarly enmesh himself with the human form. For example, *Cymbeline* illustrates that this benthic embodiment goes to the very core of British identity. As the Queen tells Cloten and Cymbeline, Britain's very identity is founded within the island nation's place as "Neptune's park, rubbed and paled in / With rocks unscalable and roaring waters" (3.1.22–23). This confluence of "rocks unscalable" and "roaring waters" serves to naturalize the geographical-humoral behavior of the British people. For the queen in *Cymbeline*, the craggy landscape among "Neptune's park" dovetails with the stalwartness of the English people, "the natural bravery of your isle" (3.1.21). We also see evidence of this tidal embodiment in the various references to and threats of sexual violence throughout *Pericles*. Implicit to the play's dramatic action is the suggestion that the sea as rapacious entity eventually infuses the sexual desire of the men whose lives and livelihoods rely upon maritime economies, and this relationship between sea and desire becomes a narrative pattern in *Pericles*. We see an example of this interrelation when the governor Lysimachus encounters Marina in the brothel; he tells Bawd, "She would serve after a long voyage at sea" (4.5.49–50). A practical reading renders this exchange fairly cut and dried: Lysimachus seeks Marina's services because he has been bereft of female companionship while at sea. However, on closer examination, this transaction reveals this account as, in Brayton's

words, a "tidal *raptus* […] a tidal economy of emotion" overtaking the male subject (98). While Brayton deploys this term to explain Tarquin's desires for Lucrece in *The Rape of Lucrece*, his analysis is useful for our purposes here. This "tidal economy" thus transforms the rapist into the role of the privateer, or pirate, who seeks to extrajudicially capture his target's "treasure", the chaste maiden's virginity. Brayton's analysis focuses on certain "hydraulic forces by likening characters to the sea and their emotional transport to the effects of rising and falling tides" in *Lucrece*, but my reading shows that this tidal economy goes even further as Shakespeare progresses in his playwrighting career (98). Additionally, the tides are no longer just mere metaphor. Rather, I argue that the masculine tides appear, as Hayles might argue, to influence the actions of men brought about by the "constant engagement of our embodied interactions with the environment" (298). This benthic embodiment furthers my assertion of a blue gender studies; in rendering visible the allegorization of gender with Roman mythological frameworks, it also makes real the ecocritical theory that nature does not just interact with man; it interacts *upon* him.

29 In *Pericles*, Marina as "a creature of sale", responds to Lysimachus's blank verse in iambs: "O, that the gods / Would set me free from this unhallowed place" (4.5.83, 103–104). The "unhallowed" brothel from which Marina begs the gods to free her somehow converts Lysimachus's desire from carnal to subdued, and her iambs manage to convince Lysimachus to stave off his own "tidal *raptus*": "I did not think / Thou couldst have spoke so well, ne'er dreamt thou couldst" (4.5.106–107). Marina's "speech" thus "alter[s]" Lysimachus's "corrupted mind" (4.5.108–109). The economic exchange shifts from one of surging "tidal" emotions that overcome Tarquin to one of moral rectitude in Lysimachus: "Hold, here's gold for thee. / Persever in that clear way thou goest" (4.5.109–110). Lysimachus's "tidal *raptus*" surrenders to Marina's "clear way"—highlighting not only the sacred path down which Marina walks, but also the fact that there is a path on which to traverse at all. As the tide of desire recedes, a solid, "clear way" is instead revealed for Marina to "goest". That clear path leads Lysimachus to call Marina a "piece of virtue", and he gives her "more gold" as he looks to leave the brothel (4.5.116, 118). Ashamed, Lysimachus curses the man that "robs thee [Marina] of thy goodness"

(4.5.120) and hastily makes his exit. But the tidal language does not end there. When Bolt asks for "one piece [of gold] for me" as Lysimachus leaves, the governor incredulously exclaims:

> Avaunt, thou damned doorkeeper!
> Your house, but for this virgin that doth prop it,
> Would sink and overwhelm you. (4.5.122, 123–125)

In this instance, Marina seems to become a proxy for, and potential embodiment *of*, Diana; the "gods" that "strengthen" her also keep the brothel in coastal Mytilene from "sink[ing]" into and being "overwhelm[ed]" by the sea. The same deity that keeps Marina's "virgin knot" intact—"Diana, aid my purpose!"—might in fact also keep the rapacious sea from swallowing the house into "the waters deep". I suggest that it is thus perhaps Marina's intense devotion to Diana that keeps her on the "clear way", unharmed by the "unhallowed" environment—that is, both the seedy brothel and the debauched sea —by which she is surrounded.

30 Imagery of the rapist as pirate further underscores this same economical exchange of a "tidal *raptus*" when Marina is captured by actual pirates in *Pericles*. For Brayton, this phenomenon in *Lucrece* amounts to "a series of carefully constructed and interlinked metaphors connecting bodies and emotions to oceanic forces—tides, storms, piracy, and shipwreck" (98). Notably, all four of these phenomena characterize, and potentially define, the narrative action of *Pericles*. Similar to Tarquin's "prize" Lucrece, the swashbuckling pirates in *Pericles* see Marina and immediately begin shouting, "A prize! A prize!" (4.1.89). When the privateers capture Marina, the murderer Leonine posits that they will "please themselves upon her" before killing her (4.1.96). In the next line, Leonine convinces himself that the pirates' sexual violence against Marina is inevitable: "If she remain, / Whom they have ravished, must by me be slain" (4.1.97–98). Similar to its close synonym rapture, ravishment signifies the simultaneous connotation of both capture and brutal sexual violence (see OED, "ravish"). Privateering, of course, was a major prop for the English imperialist aspirations. Most notable were Queen Elizabeth I's pirates, or Sea Dogs, who protected the coasts of England: Sir Francis Drake, Sir John Hawkins, and Sir Walter Raleigh. According to Fuchs, early modern pirates reveal the "cultural

anxieties" of the era, which were "attendant upon the representation of a merchant nation and the development of an English empire based on commerce" ("Pirates" 47). The queen's Sea Dogs, for example, were responsible for establishing colonies in the New World, as well as looting enemy ships and returning the treasures to enrich English royal coffers. Privateering functioned as the beginning of the global economy, with each European nation jockeying to embargo resources like sugar, cotton, spices, and enslaved peoples (Rodger 190–203). That the pirates view Marina as "a prize" therefore reinforces the play's tidal economy. Not only is her maidenhood worth capitalizing, but it also represents the incredible vulnerability Marina faces at the hands of both the rapacious pirates and an equally lecherous, unforgiving natural environment.

31 The insinuation that the pirates will rape Marina when they capture her further binds this association to the sea's rapacious qualities. And yet, in what I argue is perhaps by the grace of Diana, Marina remains unviolated. When Bolt, servant to the proprietors of the Mytilene brothel asks, "You say she's a virgin?" (4.2.36–37), the pirate mysteriously replies, "O sir, we doubt it not" (4.2.39). While the pirate offers little clarification, Gossett offers two potential rationales: through either first, the possibility that Marina resembles the Senecan "valiant virgin", or second, the likelihood that Marina, "like one of the saints she resembles", is able to convince the pirates to leave her untouched and unharmed (4.2.39n). Whatever the case, if it is true that an analogic relationship exists between sea and desire, as I suggest, it makes logical sense that Marina invokes Diana in order to protect her virginity.

32 In addition to ameliorating threats of sexual violence, I suggest that Diana serves as the antidote to the "tidal violence" of Shakespeare's play. If Diana's powers are associated with the moon, and if the moon "doost controule" Earth, then it stands to reason that the lucky vicissitudes conventionally attributed to the work of Fortuna—a commonplace convention in the romance genre—might in fact be the intervening actions of Diana and her "sphere of influence". A careful examination of the play's events reveals that once the goddess's name is invoked, the tempests that throw the characters across the Mediterranean come to a halt. Pericles often attributes his fortunate and unfortunate journeys alike to the sea's unpredictability,

but that meaning shifts when we begin to consider the moon's tidal influence. Perhaps, then, when Pericles suggests that "Alas, the seas hath cast me on the rocks", it is the restorative work of Diana that helps the prince "wash[ ] […] from shore to shore" (2.1.5–7).

33 Indeed, while the violence of the tempests threatens to drown Pericles and his crew, the tides are what ultimately result in the reversal of their fortune. The tides are what allow Pericles's "rusty armour" to wash up on shore, as well as Thaisa's "fresh" corpse (2.1.115 and 3.2.78). These tidal fluctuations are ultimately what lead Pericles to his chance meeting with Thaisa, when he gallantly announces to her:

> My education's been in arts and arms,
> Who looking for adventures in the world
> Was by rough seas reft of ship and men,
> And after shipwreck driven upon this shore. (2.3.79–82)

Pericles's language in the passage foregrounds the "rough seas", and the tides are what have "driven" Pericles "upon this shore". Cerimon's servant comments similarly when Thaisa washes ashore: "If the sea's stomach be o'ercharged with gold, / 'Tis a good constraint of fortune / It belches upon us" (3.2.56–58). But as Baxter's poem illustrated for us earlier, Diana's powers are what allow the tides to push and "belch[ ]" up the "gold", Thaisa and her bountiful coffin. Lest we forget, Diana is capable of benthic roaming: she trawls "the Cauerns of the deepe" and "views the bottom of the Ocean, / Where never walked mortall living man". The sea controls Pericles, but Diana controls the sea.

Coda

34 Rather than viewing the sea-tossed characters in *Pericles* as hapless victims of Fortuna's contingency, I suggest an added layer of complexity to the romance genre. Though romance functions as an engine for operating through the hidden workings of universal forces, Diana as moon deity intervenes with her tidal influence, and she acts as a mediating factor in this wandering quest, silently and invisibly pressing pause on the endless suffering that the sea's tempests effect. But why is it important to elevate Diana, a deity of the cosmos, into

blue cultural studies? To be sure, the goddess functions as a "dynamic agent" in the course of the sea's vicissitudes and provides a prevailing logic over a watery world otherwise bereft of meaningful pattern. If anything, Diana's magnetic influence over the tides further points to the interconnectivity so prominent in literary understandings of ecocriticism, ecofeminism, and blue Shakespeare. What this argument resists, however, is the flattening of all ecology into an asexual layer of "unitive dimensions". Diana and her feminine virtue function to restore the family bonds that the sea violently rends. This analysis, then, ultimately suggests a place at the table for ameliorative virtue within a holistic ecological system that prevails over the notion of "interconnectedness".

35 My fundamental claim here is to suggest that the dualism in Shakespeare's *Pericles* is not necessarily a pitfall to be gingerly avoided. As the rhetoric revolving around the sea in *Pericles* reminds us, the sea is not an amorphous, asexual entity in the early modern world. Rather, it "swallow[s]" and "ravish[es]". These metaphors of the water's powers are not without powerful implications; furthermore, the unifying tendency of ecological criticism has so far elided this coded language of benthic rape and capture. In other words, I suggest, albeit cautiously, that perhaps this dualism serves a purpose in the higher logic of "ecological cognition", especially when we remember that Diana's actions literally decenter and upend Pericles's "heroic individualism" at the same time that she harbors vulnerable subjects from the scarring vicissitudes of oceanic contingency.

36 Lastly, I end this article by reiterating the need for a blue gender studies. While "blue cultural studies" provides an "offshore" realm of study that investigates the sea as a site of maritime imagination and scientific advancement, as both Mentz and Brayton have persuasively argued, a blue gender studies supplies us with a conceptual framework that emphasizes the gendered seafaring journeys crisscrossing Shakespeare's corpus. In doing so, this schema refuses to flatten the gendered language endemic to functioning ecologies that are so prevalent in early modern works. A blue gender studies, then, refuses to normalize the "rapturous" characterization of the sea and instead refocuses our attention on the ideological, cosmological

balm of Diana's prowess to "voyde corruption" and restrain masculinist violence in the process.

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NOTES

1 The blue humanities "name an off-shore trajectory that places cultural history in an oceanic rather than terrestrial context". See "Shakespeare and the Blue Humanities", <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/725101> (accessed 18 April 2020).

2 These ideas were circulating in England even prior to the publication of Kepler's *Astronomia Nova*. Moreover, Kepler very likely followed in the footsteps of William Gilbert, a sixteenth-century English astronomer, natural philosopher, and personal physician to Queen Elizabeth. Of considerable note, Gilbert's best-known work *De Magnete* (1600) heartily rejected the Aristotelian and scholastic philosophy and argued that the earth's core acts as a large magnet, fundamentally modifying how early moderns understood their place on the watery globe. A major consequence of Gilbert's mystical fascination with magnets was the technological

advancement of the navigational compass, which orients the human subject toward magnetic north. Notably, it also changed the landscape of sea navigation because it allowed for more accurate longitudinal measurements and therefore decreased the imperiled chances of getting lost at sea.

ABSTRACTS

English

This original article responds to recent ecocritical trends in Shakespeare studies, namely what literary critic Steve Mentz has called the "blue humanities", or the critical analysis of literary motifs that embed the human subject within a precarious, sea-tossed imaginary. In its efforts to explore the benthic depths of Shakespeare, however, this essay demonstrates that the "blue" in Shakespeare studies has elided a crucial aspect of Shakespearean imagination: gender and female agency. "Toward a Blue Gender Studies" thus investigates Shakespeare's play *Pericles*—an offbeat romance he co-wrote with George Wilkins—to show how the sea's propensity for rape and sexual violence is restrained by the hidden powers that the goddess Diana wields. While scholars have studied Diana's role in *Pericles* as protectress of mothers in childbirth, I shift the critical conversation to her other powerful sphere of influence: the moon. To call attention to Diana's occulted power throughout the play, I investigate post-Copernican astronomy and the lively debates theorizing the moon's sway over tidal behaviors on Earth's oceans. By engaging with ecofeminist critique and the history of science, my literary analysis brings to light the lengthy, gendered literary history between Diana as moon-deity and Neptune, the sea-god. As a result, this work proffers a renewed study of the "blue humanities", making space for feminine virtue and influence while also attending to our critical concerns with the issues afflicting our current epoch: climate change, devastating storms, and rising sea levels.

Français

Cet article original se veut une réponse aux récentes tendances écocritiques des études shakespeariennes, en particulier ce que le critique littéraire Steve Mentz a appelé les « humanités bleues », ou l'analyse critique des motifs littéraires qui ancrent le sujet humain dans un imaginaire précaire ballotté par la mer. Cependant, dans sa tentative d'explorer les profondeurs benthiques de Shakespeare, cet essai démontre que le « bleu » des études shakespeariennes a éludé un aspect crucial de l'imagination shakespearienne : le genre et l'agentivité des femmes. « Toward a Blue Gender Studies » explore donc la pièce de Shakespeare *Périclès* — une romance décalée co-écrite avec George Wilkins — pour montrer la façon dont la propension de la mer au viol et à la violence sexuelle se trouve contenue par les pouvoirs cachés exercés par la déesse Diane. Tandis que d'autres chercheurs ont étudié le rôle de Diane dans

Périclès comme protectrice des mères pendant l'accouchement, je tourne la conversation critique vers son autre sphère d'influence, la lune. Pour attirer l'attention sur la puissance occultée de Diane dans toute la pièce, j'explore l'astronomie post-copernicienne et les débats animés théorisant l'emprise de la lune sur les marées des océans de la Terre. Puisant à la fois dans la critique ecoféministe et dans l'histoire des sciences, mon analyse littéraire met en lumière l'histoire littéraire genrée qui existe de longue date entre Diane en tant que divinité lunaire et Neptune, le dieu de la mer.
En conséquence, ce travail propose une étude renouvelée des « humanités bleues », créant un espace pour la vertu et l'influence féminines, tout en se penchant sur nos préoccupations critiques concernant les problèmes de notre époque : le changement climatique, les orages dévastateurs, et la montée du niveau des mers.

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Mots-clés
Périclès Prince de Tyr, Shakespeare (William), la lune, Diane, contrôle féminin, violence sexuelle

Keywords
Pericles Prince of Tyre, Shakespeare (William), the moon, Diana, female agency, sexual violence, blue Shakespeare, blue gender studies, blue humanities, blue cultural studies

AUTHOR

Alexander Lowe McAdams
Alexander Lowe McAdams studies the intersections of astronomy, religion, and philosophy in early modern literature in the Department of English at Rice University. In spite of the global COVID-19 pandemic, she successfully defended her dissertation titled *Theophanic Reasoning: Science, Secrets, and the Stars from Spenser to Milton* and received her Ph.D. in the spring 2020 semester.
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The Travails of *The Comedy of Errors* in Athens

Le voyage de La Comédie des erreurs *à Athènes*

Efterpi Mitsi

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OUTLINE

TEXT

1 *The Comedy of Errors* begins with the description of a shipwreck, presenting the significance of the sea and sea travel as forces both separating and reuniting characters and families. The trope of the shipwreck, according to Steve Mentz, represents "a swirling loss of direction that is also a redirection, a sudden shock, a violent encounter with disorder" (*Shipwreck Modernity* xx). In Shakespeare's plays, starting with *The Comedy of Errors*, shipwreck stories often instigate plots: in the opening scene of the play, the shipwreck narrated by Egeon (whose name invokes the Aegean Sea) splits his family, scattering its members across the Mediterranean, from Epidamnus to Corinth and from Syracuse to Ephesus. Yet, in *The Comedy of Errors* the shipwreck is not just a plot device; it is a force that on the one hand divides characters from their home and family and on the other, since the play's protagonists are twins, separates them from part of themselves.

2 For Katerina Evangelatos, who directed *The Comedy of Errors* in Athens during the 2018–2019 season, it is the sea imagery of the play, encapsulated in Antipholus of Syracuse's soliloquy in act 1, that represents the essence of her performance:

> I to the world am like a drop of water
> That in the ocean seeks another drop,
> Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
> Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself.
> So I, to find a mother and a brother,
> In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself. (1.2.35–40)[1]

3 Evangelatos, who has herself experienced the successive losses of mother, brother and father at a relatively young age, reflected on the importance of the above lines in an interview, explaining that she read them as emblematic of the loss of identity, which has always been in the "centre of her quest" as a director (Evangelatos, "The Theatre Does Not Have to Follow the News").[2] The sea imagery in Antipholus' soliloquy connects the story of shipwreck told by his father Egeon in the previous scene with the sense of being separated from oneself. The twin envisions the loss of self through the image of a drop of water, identical with countless others. The sea that caused the family to split apart becomes for Antipholus, as Gwilym Jones argues, "the only medium for imagining the scale of that separation" (4). Therefore, from the beginning of the play, the sea is not merely portrayed as a destructive force[3] but also implies that the very notion of individuality is fluid and elusive.

4 At the same time, the divided family of Egeon is reflected on the setting of the play, the port city of Ephesus in the Eastern Mediterranean, which evokes the diverse and fractured Greek world and the political chaos of the Hellenistic era. By situating his play in Ephesus, Shakespeare not only changes the setting of his main source, Plautus' *Menaechmi*, from the Adriatic to the Aegean, but also opens up a magical fairyland; Ephesus appears as a Hellenistic cosmopolitan city, at the intersection of East and West (Cartwright 48), representing the religious syncretism and the fusion of cultures, worships and rituals of late antiquity. Egeon's fate, condemned to death right after he lands at Ephesus, also shows the divisions and conflicts between cities and reminds that xenophobia still exists in a divided world and in a sea of continuing shipwrecks.

5 The setting of *The Comedy of Errors* and its palimpsestic nature, suggesting perhaps a lost Greek play underlying the *Menaechmi*,[4] inspired the fantastic world of the performance directed by

Evangelatos, featuring a new verse translation by poet Dionysios Kapsalis. This was a "syncretic" performance that united diverse theatrical traditions, ranging from the magical world of the circus to Kyogen, and from slapstick comedy—replete with allusions to Charlie Chaplin's *The Cure* and *The Circus*—to Vsevolod Meyerhold's biomechanics. The two concentric swing doors of the set, the larger of which was a dazzling mirror, emphasized the doubling of the idols and the transformation of characters and situations and recreated the "violent encounter with disorder" (Mentz, *Shipwreck Modernity* xx) introduced through the story of the shipwreck. This essay will analyse the Athenian *Comedy of Errors* through the perspective of syncretism suggested by the play's setting and generic uncertainty, oscillating between romance and farce. Focusing on the visual and sound devices of the performance, it will also consider to what extent its frenetic rhythm and excessive mixture of comic genres shaped new horizons for the Greek audience, exposing the composite material and lineage of the text.

The sea and the city

6 The sea of *The Comedy of Errors* is the Mediterranean of the ancient Greek world, a literary sea of ancient narratives and myths, a setting of history and romance. Egeon's tragic narration, describing how the family (his wife Emilia, his new-born twin sons, both named Antipholus, as well the new-born twin servants, both called Dromio) were shipwrecked sailing from Epidamnus, on the Adriatic coast, towards their home in Syracuse, conjures this entire world on stage. From Epidamnus to Syracuse in the west and from Corinth to Ephesus in the Eastern Mediterranean, Egeon's story reveals the variety as well as the fragmentation, conflict and instability of the Greek world. After the Antipholus raised by Egeon left Syracuse, along with his slave Dromio, to look for his lost twin brother without returning home, his aged father sets out on his own quest, wandering in the Mediterranean to the "farthest Greece" (1.1.131) until he ends up in Ephesus. As Kent Cartwright points out, the Greek elements in the play illuminate its "generic sophistication" and "constitute a little recognized instance of [its] famous doubleness, as in twin characters and mirrored scenes" (45–6).

7 The Greek city of Ephesus is itself a place "with a divided identity" (Maguire 361), a centre of both commerce and magic. Laurie Maguire suggests that the city's duality as well as division between Christians and Jews in Ephesus informs the *Letter to the Ephesians*, [5] which advises Christians to get along with each other, emphasizing social and racial unity (361–3). Shakespeare's play makes use of the reputation of Ephesus in the New Testament as a place of sorcery, danger, decadence and deceit, also evoking St. Paul's travels and travails, the storm and shipwreck, narrated in Luke's book of Acts (see Whitworth 38–41). In the beginning of *The Comedy of Errors*, Antipholus of Syracuse is afraid of the city's reputation for "cozenage" and "sorcery" (1.2.95–105), while later on he is convinced that it is in fact controlled by "witches" (4.4.149).

8 The dual nature of Ephesus is also manifested in the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the World: this massive temple, which had been at first dedicated to an ancient fertility goddess, was built over a period of 120 years and filled with works of art, combining the spiritual with the mercantile element. Tourists from all around the Greek and Roman world travelled to the temple, making Ephesus a cosmopolitan city full of ways to spend money, until it was closed down by the Byzantine emperors, and finally demolished by a Christian mob in 401 CE. The market and all kinds of mercantile exchanges based on credit play a very important role in *The Comedy of Errors*, as several critics have already pointed out (see Perry; Gordon). It is the flourishing of Ephesus as the largest city and commercial centre of Asia Minor during the Hellenistic and Roman periods that brings about the relentless material exchanges of Shakespeare's play underpinning the core of the farce and the instability of identities. As a merchant from Syracuse, Egeon has landed illegally in Ephesus, and is apprehended and condemned to death for violating the law that forbids trade and travel between the two cities unless a ransom is paid by sunset. According to Martine Van Elk, his misfortune is related to "the mercantile hunger for profit embodied in the cruel, arbitrary trade laws of the two cities, which falsely substitute people for money" (51).

9 Egeon's response to the Duke's request to tell his story of shipwreck, loss and quest in the play's first scene not only highlights the element of romance (in opposition to the farce dominating the following

middle acts), and the play's debt to Apollonius of Tyre, [6] but also marks the conflict between Ephesus and Syracuse and the division of the Greek world, creating a dark, political background to the comedy of mistaken identities. Yet, the darkness is not only caused by Egeon's misfortune. According to de Sousa, the appearance from the sea of one long-lost twin "unsettles and throws into chaos the other twin's married life", by creating a crisis of identity and threatening his prosperity and happiness (153). While mistaken identity leads to accusations of adultery, imprisonment and demonic possession, Ephesus emerges as a place of transformation, where characters can lose but also reinvent themselves.

"Here we wander in illusions": The Athenian *Comedy of Errors* [7]

10 Evangelatos' interpretation of *The Comedy of Errors* makes ample use of the "Ephesian transformative magic" and the combination of "estrangement and enchantment" which the sea (as well as the city) offers to the characters (Mentz, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean* IX). The director, currently in her late thirties, has studied acting at the National Theatre of Greece and directing for her postgraduate studies at Middlessex University as well as at the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts GITIS. Having already directed many critically acclaimed and awarded productions, Evangelatos has stated that choosing "difficult" plays like *The Comedy of Errors* and *Woyzeck* (both produced during the 2018–2019 theatrical season) is "part […] of [her] mission", which is "to acquaint the audience with less well known plays through readings that might often be disturbing or seem inaccessible. It is my duty to do it" (Evangelatos, Interview by Mia Kollia). Performed at Katerina Vasilakou Theatre, *The Comedy of Errors* was produced by Lykofos, a production company that has staged many of the director's works, such as Euripides' *Rhesus* (2015), *1984* (2016), *Faust* (2016), *Woyzeck* (2018–2019) and *Hamlet* (2019–2020).

11 When Evangelatos was asked why she chose to direct *The Comedy of Errors*, a play which has been rarely performed in Greece, [8] she replied that she had been looking for a "classical" comedy for two years, and was attracted to the play's farcical elements, which "create

a strange magical universe" but also "make it sometimes dark" ("A Gun Was Always Pointed at Me"). Emphasizing the significance of the twin protagonists, Evangelatos argued that Shakespeare

> did not want to talk about the game of similarity but of identity, the essence of identity. [The play's] entanglements create such confusion to the characters that they reach the point of wondering "who am I?". What interests me is the question, "Am I the one I think I am or the one that others think I am?" ("A Gun Was Always Pointed at Me")

In the end, the director found *The Comedy of Errors* "intriguing" as "it was a strange work that was not often produced" that gave her the opportunity to "deal with its [mixed] genre" ("The Theatre Does Not Have to Follow the News"). The re-acquaintance of the Greek audience with the play depended on the new verse translation by Kapsalis, an eminent Greek poet and translator, who has translated Shakespeare's sonnets and many of his plays for the stage, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, A *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Hamlet*.

12 Since much of the farcical comedy of the play depends on puns and other kinds of wordplay, the theatricality and playfulness of Kapsalis' translation was an integral part of Evangelatos' staging of the *Comedy of Errors*. The twin Dromios for example, recall the Fool part of other plays by amusing the audience through wordplay and jokes that reinforce their comic doubling. As the linguistic playfulness of the text is interwoven with the action on stage, if this were lost in translation, then the comedy's liveliness would also be lost. Based on his poetic and theatrical experience, especially his work on the figurative language and the Petrarchan conventions of the sonnets, Kapsalis succeeded in conveying the puns, metaphors, similes and sexual connotations which abound in the play. In an interview discussing his translation of *Hamlet*, Kapsalis has emphasized that the translator must bring the text into his own language and poetic identity. The Greek language cannot be abused, he argued; the target text should be intelligible, performative and poetic at the same time ("The Multiple Dilemmas of Dionysis Kapsalis"). And he has described his translations of Shakespeare as a process in which "one loses to win; and the more he suffers for the loss, the greater are his chances —along with his desire—to recover what has been lost in another way,

not always the most honest way" ("The Language of Literature and the Language of Translation").

13 Armed with a vibrant verse translation, Evangelatos was able to concentrate on her personal vision of the play that drew upon the images evoked by the magical city of Ephesus, "mingling the fantastical with the mundane" (de Sousa 147). This successful performance [9] emphasized syncretism, as suggested earlier, fusing not only a variety of theatrical styles but also ideas and images from the performing and visual arts, such as the circus, the ballet, silent movies and slapstick comedy, Russian constructivism and the Bauhaus. Mixing traditional forms such as Commedia dell' arte with the theatrical idioms of the European avant-garde, namely Meyerhold and Oskar Schlemmer, and at the same time making references to Kyogen [10] and Kabuki, the latter through the white mask-like make-up of actors, Evangelatos reflected on the theatre as a performing and popular art through history.
Her self-reflexive, meta-theatrical approach materialized through the set, designed by Evita Manidaki, which consisted of a central double mirror with revolving doors on a rotating base, as well as though the doubling of actors (see Figure 1). Evangelatos has admitted that what fascinated her in *The Comedy of Errors* was:

> […] the game with the double protagonists. From the beginning I thought of using two actors rather than four. The play is written to be performed by four actors. But I was very interested in making a comment on the contemporary theatrical praxis and what theatre is. ("The Theatre Does Not Have to Follow the News")

Figure 1. – The revolving doors of Manidaki's set.

Courtesy of Lykofos.

14 Although the idea of using two rather than four actors for the two pairs of twins has already been tried in the past by James Cellan-Jones for the BBC television series of Shakespeare's plays in 1983, by Ian Judge in 1990 at the RSC, and by Kathryn Hunter for the Globe in 1999, Evangelatos' decision succeeded in reinforcing the constant doubling and repetition that characterizes *The Comedy of Errors*. Whereas Judge's and Hunter's doubling of the parts of the two Antipholuses and the two Dromios was deemed unsuccessful and "distracting" by theatre critics (see Whitworth 74, 76), in the Athenian *Comedy of Errors*, Nikos Kouris playing the two Antipholuses and Orpheas Avgoustidis the two Dromios effectively conveyed to the audience the confusion and anxiety experienced by their characters.

15 The plot of *The Comedy of Errors* allows the extra doubling of the protagonists; as Kostas Georgousopoulos pointed out in a review of the performance, the twins never meet on stage until the ending of the *Comedy of Errors*, thus enabling the actors to play both parts. In that final scene, when all is revealed, the two Antipholuses and the two Dromios confront and stare at each other, surprised at the similarity. Then, in a *coup de théâtre*, the set's mirrors turned the crucial flash of recognition into a game of reflections; the recognition unravelled the core of the farce—the errors of misrecognition, also displaying the theme of multiple and fluid identities. Therefore, the mirrors became the protagonists of the action (Ioannidis), creating distorted images on their dim glass surface and, together with the illusions shaped by the lighting and the constant sound and noise, transformed the reality viewed by the spectators. The mirror effect highlighted the spe(cta)cular and labyrinthine world of the play, in which, as Cartwright points out, "characters who are doubles of each other repeat, over and over, variations on the same actions" (61). Experimenting with optical duplicity, the final scene of Evangelatos' performance revealed the significance of optical illusion resulting from identical appearances in *The Comedy of Errors*, a technique that Shakespeare borrowed from Plautus, who had developed the technique of the doubling and mirroring of characters from the earlier New Comedy tradition.

16 By merging the two Antipholuses into one, Evangelatos also played with the notion of the "drop of water / That in the ocean seeks another drop, / Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,/ Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself" (1.2.35–8), the lines that inspired her vision. Used both as doors and as reflecting surfaces, as the front doors of Antipholus' home, of the *Phoenix* and the *Porcupine*, as home and marketplace, and as court and priory, the mirrors intensified the play's frantic repetition and doubling. In this way, Manidaki's set design, probably inspired by the famous scene of the revolving door in Charlie Chaplin's 1917 short film *The Cure* (Sella; Kaltaki; Sampatakakis), served plot and theme and underpinned the concept of doubling and optical illusion.

17 Besides the revolving doors in *The Cure*, the set and staging recalled another famous comic scene, the "Mirror Maze" clip from Chaplin's *Circus* (1928). There, Chaplin, chased by policemen, enters into a

funhouse Mirror Maze, where mirrors reflecting mirrors kaleidoscopically reproduce so many images of the Tramp that he is confused about who and where he is, trying in vain to get out. This scene is then repeated with the chasing policeman, enhancing the sense of the endless reproduction of images. In this self-reflexive moment, the artist holds a mirror up to his creation and to his medium, while distancing the audience from the subject of representation. In the same way, Evangelatos uses the slapstick element to emphasize the farce as well as comment on the doubling, creating the distancing effect, which has always been present in her work. What the doubling of the actors and the mirror effect also suggest is that the brother is not a brother, but the other/absent self. And it is only in the realm of comedy that the lost ideal "I" may be recovered, or rather reconstructed and reproduced.

18 At the end of the play, Dromio of Ephesus tells his twin "Methinks you are my glass and not my brother. / I see by you" (5.1.419–20). His statement concludes the anxious quest expressed in act 3 by Dromio of Syracuse, when he asks his (real) master: "Do you know me sir? Am I Dromio? Am I your man? Am I myself?" (3.2.73–4). Each twin desires to see his idol in the "mirror" in order to find who he is and finally say "I am". The mirror moment resolves the assault on identity confronted by both sets of twins when one twin was mistaken for the other through the farce, a genre, which according to Douglas Lanier "entertains the unsettling possibility that character is perhaps never more (and no 'deeper') than a well-managed stage spectacle" (326). Yet, through the *Deus ex Machina* intervention of the Abbess-Emilia, farce and romance come together in the last scene to show that the errors in the play may have a positive outcome, becoming, as Coppélia Kahn argues, part of "a process whereby youth grows into and out of the family to find itself" (225). The notion that identity is not merely performative but growing through time, loss and confusion lies at the core of the romance, which through Acts 1 (the father's story of shipwreck and loss) and 5 (the mother's story and the resolution) frames the unstoppable plot of the farce, that turns in the middle acts people into objects, or clowns and marionettes. [11]

Figure 2. – Antipholus (Nikos Kouris) and Dromio (Orpheas Avgoustidis).

Courtesy of Lykofos.

19 The world of the circus is present in the Athenian *Comedy of Errors* not only through the reference to Chaplin's film but also through the actors' costumes and movements. Evangelatos' production creates an unreal world inhabited by circus clowns, dressed in the constructivist pastel-coloured costumes designed by Vassiliki Syrma (see Figure 2). Although Evangelatos has often used clowns in her performances, often in surprising contexts, such as in Euripides' *Alcestis*, directed for the National Theatre in 2017, she has emphasized that this is not done on purpose, but:

> […] it is something that is a part of the stage language I am trying to articulate. It is not something that is done just to do so. When it occurs, it is always because I think it suits the play. (Evangelatos, "The Theatre Does Not Have to Follow the News")

20 In *The Comedy of Errors*, her vision began with the costumes, inspired by Schlemmer's *Triadisches Ballett* (1919), with its beautiful Bauhaus costumes. In that sense, the idea of the Bauhaus costumes preceded the set, movement and sound:

> It started reversely [...] I had decided on the play, of course, but first I found the costumes, then we started thinking with Eva Manidaki about the set design, and then the movement came in, after investigating many different options. (Evangelatos, Interview by Mia Kollia)

The costumes added to the circus and carnival effect deliberately hindering the actors' movement and turning them into strange automata. As some reviewers also pointed out, the combination of costume with movement recalled Meyerhold's biomechanics and his vision of the world as a dark puppet theatre (Kaltaki).

21 The clowns or marionettes appearing on stage were both comic and melancholic, suggesting the darkness which the director read in the farce. The sadness underlying the buffoonery was consistent with the "melancholic irony" that according to Giorgos Sampatakakis characterizes Evangelatos' personal style and approach to classical plays. Moreover, the white make-up turned the actors' faces into masks, recalling besides clowns, also cartoon characters, harlequins or even Kabuki performers. Evangelatos' emphasis on the visual conjured the most influential production of the *Comedy of Errors* in the 20th century, Theodore Komisarjevsky's 1938 staging at Stratford for the Royal Shakespeare Company, which put the play back on the theatrical map after many years of neglect. Komisarjevsky emphasized "zaniness and an atmosphere of comic anarchy", setting the play in a stylized Mediterranean world (Whitworth 68). Ephesus was "a busy, brightly-coloured Toytown", while characters were colourfully dressed in different styles, including pink bowler hats for the officers ("Selection of Past Productions"). Komisarjevsky's stress on the playfulness of *The Comedy of Errors* and the surrealist style of his production influenced a number of twentieth-century productions, such as Adrian Noble's 1983 production at the RSC, which also created a circus world, with ladders, lifts, bicycles and funny sound effects. In this production, perhaps also informing Evangelatos' vision, the Antipholuses were confused, not only because they dressed alike as in many past performances but because they had blue faces, while the Dromios looked like clowns with check suits and red noses ("Selection of Past Productions").

22 Recalling Noble's production, where actors had to climb, swing and bicycle their way across the stage to produce a circus-like comedy, Evangelatos' aesthetics were very demanding for the actors. Patricia Apergi, who created the movement, made the actors perform ballet poses as well as repetitive motions resembling automata or robots, complementing the farcical dehumanization of the play's plot. The movement contributed to the circus and slapstick atmosphere through reverse walking, slaps and falls and all kinds of gags accompanied by an assortment of funny sounds, such as bells buzzing, thuds, whistles, trumpets, tubes, balloons and all kinds of percussions. The words and noise produced by the actors were framed by an electronic score, composed by Giorgos Poulios and played by three on-stage musicians, who also generated all kinds of sounds and intensified the zany atmosphere of the play. In this way, the actors' movements had to correspond to the sounds produced by the musicians or the other actors, a particularly challenging task, especially considering the inflexibility of their constructivist costumes (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. – Movement: Adriana (Dimitra Vlagopoulou) and Luciana (Amalia Ninou).

Courtesy of Lykofos.

23 To achieve such a complex visual and auditory effect Evangelatos rehearsed for "three and a half months, seven hours a day", exhaustively training her actors, first "in classical ballet—to be able to do all that they did", and then adding the music and the live sounds. This synergy would not have been possible without "the faith, enthusiasm, dedication and generosity [...] as well as the improvisations" of the actors (Evangelatos, Interview by Mia Kollia). The performance took the slapstick humour, madness and bawdiness of *The Comedy of Errors* to their utmost limits, while accentuating its themes, especially those associated with the instability of identity embodied in the sea imagery and the doubling. Returning to Egeon's story and his tragic predicament which is magically transformed at the last moment into a happy ending, many

among the Greek audience could not help but think of the Mediterranean today as a sea separating rather than bringing people together due to all kinds of new political boundaries and disparities.[12] Evangelatos has explicitly rejected the idea that her choice of plays has been topical, arguing that "the theatre does not need to be timely or follow the news" ("The Theatre Does Not Have to Follow the News") and indeed, it would be odd to turn *The Comedy of Errors* into a dark and laughterless play. Yet, the magical, funny, and a few times melancholic, spectacle that she created uncovered the layers of the text without at all diminishing its farcical humour.

24 In the final act of *The Comedy of Errors*, the motifs of drowning, loss, metamorphosis and magic culminate in the Duke's words: "I think you all have drunk of Circe's cup" (5.1.270). Shakespeare's allusion to the *Odyssey* highlights the magical metamorphosis suggested by myth, by the sea—as "a transformative and liberating force" (Mentz, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean* 69)—and by the theatre itself.

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NOTES

1 All references to the play are from the Oxford Shakespeare edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.

2 All translations from the Greek sources used in the essay are mine.

3 The role of the sea is ambiguous in the play, since it also unites the family. Both Antipholus of Syracuse and his father Egeon have crossed the Mediterranean, arriving at Ephesus, the home of Antipholus of Ephesus as well as the Abbess, who turns out to be the lost Emilia at the end of the play. Geraldo de Sousa has emphasized the duality of the Mediterranean in the

play, arguing that “the sea serves as a vehicle for separation, alienation, fear, loss, shipwreck, tragedy, loss of control, and suffering. It destroys homes. But it also creates a re-enchanted world,—reunion, regaining control, recovery, joy, pleasure, love, and happiness” (156).

4 Scholars have argued that Plautus may have used a Greek play as a model, which he adapted and changed. See for example Gratwick (23–30), Fantham (3–14).

5 It is debatable whether St. Paul is the author of *Ephesians*, as many biblical scholars today question its authorship.

6 On the influence of Apollonius of Tyre on *The Comedy of Errors* and on whether Shakespeare had found the Apollonius narrative in John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* or Lawrence Twine’s *Pattern of Painful Adventures*, see Whitworth (27–37), Van Elk (49–59).

7 A short preview is available at <www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VJ5UQJl3r8>.

8 Past productions of *The Comedy of Errors* in Greece include a performance at the National Theatre in 1965, directed by Takis Mouzenidis, and another at Theatro Technis (Art Theatre) in 2007, directed by Dimitris Degaitis. Both productions received mixed reviews. The program and reviews of the National Theatre’s 1965 performance are available at the theatre’s digital archives: <www.nt-archive.gr/playMaterial.aspx?playID=151>.

9 The play premiered on 9 November 2019 and enjoyed success with audiences and critics alike. The reviews in the press and web were overwhelmingly positive (see for example Sella; Sampatakakis; Kaltaki; Ioannidis; Georgousopoulos). There were very few mixed reviews (see Arkoumenea and Karaoglou), mainly objecting to the formalism and “hyperactivity” of the performance. An examination of 102 audience reviews in the site athinorama.gr shows that 44 spectators gave the performance the highest evaluation of five stars, while 21 more gave it four or four and a half stars; only 23 audience reviews criticized it as tiresome or boring (<www.athinorama.gr/theatre/performanceratings.aspx?id=10062569&cp=6>). Playing to a full house for months, *The Comedy of Errors* extended its performances to mid-April 2019.

10 Interestingly, the Mansaku Company explored the play’s similarities to this classical Japanese farce style in a 2001 performance at Shakespeare’s Globe entitled *The Kyogen of Errors*.

11 Van Elk examines the relation between Shakespeare's choice of mixing the two genres and subjectivity, arguing that "[t]he two genres, at least in Shakespeare's versions of them, represent contrasting perspectives: farce shows subjectivity to be the random and unstable product of material exchange, while romance locates a spiritual and physical essence at the core of identity, a core that is testable but ultimately inalienable" (48).

12 In the summer of 2019, Shakespeare's Globe's Touring Ensemble made this association explicit by including *The Comedy of Errors* in a trio of plays —with *Pericles* and *Twelfth Night*—whose performance intended to explore "the themes of refuge and displacement" through "these timeless tales of those who have crossed seas and lost their families, are seeking new homes, and finding out what belonging truly means to them" (Shakespeare's Globe).

ABSTRACTS

English

The Comedy of Errors begins with the description of a shipwreck, presenting the significance of the sea and sea travel as forces both separating and reuniting characters and families. By situating his play in the port city of Ephesus, Shakespeare not only changes the setting of his main source (Plautus's *Menaechmi*) from the Adriatic to the Aegean, but also opens up a magical "fairyland", a cosmopolitan city, at the borders between East and West, representing the religious syncretism and the fusion of cultures, worships and rituals of late antiquity. The setting of the play and its palimpsestic nature underlie the Athenian production of 2018–2019 directed by Katerina Evangelatos that unites diverse theatrical traditions, ranging from the magical world of the circus to Kyogen, and from slapstick comedy—replete with allusions to Charlie Chaplin's *The Cure* and *The Circus* —to Meyerhold's biomechanics. The performance depended on a central double mirror with revolving doors on a rotating base, as well as on the doubling of actors to address the mirroring and transformation of characters and the themes of optical illusion and loss of identity. Focusing on the visual and sound devices of the performance as well as on its mixture of comic genres and idioms, the essay explores its repossession of the composite material and theme of Shakespeare's play.

Français

La Comédie des erreurs débute par la description d'un naufrage, présentant la mer et le voyage en mer comme des forces qui à la fois séparent et réunissent personnages et familles. En situant sa pièce dans le port d'Ephèse, Shakespeare non seulement change le décor de sa source principale (*Les Ménechmes* de Plaute) de l'Adriatique à la mer Égée, mais

convoque également un univers magique de contes de fées, une cité cosmopolite à la frontière entre l'Orient et l'Occident, représentant le syncrétisme religieux et la fusion des cultures, des cultes et des rituels de l'antiquité tardive. Le décor de la pièce et sa nature palimpseste sont au cœur de la production athénienne de 2018-2019, mise en scène par Katerina Evangelatos, qui réunit plusieurs traditions théâtrales, allant du monde magique du cirque au kyōgen, et de la comédie burlesque — avec de nombreuses allusions aux films de Chaplin *Charlot fait une cure* et *Le Cirque* — à la biomécanique de Meyerhold. Au cœur de la représentation se trouvait un double miroir sur une porte à tambour, ainsi qu'une double distribution pour certains rôles afin de mettre en évidence la thématique du miroir et la transformation des personnages, ainsi que les thèmes de l'illusion d'optique et de la perte d'identité. En analysant les procédés visuels et sonores de la représentation ainsi que son mélange des genres et des idiomes comiques, cet article explore son appropriation des matériau et thème composites de la pièce de Shakespeare.

INDEX

Mots-clés
La Comédie des erreurs, Shakespeare (William), Evangelatos (Katerina), représentation contemporaine, la mer chez Shakespeare, le double

Keywords
The Comedy of Errors, Shakespeare (William), Evangelatos (Katerina), contemporary performance, sea in Shakespeare, doubling

AUTHOR

Efterpi Mitsi
Efterpi Mitsi is professor in English Literature and Culture at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Her research and publications are on classical receptions in English literature, word and image relations, and on travellers to Greece. Recent publications include *Greece in Early English Travel Writing, 1596–1682* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), *Troilus and Cressida: A Critical Reader* (Bloomsbury, 2019) and the edited volume *Ruins in the Anglo-American Literary and Cultural Imagination* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).
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Metatheatrical Storms in Georges Lavaudant's *Une Tempête…* (2010) and Oskaras Koršunovas' *Miranda* (2011)

Déchaînements métathéâtraux dans Une Tempête… *de Georges Lavaudant (2010) et* Miranda *d'Oskaras Koršunovas (2011)*

Dana Monah

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OUTLINE

TEXT

Introduction: Georges Lavaudant and Oskaras Koršunovas

1 About ten years ago, two European directors, one Lithuanian (Oskaras Koršunovas), the other French (Georges Lavaudant), proposed their readings of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in stage versions that were advertised, from their very title, as "adaptations": if Koršunovas, with *Miranda*, announced a focus on the main female character, Lavaudant's use of the indefinite article—"*Une*" *Tempête…*—placed his work into a series, introducing it as one of the many *Tempests* available, while the ellipsis seemed to imply that there is more to this production than just another staging of Shakespeare's play.

2 While for both directors this was their first take on *The Tempest*, neither was at his first encounter with Shakespeare: on the contrary, both Koršunovas and Lavaudant had authored, in the previous decades, major productions, some of which had toured abroad, and their different encounters with the poet had strongly shaped their theatre aesthetics. Georges Lavaudant, who started his directing career in the early 1970s, is one of the most prominent French theatre directors, the author of a "bastard" or "hybrid" theatre [1] (Bailly/Lavaudant 39), which mixes genres, music and pantomime, high and mass culture. Neither burdened by the English theatrical traditions, nor by mainstream theatre training, the director felt free to propose an irreverent, iconoclastic approach to Shakespeare's plays.

3 Lavaudant first became interested in Shakespeare in the early 1970s, when he directed Ariel Garcia-Valdès in *King Lear* (1974), but his most successful Shakespearean production was undoubtedly the 1979 *La Rose et la hache* (*The Rose and the Axe*), an adaptation of Carmelo Bene's rewriting of *Richard III*: "a particularly happy job, as it was very irreverent", [2] claimed the director in an interview (Lavaudant 164), highlighting the main feature of his work. *Richard III* was to haunt Lavaudant's career, both in this reduced version (which he re-staged in 2004 and 2019) and in the larger, "full cast" version, presented at the 1984 Avignon Festival, starring the same Ariel Garcia-Valdès.

4 Dramatist Daniel Loayza translated and adapted *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Lavaudant's June 2010 production, [3] which was first presented in Lyon's Roman theatre, as part of the Nuits de Fourvière summer open-air festival and in the autumn at the MC93 Bobigny (Paris). The director's project was to confront these two plays in which magic is at work, considering that the lightness of the *Dream* could soften the metaphysical aspects of *The Tempest* (Soleymat 2010). According to Clifford Armion (93), it was Loayza who brought to Lavaudant's attention (and who emphasized in the French translation) the intermingling semantic fields of dreams and storms.

5 Oskaras Koršunovas, who made his debut as a director in the early 1990s, soon took the Lithuanian and world theatre by storm

with his productions in which "the stage action and time function under dream logic" (Vasinaukaite 9). In 1998, the director founded his own independent theatre (OKT Theatre, Vilnius), where he staged *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1999), *Romeo and Juliet* (2003) and *Hamlet* (2008).

6 In *Miranda* (2011), Koršunovas used the play-within-the-play device to adapt *The Tempest* for a cast of just two actors: a dissident intellectual and his disabled daughter, secluded in an Eastern-European block of flats, performed Shakespeare's play as part of what looked like a daily ritual. The production (OKT and Vilnius City Theatre), starring Povillas Budrys and Airida Gintautaite, toured to Italy, Poland (2011), France (2013) and Romania (2014). The director declared having been influenced by Jan Kott's reading of the play, who saw it as "a social drama about the never-ending and absurd struggle for power, […] as the drama of power and an individual" (Koršunovas 2011). In the introductory statement on the production, Koršunovas assimilated Shakespeare's island to the "zones of deportation" (Koršunovas 2011) that the authorities in the Soviet Union set up for "inconvenient" people, and identified Prospero as a creator striving to maintain spiritual life:

> Miranda interests me most in this play […] She is most often regarded as a naive princess, though she has been created by Prospero, she is Prospero's soul […] Eventually, in deportation to desert islands creators still used to raise their Mirandas. (Ibid.)

Two Metatheatrical Tempests

7 While Lavaudant's beautiful, polite, fluid, seemingly a-political "theatre of images" (Fayard 206) seems to have little in common with Koršunovas's domestic, gloomy, highly political production, I would argue that both directors explored the role that metatheatricality has in shaping performative identities. Their productions were also a way to interrogate the challenges of performing and spectating Shakespeare today.

8 They indeed refused stable, unified narrative, and decided to frame Shakespeare's play, blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality and between fictional worlds, thus complicating Shakespeare's

own metafictional devices. Koršunovas cast *The Tempest* as an inset performance played by father and daughter, while Lavaudant's *Tempête* framed a condensed version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (that replaced the original pastoral offered by Prospero as a present for Miranda's wedding) and "host[ed]" the mechanicals' performance of *Pyramus and Thisbe*.

9 According to Christine Dymkowski, the essential paradox at the core of the play relies on the contrast between the spectacular quality of the first scene and the performative space for which it was initially designed:

> Although throughout its performance history *The Tempest* has proved to be perhaps the most visually spectacular of Shakespeare's plays, it was written to be performed on a virtually bare stage. (71)

While using different techniques, both Koršunovas and Lavaudant provided a modern equivalent of this initial bare platform, presenting the storm of act I, scene 1 as a metatheatrical, artificial, extremely fragile device, built with the simplest, most trivial means. However, neither gave a sense of what Andrew Gurr identified as an essential quality of the shipwreck scene—its initial realism, on which the whole play depends: "It is the verification of Prospero's magic and the declaration that it is all only a stage play" (Gurr 256). In both productions, the storm was denounced from the outset as a fabricated event, whose performers (father and daughter in *Miranda*, Prospero and Ariel in *Une Tempête…*) were shown enjoying the process of staging.

Home-made magic

10 As I entered the theatre hall at the Craiova Shakespeare Festival in 2014 to attend Koršunovas's production, Prospero's island appeared to me, first of all, as an island of the past. Placed centre-stage on an otherwise dark platform, the carefully reconstructed drawing room in a Communist flat (by set designer Dainius Liškevicius) unsettlingly recalled my parents' drawing-room back in the 1980s. I took nostalgic pleasure in recognising the different objects, sunken galleons of a half-forgotten world—the shabby library shelves, the poorly

functioning lamp TV set, my grandmother's old radio—little expecting the role these extremely mundane objects were to play in creating Shakespeare's play on Koršunovas's stage. In a way, the realism of the set played a role similar to the initial shipwreck scene in *The Tempest*: it was the director's way of luring his audience into expecting a realistic staging, as it was in stark contrast with the dreamlike atmosphere of the play.

11 Within this closed, domestic space, the only references to a desert island or to water were ironic, suggesting that the relationship with the Shakespearian reference was going to be a subverted and mediated one: a potted green cactus stage left and, stage right, the black and white TV which broadcasted a ballet solo, which could be Michel Fokine's *Dying Swan*.[4] Maria Goltsman contends that this ballet, the most politicized in the world, which enjoyed a mythical status in the Soviet Union, is strongly connected with death, as it used to be broadcasted "on days of official mourning and funerals", but also shown on days of political turmoil such as on 19 August 1991 (the last day of the Soviet Union), serving as "a cloak, with the television screen masking reality" (Goltsman 310). As this opening image suggested, Tchaikovsky's mythical ballet (and the symbolism of classical dance in the Soviet Union) was going to model the way in which father and daughter told their story by staging Shakespeare's work.

12 References to the storm accumulated at the beginning of the frame performance (the father-daughter story), but in a deconstructed, displaced manner. *Miranda* started with the girl asleep in her armchair, while her father, behind transparent sliding doors, paced up and down, like an actor preparing to enter the stage, overcome with stage fright. His chaotic movements appeared as a grotesque counterpart of the ballerina's dance on the screen. A storm of applause burst as he finally precipitated into the performance space (on tiptoe, not to disturb his daughter's sleep), further superimposing his image on that of the dancer, in a grotesque, unsettling way. The character, turned into a performer despite himself, kept glancing nervously at his watch and seemed to hesitate whether to make a very important phone call. He was going to perform, during the next hour and a half, his own swan song.

13 As father and daughter engaged in their evening routine, the storm motif occurred again, foreshadowing yet another essential feature of Koršunovas's treatment of Shakespeare: when "Prospero" painstakingly tried to feed his daughter her soup, she suddenly spit it out, creating a "storm in a soup kettle" (Jevsejevas 2011). While suggesting a moody, tense relationship between the protagonists, this episode announced that in this performance theatrical fiction would be constructed with the help of the most mundane objects that the performers' imagination would morph into fictional objects.

14 *The Tempest* proper started as a bed-time story which the caring, affectionate father told his daughter, as part of a daily ritual. Just like Shakespeare's Prospero, this Soviet intellectual seemed to be particularly fond of books, a passion he had handed over to the girl. Only she was most selective and extreme in her reading choices: Miranda's story was the only one she wanted to be told, again and again: "there's never enough for you", the protagonist exclaimed, slightly annoyed. As her father opened the book, the daughter turned into a very active and demanding spectator: for the time being, just like an old-school Shakespeare scholar, she would admit no cuts or omissions. Her father had to obey the rules of the game, and started reading the list of characters—most of which would not appear in this adaptation. Indeed, it was an exercise in the art of (re)reading the canonical text that Koršunovas proposed in his production, and this (re)reading was conceived as a playful activity, and an escape from an oppressive reality.

15 As he read the list of names, the protagonist also acted them out, capturing the essence of the characters in a gesture or in the tone of his voice, as if addressing a young child. Thus, a sort of dramatization emerged that suggested the transition from text to fiction, where the girl joined in. She was already playing the part of bashful Miranda by the time her father uttered the name of Ferdinand; she was the one who pronounced "Miranda", as if taking possession of her character, and then "mimed" the part of Ariel, that she would later act out. The game of casting as well as the female protagonist's reactions to the different characters [5] announced the massive editing that structured this production, from which the court party, for instance, was significantly absent.

16 The father made his first artistic decision when he started the embedded performance with Laertes' words "my revenge will come" (*Hamlet* IV.7.29) that he directed at the absent interlocutor on the telephone. Then, book in hand, he recited Ariel's sermon to the shipwreck (act III, scene 3), thus suggesting that this was not going to be a fairy-tale *Tempest*. Meanwhile, his daughter listened to the sound of the sea in a shell and imitated the wind, as if trying to better grasp the atmosphere of the play.

17 Like an amateur Prospero, Koršunovas's protagonist became the director of a performance when he decided that the storm would be represented on stage: "we'll make the tempest", he told his daughter, involving her into the creation of the production. Here again, the simplest means, the most trivial objects accomplished the transition from reality to fiction. The storm effect was obtained first, on an aural level, by Prospero's turning on the poorly-functioning radio, and second, in a visual way, with the help of a fan, which moved the pages of the book in the girl's lap. In a touchingly ridiculous gesture, the latter gently moved her dress back and forth to suggest the waves. In fact, throughout the first scene of the embedded production, the female protagonist acted as a clumsy stage assistant, giving "stage" expression to the storyteller's words. In her hands, the shell became the boat on the stormy sea, on which Prospero and Miranda, symbolized by an old radio tube, travelled to the desert island.

18 During this opening scene, Koršunovas's stage devices blurred the boundaries between the fictional levels: when the man tried to calm down the girl at the end of act I, scene 1, he was both Prospero reassuring Miranda and the father reassuring his ill daughter who was frightened by the terrifying sound of the sliding doors colliding and by the smoke from the burned saucepan. This constant interplay between the level of the fiction and that of the fiction-making was going to structure Koršunovas's production, as characters and conflicts in *The Tempest* enabled the father-daughter's relationship to be told. In turn, situations in Shakespeare's play were rewritten in the light of the conflicts within the framing play.

19 Thus, the initial storm-making appeared as a pitiful attempt at creating fiction (and life) with the basest means: just as in Ionesco's *Exit the King*, [6] father and daughter were the only inhabitants of a

collapsing world, and if they acted out all the parts in the *Tempest*, this was also because no one else was left in their tiny universe, seemingly cut out form the rest of the world. Although it started as a good-night story, this *Tempest* was far from being a fairy-tale: characters were either tormented or tormenting figures, abusing and/or letting themselves be abused by the others. Ariel, played by the daughter, claimed his (her) freedom in a violent manner and seemed to intimidate Prospero: (s)he burst into a disco dance that contrasted with the handicapped movements of the girl/Miranda. Ferdinand did not love Miranda and mocked her: he parodied ballet movements, as if trying to persuade her into believing that he was the prince she had been waiting for. Finally, Caliban tried to rape Miranda, with the help of the vacuum cleaner.

20 No reconciliation, no forgiveness was hinted at, no wedding was to take place on this island. From the director's point of view, it suggested work camps in the Soviet Union, [7] where intellectuals had to create their own version of "Miranda"—a symbol of freedom—in order to bear their imprisonment. Towards the end of the performance, as Ariel/Miranda was to be seen on the upper shelves of the library, books in hand, like a flying bird, singing Ariel's lines ("Where the bee sucks, there suck I", IV.1.88) like a lullaby, Prospero/the father attempted to retain her with the words of another Shakespearean father, the mad King Lear, who, approaching his own death, dreamt of spending the rest of his life in a paradise-prison, together with his daughter Cordelia. The girl seemed to refuse, kissed him good-bye and slowly disappeared. When he woke up from his fantasy, his daughter was no longer in her armchair. Far from the utopian discourse of Lear, "Prospero" recited Macbeth's soliloquy, who saw life as "a tale / Told by an idiot" (V.5.25–26), before concluding with Prospero's disillusioned speech: "and my ending is despair" (V, Epilogue, 15).

21 This was not the "brave new world" Shakespeare's Miranda had wondered at four centuries before. On the contrary, it was an absurd world thought by a 21th century Prospero who had apparently read Ionesco and Beckett: [8] Koršunovas's Prospero would remain on the island—his "soul", Miranda, having vanished from stage—there would be no one to answer the phone when it finally rang back, at the very end of the production.

A dreamy tempest

22 Georges Lavaudant's production presented performance as a site of conflict and its complex embedding commented on ways of staging Shakespeare nowadays. The director, who had initially conceived his production for Lyon's open-air Roman theatre, opted for a bare stage here, where play areas were delimited mainly through lighting. His opening storm, which lasted for about one minute, consisted of an undulating piece of blue canvas evoking the waves (which was not without recalling Giorgio Strehler's famous rendition of the storm), completed with sound and light-effects that suggested thunder and lightning, but also with the dim voices of men screaming with fear. No ship was to be seen, but someone stood in the middle of the "sea", facing the audience, controlling the waves with large, theatrical gestures that reminded those of a conductor: in act I, scene 2, the audience identified this character as Ariel (performed by an actress—Astrid Bas), and the sea as Prospero's magic cloth. When watching the blue canvas, the spectator could glimpse, through flashes of light, the stagehands manipulating the canvas: thus, the storm was denounced, from the very beginning, as an artefact, a stage device, the making of which the audience was invited to witness.

23 When it calmed down, the gentle hissing of the waves seemed to bring the first shipwreck on the island. A sleeping Miranda, dressed in white, lay on a white circular floor-tiled box, in the middle of an otherwise dark platform, which suggested a spotlight. Prospero's island was a spotlight, or a bright spot on a theatre stage in this production, on which repeated storms would bring theatrical performances again and again. The initial spectacular tempest was going to be echoed by a whole series of tempests (retaining only the aural dimension of the first tableau), thus introducing the different episodes as inset micro-performances. Jean-Christophe Bailly stressed Lavaudant's particular interest in lights. The French director generally starts working on them from the very beginning of the rehearsals: they are endowed with a metatheatrical quality, and function like a luminous score that enables him to comment on the fiction in a playful way [9] (Bailly *in* Ciret 148). Indeed, throughout the production, lights would frame the actions and the characters, which

created ephemeral performing areas suggesting a game of hide-and-seek.

24 While talking about the spectacular event they still seemed to be witnessing, Prospero and his daughter delivered their speeches facing the audience, which was thus associated with the shipwrecks caught in the storm. Throughout the performance, a sliding door, placed backstage, provided access to a space immersed in blue light which functioned first as an antechamber, then as a transition area between the wings and the stage (characters often stopped there to watch the others perform), and later as a frame enclosing micro-performances. Thus, if the auditorium was associated with the sea, the space that was supposed to represent the sea was turned into a viewpoint: the sea/auditorium surrounded the island/performing arena, it was a place from which fiction was to be watched and commented upon.

25 With Lavaudant, as with Koršunovas, concrete, specific elements in the theatre house represented objects of the fictional world, estranging the play text from the performance text. Thus, Caliban's cave was figured by a trapdoor and Ferdinand's burden of wood by a spotlight fixture, which implicitly turned him into a stagehand: by being obliged to do a slave's work, the prince had fallen from his former position as an actor. Indeed, in Lavaudant's production the inhabitants of Prospero's island fell into two main categories: actors and spectators. In turn, Ferdinand, the shipwrecks, Caliban and his companions or the young lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* were watched by other characters, positioned either in the darker areas of the platform or in the blue area at the rear. The real spectators were thus placed in a position of control, as they were watching characters watching other characters. The fact that the "performers" were most often isolated by spotlights detached the respective tableau from the rest of the play, turning it into a performative event to be enjoyed for its own sake. Shakespeare's plot became a series of "performances-within-the-play": *The Tempest* was interrupted to "shelter" *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which was also interrupted to embed *Pyramus and Thisbe*. The storm that had been denounced from the very beginning as a performance, now became a strategy of disjunction, undermining realism and introducing the different

numbers of a performative event—just like a Russian doll construction—to suggest that theatre could be forever embedded into theatre.

26 The embedding of fictional levels provided for a *mise en abyme* of performance and presented theatre as a playful activity. Lavaudant's *Une Tempête…* turned into a collection of instances of theatre-within-the-theatre or of mini-performances that could be read as different ways of staging Shakespeare nowadays. The director usually opts, according to Nicole Fayard (211), for an anti-historical approach, ignoring the political and historical aspects of Shakespeare's plays. This production used time and space references in order to include mini-Shakespearian performances within its structure, ranging from a historical reconstruction of an Elizabethan production to a 21st-century amateur performance. The spots that delineated paths of light on the platform turned the latter into a playground where fragile fictional worlds came to life only to be replaced shortly after by other fictional worlds. Characters did not hesitate to change roles in order to entertain the other characters as well as, of course, the real audience. The idea of play governed the characters' interactions, turning Lavaudant's *theatrum mundi* into a coloured playground: under the power of Prospero's magic, Ferdinand performed funny jumps, while the lovers of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* seemed to be involved in an energetic game of hide-and-seek.

27 Alonso and his companions landed on Lavaudant's stage (act II, scene 1) as a compact group clad in Renaissance outfits, and moved as if caught in a slow-motion storm, or as if having just descended from a roller coaster. Utterly confused and a bit dusty (wearing strong white make-up), the shipwreck victims still bore the marks of the terrible experience they had been through. The men's incongruous costumes complicated the significance of their journey, adding a temporal layer to the spatial one: the court party seemed to have emerged right from Shakespeare's *Tempest*, or from a performance of the play as it was given during Shakespeare's time. Thus, on the one hand act II, scene 1 looked like a possible reconstruction of an original Renaissance production of the play (that drew attention to the play as performance); on the other hand, the shipwreck victims appeared as visitors from another time who were suddenly confronted to a "brave new world", i.e. a 21st-century playhouse,

where they felt rather lost, and where their “garments” were ironically “fresh”.

28 Prospero, who has traditionally been seen as a director, did become an actor during the wedding performance that he offered Miranda and Ferdinand. Under the gaze of the (real) audience, he modified his costume in order to become Oberon. By exhibiting the presence of the actor, Lavaudant put forward the idea of theatre conceived as an intimate relationship shared by audience and performers alike.

29 On the contrary, the mechanicals who presented their production of *Pyramus and Thisbe* were depicted as contemporary French workers: Lavaudant’s actors used their real names, so that Bottom or Quince became Pascal or Antoine. As they wore blue work outfits, the characters relocated the play in contemporary France. In this dreamy *Tempest*, the mechanicals had read Kott’s *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary*. Theatre-making appeared as an essentially playful activity on Lavaudant’s island, where actors constructed and deconstructed fictions not to create illusion, but to assert it was a performance. “My first field of invention is creation”, claimed the director. “I ask what is the theatrical machine, and how to make it function [as a] zone of illusion, fascination and mystification” (Lavaudant *in* Champagne 95). His lively wrecks, caught in a never-ending performative game, identified Prospero’s magic as theatre magic in this production.

Conclusion

30 The two productions discussed here staged the initial storm as a theatrical and playful devices that displayed the theatre as a machine, explicitly casting the spectator as a witness. In spite of their very different aesthetics (an overcrowded stage versus a bare platform), Prospero’s island became a locus of performance, floating in a darkened no-man’s-land. In a theatrical era of sophisticated technology, these productions (which however used modern stagecraft) seemed to go back to a simple theatricality. They created illusion with the help of the simplest theatrical means, and presented the performative event as a negotiated one, under the spectators’ eyes, as part of either a ritual (Koršunovas) or a theatrical improvisation (Lavaudant). Both edited the original text heavily,

situating it in a complex narrative frame with multiple performing identities, in order to make the viewer travel among layers of fiction that negotiated either with political issues (Koršunovas) or with ways of staging Shakespeare today (Lavaudant).

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NOTES

1 "Notre art, si j'ose dire, c'est sans doute […] le mélange des genres, avec du verbe, de la musique, de la pantomime, ce que j'appelle un théâtre bâtard ou 'métissé'".

2 "[U]n travail très heureux, car il était très irrévérencieux" (my translation).

3 A coproduction of the Festival and of the MC93, starring André Marcon as Prospero, who doubled as Theseus and Oberon. The production was initially a project the director set up with student actors in Montpellier, and the professional production included students from the conservatory headed by Valdès (Lavaudant *in* Soleymat, 2010).

4 Michel Fokine's solo (1907) is considered a step in the evolution of the myth of the Dying Swan. Maria Goltsman points out that *Swan Lake* and *Dying Swan* "were closely connected to each other and for some people they were even inseparable" (Goltsman 311). In this particular instance, the ballet is performed on the swan theme in Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, not on Saint-Saëns' swan theme from his *Le Carnaval des animaux*.

5 For instance, she got bored when Trinculo or Stephano were mentioned, excited at Ferdinand or Ariel, irritated at Antonio.

6 The original title is *Le Roi se meurt*.

7 Autors's statement on <www.campusbn.org/évènement/festival-les-boreales-miranda-dapres-la-tempete-de-shakespeare-oskaras-korsunovas/>: "L'île où débarquent Prospero, duc de Milan, et sa fille Miranda, après le naufrage de leur bateau, nous rappelle les camps de travail où les autorités isolaient les libres penseurs, et notamment les goulags de l'Union soviétique, aujourd'hui disparue."

8 The last image, with the man sitting in his armchair and covered with a blanket, was not without recalling the disabled Ham in *Endgame*.

9 "Faire entrer en douceur le hors-champ dans le champ clos du drame, pour écrire autour du drame et avec lui une partition lumineuse précise comme un toucher, émouvante comme une sorte de jeu de colin-maillard auquel on assisterait."

ABSTRACTS

English
The world is a bare stage in Georges Lavaudant's production of *The Tempest* (2010) and a cluttered flat in the Communist Gulag in Oskaras Koršunovas's adaptation *Miranda* (2011). In spite of their highly different aesthetics, both directors construct the initial storm as a metatheatrical, artificial, extremely fragile device, built with the simplest, most trivial theatrical means which enables the on-stage and off-stage spectators to escape into embedded fictional time and space layers. This paper investigates the ways in which these "voyages", controlled by an authoritarian figure, frame an intellectual, sometimes political play with the meanings and forms of Shakespeare's text, which the off-stage spectator will be asked to enjoy and decode.

Français
Le monde est une scène vide dans le spectacle de Georges Lavaudant *Une Tempête…* (2010) et un appartement encombré du goulag communiste dans *Miranda* (2011), l'adaptation d'Oskaras Koršunovas d'après *La Tempête* de Shakespeare. Malgré leurs esthétiques très différentes, les deux metteurs en scène construisent la tempête initiale comme un dispositif métathéâtral, artificiel, fragile, fabriqué avec les moyens théâtraux les plus simples, ce qui permet aux spectateurs extra- et intra-fictionnels de s'évader dans des niveaux spatiaux et temporels enchâssés. Ce travail examine les modalités par lesquelles ces « voyages », contrôlés par une figure autoritaire, facilitent des jeux intellectuels, parfois politiques, avec les sens et les formes du texte shakespearien, que le spectateur extra-fictionnel sera convié à décoder et à apprécier.

INDEX

Mots-clés
La Tempête, Shakespeare (William), Lavaudant (Georges), Koršunovas (Oskaras), Miranda, metathéâtral, traversées, théâtre politique

Keywords
The Tempest, Shakespeare (William), Lavaudant (Georges), Koršunovas (Oskaras), Miranda, metatheatrical, voyages, political drama

AUTHOR

Dana Monah
Dana Monah is a Junior Lecturer at the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania. Her research interests include adaptations and rewritings of Shakespeare in contemporary theatre, performance studies and contemporary French and Francophone literatures. She is the author of *Shakespeare et ses doubles. Essai sur la réécriture théâtrale* (L'Harmattan, 2017). She wrote articles published in collective volumes and academic journals (*Thélème*, *Studia Dramatica*, *Alternatives théâtrales*) and introductions to *Richard III* and *Henry V* for the new Romanian translation of Shakespeare's Complete Works.
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Mors bona, or, Storm in a Tea Cup? Shakespeare's *Tempest* in a Puppet and Live-Actor Production

Mors bona *ou tonnerre dans une tasse de thé ?* La Tempête *de Shakespeare interprétée par une troupe d'acteurs-marionnettistes*

Gabriella Reuss

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OUTLINE

TEXT

Introduction

1 *The Tempest* is "the most puppeted" Shakespearean play worldwide, thus, as a choice for the Hungarian adult puppet stage it should not be really surprising. Although somewhat reluctantly, we must acknowledge that there is no such thing as adult puppet theatre scene in Hungary, only some productions, few and far between. The subject of this paper, *The Tempest* directed by Rémusz Szikszai in 2018 [1] is advertised as a 16+ production. Perhaps it marks the first steps in the gradual consolidation of the puppet medium for adult audiences in Hungary but perhaps it is nothing more than the one swallow that does not make a summer. Some, like journalist and

puppet theatre producer Tímea Papp, are quite pessimistic about this process, [2] that is why it is more than simply notable that most critics [3] hailed the production as one which effectively proves that the puppet medium is, in fact, suitable for mature audiences.

2 Although this paper does not aim to describe the state of twentieth-century Hungarian puppeteering, nor does it mean to deal with the Hungarian stage history of *The Tempest*, one production ought to be mentioned here, as the earliest of swallows: this (in fact, the only previous puppet) *Tempest* was staged in 1988. [4] At what was then called the State Puppet Theatre, Prospero appeared as the single live-actor (Dezső Garas) while all other characters were played by puppets: his omnipotent authority figure dominated the scene and dwarfed the rest of the cast. In contrast, Szikszai's production features a wide variety of characters on the stage, all perfectly visible, including live-actors, bunraku (child-size) puppets, plaster heads made after actors' heads, and prostheses, that is, attachable body puppets which puppeteers can wear.

3 What is always at stake with puppet performances is whether the puppets add yet another layer to the interpretation or merely decorate it. Garas' production by casting a live-actor as Shakespeare's magician quite naturally referred in 1988 to an unequal power situation. But then, what purpose does Szikszai's variety of puppets serve? In this paper the relations between the bodies of the actors and the bodies of the puppets will take centre stage—besides other devices—so as to point out the place of Rémusz Szikszai's uniquely mixed, puppet and live-actor production on the map of twenty-first century Hungarian Shakespeares.

"Sir, I am vexed" (*The Tempest*, 4.1.174–175) [5]

4 It is not the evident "puppetability" of *The Tempest* that interested Rémusz Szikszai. In several interviews, for instance, one by Panka Dióssy, the director referred to other, intensely personal reasons for his selection of the play and expressed his profound inner need to consider the issues Shakespeare addressed in *The Tempest*; most importantly those of achievement and forgiving. [6] What is clear from

the interviews he gave after the success of the première, is that passing fifty, that is, in Dante's words, "midway upon the journey of [...] life" Szikszai was/is apparently "vexed" and keeps pondering, even in the Epilogue, what strength "I have's mine own" (2) and whether all "my vexations were but my trials of thy love" (4.1.6). Not surprisingly, what is clear from the production is that, at the conclusion of the tale, Szikszai's Prospero lies down, apparently not to sleep but to die.

Figure 1. – Tamás Fodor as Prospero in the Epilogue in Shakespeare's *Tempest*. [7]

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5 What Szikszai might have had in mind for the backbone of the production is staging what Christians call a good or happy death, *mors bona*. It means quitting "this world in the peace of a good conscience" (Prayer for a happy death #7) which is in sharp contrast to the unexpected, "sudden and unprovided death". People can die, as Stoppard's omniscient Player once explains in his *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, "heroically, comically, ironically, slowly, suddenly, disgustingly, charmingly, or from a great height" (83), but dying convincingly on the stage, or, ending one's life with a happy death, is in fact the ultimate life achievement.

6 Death is an event of certain honourable theatricality, both on stage and off: “It’s what the actors do best”, it “brings out the poetry in them” the Player summarizes. Performers, either on stage or off, “have to exploit whatever talent is given to them” (Stoppard 83). Szikszai makes us face the question, how will *we* perform it … Tamás Fodor, Szikszai’s 76-year-old Prospero, embodies the highly professional player who is able to act out dying convincingly: in the Epilogue Shakespeare gave him time and focus on the page, Szikszai gave him the same on the stage. What precedes his last lines can be seen as an aging person’s preparation for a good death, arranging the chattels and the relationships, providing for the child and “pardoning the deceiver” (*The Tempest*, Epilogue, 7).

7 But if Szikszai meant to target an adult audience with the subject of leaving the worldly stage, then why did he choose the puppet medium to convey his message in a culture where puppetry in people’s minds still equals with the somewhat low and silly entertainment for little children? If Szikszai has been working in the live-actor segment of the Hungarian theatre scene, why did he opt for a variety of puppets, marionettes, prostheses, masks, performing objects, rod puppets and bunraku? How will these colourful toys authenticate his Shakespearean story about Prospero’s death? How will these simple creatures reveal the secrets of a great magician’s ultimate staging?

“You demi-puppets” (*The Tempest*, 5.1.45–46)

8 The present Hungarian theatre scene is characterized by the often sadly tangible division between the puppet and the live-actor fields (noted by puppet theatre manager and director Géza Kovács in his opening speech for this year’s World Puppetry Day), and the painful lack of both adult puppet productions and their critical discourse, as puppet director Ágnes Kuthy complained. [8] Just a few hundred kilometres and few hours away from Budapest, the cultural position of puppets is quite different: in the Czech lands an unbroken tradition of puppetry is thriving. Puppets have been present in adult performances both in high and popular culture as well as in the academia. For instance, it is puppets, expensive and sumptuously

dressed marionettes, that vivify the sombre greys of Prague's medieval Charles Bridge, and also puppets, in fact the practice and the theory of puppetry, that occupy a great proportion of the issues in Brno's international scholarly journal, *Theatralia / Yorick*. In short, puppeteering is seen as an equal amongst the other branches of the performing arts.

9 Geographically very close to the Bohemian-Moravian context, but practically and intellectually perfectly outside of it, Hungary's puppet traditions have always been scarce and weak: following two marionette operas written by Haydn at Esterháza / Fertőd to greet Empress Maria Theresa, only the 1930s featured inventive efforts in puppeteering. Regrettably, to make a lasting impression these efforts were either too far away, e.g. Théâtre Arc-en-Ciel in Paris (1929–1940), [9] or too short-lived, or both. The only puppet tradition surviving from the 1930s was that of the slapstick, practiced by three devoted generations of the Korngut-Kemény family, the last of the Czech, Austrian, Italian itinerant puppet animators. According to Éva Hutvágner [10] the Socialist regime effectively and probably intentionally prevented the family to build up a stable adult spectatorship: after the war the Keménys' own permanent playhouse was nationalized and the family was not permitted to perform in Budapest any more. [11] Even the name of their slapstick character, Vitéz László (László the Knight) had to be changed to the less aristocratic Paprika Jancsi (Johnny Pepper).

10 As a recent effort to bridge the gap between the puppet and live-actor, the child and the adult theatre scenes, the Budapest Puppet Theatre [12] annually invites directors of significant renown to direct a puppet performance for adults. When Szikszai received the János Meczner's invitation in 2018, he immediately responded positively: his recent works, *Pillowman* by McDonagh and later his *Macbeth* [13] already used puppets to various extents in live-actor productions and live-actor theatres, with remarkable success.

11 This time, however, his Shakespeare was to be puppeted throughout, and the venue, the Puppet Theatre only increased the difficulties. Szikszai had to make a production which, by the time it neatly unfolded, should persuade the viewer of the suitability of the puppet medium for adults. But he also had to immediately win his audience,

not to allow the spectators to leave during the interval. Szikszai carefully delayed the appearance of puppets, and what he first did was create a storm, by an impressive strike:

> I have bedimmed
> The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds,
> And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
> Set roaring war; (5.1.50–53)

"The mutinous winds" (*The Tempest*, 5.1.51)

12 While the lights in the relatively small and cosy rehearsal room of the Budapest Puppet Theatre are dimming, and the spectators are casually awaiting *The Tempest* to commence, they cannot possibly imagine how far in time and space they will travel with Rémusz Szikszai's rendering. They certainly might expect a stage storm of either the picturesque, the menacing or the playfully stylized kind. But probably few would believe that in the next moment they would mentally leave behind the reality of the uncomfortable chairs on the creaking grandstand of the Budapest Puppet Theatre's shabby rehearsal room, the traffic jams and the pressures, the "slings and arrows" (*Hamlet*, 3.1.66) of everyday life, and suddenly travel to a parallel world, which is far in time and space, yet somehow flamboyantly real. Captured by the ethereal cries and whispers that sound creepy in the darkness, spectators are pinned to their seats, having lost their senses of time and location due to the blinding strikes of lightning created by a stroboscope. By the white flares we see sailing boats struggle against the waves, and soon we notice three female creatures who toss the vessels and animate the storm.

Figure 2. – The Storm in Shakespeare's *Tempest*.

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13 Although warnings about the use of the stroboscope and the strong sound effects are pasted on both the playbills and the programme brochure, this blue-lit stroboscoped storm is somehow uncanny and unexpected: it is more than a *mise-en-scène*, one has to make an effort to survive it, it seems almost unbearably long. It is a relief when Ariel, content with the job done, tunes it down.

Figure 3. – Gyöngyi Blasek, the oldest of the production's three Ariels, conjuring the storm.

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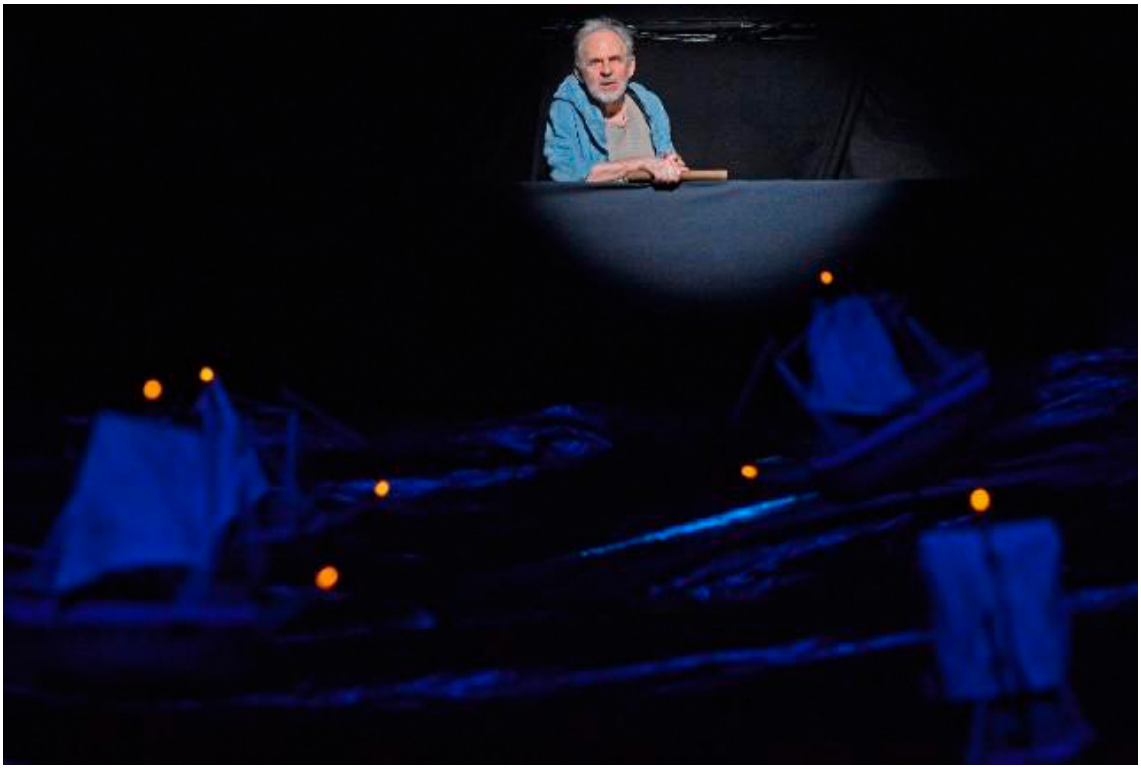
Figure 4. – Tamás Fodor as Prospero, directing the Storm in Shakespeare's *Tempest*.



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14 Here, over the ocean's literally silk surface, new and old stage technologies, represented by the stroboscope and the handmade, wooden boats, seamlessly fuse; the sound effects are re-created live night by night (DJs: Bálint Bolcsó, Jázon Kovács). They all serve to effectively separate the travellers as well as the spectators from their well-established past, acute problems, social positions, be they in Milan, Naples or Budapest. Shakespeare's storm in Szikszai's and his DJs' production seems to be a practical spectacle to separate the characters in the first place, and an impressive stroke to unite the auditorium with the stage and wipe out all but the performance's present. Indeed, it proves to be an indispensable device in order to suddenly invade and captivate the audience's mind and turn their attention to the story on the stage in the ephemeral present, and to make them taste the "unique and unrepeatable" "event-ness" of the theatre (Fischer-Lichte 41).

15 As the sea calms, the performing space slowly lightens and we start to understand the scenery and the proportions: the old man and the three women who fiddled with the toy-sized boats are apparently playing Prospero and Ariel, and are flesh actors. The ribs of the giant wreck of a barge squeeze performers and spectators together, impressively extending the sense of union prompted by the common experience that has been achieved by the storm. The set for the 2016 *Tempest* of the RSC looks surprisingly similar; however, the impact, thanks to the particularly small performing space (that seats only 150 people, and thus is almost the size of a teacup), is completely different. The lack of physical distance between viewer and player simultaneously stimulates the spectators' emotional involvement and at once reminds them of the meta-theatre present in both the play and the production.

"Wonder and amazement / Inhabits here" (*The Tempest*, 5.1.114–115)

16 It is only after the shocking caisson of the mental and physical/optical storm that puppets appear. The wreck bathes in warm sunshine, and unseen, Ariels chirrup and sing as birds. A macaque's playful gibber is heard from various locations—the three Ariels work wonders—, and soon a little monkey shows up, jumping on the ribs of the barge. No sooner than Gonzalo notes that "Here is everything advantageous to life" (2.1.52) the shipwrecked start chasing the first animal that had the misfortune of curiously peeping after them, thus breaking the spell of the paradisiac ambiance. The crudity of the attempt to catch and kill the jesting animal is both comedic and alarming: the scene revisits the moment when colonizers arrive in a newly found land and records the spontaneous and elemental drive to possess dead or alive whatever they find there.

17 Contrasting the depiction of the storm with that of 2.1, I intended to demonstrate how Szikszai's minute reading makes use of the emotional rollercoaster Shakespeare offers in the text. Before we would realize it, Szikszai introduces the audience to the use of puppets, first with the wooden boats and now by making us feel

sympathy for a particularly likeable, cute, big-eyed animal of a baby's size. Soon the fact that the monkey is a plushie animated by one of the three Ariels (though voiced by all three) and the fact that all the shipwrecked travellers wear some sort of a prosthesis (or body mask), holding what appears to be the plaster replica of their own heads, will seem perfectly natural and evident.

18 It is the storm's magical work that makes us more interested than confused at the sight of the great diversity of puppets. Besides we are not disturbed but rather pleasantly surprised by a somewhat unusual tool that Piris calls *co-presence* (30) of the puppets and puppeteers. Co-presence in his sense however does not merely equal with the visible presence of the puppeteer (31).

> [Rather, it] takes place between the puppeteer and the puppet and is particular in the sense that it establishes a relation [...] between two things that are ontologically different: one is a subject (in other words, a being endowed with consciousness) and the other one an object (in other words, a thing). (30)

Following this logic, soon we are to understand the role of the costumes [14] that are the same or quite similar for the animators and their puppets. For instance, both Miranda (Alma Virág Pájer) and her bunraku self wear a matching natural flax and linen outfit. Hoods, and what appear to function as hoodies have a purpose too: puppeteers at least partially cover their heads to drive the focus of attention away from their faces, indicating that they speak in the name of the puppet. By contrast, hoods are always off when actors speak without the puppet.

Figure 5. – Prospero telling the story of their close escape to Miranda (puppeteer Alma Virág Pájer) here under his full control.

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Figure 6. – Zsombor Barna as Ferdinand and Alma Virág Pájer as Miranda.

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19 Caliban's (Zoltán Hannus) attire is another example of harmonizing the costumes and the puppets with the reading of the text: the savage who wears his heart on his sleeve and sings the beauty of the island in verse is differentiated from the rest of the cast by wearing his stick, a practical manly weapon, not on his sleeve but under his belly. He is the only one who, apart from Ariel and Prospero, does not have a puppet double. However, what he has, is a kind of penis sheath of an exaggerated size (half a meter) applied with rope ties onto his body in such a way that it seems to be a giant phallus. It later proves to be more than a funny piece of clothing: it characterizes and plays as well, in short, it is what theorists of puppetry call, after Frank Proschan and John Bell, a performing object (30). In this rendering Prospero severely "chastises", that is, castrates the savage. Thus, when in a transparent box Caliban reappears without the stick tied to his body, he carries like a dead puppet his own giant phallus.

Figures 7–9. – Caliban (Zoltán Hannus) and his stick.

© Vera Éder (My editing).

20 Despite the ostensibly chaotic diversity of puppets, a close look at the production reveals that Szikszai and his puppet designer Károly Hoffer apply them quite systematically. It is not the live-actress but the child-size bunraku Miranda who is the addressee of Prospero's words in 1.2. It is also the bunraku girl who sights Ferdinand (Zsombor Barna). They are both dwarfed and also outnumbered by the power of Prospero and the tripled Ariels, all played by flesh actors. On the one hand, it is a physical and professional necessity; on the other hand, it is a metaphorical act that Ariels animate the wooden creatures' motions. The bunraku's head always belongs to its primary puppeteer while its limbs are often left to be moved by the (in)visible assistants.

Figure 10. – The two young Ariels, Anna Spiegl and Mara Pallai charming Ferdinand (Zsombor Barna) and his bunraki self.

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21 As Miranda and Ferdinand fall in love and start acting independently of Prospero's charm, the bunrakus are replaced by the live puppeteers, an act that ought to be understood as more than a change of size; quite significantly and unusually in the theatre, it is a change of perspective. Szikszai and Hoffer stage a particularly moving scene when under the sway of their emotions Miranda and Ferdinand outpace Prospero's intentions who then urgently slows them down by separating them with a magic glass wall. In live-actor theatres this spell is usually staged as invisible, actors merely pretend that they cannot move. Here Ariels physically fence off Ferdinand from Miranda's body with a glass wall. The latter gains further meaning when, with an interesting change of point of view, we are to see the lovers as governable youngsters again, in their bunraku selves, the sad-faced Ferdinand in a transparent box, just like a toy on old Ariel's lap. The action on the (puppet) stage is thus capable of embodying the layers of the Shakespearean text:

“My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up” (*The Tempest*, 1.2.595)

> My father’s loss, the weakness which I feel,
> The wrack of all my friends, nor this man’s threats
> To whom I am subdued, are but light to me,
> Might I but through my prison once a day
> Behold this maid. (1.2.593–598)

Figures 11–12. – Ferdinand (Zsombor Barna) and his bunraku self temporarily paralyzed by Ariel’s (Gyöngyi Blasek) invisible charm.

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“This is as strange a maze as e’er men trod” (*The Tempest*, 5.1.293)

22 When we look at the variety of the prostheses Antonio, Sebastian, Alonso, Gonzalo, Adrian and Francisco wear, the sight might be slightly puzzling. The situation is further complicated by the three marionettes in the court masque and the rod/hand puppets of Stephano and Trinculo. Here, again, the analysis of the role of the puppets will assist us in understanding the profound effect they undoubtedly make.

23 One of the interesting solutions impossible on the only live-actor stage is that Adrian and Francisco, the two courtiers "in attendance on Alonso", are performed by the same puppeteer. The characters whose names, by no accident, we tend to forget, are not given clearly identifiable selves by Shakespeare's text, hence Szikszai and Hoffer's Gordian resolution. The small prosthesis strapped onto Tibor Szolár's tall body visibly dwarfs the characters' human stature, and laughably emphasises the two-head and two-mouth courtly parasite. The inherent irony is further heightened by the swift-paced moves of the pair with which they both spectate and react to the events. It is impossible not to recognize similarly bootlicking creatures [ADRIAN: "Tunis was never graced before with such a / paragon to their queen" (2.1.77–78)] in a country that is so rapidly sinking into the swamps of corruption.

24 Gonzalo's almost life-size head and prosthesis stand in stark contrast to the two gilded leeches. In fact, while the sweet-tempered Gonzalo (Csaba Teszárek) delivers his monologue about his peaceful utopian state, the performer becomes nearly invisible: the "actual body of the puppeteer and the apparent body of the puppet" merge, as if the crust becomes one with the tree trunk, only to exhibit the sole true-hearted court character.

Figures 13–14. – Tibor Szolár's two-head, two-mouth court parasite, Adrian and Francisco, and Csaba Teszárek's self-identical Gonzalo.

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25 It is a question whether the puppets personifying the travellers mentioned so far are rather illustrative and not sufficiently expressive of the Shakespearean text, and whether the lavish visuality of the puppet medium merely decorates or creatively furthers the claims of the drama. My response originates from "close reading" the prostheses and heads of Antonio and Sebastian: their representation certainly needs the contrast and the comparison that the other courtiers provide.

26 In Antonio and Sebastian's case we can witness the intricate play which Paul Piris describes as the essence of co-presence. According to Piris, "co-presence inherently supposes that the performer creates a character through the puppet but also appears as another character whose presence next to the puppet has a dramaturgical meaning" (31). [15] The actual arms of the puppeteers are clothed

lavishly as if they belonged to the apparent body of the puppet. In contrast, the heads the puppeteers hold are quite lifelike plaster replicas of the puppeteers' heads; and thus, while Antonio and Sebastian conspire, we see four heads altogether, one pair each. In sum, while the arms seem to indicate that the actual body of the puppeteer and the apparent body of the puppet are the same, the presence of the four heads effectively deny it. While not one spectator has the time to reflect upon this visible contradiction, the situation results in the desired effect: the sudden snakelike moves of the hands holding the heads evoke visceral reactions such as disgust and disdain in the spectator towards the plotting brothers. Moreover, doubling the speaking heads creates space for the director to repeat or counterpoint a situation. The dialogue between the two poker-faced and threateningly lifeless replica heads demonstrates what one would see from the outside. The dialogue between the two real actors' heads and mobile facial expressions demonstrates what is really in their minds (*voilà*, the dramaturgical meaning that justifies the puppeteer's head next to the puppet's head): "yet methinks I see it in thy face / What thou shouldst be" (2.1.228–229). While live-actor theatre often uses asides through which the audience may peep into the character's head, Szikszai's solution subtly takes advantage of the mixed, live-actor-and-puppet cast. The result—the two pairs of identical heads—is highly theatrical, meta-theatrical and meta-puppet-theatrical at once. Its effect is nothing less than thrilling and menacing while also popular and tragi-comedic.

Figures 15–16. – Poker-faced Sebastian (István Kemény) and Antonio (Norbert Ács) conspire uncovering their real selves.

27 Because the sophisticated play with co-presence dramatizes the double-faced, double-tongued nature of the scheming brothers, the only occasion when they take their masks off their poker-faced heads gains particular importance. In 3.3 Prospero reveals their wolfish and boundless power hunger, and when "Enter several strange shapes, bringing in a banquet" as well as illusory food, he tests the conspirators' bravery: "Will 't please you taste of what is here?" (3.3.55). In Szikszai's rendering, the challenge is obvious: Ariel serves monkey brain. Usually a loud gush of shock sweeps over the audience at the sight of the boxed live monkey. Not too long ago we saw it bouncing happily on the ribs of the wreck, and now it first gibbers, then screeches in despair. Just for spite, Antonio and Sebastian take their time and spoon out what seems to be the monkey's brain, munching loud with pleasure, to the frustrated laughter and utter disgust of the audience. Spectators report that they find the scene intensely painful even if they all know and see that the little macaque is a stuffed toy and that Ariel visibly voices it. Studies and articles [16] have already explored how and why the ventriloquist trick works: simply because humans spontaneously look at what they suspect to be the source of a voice, a face or a mouth, because, due to our evolutional coding, we trust in the visual input better than in the auditory one. In sum, this explains why we perceive Ariel's voice as the monkey's screams, and consequently, why the monkey brain eating scene demonstrates the ultimate power of puppetry—on anyone, even on adults.

Figures 17–18. – The illusory feast for Antonio and Sebastian (István Kemény and Norbert Ács): the usurpers appear as ruthless colonizers.

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28 The least sophisticated puppets belong to the least serious characters, and yet again the question rises whether the puppet medium contributes to the better understanding of the play. Perhaps Caliban's final punishment (his castration) would set his partners in crime, Trinculo and Stephano, the thin and the chubby, somewhat apart from the rest of the cast. However, through the devices of puppetry, Szikszai manages to keep them organically within his universe.

29 Trinculo and Stephano have puppet doubles of the simplest and most primitive kind: rod puppets which do not cover the puppeteers' body at all. Much rather, these puppets epitomize and even exaggerate their personalities in the manner of the commedia dell' arte. Stephano (Gergő Pethő), is depicted as a round-bellied simpleton: his puppet is a colossal wine bottle with a long neck, both of which serve Shakespeare's low jokes (rejuvenated in contemporary Hungarian by Ádám Nádasdy). Trinculo, the thin one (Zsolt Tatai), "servant to Alonso", is traditionally impersonated as the court jester, here he is personified by a rod puppet whose red cheeks, red hat and long red wooden nose remind us of either Punch or his Hungarian equivalent, Vitéz László / Paprika Jancsi (László the Knight / Johnny Pepper). By casting the Shakespearean jester Trinculo as Punch / Paprika Jancsi, Szikszai proves his familiarity with puppet traditions. The puppeteer's acrobatic acting upside down or between his two legs points out what the Trinculo-character inherited from Punch (and/or Paprika Jancsi): his enduring optimism, his high levels of energy and his indestructible nature.

30 Tatai's incredible athletic acting and his hairdo that pointedly resembles the dishevelled head of his Trinculo puppet provoke thoughts about co-presence, more precisely, the vast (and disturbing?) complexity of the relationship between the puppet's body and that of the performer's. Tatai's Trinculo is obviously informed about Shakespearean jesters, such as the carefree loudmouth Falstaff, or the wise and occasionally melancholic fools, like Feste. The puppeteer with frequent comically honest asides represents the unhappy self behind the shrill voice of the red-nosed Punch. Thus, by adding a melancholic touch, Tatai creates a profoundly detailed, memorable fool.

Figures 19–20. – The two unsophisticated characters of the comic drunkard and the Elizabethan court jester / Punch / Paprika Jancsi performed with simple rod puppets: Gergő Pethő as Stephano and Zsolt Tatai as Trinculo.

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“No more amazement” (*The Tempest*, 1.2.15)

31 The analysis of the relationships between the puppets and their animators in Szikszai’s staging of *The Tempest* must conclude with the queen of all puppets, the marionette. It is the most elegant and most gracefully moving creature and also, the most difficult one to handle: reportedly only a lifetime is enough to master its strings. Thus, when seeking the worthy representation of an early Baroque court masque it was only natural from Szikszai to choose the marionette. In general, as Margaret Williams put it, the marionette is “the classic metaphor of puppetry—the godlike puppeteer both gives life to and withdraws it from a creation made in his/her own image. […] It demonstrates, quite literally, that the puppet’s ‘life’ exists only as an effect of the puppeteer’s control” (18).

Figure 21. – The charming court masque / Baroque opera performed with marionettes—the legs of the Ariels, of Anna Spiegl and Mara Pallai who sing as Ceres and Iris respectively, are visible on the opposite sides of the miniature barge.

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32 Szikszai exploits both the concept and the ambiguity of the marionette entirely: the marionettes are to play the role of the three goddesses, Iris, Ceres and Juno, who are moved by the three female Ariels, who are, in turn, moved by Prospero. In centre stage we see a rather small replica of the barge which is tiny enough for the marionettes to appear as goddesses. While we focus on the opera-singing marionettes, we almost forget about the frightening proportions:[17] about the fact that the marionettes reach only to the Ariels' knees and that their reality on the tiny wreck is no more than a coloured set in a miniature theatre. Although marionettes are famous for their capability of ballet dancing and for taking unreal moves, it becomes clear that even the most elaborate marionette is inherently limited: it can walk, in fact, toddle along the plank of the barge, but can never exchange places with another. It is technically impossible as their strings would get entangled for ever. In this way, the situation of Szikszai and Hoffer's marionettes is similar to that of their manipulator, Ariel: no matter how omnipotent, charming or artistic Juno, Ceres and Iris or Ariel seem to be, they remain equally dependent upon their master.

33 As his last magical action Prospero sets Ariel free with a kiss, and promptly the pretty Ariels disappear from his embrace. Instead, an old hag sporting a well-worn, colourless brown sweater smiles up at Prospero. He faces the sudden lack of the skin-tight dresses, the much younger bodies. *Ubi sunt*—where have they (his puppets) all gone? Or did he merely dream them? But "Let us not burden our remembrances with / A heaviness that's gone" (5.1.236–237).

Figures 22–23. – Taking off the masks—taking leave.

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Conclusion—mere oblivion?

34 Just before the Epilogue, in the "last scene of all, / that ends this strange eventful history" (*AYLI*, 2.7.170–171) the characters gather at Prospero's summons to give up playing. In Szikszai's rendering the actors' detachment from their roles takes place in silence and with heart-rending dignity. Puppeteers separate from their puppets: they slowly peel off their prostheses, gently lay down their replica heads, rod puppets, performing objects and their bunraku selves. By peeling off one layer of theatricality we sight the next: they are like us, merely players.

35 This scene effectively prepares us for the Epilogue, heightening tension for the theatricality of the moment when Prospero must step off. He has "pardoned the deceiver", he has set free the creature whose strings he used to move and now he must see what strength he has as his own … His initial thirst for revenge and vehemence to act have melted into acceptance and reconciliation. Although evil

brothers will remain evil brothers, heaviness is gone, grievances ventilated, vexations articulated—all by role play, by the power of animation, by the magic of the theatre.

36 Puppeteers do not act any more—this is how puppets (never) die. With them we will lose the playfulness of their self-referentiality, their emphatic fictitiousness, their ever conspicuous embodiment of a theatrical role and the inherently (meta)theatrical nature of a puppet and live-actor performance. With them we will lose the ventriloquist trick, we will stop the experiments with the changing point of view and the double focus, we will lose all that ensured an inventive and gripping reading of *The Tempest*. It is the performance critic's responsibility, as Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine pointed out (78), to select truly worthy renderings for the critical discourse, and I firmly believe that Szikszai's engaging puppet and live-actor production is one of those. "A grace it had. Devouring" (3.3.103).

37 The lights are dimming, Prospero remains alone in the space surrounded by the audience, his fellow actors and the puppets. This is his last job. He has neither a puppet, nor a mask. In the last minute even the heap of puppet corpses is gone. What he only has is a bunch of former puppeteers that now become his audience. Szikszai makes sure that in the Epilogue the actor's loneliness with his role is almost tangible. Before he can bow and suck up the praise like Stoppard's Player, "Oh, come, come, gentlemen—no flattery—it was merely competent […]" (123), he must answer the ultimate challenge, he must reveal the power of a live-actor's death scene.

38 By staging Prospero's death Szikszai makes us suddenly realize that the Epilogue of *The Tempest* might not be only about the enthusiastic applause of an already tamed audience: much rather, it is about the loneliness of the long distance runner, of the experienced theatre professional, who will have to play the way he has never felt and who will have to go further than he has gone ever before. Thus, in Szikszai's production the Epilogue of *The Tempest* demonstrates what the actor faces professionally: the difficulty and the risk night by night, and the arrival to the "undiscovered country from whose bourn / No traveler returns" (*Hamlet*, 3.1.87–88). Leaving his leading actor so gradually and also so spectacularly alone, in the crossfire of gazes by spectators and colleagues alike, Szikszai responds to

> Shakespeare's challenge and demonstrates what theatre really, viscerally is. The last scene of all—though perhaps *sans* everything—is not "mere oblivion" (*AYLI*, 2.7.173): taking off our masks, holding our breaths, we are all gathered to see and to remember how death is performed by a great theatre professional.

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NOTES

1 A *vihar*, directed by Rémusz Szikszai, premiered 26 September 2018.

2 Papp argues that packed houses and euphoric criticisms do not provide a realistic picture: in general, she claims, adult puppet performances reach very few spectators as they run for very limited periods (few months only in the repertory system) and in rather small auditoria. Personal interview, 17 April 2019.

3 For instance, see criticism by Katalin Gabnai at *Revizor*, 8 October 2018, "Búcsú magunktól", or by Annamária Jász at *WeLoveBudapest*, 1 October 2018, "Játékos, kísérletező, és abszolút felnőtteknek való—bemutatta a Vihart a Bábszínház".

4 A *vihar*, directed by Dezső Garas, 1988.

5 Ed. by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, Folger Digital Texts. All quotations are from this edition.

6 "Összhangban a viharral", 2 October 2018.

7 All the pictures presented in this study are from the production of *The Tempest* directed by Rémusz Szikszai in Budapest Puppet Theatre, 2018.

8 "A bábba vetett feltétlen hit", in *ArtLimes*, 14 April 2019.

9 Founded by Géza Blattner and Alexander Tóth.

10 "Nyúló-szétváló bohóc". Exhibition guide on the website of the Hungarian Theatre Museum and Institute.

11 They became itinerant players, carrying their booth and belongings in the smallest of Socialist cars, a Trabant (the one made of cardboard). The last member, Henrik Kemény died in 2011 only a few months after the family's former playhouse burnt to ashes.

12 Theatre manager János Meczner (1994–2020).

13 *Macbeth*, 20 October 2018 at Jászai Mari Theatre, Tatabánya and at Szkéné, Budapest; *Pillowman*, 7 May 2016 at Radnóti Theatre, Budapest.

14 The costume designer is Julcsi Kiss.

15 Also see *supra* in part "Wonder and amazement / Inhabits here" (*The Tempest*, 5.1.114–115).

16 See for instance Jurkowski's monograph, Soto-Faraco's paper or Henriques' article, amongst several others mentioned before.

17 It is also easy to suspend our disbelief and freely enjoy the spectacle.

ABSTRACTS

English

The most recent Shakespearean première in Budapest, in September 2018, was held at the Budapest Puppet Theatre. *The Tempest* is not the first ever Shakespeare to be staged in a Hungarian puppet theatre, yet, I argue that the production directed by Rémusz Szikszai is one that demands thorough attention from the Shakespeare researcher from at least three aspects. Firstly, the performance is advertised as 16+, and it marks the gradual consolidation of the puppet medium by adult audiences. It features a wide variety of characters on the stage, all perfectly visible, including live/flesh actors, bunraku (child-size) puppets, bunraku heads made after actors' heads, and attachable body puppets (prostheses, which puppeteers can wear); therefore, the subtle and complex play with the relations between the bodies of the actors and the bodies of the puppets ought to be noted. Secondly, the performing space is worth being mentioned: an enormous wreck of a barge in a spacious room which squeezes performers and spectators together. The lack of physical distance between viewer and player simultaneously provokes the spectator's powerful emotional involvement and at once reminds them of the meta-theatre present in both the play and the production.

Thirdly, the production is noteworthy in a country where the slapstick-for-three-year-olds kind of puppet productions that Socialist authorities permitted after World War II practically washed away the scarce and weak pre-World War adult puppet traditions. It is Prague (Czechia) where marionettes are ubiquitous, sold in the streets and footbridges, and it is Brno (Moravia) where scholarly journals like *Theatralia* regularly deal with puppeteering in detail. In sum, the cradle and home of centuries-long Central-European puppetry is the Czech Lands rather than Hungary.

My paper does not aim to summarize the state of Hungarian post-war and post-1990 puppeteering, nor does it mean to deal with the Hungarian stage history of *The Tempest*. My argument will be informed about and rely on these two fields in order to point out the place of Szikszai's mixed, puppet

and live actor production on the map of twenty-first-century Hungarian and European Shakespeares.

Français
La première la plus récente d'un spectacle shakespearien à Budapest, en septembre 2018, s'est tenue au Théâtre de marionnettes de Budapest. Ce n'était pas la première fois qu'une pièce de Shakespeare était représentée dans un théâtre de marionnettes hongrois, mais cette représentation de *La Tempête*, mise en scène par Rémusz Szikszai, mérite selon moi l'attention des spécialistes de Shakespeare pour au moins trois aspects.
Premièrement, le spectacle était annoncé pour un auditoire de plus de 16 ans, ce qui marque le retour graduel des marionnettes pour spectateurs adultes. On y trouve sur scène toutes sortes de personnages, tous parfaitement visibles, comprenant des acteurs en chair et en os, des marionnettes bunraku (de la taille d'un enfant), des têtes bunraku faites d'après les têtes des acteurs, et des marionnettes-prothèses que les marionnettistes peuvent porter ; il faut donc noter le jeu complexe et subtil des relations entre le corps des acteurs et celui des marionnettes.
En second lieu, l'espace scénique mérite également d'être mentionné : il s'agit d'une énorme épave de barge dans une salle spacieuse, où acteurs et spectateurs se retrouvent serrés les uns contre les autres. Le manque de distance physique entre les deux provoque un investissement émotionnel puissant de la part du spectateur, tout en lui rappelant la dimension méta-théâtrale présente à la fois dans la pièce et dans la mise en scène.
Enfin, cette production fait date dans un pays où les spectacles burlesques de marionnettes pour enfants qui étaient autorisés par les gouvernements socialistes après la Seconde Guerre mondiale avaient pratiquement fait disparaître les rares et timides traditions de théâtre de marionnettes pour adultes qui existaient avant-guerre. C'est à Prague que les marionnettes sont omniprésentes, vendues dans la rue et sur les ponts, et c'est à Brno que des revues savantes comme *Theatralia* publient régulièrement des articles sur l'art des marionnettistes. Pour résumer, le berceau de la marionnette d'Europe centrale se trouve dans les pays tchèques plutôt qu'en Hongrie.
Mon article ne vise pas à résumer l'état de l'art de la marionnette après-guerre et après 1990 en Hongrie, ni à faire l'histoire des représentations hongroises de *La Tempête*. Mon analyse s'appuie sur ces deux champs pour mettre en évidence la place de la mise en scène mixte de Szikszai, avec ses marionnettes et ses acteurs, sur la carte des représentations shakespeariennes hongroises et européennes du XXIe siècle.

INDEX

Mots-clés
La Tempête, Shakespeare (William), théâtre de marionnettes hongrois, Szikszai (Rémusz), bunraku, métathéâtre, acteurs réels, Vitéz László, Punch, Blattner (Géza), Tóth (Sándor A.), Garas (Dezső), Meczner (János)

Keywords
The Tempest, Shakespeare (William), Budapest Puppet Theatre, Hungarian puppet theatre, Szikszai (Rémusz), marionettes, bunraku, meta-theatre, live actors, Vitéz László, Punch, Blattner (Géza), Tóth (Sándor A.), Garas (Dezső), Meczner (János)

AUTHOR

Gabriella Reuss
Gabriella Reuss is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary. Her research interest lies in the stage history and the reception of Shakespeare, as seen particularly in performance archives including promptbooks, and in contemporary plays and productions. Besides theatre reviews and performance criticisms, the majority of her publications concerns the promptbook of the earliest restoration (1834) of the tragically ending *King Lear*. She devoted her doctoral dissertation (2004) to this manuscript. Her first monograph, entitled *Shakespeare Londonban és Pest-Budán. Az előadás emlékezete* [*Shakespeare in London and Pest-Buda. Remembering performances*], published by L'Harmattan in 2017, is about W. C. Macready's and Gábor Egressy's interpretation of *Lear* as seen in their unique prompt copies (1834, 1838) and the way their paradigm-changing performances shaped the Shakespeare cult as well as theatrical and cultural memory.
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Doran's and Taymor's *Tempests*: Digitalizing the Storm, a Dialogue between Theatre and Cinema

Les Tempêtes *de Doran et Taymor : déferlement numérique pour un dialogue entre théâtre et cinéma*

Estelle Rivier-Arnaud

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OUTLINE

TEXT

Introduction

1 When in June 2017, I saw *The Tempest* on the stage of the Barbican Centre in London,[1] I found it breath-taking and amazingly innovative. Perhaps this was due to my unawareness of the new capacities that digital art could already provide the stage with. The invasion of screens and high-tech in the theatrical space is however not new and the dialogue between cinema and theatre started decades ago so much so that we, as members of the audience, are expecting a reciprocal influence whenever we attend a play, notably those written by Shakespeare. Yet in Doran's production, the technology seemed to be even more challenging as it claimed to have a narrative function (See Genette *Figures III*).[2] In other words, the artefact created by computers was meant to tell the story of *The Tempest*, more than the actor's body and voice that merely appeared as media

through which the image could be conveyed. As we will see, by replacing a real décor, the 3D image was vivid enough to make the audience believe that it was living and concrete indeed.

2 Although strongly creative, such images were evocative of another technological process—CGI (computer-generated imagery)—used by Julie Taymor, seven years before, [3] particularly as far as Ariel and the shipwreck were concerned. Taymor's film also offered visual extravaganza when for instance Ariel (Ben Whishaw), appearing from a watery hole, recreated the tempest under Prospero's eyes. Prospero was now Prospera (Hellen Mirren), a rather convincing sleight of hand to blur the genders even further. During this first confrontation between the Master of illusion and his (her) servant, the images piled on top of each other while Shakespeare's lines could be heard, which produced a kind of synesthetic vertigo.

3 The motif of magic and supernatural forces permeates Shakespeare's Tempest, which has fed the stage-directors' thoughts—from Shakespeare until today—and led to the invention or, at least, the imagination (let us think of Edward Gordon Craig) of extraordinary scenographies. In this paper, after exploring both Taymor's and Doran's sets, I will investigate the relevance of the technical means used there to serve Shakespeare's magic: how has the illusion been built? Has digital art efficiently contributed to create wonder and to enhance the poetry of words? By extension, we should wonder whether the new technologies, whereby theatrical and cinematic devices are combined, alter the public's expectations today: could we now see a *Tempest* without artefact and still be spellbound?

Taymor's *Tempest*: CGI at the service of poetry and illusion

> **Miranda**
> If by your art, my dearest father, you have
> Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
> The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,
> But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,
> Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered
> With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel,
> Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her,

> Dash'd all to pieces. O, the cry did knock
> Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perish'd.
> Had I been any god of power, I would
> Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere
> It should the good ship so have swallow'd and
> The fraughting souls within her.
> (1.2.1–10) [4]

4 Julie Taymor's career is rather idiosyncratic, including the artistic fields of musical, puppet-theatre, cinema, opera and theatre of course. The place of her various productions of Shakespeare's plays is however telling in the mass of her iconoclastic creations. [5] During the late 1980s and early 1990s, she staged several of Shakespeare's plays including *The Tempest* (1986), *The Taming of The Shrew* (1988), and *Titus Andronicus* (1994) although she earned international fame with her Broadway *Lion King* in 1997. Following the critical and financial success of this production (traditional African costumes and animal masks gave a rather unusual aesthetic compared to the whimsical world of Disney), Taymor released *Titus* (1999), based on Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. The film starred Anthony Hopkins and Jessica Lange. It was set in an anachronistic fantasy world in which various historical periods such as Ancient Rome and Mussolini's Italy were superimposed. The film received a qualified success, which may explain why Taymor waited more than ten years before adapting another Shakespearean play. In a way, *The Tempest* came at a time when she could prove again how skilful she was in challenging the norm and responding to the critics.

5 Taymor's ambition was to use special effects and gender controversy as means to shape the multi-faceted world of *The Tempest*, to highlight its inner conflicts and show the dynamics of change at stake in the play. The general understanding is that Prospero is not exempt from the madness and delusions that his ship-wrecked enemies suffer on the island. Since Prospero is no longer quick to forgive, to re-imagine him as a woman seemed appropriate. A woman having magic powers could make the nature of the power asserted on the island even more ambiguous. Although referred to as a "witch" once in the film, Prospera is expected to call into question the nature of human relationship, and to use her motherly and benevolent values to thwart the political threats—mainly colonialism—at stake in the

play. If the casting was one of the critics' main focuses of concern when the film was released, [6] my point here is rather to understand Taymor's choices in the design of both Ariel and the tempest insofar as the two illustrate key features also present in Doran's production: first, the de/construction of the image and second, the power of illusion.

6 The first scene of the play opens on a sand castle that appears to be held in the hand of Miranda (Felicity Jones) as the camera moves back. In the background, the sky is tortured: flashes of lightning are striping the horizon. In the next shot, we are in the vessel, and can hear the panic-stricken boatmen shouting at the angry sea. The following shots alternate between the sandy beach where Miranda is running, and the mess within the boat: the camera zooms on the various faces of the crew before Alonso (David Strathaim) and Ferdinand (Reeve Carney) are seen kneeling and praying in the captain's cabin. Fire eventually attacks the ship and the bodies: the sailors fall into the sea; the waves invade the screen before Miranda finally reaches Prospera who is confronting the wild sea with her stick held horizontally. The whole sequence is recorded with classical music, [7] which, together with the loud sounds of the storm and of the human voices, gives a rather tragic entrance into the film.

7 The very motivations that led Taymor to design her adaptation as such are unfortunately not explicitly revealed in the interviews she gave at the time the film was released. We know that the location of Prospera's island was set around the volcanic areas of the big islands of Hawaii and of Lanai. It strengthened the wild dimension of the picture but also its potential idyllic and romantic propensities. This background rather well expressed the characters' words—especially Miranda's at the onset of the play (quoted in the epigraph)—and gave a sense of truthfulness to the scenes. Yet, the computer-generated imagery soon modified the sense of plausibility to make the magic prevail. This technology often used in movies is useful to create the illusion of a historical reconstruction (in biopics and peplums for instance), and can be considered as the contemporary magic wand able to create strong visions of all kinds: fantasy worlds, dreadful apparitions, merriments or, conversely, apocalyptic situations. In Taymor's film, the CGI was also used to create virtual landscapes and characters as when, for instance, Ariel is summoned by Prospera and

is asked to describe the storm he is supposed to have set. This second part of act 1, scene 2, is usually a way for the stage director to stage the storm scene a second time and create new visions.

8 In this new sequence, Ariel appears naked from a hole filled with water. His face partly undulates like waves on the surface, which logically draws a link with the content of his tale. As he minutely develops his narration, scenes of the boat in flames appear on screen. Ariel now dressed as a supernatural creature resembling Poseidon, the God of Oceans in Greek mythology or Neptune in the Roman one, has a human face and a golden body that can divide into three:

> **Ariel**
> I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak,
> Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
> I flamed amazement: sometime I'd divide,
> And burn in many places; on the topmast,
> The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,
> Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings, the precursors
> O' the dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary
> And sight-outrunning were not; the fire and cracks
> Of sulphurous roaring **the most mighty Neptune**
> Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble,
> Yea, his dread trident shake. (1.2.198–206)

9 Ariel/Whishaw is able to take the multiple shapes implied by Shakespeare's lines, and just like Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he can move and travel faster than the wind. With the CGI, these protean characteristics are probably easier to transcribe on the screen than on the stage. As the definition of the word indicates, virtual technology enables the director of the film to "interact with [or through] animated characters, [such] as avatars". [8] These avatars seem to be so visually present that we may turn out to be confused about their insubstantiality. This is an aspect that did serve the theatricality of Taymor's adaptation. Indeed, the three-dimensional images that were used to figure out the power of illusion at work in the play as well as the way the illusion manipulates the characters, were Taymor's response to illustrate the actor's metamorphic skill at its best. As Shakespeare implies in the play, the actor is supposedly able to transform him/herself into all possible shapes. He can also

direct the action while being part of it. These features are later pointed out by Ariel in act 3, scene 3. [9] In the film, he reappears dressed as a titanic black bird that speaks in a sonorous and metallic voice. As Alonso (David Strathairn), Gonzalo (Tom Conti) and Sebastian (Alan Cumming) are watching him with terrorized eyes, the structure of the image itself highlights the theatricality of the whole composition: seen from a high angle shot, the three men appear even more vulnerable compared to the giant Ariel (mostly seen from a low-angle shot or in a close-up).

10 In a press conference, Taymor underlined some of the similarities between her preceding productions of *The Tempest* (the first Shakespearean play she actually directed for the theatre [10]). Interestingly enough, if previously she had cast a woman in the part of Ariel, she had mostly focused on the same themes such as gender power, forgiveness (another beautiful scene between Ariel and Prospera), the physicality and poetry of words as well as the aesthetic backdrop from which the silhouettes of the actors could stand out. In her previous production for the stage, the set was also a volcanic place where black sand covered up the proscenium.

11 As a matter of fact, the editing process she used in her 2010's film production seems to have been the counterpoint to the cinematic stage that some of the major contemporary directors are promoting today. Indeed in contrast to the works of Robert Lepage or Thomas Ostermeier who cinematize their stage—what Jitka Pelechová calls a "cinefied narration" (140) [11]—the image in Taymor's film is theatricalized. The special effects, used in all contexts, either to animate the architectural environment or to create fantastic visions, do not seem to have impeded the theatrical scope of the piece. Yet, at the time, some reviews deplored the uselessness of technological artefacts that denied the Shakespearean nature of the play. In *Newsweek* for instance one could read that "the film's special effects, to a surprising extent, add[ed] little to the story", and that "next to the concise power of [Shakespeare's] language, the screen wizardry […] seem[ed] like rough magic indeed". [12]

12 If Taymor's film was not favourably reviewed when it came out, the conjunction between cinematic and theatrical forces—that I suppose is inherent whenever a play is adapted on screen—was so blatant that

the influence of one medium on the other had a future and would probably further strengthen, in a different way though. This is what could be observed—as it seems to me—in Doran's use of digital images seven years later, when one could feel as if being on the other side of Taymor's mirror, attending a theatrical performance like the audience in a cinema.

Doran's digital *Tempest* or how magic may work today on stage

13 When Gregory Doran planned a new production of *The Tempest* for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2016,[13] his designer, Stephen Brimson Lewis, imagined a set that would mark the four-hundredth-year anniversary of the poet. He took the example of the wreck of the Mary Rose—an admiral ship that had sunk a few decades before *The Tempest* was written—[14] and built a miniature decor before sketching a 3-D picture from which the RSC workers would actually construct the effective set. Quite interestingly, once the ship's carcass was in full-size, it perfectly mirrored the inner architecture of the RSC theatre with its wooden galleries on three levels. The effect was a fortunate coincidence but also a proof that this artistic choice was well-founded and perfectly coherent. The next step was to make the carcass—that was not meant to change during the whole performance—move, at least seemingly. There, the special effects would play their part.

14 The major innovation of such a design was the use of motion capture technology to create movement, especially of Ariel's avatar. Digital images projected on either the actors' body or the set would also simulate various places and atmospheres. Even though this technology has long been used to support a variety of artistic creations (among which video games), it was the first time it was used on a stage as a real time live performance capture with the RSC. During the rehearsals, the actor (Mark Quartley) was connected to a computer (Doran's Intel partnership) through multiple sensors. His movements could then be mimetically reproduced by a translucent and gigantic avatar whose movements seemed fluid and evanescent, thanks to twenty-seven projectors. The actor was then both the marionette and the puppeteer.

15 As Doran and his collaborators explain in a video about the creative process of the production,[15] computerized images are limited only by our imagination. In this play, walking in Shakespeare's steps, the power of illusion must be pushed a step further. Consequently, for the opening scene, flashes of lightning as well as the loud sounds of thunder and shouts, immediately filled in the theatrical space. Under the light-effects, and thanks to the projection of undulating images through a huge cylinder coming from the flies, the boat hull did seem to pitch and toss. In parallel, the ocean seemed to invade the theatre's boards while the flames were licking the boat's skeleton. On each side of the carcass and at various levels, the actors were yelling their lines while clinging to the boat, thereby strengthening the impression of instability in this apocalyptic moment. When at the end of act 1, scene 1, the sailors are supposed to be swallowed by the waves ("Gonzalo: […] —We split! We split! We split!", 1.1.62), we could see the mirror image of the men's bodies reflected inside the cylinder as though they were *really* drowning. The image was impressive, and strongly highlighting the synchronization between the virtual and the real, the digital and the physical, the robot and the human.

16 Again, when Ariel entered stage in 1.2, the cylinder came down from the flies to carry his long, evanescent shape. Thanks to Intel's technology, all the movements of the actor could be instantly reproduced, even when the spirit is expected to fly. With the addition of light-effects, the tempest that had presumably drowned the king of Naples and all his courtiers could be revived while Ariel described how he had provoked the disaster. Such a technique made the performance more spectacular than if screens had merely shown images of a wreckage. In Doran's production, the tempest did seem to be happening on stage as a kind of immersive experience.[16] The notion of immersion sounds particularly adequate in such a context and is reminiscent of preceding forms of illusionistic sets like Georges Coates's in *20/20 Blake*. Presented in 1996 in San Francisco, it was conceived as an Artaudian production[17] because of William Blake's monumental religious paintings, recreated on the stage. At the time, the reviews considered the digital manipulation as "[…] the most innovative feature of this lush scenic production" (McKusick 38). Blake's paintings and engravings created the illusion of three dimensions when viewed by the audience through special 3-D

glasses, a device that Doran did not use however. Yet, as in Coates's production where images from Blake's illuminated books were magnified to enormous size and projected onto the stage, the performers could walk into, through, and behind Doran's virtual set. In Coates's as much as in Doran's productions, virtual reality was a way to represent the passionate intensity of either Blake's or Shakespeare's poetry with a dynamic and contemporary medium, thus challenging the audience's expectations while enhancing artistic innovation.

17 Later in Doran's performance, when Prospero ordered a masque for the union between Miranda and Ferdinand, the illusion of a fairy-like world representing Juno's car, surrounded by the nymphs and, at the end of the scene, the reapers, all singing and dancing, seemed palpable in the theatrical space. Just as in the opening scene where the waves had seemed to flood the whole set, the nymphs' and peasants' woodland appeared as a real entity invading the acting space. VR did make the audience's imagination cross the invisible line between times and geographies, and in so doing initiated a new narrative mode to tell Early modern drama.

18 Such technicity—however fascinating and innovative—is also very puzzling because of the unlimited scope of its action and the loose definition of theatrical creation it tends to generate. As Elizabeth Grosz points out, these forms of transitional spaces constructed through digital process are spaces "*of* the in-between" (90), within which we may lose the essence of the theatre, and of the plays.

"In-between-ness": kaleidoscopic Shakespeare

19 As Steve Dixon writes, the screen images—whether including CGI as in Taymor's Tempest or digital live capture as in Doran's—create a liminal space, i.e. a "sense of in-between-ness […] often called the 'metatext' of digital theatre production" (Dixon 337). The semioticians like Pierre Bourdieu or Keir Elam have long demonstrated how complex the signs of theatrical productions were to define and delineate. The permeability of theatrical art, but also its openness and its flexibility, enable directors and scenographers to invite new

disciplines that will always re-invent the codes of performance. Dixon questions this new relationship established between screen (or digital technology) and stage, implying that they either compete with each other or interact and fuse efficiently:

> The semiotic relationship and tension between the screen imagery, which we could call A, and the live performers, B, is most commonly interpreted as either a *dialogic* relationship (A versus/in relation to B), or as establishing an *additive* combination which engenders something entirely new, namely C, (A+B=C). (Dixon 336)

In many cases however, Dixon suggests, the juxtaposition between live performance and projected media is meant to excite a subjective response from the audience, and to appeal to their senses more than to compel them to think and understand the purpose of such juxtaposition. In this field, and as far as Shakespeare's canon is concerned, Robert Lepage's chimeric and uncanny productions are textbook cases. The use of unconventional video projections, kinetic screens, mirrors and ingenious mechanical sets have shown how Shakespeare's plays (but not only) could "morph, mutate, transform, often with thrilling speed and theatrical impact" (John Mahoney *in* Dixon 351). For example, Lepage's 1992 A *Midsummer Night's Dream*, staged entirely in a shallow pool of water, surrounded by mud, which the actors walked through, was visually grandiose but also efficient in the performative process. The adjunction of images and heavy light effects particularly enhanced the vast potentials of the performance in a classic venue (The National Theatre in London). They also reinforced the dynamics of stage-action that the Shakespearean comedy inspires.

20 The Builders Association is another theatre company that resorts to large-scale projections (used to a variety of effects), media and computer technology to "reanimate" theatre for a contemporary audience (see for instance *Jump Cut*, 1997 or *Alladeen*, 2003, both high budget multimedia theatre performances). Hence, undoubtedly, the union of genres and technologies whereby the immediacy of drama and the sophistication of decades projected images are combined has become rather *natural* if not inescapable over the past. It is a way to revive the classics as Doran and Taymor also underlined in their works. Shakespeare's *Tempest* offered them the possibility to

challenge the boundaries of imagination. Since, through his words and the contexts he shaped, the poet implied there was indeed no limit:

> **Prospero**
> […] These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits and
> Are melted into air, into thin air:
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> **Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve**
> **And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,**
> **Leave not a rack behind**. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep. [4.1.148–158. My emphasis]

Digital technology seems the perfect tool to follow Prospero/Shakespeare's advice quoted above. The fleeting nature of the projected images fill in and empty the stage as dreams invade our minds before vanishing in a flash. Furthermore, the structure of *The Tempest* that makes the audience's eyes travel from the sea to the shore, and then from a place to another on Prospero's island, invites the directors and their scenographers to go beyond the letter (or the scenery-words), and offer concretely what only the imagination was able to figure out, back in the 17th century.

21 In a way, we could borrow Marguerite Chabrol's and Tiphaine Karsenti's book-title *Le croisement des imaginaires* ("*at the crossroads of imaginary worlds*") to define this phenomenon. The cinema—in the way the images are either projected on a screen or in 3-D—and the theatre combine their skills to serve a similar goal: to make Shakespearean art still attractive, semantically and aesthetically. Again this alchemy was already described by Artaud who was the first one to coin the term "virtual reality" when he developed his concept of duplicity (or twoness) in *The Theatre and Its Double*.[18] For him, the double of theatre is its true magical self. The notion of theatre's double includes the vision of a "sacred, transformational and transcendental theatre" (Dixon 241). In other words, it is vain to think that there are impossibilities in theatre. Artaud was a visionary as he

conjured images—truly impossible to stage in his time—that were eventually concretized thanks to computers much later (in works like *Anima*, 2002, a 4-D Art's dance theatre production). Such theories invite us to consider the cinema (let us rather say the images) not as the double image of theatre, but as an entity that is a *part of* theatrical practices. Likewise, on today's stages, drama cannot work *without* the capacities offered by computers, if only because the elaborate light-effects are key and inevitable devices that shape the décor in a sophisticated way.

Conclusion

22 With the examples of Taymor's and Doran's productions of *The Tempest*, we may question the relevance of the other performances that eschew such degree of sophistication. And yet, if we but observe the permanence of the "authentic" Shakespeare in the New Globe Theatre in London as well as in other venues that remain faithful to a traditional form of interpretation, we keep being convinced of the efficiency of the poet's words to create magic. What must prevail is indeed the capacity of the play to entertain its audience. *Extra*-ordinary responses to the challenges triggered by Shakespeare's maritime plays like *Twelfth Night*, *Antony and Cleopatra* or *Pericles-Prince of Tyre* among others have been given by Taymor and Doran, at least in *The Tempest*. It was a way for them to explore the abysmal borders of creation, resorting to 21st-century tools. And at the same time, rather paradoxically, it was a way for them to remain faithful to Shakespeare, avoiding textual ellipses, and making the meaning of words even more obvious in a colourful, ever-changing, décor.

23 Just as in Shakespeare's time when the Globe's audience was eager to attend a new play, admire the magnificence of costumes and enjoy the truculence of the dialogues, we are very fond of novelty and look forward to discovering the plays under a new light. We can still interrogate the consequences of cinematographic art and of I.T. in theatre as well as the proliferation of film adaptations of Shakespeare's canon. However, we should not fear the so-called invasion of an art into another but instead, we ought to welcome the recurrent collaboration of genres that gives a new direction to Early-

modern drama, beyond the borders of seas and oceans, where the language of performance is universal.

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Ariel (Ben whishaw) and Prospera (Hellen Mirren), Act 1, scene 2: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqM28B95IGg>.

Ariel's "I have made you mad" scene (3.3): <www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XdBTA90Iak>.

Taymor's interview in Cannes, spring 2010: <www.bing.com/videos/search?q=taymor+the+tempest&&view=detail&mid=2F6C8736AEC55438B9D22F6C8736AEC55438B9D2&&FORM=VRDGAR>.

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Doran's Ariel with the motion capture technology: <www.rsc.org.uk/the-tempest/gregory-doran-2016-production/act-1-scene-2>.

Doran: Creating *The Tempest*: <www.rsc.org.uk/the-tempest/gregory-doran-2016-production/video-creating-the-tempest>.

The Pictures of the RSC production are accessible on <www.rsc.org.uk/the-tempest/gregory-doran-2016-production>.

NOTES

1 The production was first staged in Stratford-Upon-Avon in 2016 and then presented in London in July 2017. See the website of the RSC production of the *Tempest*: <www.rsc.org.uk/the-tempest/gregory-doran-2016-production>.

2 Gérard Genette makes a distinction between "story" and "narrative", a narrative being the events of the story dramaturgically shaped.

3 Taymor's production premiered at the Venice festival on 10 September 2010. The trailer and the movie are available online: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gv35Jw76yc>.

4 All the quotations are from William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by Stephen Orgel, Oxford: OUP, 2008.

5 One of Taymor's first projects was the original musical *Liberty's Taken* (1985) soon after a four-year stay in Indonesia. A *Carnival Mass* (1988) earned her an Obie Award for best direction. Her first production of an opera, Stravinsky's opera-oratorio *Oedipus Rex*, was recorded in 1993. She also staged Mozart's *The Magic Flute* the same year, and the following year she took on Richard Strauss' *Salomé*. Other operas came later.

6 See for instance Aaron W. Vinson, *Challenging Identity Hierarchies in Julie Taymor's* Tempest, Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of DePaul University in June 2014, and also Clare Sibley-Esposito, "Becoming-Ariel: Viewing Julie Taymor's *The Tempest* through an Ecocritical Lens", *Babel*, no. 24, 2011, pp. 121–134.

7 The music score was composed by Elliot Goldenthal.

8 "These avatars are usually depicted as textual, two-dimensional, or 3D representations, although other forms are possible (auditory and touch sensations for example)." <www.techopedia.com/definition/25604/virtual-world>.

9 You are three men of sin, whom Destiny,
That hath to instrument this lower world
And what is in't, the never-surfeited sea
Hath caused to belch up you; and on this island
Where man doth not inhabit; you 'mongst men
Being most unfit to live. **I have made you mad**;
And even with such-like valour men hang and drown
Their proper selves. (3.3. 53–60. My emphasis)

10 Actually, before the cinematic version, she directed the play three times for the stage. The dates are not mentioned in her biography.

11 "Narration cinéfiée" (my translation). See also Féral (55–69).

12 And in *The New York Times*, December 2010: "Ms. Taymor's overscaled sense of stage spectacle can be impressive and effective, even moving, but her three-dimensional, high-volume compositions translate awkwardly into the cosmos of cinema, which turns her pageantry into mummery and the physical exuberance she likes to draw from performers into mugging."

13 Earlier RSC productions include William Bridges-Adams's (1919), Peter Brook's (1957), Clifford Williams's (1978), Ron Daniels's (1982), Nicholas Hytner's (1988), Sam Mendes's (1993), David Thacker's (1995), Adrian

Noble's (1998), Michael Boyd's (2002) and Rupert Goold's (2006) among others.

14 The Mary Rose was an English warship vessel of the carrack type, commissioned under Henry VIII's reign. In 1545, it sank on the Solent in front of the king. It was raised in the early 1980s.

15 See the creative process of the scenography on <www.rsc.org.uk/the-tempest/gregory-doran-2016-production/video-creating-the-tempest>.

16 The word "immersive" is not used here in the general sense of the term—that refers to the experience of the spectators being literally included in the performance—but describes the actors' bodies being totally submerged by their fictive, illusory environment.

17 Produced at the Civic Centre Theatre in San Francisco.

18 Antonin Artaud published a series of essays in 1938 under the title *Le Théâtre et son double* (later translated *The Theatre and Its Double*) in which he developed his concept of the theatre of cruelty.

ABSTRACTS

English

In 2017 on the Barbican stage, London, director Gregory Doran presented a very daring production of *The Tempest*. Working hand in hand with Intel Pentium, he created an outstanding set made of digital images that would give the vivid impression that the boatmen were actually diving in the depth of the stage during the shipwreck. Though extremely challenging, such a process whereby artificial images and theatrical immediacy were combined, was not new. Virtual technology had already been used in Julie Taymor's film adaptation starring Helen Mirren (Prospera [The spelling of the Shakespearean name—Prospero—was changed into Prospera to fit the female gender]) and Ben Whishaw (Ariel) in 2010. Both productions had received mixed critical response as the poetical momentum of the script sometimes vanished to the benefit of very powerful images. Borrowing concepts developed in Marguerite Chabrol's and Tiphaine Karsenti's *Théâtre et cinéma : le croisement des imaginaires* and Steve Dixon's *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance Performance Art, and Installation*, the following paper questions the way such cinematic artefact influences the reception of Shakespeare's play today, and whether high-tech, while solving the difficult *mise en scène* of the shipwreck, belies the efficiency (and sufficiency) of scenery-words. The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast both productions and see how artificial images increasingly dominate the Shakespearean stage in order to create a more

spectacular illusion of the watery world, the bodies lost at sea and the metamorphoses of the décor. On a broader scale, what are the consequences of the "invasion" of cinematographic art and I.T. in theatre? How will it shape the evolution of Early Modern drama in future stage performances, beyond the borders of seas and oceans?

Français

En 2017, sur la scène du Barbican Centre à Londres, Gregory Doran présente une mise en scène audacieuse de *La Tempête* de William Shakespeare. En collaboration avec Intel Pentium, il crée un décor époustouflant fait d'images numériques qui donnent l'impression que les marins coulent réellement dans les profondeurs de la scène lors du naufrage de l'acte I, scène 1. Bien qu'extrêmement prometteur, un tel procédé — par lequel les images artificielles et l'immédiateté théâtrale s'entremêlent — n'est finalement pas nouveau. La technologie virtuelle avait déjà été utilisée par Julie Taymor dans son adaptation cinématographique de la même pièce avec Helen Mirren en Prospera (le nom du personnage shakespearien, Prospero, fut volontairement changé en Prospera pour correspondre au genre féminin) et Ben Whishaw en Ariel (2010).
Au départ, les deux réalisations ont été accueillies de manière mitigée par la critique qui a vu la poésie du script souvent disparaître au profit de la puissance des images. Dans cette étude, en empruntant la terminologie de Gilles Deleuze dans *Dialogues* (2), et de Marguerite Chabrol et Tiphaine Karsenti dans *Théâtre et cinéma : le croisement des imaginaires*, entre autres références, nous interrogeons la façon dont l'artifice visuel influence notre compréhension de la dramaturgie shakespearienne ainsi que la manière dont la technologie avancée dément l'efficacité des mots-décor alors même qu'elle offre une solution à la difficile mise en scène du naufrage.
Cet article compare et contraste les deux productions afin de montrer comment les images artificielles dominent de plus en plus la scène shakespearienne pour créer l'illusion spectaculaire d'un monde liquide, de corps perdus en mer et de métamorphoses scénographiques. D'un point de vue élargi, nous interrogeons les conséquences de cette « invasion » de l'art cinématographique et de l'informatique au théâtre. Comment ces outils façonneront-ils l'évolution du théâtre de la première modernité dans le futur, au-delà des frontières maritimes ?

INDEX

Mots-clés

Taymor (Julie), Doran (Gregory), Shakespeare (William), La Tempête, images de synthèse, monde virtuel, technologie numérique, illusion

Keywords

Taymor (Julie), Doran (Gregory), Shakespeare (William), The Tempest, CGI (computer generated images), virtual world, digital technology, illusion

AUTHOR

Estelle Rivier-Arnaud
Estelle Rivier-Arnaud is a professor at the University Grenoble Alpes, France, and a member of the CEMRA (ILCEA4) as well as of the Performance Lab (Idex), of ESRA (European Shakespeare Research Association) and of the Radac scientific society (Recherches sur les Arts Dramatiques Anglophones Contemporains). She has published various books and articles on the scenography of Shakespeare's plays, among which *Shakespeare dans la maison de Molière* (Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012), *Shakespeare in Performance* (co-ed. Eric C. Brown, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013). She also currently works on contemporary drama, in particular on the adaptation of Shakespeare's plays (*Rewriting Shakespeare For and By the Contemporary British Playwrights* (co-ed. Michael Dodson, Cambridge Scholars P., 2017). She has recently co-edited an online collection of essays entitled *Romeo and Juliet: From Page to Image* (co-ed. Eric C. Brown and Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine), *Cahiers Shakespeare en devenir*, no. 14, December 2019, dir. Pascale Drouet (<https://shakespeare.edel.univ-poitiers.fr/index.php?id=1563>).
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Pascal Rambert's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1995): Deep in Love and in Water

Antoine et Cléopâtre *selon Pascal Rambert (1995) : des amoureux les pieds dans l'eau*

Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine

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OUTLINE

TEXT

1 The production of *Antony and Cleopatra* staged by Pascal Rambert in 1995 left strong memories in my mind. The play was performed in a National venue, MC93 Bobigny, situated in the northern suburbs of Paris, where the choice of plays is always challenging (needless to say, attracting educated Parisians rather than the multi-cultural locals); the actors playing the title-parts, André Marcon and Dominique Reymond, had a long-standing reputation as major actors, the young director, Pascal Rambert, was already well-established as one of the leaders of his generation.

2 However, little did I know that the search for documents would be so full of difficulties and reveal such dramas.

3 When I started my research, I was told at the MC93-Bobigny Theatre that the storage-rooms had just been flooded destroying all their archives; [1] Pascal Rambert's agent answered my email straight away saying he had no archives on this production; [2] André Marcon wrote to me he "would prefer not to" talk about this part as he felt that it was not a successful production and it would bring back heavy memories; [3] the archives of the National Library were particularly thin, there were hardly any documents or reviews on the production. In his article, "Nightwatch Constables and Domineering Pedants: the past, present and future of Shakespearean theatre reviewing", Paul Prescott seems to assume that getting material will be made easier in the modern world: "Theatre historians of the future wishing to reconstruct a production in 2012 will—in theory at least—only have to contact a company or a theatre archive to access a range of materials", because "theatre companies are now generating an exponentially increasing amount of archivable materials by themselves" (Prescott 29). Note the "only have to" in this optimistic statement which did not prove true in this particular case, indeed reality may resist theory. However, I must say that this lack of archival memory and these closed doors only whetted my curiosity and encouraged me to inquire further.

4 The première of the production was supposed to take place on 12 January, according to the date printed on the programme, but it turned out that it was in fact postponed for a few days, to 18 January. [4] It is a very unusual case, especially on a National stage. It showed that the time of rehearsal might not have been long enough to solve all the practical questions, with probably some hitch(es) at the very last moment, serious enough to need a few extra days of work. [5]

5 In his memoirs, published in 2005, exactly ten years after the staging of *Antony and Cleopatra*, when Pascal Rambert had made a name for himself, he mentions that his early success had been too quick and overwhelming for him. He had been caught in a prolific but devastating whirlwind of creation "until the boomerang shot of Shakespeare, the failure of *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1995 when everything stops" (Rambert *in* Goumarre 13). [6] A failure? According to the words of the director himself. In this text, Rambert alludes to a

post-traumatic effect as an artist, with a dark period on the verge of a mental break down.

6 This confusion could not be perceived for the one-night audience members. Personally, I really thought that the production highlighted very well some of the main issues of the play. Fortunately, my research led me to the actress playing the part of Cleopatra, Dominique Reymond, who was kind enough to accept an interview and provided me with some direct information. [7]

7 This paper will explore and discuss some of the aesthetical stands taken by Rambert in his approach of the play: the attention to the words of the text and the rhythm of the scenic action, then his focus on the two lovers magnifying the love story in which Cleopatra takes the lead, and last the visual defeat of Antony at the battle of Actium with the actors having to play on a stage full of water.

I. Poetry over scenography

1. Slow time

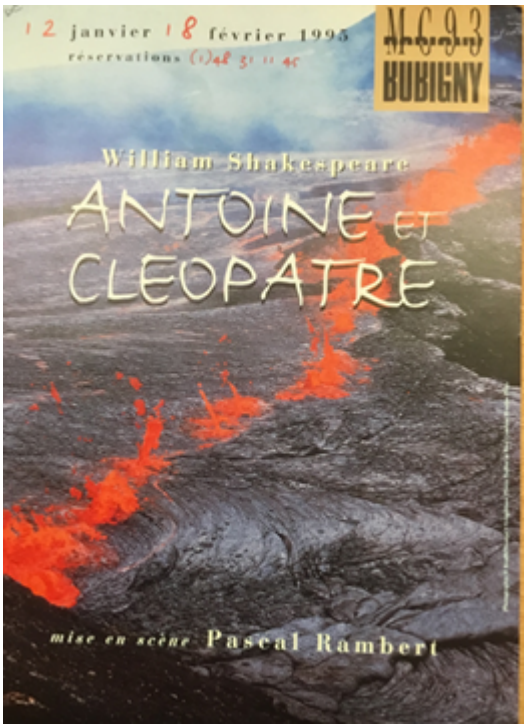
8 As a reaction against the teaching of Antoine Vitez [8] who kept advocating his trainees to amplify everything on stage (voice effects, gestures, movements …), Pascal Rambert decided to take the opposite stand and get away from a "deliberately excessive acting practice" belonging to a historical tradition which he did not feel he could fit in. So he, deliberately, endeavoured to "slow down everything, the delivery of the text, the movement, in order to increase something else, the time which must pass over the stage, the time the actors must spend on stage" (Pascal Rambert *in* Laurent Goumarre 20–21). [9]

9 This frontal opposition to Vitez's teaching seems rather surprising as Vitez is especially remembered for having worked on a kind of suspended rhythm, "in order to allow the dramatic time to flow" (Vitez). [10] However, Rambert further supports his argument on the grounds that he is after some presence on stage even when the actors do not have to deliver any cues, so, beyond the words themselves (Rambert *in* Goumarre 33). [11] Rambert refers to two influential sources of inspiration. First, the famous German dancer Pina Bausch and her Company, Tanztheater, who explored a fable

through modern dance modelled on everyday gestures, and who started to punctuate her later scenarios with some texts. [12] He also refers to a theatre director, Claude Régy, who promoted a minimalist aesthetics in which some of the actors, immobile on a bare stage transformed by suggestive lighting effects, had to convey a feeling of scenic presence through the only means of their bodily attitude. [13] Rambert thus claims that the actors "could play without moving, deliver a monologue, extend its duration, and this duration became theatre" (Rambert *in* Goumarre 18). [14]

10 However, Rambert's stands were not favourably received for *Antony and Cleopatra*. One review, expecting sound and fury in a play devoted to a violent passion between the protagonists, an expectation which was conveyed by the programme featuring some incandescent lava (Figure 1), complained of a lack of direction in an article entitled "Shakespeare without passion". The reviewer, René Solis, who obviously knew about the rehearsal difficulties (without naming them), could not find harsh enough words to describe "this absence of performance": "the stage seems bare as [the actors] seem so far away from each other, condemned to a hieratic austerity, devoid of passion" (Solis 1995). [15]

Figure 1. – The programme of the performance.



With courtesy of the Archives of MC93 Bobigny.

11 Indeed, the two characters are far apart in the play. They long to be together but are not often united by Shakespeare, and more often than not, when they are, they are at odds with each other. Antony is also at odds within himself every time "a Roman thought" (1.1.88) crosses his mind or Roman affairs are in his way. [16] He is alone, fighting with his passion that Philo qualifies as "dotage" (1.1.1) in the opening line of the play, and which he eventually acknowledges towards the end of act III (3.11.15). Then, he admits being completely under the irresistible charm of Cleopatra, his defeated opponent whom he names "my queen" (1.1.55), a contradictory conflation of a possessive and a title of superiority, who has caught him in her net of seduction and domination.

2. The Poetry of Shakespeare's words

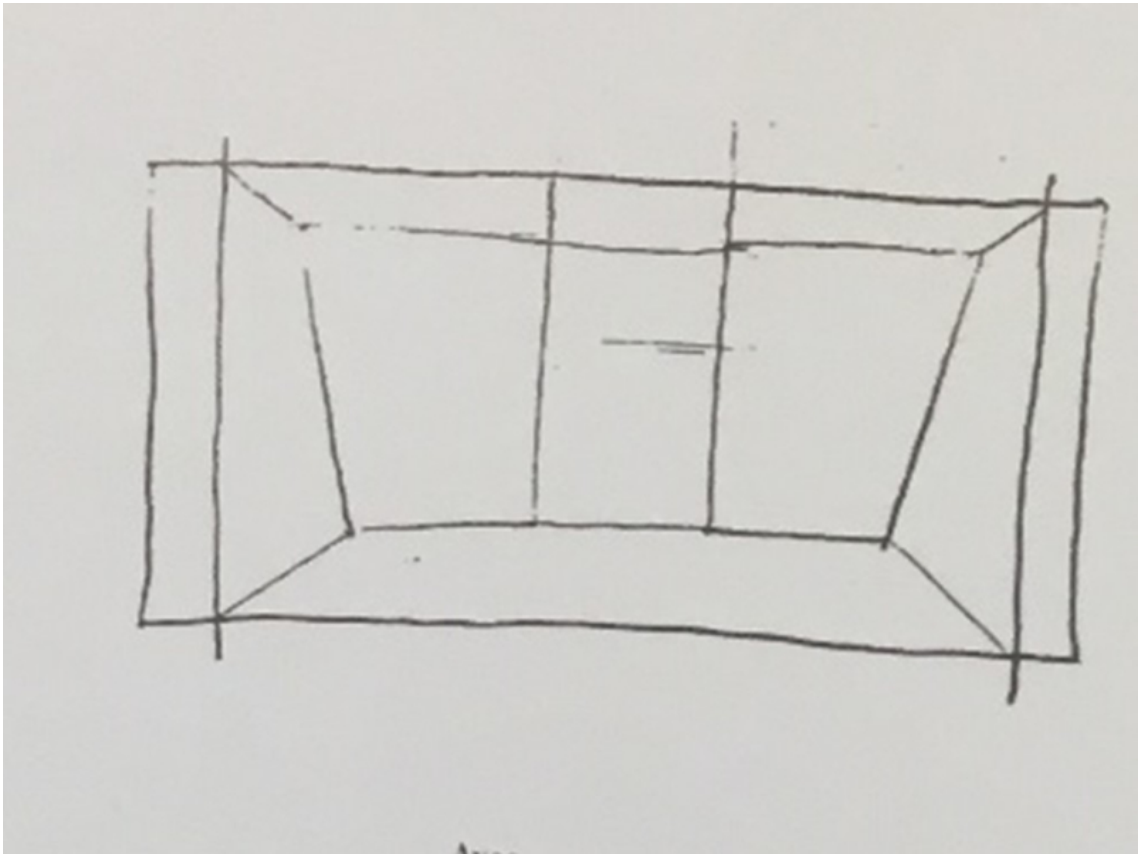
12 Shakespeare gives the sense of Cleopatra's seductive power, not by a visual pageantry, but through the most inspired description of Enobarbus in act II (2.2.201–242). We can imagine the actor playing Enobarbus standing on the bare boards of the Jacobean stage to embark on the lavish description of the queen's munificence as her barge slowly progresses towards the "Third Pillar of the World", the victorious Roman General, now her master. His words exhale "a strange invisible perfume" which "hits the senses" (2.2.222) of Agrippa and Maecenas, Octavius Caesar's followers, as they provide an approving audience within this dramatic *mise en abyme* and also of the audience without, of all times, who can also revel in the words and rhythm of this most beautiful passage, preceded by Agrippa and Maecenas's enraptured comments, but who perceive immediately the danger of such a powerful seductress for Antony and for the Roman Empire (2.2.243).

13 By the same token, Rambert wanted the words to "o'erflow" (1.1.2) his production. Indeed, the text is a primordial component of his own work. As a writer and playwright in his own right, he provides a good sample of a style based on a nervous, vehement flow of words. [17] Thus, Jean-François Peyret, [18] a translator and a director, was commissioned to write a new version of the play which was praised in most reviews, [19] and more importantly by Dominique Reymond who,

as Cleopatra, was in the best position to appreciate its precise wording, its clarity, its easy flow of delivery. [20]

14 Rambert's approach to scenography was resolutely minimalist. In his memoirs, the chapter devoted to scenography is entitled "The décor which kills": "I did not believe in décors anymore", he adds, explaining that "a décor was just another means to pile up more false elements on stage" (Rambert *in* Goumarre 49). He further argued that after Marcel Duchamp and the surrealist movement, it was impossible to content oneself with the exhibition of a makeshift illusion of the real world on stage. [21] Fred Condom, his usual designer, left the stage bare, with grey walls in which several doors allowed for quick changes as the action switches from one location to another (one of the great difficulties of the play faced by directors). There were very few movable props, a golden chair of state, a suggestive white box (Figure 2: Sketch of the set) which could in turn represent Alexandria and Rome, Pompey's galley or Cleopatra's monument. This set certainly contributed to magnify the beautiful, deep voice of Dominique Reymond when she was playing inside the box then featuring her Alexandrian Palace. [22] Due to the enclosed space, the sounds of her voice reached a fullness which reverberated and elongated the words she uttered. Her mezzo voice highlighted the beauty of the text and made her the dominant figure in this love story, even if Pascal Rambert meant to explore the theme of the play in a different perspective. At the end of act IV, Cleopatra and her women [23] endeavour to lift Antony up to the top of the set representing then the monument, focussing on the general dying in the arms of his lover. In this sequence, Antony, who has failed in committing suicide the Roman way (unlike his servant Eros), seems to have lost all dignity and command of himself. The actor looked embarrassed and clumsy, with Cleopatra kneeling over him.

Figure 2. – White set, programme.



Archives of MC93 Bobigny.

II. A magnified love story

1. “And”

15 In his Introduction to the play, John Wilders states that “unlike Shakespeare’s early romantic tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra* is also a play about international politics, a public as well as a private drama in which Antony and Octavius compete for mastery over the Roman empire” (Wilders 2). In this production however, the international issues and political stratagems were completely by-passed by Rambert who chose to concentrate his interpretation of the play on the two lovers. Indeed, he focused his attention on the title which contains the two names, the Roman General coming first, followed by the name of the Egyptian queen which sounds so seducing with a word full of vowels and ending with

an assonance (in “a”) which can be elongated. Rambert wanted to set himself the challenge of proving that the title was right, “in spite of the play”, he writes, because Shakespeare did not write many scenes or sequences where Antony and Cleopatra are united. Rambert made it his single aim, to explore the conjunction “and” on a grammatical and theatrical point of view, considering it not as an addition or a measure “that can be reckoned” (1.1.15), but as the symbiotic nature of their attachment (Rambert *in* Goumarre 33). Antony and Cleopatra, a mature couple of exclusive lovers, experience passion when their hair is turning grey; Antony even says that he can still have the ardour of youth in war and in love, “Though grey / Do something mingle with our younger brown” (4.8.19–20) in an illusory attempt at trying to have a grip on reality. Rambert considered them as the late counterparts to Romeo and Juliet, the early epitome of devouring passion, as both couples are forever linked in the title of their tragedy. So, they can be defined as Romeo and Juliet grown old (see Solis 1995). In fact, in both plays, the Jacobean Roman tragedy and the Elizabethan Italian drama, the togetherness of the heroes is concluded forever “when they are alone in the monument hit by a love which will live after their deaths. So, this ‘and’ is death” (Rambert *in* Goumarre 34). [24]

16 Even before the production started, the previews had highlighted their high expectation towards the two actors who would play Antony and Cleopatra. Fabienne Pascaud, who is usually more prone to criticize than to praise, wrote enthusiastically of “a dream-like cast” (Pascaud 2019). [25] And indeed, these very talented actors mastered their parts and gave a sense of their characters’ unnatural bond the one for the other. They showed that their love transcended duty and society, they were above friendship and even enmity. They dominated the cast, the play, and were the focal points of the production, in their shiny, golden gowns. They somehow eclipsed the other members of the cast. They were praised unanimously by all reviews alike, the only asset in an otherwise overtly critical, if not entirely negative assessment of the staging and scenography. [26]

2. Cleopatra's triumph over her lover

17 However, on stage, the two lovers were not equal. Indeed, Cleopatra/Reymond dominated the production and had the favour of all the reviews. For one thing, the figure of the Egyptian queen has acquired a mythic status over the centuries, twice seducer of her successive invaders, Julius Caesar first and then Antony, the famous general who cannot fight against his devouring passion. Her story has been dealt with in many artistic forms and still fascinates. However, in his play, Shakespeare does not explore the success of the lovers but their story past the apex. Antony is seen on the decline, a man under influence, whose "goodly eyes [which] / Have glowed like plated Mars" (1.1.2/4) are now blinded by "dotage" and his "captain's heart" has been "transformed / Into a strumpet's fool" (1.2.12–13), according to the Roman conception of manhood and honour seen through the eyes of Renaissance England.

18 Jealous of Fulvia, then of Octavia, Cleopatra is ready to "sink Rome" (3.7.15) but it is Antony who is sinking, following Cleopatra even when her ship leaves the battle, and who must face his shame as a soldier: "My heart was to thy rudder tied by th' strings" (3.11.57). Cleopatra has indeed enraptured the Roman General past the point of decent manhood. The actress showed perfectly well her determination to seduce and dominate her conqueror. Dominique Reymond was unanimously praised for her force of persuasion. [27] Whereas André Marcon, for all his art, was considered as disappointing in this part: "Unfortunately, two people are necessary to enhance Cleopatra […] but André Marcon is absent, withdrawn" (Schmitt 1995). [28] I presume the reviewers were expecting an imperial conqueror, but they saw a defeated "fool" (1.1.13), a loser, and also, an actor who may have had difficulties to find his own way against the management of their director.

III. "By sea, by sea" (3.7.40)

1. The flooded stage

19 According to Dominique Reymond, Pascal Rambert wanted to introduce three elements in his production: fire, hinted at by

Cleopatra at the very end of the play, "I am fire and air" (5.2.288), certainly the colour of passion (some braziers were meant to burn on stage, but the idea was discarded because of the smoke); wind, or air (discarded as well because of the noise produced by the ventilators); and water, the only natural element which was maintained. In his memoirs, Rambert acknowledges the influence of Pina Bausch and her scenographer, Peter Pabst, for whom the surface of the stage is fundamental (Rambert *in* Goumarre 61). Rambert could have been influenced by a much earlier, much analysed, iconic play/dance, *Arien*, staged by Pina Bausch in 1979. Her dancers had to move barefooted in water, they would run, splash each other, fall; their costumes, heavy with water, became transparent; the lighting effects on the moving expanse of the water producing further scenic images. [29]

20 This calls to mind an earlier use of water on stage, if not even more spectacular, and equally famous also dating from the 1970s when experimentations were conducted in many directions. Patrice Chéreau, then a promising, challenging young assistant director to Roger Planchon at the TNP, Villeurbanne (in the suburbs of Lyons), had a real swimming-pool on stage for the staging of Christopher Marlowe's *Massacre à Paris* in 1972. [30] The actors would be knee-deep in water but could also walk on dry platforms set against a high tower. The actors splashing each other would produce most beautiful plumes of water which were enhanced by the lighting effects (see Bataillon 141–167). The comments described the effect of surprise and the pure beauty of the scenic images, the admiration being only tampered by financial considerations because it had meant extravagant expenditures (also see Goy-Blanquet 45–53).

21 Rambert used this kind of device. During the interval, the stagehands covered the stage with a thick sheet of plastic and filled it with about thirty centimetres of water thanks to four taps placed at each of the four corners. Dominique Reymond remembers the surprise of the spectators when they entered the auditorium after the interval [I must say I remember it too].

22 Indeed, for the second part of the performance, the stage was entirely under water. Rambert meant to stage literally the defeat of Antony's navy at Actium. Antony, the Roman General who has led his

soldiers to many victories on land, for the Roman Empire, and also for the sake of Cleopatra and her progeny, through blinded braggartry in front of Cleopatra, decides to fight by sea the other member of the former Triumvirate, now his opponent, whom he still later calls wrongly "the boy Caesar" (3.13.17): "We / Will fight with him by sea", he declares to Canidius, a decision that Cleopatra echoes within the same line: "By sea, what else?" (3.7.28). He is warned against it, by Enobarbus first ("No disgrace. / Shall fall you for refusing him at sea, / Being prepared for land", 3.7.38–40) and then, even by an unnamed soldier who dares contradict his master whom he senses has become weaker and has chosen the wrong strategy: "Trust not to rotten planks" (3.7.62). However, Antony is past listening to sound advice and goes blindly to his disgrace and the fall of all his followers.

2. Playing in the water

23 All the actors had to wear plastic shoes for the second part of the production. They were impeded in their progression on stage, Dominique Reymond remembers with a smile that they were somehow met with laughter from the audience as they splashed each other. Antony had to literally fight against the water "most lamentably" (3.10.26) to get to Cleopatra. The bottom of André Marcon's toga getting darker as it became wet with water, he seemed to be impeded in his progression, having to fight against the mass of water. He was shown as physically defeated, clumsy, baffled by his own thoughtless decision, losing ground, and thoroughly ashamed of having followed his own inclination. Antony was clearly a loser in front of Cleopatra who seemed unable yet to fully understand the gravity of her act and their subsequent defeat. The actress seemed so much in control of her influence over Antony. She was a seducer to the end, with her elegant gestures, and, most of all, her beautiful voice which was magnified by the vibrations of the water.

24 At the end of the play, Cleopatra asks her women to dress her in her best attire: "Give me my robe. Put on my crown" (5.2.279). When she dies, Charmian closes Cleopatra's eyes and sets her crown straight ("Your crown's awry", 5.2.317) so that her mistress appears as the royal queen that she was when Octavius Caesar and his train enter the monument (5.3.335–336). On stage Dominique Reymond wore a most

beautiful full length pleated golden gown which shimmered in the light and a high golden tiara reminiscent of Nefertiti's. When Cleopatra died, the tiara fell to the ground, the actress slowly knelt down, and remained head half immersed in the water for ten long minutes until the end of the performance, her kneeling figure being duplicated on the shiny surface of the water. As if Cleopatra could find some support from the element which gave her majesty to seduce Antony and which now can help her avoid the shame of being a captive in Rome. As opposed to Antony, a man of the land whose "legs bestrid the ocean" (5.2.81), Cleopatra enjoys the fluidity of the water, and is ready "again for Cydnus" (5.2.227). This conclusion provided a beautiful scenic picture, with silvery/grey lighting effects on the shiny surface of the water, even if the position was certainly not entirely comfortable for the actress.

Conclusion

25 When Pina Bausch and Patrice Chéreau challenged tradition with a stage covered with water, they were praised for their creativity because the water was really a dominant component of the scenography and staging, providing the dancers and actors with a material they could play with.

26 However, in this case, the water on stage was not taken favourably by the reviewers. One, even, whose excessive punctuation (exclamation marks, question marks, suspension points) translated the subjectivity of the author: "After the interval we find ourselves in a pool of water. Why? What is the symbol? We are furious, sad—so much waste …" (C. A. 1995). [31] The pejorative connotation of the metaphor "pool of water", the first-person plural and the choice of verb giving the impression that the audience were also in the water further contribute to this negative opinion.

27 The text of the play starts with a water metaphor and the sense of an excess ("o'flows the measure", Philo. 1.1.2), however, strangely enough, not all the reviews mention the water on stage. This is the case of Olivier Schmitt who manages to devote three dense columns to this production (Schmitt 1995). René Solis, for instance, who explores the volcano metaphor of the programme at length, does not account for this unusual feature in the seven columns of his article, although the

two pictures which are inserted concern sequences from the second part showing the shiny surface of the water: Eros raising his sword over kneeling Antony (4.14) and Cleopatra dying (end of performance). His only allusion to water is metaphorical in his negative conclusion: "This three-hour and fifteen-minute voyage is a strange adventure in which the flashes are rare, but on which nonetheless **floats** Shakespeare's spirit" (Solis 1995). [32] Most of the references to water are metaphorical and provide negative puns, such as *InfoMatin*'s title "Who wants to **drown** Shakespeare…" and concluding sentence with a watery pun (Nicolet 1995), impossible to translate into English. [33]

28 These negative opinions criticize the stage effect without considering that this scenography could be seen as the scenic translation of the various excesses explored by Shakespeare, in particular the character of Antony who falls due to an excess of pride.

29 However, even if this production of *Antony and Cleopatra* proved so laden with conflict, it was a landmark for Rambert. He decided to leave Shakespeare's plays aside, as well as any other canonical texts altogether; he discarded famous actors whose conceptions differed too much from his own, and staged only his literary production with the actors with whom he could feel a strong sense of empathy. His choice was indeed the right one: in 2016 he was awarded the prestigious Theatre Award of the French Academy for his work and career in the performing arts. Shakespeare is for all seasons, but perhaps not for all directors.

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NOTES

1 Anne Kersulec, MC93. Personal mail, 30 November 2018.

2 Pauline Roussille, Structure Production. Personal mail, 4 December 2018.

3 André Marcon. Personal mail, 12 February 2019.

4 Bibliothèque nationale de France, Site Richelieu, Arts du Spectacle [WNB-24 (1994–1995)].

5 The original dates being printed on the programme (12 January/8 February 1995), the problems must have occurred very late in the process of creation, but I have not been able to find out the cause.

6 Chapter entitled "The Gulf" [Le Gouffre]: "Très vite j'ai eu de lourdes responsabilités, une pression, qui à vingt ans explique les excès que j'allais faire. J'enchaînais les spectacles que j'écrivais sans doute trop vite, même si cela me semblait une vertu. Il y avait quelque chose de la brûlure, je faisais du théâtre comme j'aurais fait du rock. C'était une pièce par an, deux, de gros spectacles tout de suite, pas de stages pour initiés, la presse au rendez-vous, le plus jeune metteur en scène d'Avignon en 1989, jusqu'au coup de boomerang de Shakespeare, l'échec d'*Antoine et Cléopâtre* en 1995 où tout s'arrête […]." All the translations from the French are mine unless otherwise stated.

7 In 1992 Dominique Reymond played in Pascal Rambert's tragedy, *John & Mary* (Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers), directed by the playwright, the part of "Elle, sa jeune épousée" [She, his young bride]; scenography, Fred Condom; costumes, Fred Condom, Olivia Morant. First edition of the play, Arles, Actes Sud, 1991. Dominique Reymond, Personal Interview, 22 March 2019. All quotes or references will be from this interview. I am very grateful to her for showing me the numerous reviews which indeed had been written on the production, in anticipation of a great success.

8 Antoine Vitez (1930–1990), actor, director, poet, translator, influential teacher (<http://amis-antoine-vitez.org/info/>). Pascal Rambert spent six months of training with Antoine Vitez.

9 "J'ai tout ralenti, tout, le texte, le mouvement, pour augmenter quelque chose, le temps qui doit passer sur la scène, le temps qu'on doit passer sur la scène."

10 "[L]aisser s'écouler le temps dramatique" (Antoine Vitez, entretien avec Henri Meschonnic, "À l'intérieur du parlé, du geste, du mouvement", *Le rythme et le discours*, *Langue française*, no. 56, 1982, p. 25, <https://doi.org/10.3406/lfr.1982.5146>).

11 "[D]es présences même quand les gens ne parlent pas, donc des présences en dehors de la parole."

12 See Odette Aslan and Pina Bausch, *Théâtre/Public*, no. 138 and 139, Gennevilliers, Théâtre de Gennevilliers, 1997. Pina Bausch's first visit to Paris was in 1979, her influence in France is considerable.

13 Claude Régy (1923–2019). See Marie-Madeleine Mervant-Roux (ed.), *Claude Régy. Les voies de la création théâtrale*, t. 23, Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2008.

14 "On pouvait faire du théâtre sans bouger, faire un monologue, l'inscrire dans la durée et que cette durée-là devenait du théâtre."

15 "Le plateau semble nu tant [les acteurs] semblent loin les uns des autres, condamnés à une sobriété hiératisante, en panne de passion."

16 All references to the text are to John Wilders (ed.), *Antony and Cleopatra*, London / New York: Routledge, The Arden Shakespeare, Third Series, 1995.

17 See in particular his recent play, *Clôture de l'amour*, Besançon: Les Solitaires intempestifs, 2017.

18 Jean-François Peyret, A&C. The fact that the text was unpublished was a further source of questioning for me as Jean-François Peyret is an academic, director, playwright, and translator (among others: *Quarante sonnets de Shakespeare*, Arles: Actes Sud, 1990).

19 Olivier Schmitt, *Le Monde*, 25 January 1995, is particularly emphatic in his praise: "Jean-François Peyret's very beautiful and very efficient version." ["la très belle et très efficace traduction de Jean-François Peyre"]. Alain Barbier, "L'amour à mort", 93 *Hebdo*, 27 January 1995: "a new nervous and enigmatic translation" ["une nouvelle traduction nerveuse et énigmatique"].

20 Dominique Reymond: "Working with Jean-François Peyret was most interesting. […] His Cleopatra speaks differently from the other characters. She was a foreigner among the Romans." ["Travailler avec Jean-François Peyret fut passionnant. […] Il fait parler Cléopâtre différemment des autres personnages. Elle était une étrangère chez les Romains."] (Jurgenson 1995)

21 However, a real element can prove less true than a false one: Dominique Reymond recalls the aspic with a touch of humour. At the beginning of the rehearsal real but harmful snakes were used in the last scene. They became drowsy under the heat of the spotlights, so they were discarded for an articulated wooden (or plastic) snake which produced the illusion of movement when she rolled her head.

22 See the very eulogistic commentary starting the article of Olivier Schmitt "Le rendez-vous manqué d'Antoine et Cléopâtre" (*Le Monde*,

25 January 1995): “Dominique Reymond est Cléopâtre. C’est une nouvelle importante. Il y a longtemps que l’on sait les qualités de cette longue femme brune, à la voix de mezzo d’une émission dont il en est trop peu. On savait aussi sa beauté, et sa justesse, au service de textes difficiles, comme la Phèdre de Racine ou celle de Marina Tsvetaeva. Elle est ici l’interprète de l’un des rôles les plus passionnants du répertoire, personnage mythique, personnage dramatique, qui hante la conscience universelle, figure de femme-sortilège.”

23 Charmian was played by a male actor, Grégoire Oestermann, a gender change that one of the reviewers was not ready to take (see Nicolet 1995).

24 “Ils sont alors seuls dans le tombeau, traversés par un amour qui, comme celui de Romeo ‘et’ Juliette, va vivre après leur mort. Donc ce ‘et’ c’est celui de la mort.”

25 “Une distribution de rêve”. However, this short, promising preview is not followed by a proper article on the production by the reviewer; I assume that it is a sign that she did not want to put her disappointment on paper.

26 See the fairly negative title of Olivier Schmitt’s review (*Le Monde*, 25 January 1995): “The failed meeting of Antony and Cleopatra” [“Le rendez-vous manqué d’Antoine et Cléopâtre”].

27 For instance, Sylvie Nicolet (*InfoMatin*, 26 January 1995) wrote: “Full of grace and majesty, Dominique Reymond is a splendid Cleopatra.” [“Féline et majestueuse, Dominique Reymond est une somptueuse Cléopâtre.”]

28 “André Marcon est un Antoine porté disparu, absent, en retrait du théâtre.”

29 See Aslan (1997), particularly “Le Tanztheater s’affirme. *Arien* une œuvre aquatique” (pp. 50–52).

30 See Aslan (1986). My warmest thanks to Odette Aslan for directing my attention to this reference.

31 This is the latest review: “[…] après l’entracte on se retrouve dans une mare d’eau. Pourquoi ? Quel symbole ? On est furieux, triste — tant de gâchis…”

32 “Drôle d’aventure que ce voyage de trois heures et quart où les éclairs sont rares mais où flotte quand même le fantôme de Shakespeare.”

33 The title was: “Qui veut noyer Shakespeare…”. The last sentence: “Et quand nos héros meurent face contre pataugeoire, c’est le spectateur incrédule qui se retrouve le bec dans l’eau.” “And when our heroes die, their

faces in the paddling pool, the puzzled spectator is left in the lurch." The reviewer describes bluntly "the worse" of the second part of the performance, "the actors making exasperating noises, 'splash', 'splash', every time they walk".

ABSTRACTS

English
In 1995 Pascal Rambert (born in 1962) was one of the young upcoming actors, theatre directors and dramatists of his generation. His reputation on the French stage was already well-established and full of prospects, especially for the production of his own texts which were staged in the main national venues. Then he turned to Shakespeare, as many theatre directors did in the 90s in France, but his perspective baffled the actors and was rather badly received by the rare reviews devoted to his production. This work turned out to be at the origin of a deep personal crisis for Rambert who discarded the classics altogether to focus on his own dramas for which he received the prestigious "Prix de l'Académie française" in 2016. This paper explores and discusses some of the aesthetical stands taken by Rambert in his approach of the play: the poetry of the text which "overflows" the stage, the focus on the figure of Cleopatra as the leader in the relationship between the two lovers, and then the visual defeat of Antony at the battle of Actium with the actors having to play on a stage covered in water.

Français
En 1995, Pascal Rambert (né en 1962) était l'un des jeunes acteurs, metteurs en scène et dramaturges prometteurs de sa génération. Sa réputation théâtrale était déjà bien établie et pleine d'avenir, surtout la mise en scène de ses propres textes qui étaient montés sur des scènes nationales de premier plan. Puis, il s'est essayé à monter Shakespeare, suivant ainsi de nombreux metteurs en scène français des années 1990, mais son point de vue désarçonnait les acteurs et les critiques qui pourtant admiraient son travail. Cette mise en scène fut à l'origine d'une crise personnelle profonde pour Rambert qui, ensuite, se détourna complètement du répertoire classique pour ne monter que ses propres œuvres pour lesquelles il reçut le prestigieux Prix de l'Académie française en 2016.
Cet article s'attache à analyser certains partis pris esthétiques développés par Rambert dans son travail de mise en scène : la poésie du texte qui envahit l'espace, la centralité du personnage de Cléopâtre dans la relation entre les deux amants et la défaite d'Antoine lors de la bataille d'Actium qui se traduit visuellement par un jeu sur un espace scénique recouvert d'eau.

INDEX

Mots-clés
Antoine et Cléopâtre, Shakespeare (William), Rambert (Pascal), Cléopâtre, scène remplie d'eau

Keywords
Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare (William), Rambert (Pascal), Cleopatra, water on stage

AUTHOR

Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine
Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine is Professor Emerita of Renaissance Studies (University of Caen-Normandy, France), a member of ERIBIA Research Centre (Caen-Normandy) and of the CNRS Research Centre on Theatre and Drama (THALIM, Paris). A member of National and International Renaissance Associations (Société Française Shakespeare, European Shakespeare Research Association, International Shakespeare Association, World Shakespeare Association) she is a specialist of Shakespeare plays in performance on the French stage from the beginning to the present day. She has published a few monographs on some plays (*King Lear*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), edited (*Richard II de William Shakespeare : une œuvre en contexte*) or co-edited some volumes (the latest ones: *Romeo and Juliet: From page to Image* with Estelle Rivier and Eric C. Brown; *Much Ado about Nothing: A Miscellany of 20th and 21st Century Perspectives* (2018), with Kiki Lindell; *Traversées/Crossings* (2016), with Pascale Drouet; *An Approach to Mythical Performance in Europe* 2015), with Keith Gregor and Juan F. Cerda; *Measure for Measure in Performance* (2013), with Estelle Rivier and Delphine Lemonnier-Texier), and wrote many articles or chapters in national and international encyclopaedias, books or journals (*Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*, Delaware University Press, *Revue d'histoire du théâtre*), and e-journals (*Borrowers & Lenders*, *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, *Cahiers Shakespeare en devenir*, *Société française Shakespeare*). She also translates modern poetry (Debjani Chatterjee, *Cette femme-là…*).
IDREF : https://www.idref.fr/035808446
HAL : https://cv.archives-ouvertes.fr/isabelle-schwartz-gastine
ISNI : http://www.isni.org/0000000385766314
BNF : https://data.bnf.fr/fr/13337961