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Metatheatre from Stage to Screen
Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in the
Twenty-First Century

Supervisor

Prof. Shaul Bassi

Assistant supervisor

Prof. Lucio De Capitani

Graduand

Beatrice Cataldo

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“Lately, I have been wondering if there is
time left for daydreaming in this 21st
century world of constant
communication”

-James Thurber, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*

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Introduction

During the Early Modern Period the theatre spaces reflected the ideal environment for staging metatheatre – a device developed from the ancient *Theatrum Mundi* metaphor which originated in the Greek-Roman world. In fact, there was interaction between audience and actors and the people attending the performance were well aware of the fictionality of what was showed. The social space of the theatre was intimately involved with the social, political and economic life of Jacobean England, thus metatheatre was used through many devices in order to provoke in the audience a critical thinking about contemporary society. As a matter of fact, the stage was an imitation of the world and could influenced the spectators as well as have an impact on society, moreover it was highly persuasive and, for the influence it exerted, the boundaries between stage and world, life and theatre, were porous.

During the centuries playhouses structure has changed creating more and more an illusion of actuality, furthermore the medium has developed and transformed up to the advent of cinema. Therefore, the enunciation mode has shifted from a theatrical verbal means to a filmic visual one and what was a collective and active experience has given way to a more individual-passive-close-to-reality event. Filmic techniques have continued to improve since their first appearance, in a short time the industry has moved from silent films to the so-called talkies, and the new millennium has undergone a series of rapid advancements that have brought to animated films, computer-generated graphics, 3D animation and CGI. All these great achievements lead naturally to the question: how can cinema translate such a specific device inherent to theatre like metatheatre into cinema, especially in a Millennium in which the CGI and AI have created perfect transposition of actuality on the screen?

The Tempest relies widely on metatheatricality in order to stage through the plot different aspects of the England of that time: Renaissance humanism, colonialism, James's political figure, as well as Shakespeare's commentary on theatre and theatrical practice. The playwright has filled this play with hints to contemporary-real-life features in addition to a revision of themes already treated in previous works. Among other things Shakespeare's text enables to evaluate how theatre and life are

interconnected and how people adopt different roles throughout their lives, just like actors do.

This dissertation, consisting of five chapters, aims at showing how metatheatre has been rendered on screen in the New Millennium, an era that sees the evolution of new high-tech and AI technology which give ever more actuality to films, hence an era that can leave little room for metatheatricality. To reach this objective I have analysed four different adaptations of *The Tempest*: a live record at The Globe (2014), a live broadcast from Stratford-upon-Avon (2017), a film (2010) and a VR-live performance/videogame (2020).

The first chapter regards the parallel that can be drawn between Prospero's island and the stage, more specifically it begins with an overview on the plot and the real-life events that have served as foundations as well as a mirror for the main themes explored. Then, it focuses on the theatre structure and the related "all the world's a stage" metaphor along with the resulting five metatheatrical devices: playwright-character, role-playing, play-within-the-play, manipulation of the audience and, lastly, real-life and self-reference. The chapter concludes with the analysis of *The Tempest* hints to the analogy comparing the stage and the progress of man's life, that is to say the analysis of how the five devices are employed in the play.

In the second chapter the dissertation then explores what the definition and the ongoing process of adaptation are highlighting that this is a circular-ever-ending activity. In fact, what readers can appreciate today is already a mediated product, a process of collaboration and editorial creation emerged during the conception of First Folio in 1623. Furthermore, from the English Restoration onwards the play has been widely adapted in the first place on stage and then on screen with the advent of cinema and TV. Likewise, *The Tempest* is not an explicit adaptation of any previous work of art, nonetheless it relies on different sources, the traces of which appear in the form of analogues and allusions all along. Therefore, this chapter reviews the play sources and the stage adaptations from the Restoration to the nineteenth century.

The third chapter focuses on the shift from stage to screen, thus from verbal to visual, first of all giving a general notion of Shakespeare film adaptations, then analyzing into more detail cinematic narrative techniques as well as the differences between staging and filming and the evolution from metatheatre to metacinema. The chapter eventually concludes with an outline of the evolution of Shakespeare films in the twentieth century, starting from silent movies to the so-called talkies.

The fourth chapter focal point is the twenty-first century, the era of the digital technology. After a brief excursus on the major achievements earned during the previous century this section will show the great advances in technology made during the New Millennium that have brought to the digital animation and games, the computer-generated images or CGI as well as the live theatre broadcasts experience, all important devices employed in the four screen adaptations briefly discussed at the end of the section.

Finally, the dissertation draws to a close with the fifth chapter that analyses how metatheatres has been transposed on screen in the four adaptations briefly mentioned in the previous section. More precisely what is studied here is how metatheatricality of some scenes such as the tempest, the banquet, the masque, the farewell to arts as well as the epilogue, the “our revels are now ended” (4.1.148) speech and the figure of Ariel and his fellow spirits is rendered on screen in a time marked by high-tech and VR-immersive experiences.

1

The Island, a stage

“Words are, in my not-so-humble opinion,
our most inexhaustible source of magic.
Capable of both inflicting injury, and remedying it.”
(J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*)

1.1 *The Tempest*

1.1.1 The Plot

The Tempest “is a blend of magic, music, humour, intrigue and tenderness” (Vaughan 2021,1) and is concerned with a journey from revenge to forgiveness. It depicts a magician absorbed in his art who renounces his gift before getting back to a life of responsibility rather than creativity.

The play opens in medias res, with a spectacular storm-tossed ship at sea carrying The King of Naples Alonso along with his son Ferdinand, Alonso’s brother Sebastian, the Duke of Milan Antonio, an old councillor Gonzalo and other court members. This scene is watched from an island by the sorcerer Prospero and his daughter, who soon learns from the father that the storm is only but an illusion created by him so as to take revenge on his enemies and regain his dukedom.

The backstory given to the girl and to the audience is that of the rightful Duke of Milan deposed twelve years earlier by the brother Antonio who conspired with Alonso to assassinate him. Father and at-the-time-three-year-old daughter managed to escape in a boat thanks to the aid of Gonzalo, who also provided Prospero with supplies and his book of magic, the very reason that brought to the coup since he neglected his ruling duties spending all his time in the library rapt in study.

Once arrived on the island, inhabited only by one native called Caliban and numerous spirits, Prospero made good use of his magic freeing the chief spirit Ariel from the cloven pine tree where the Algerian witch Sycorax – Caliban’s mother –

imprisoned him and where he was left trapped due to her death. Both the airy spirit and the earthy monster work in Prospero's service, but actually one is the mirror of the other, in fact the former serves him in return for being put at liberty but with Prospero's promise of freeing him once everything he asks has been done, whereas the latter has been enslaved after having tried to rape Miranda, despite the attempt of giving him a family and education.

The noble party is set ashore unharmed but divided in different groups by Ariel. Ferdinand is led through music towards Miranda and the two fall immediately in love as Prospero has hoped. In the meantime, on another part of the island King Alonso mourns the son who is believed to be dead and, while he is looking for him, Ariel magically puts everyone to sleep except Antonio and Sebastian who resist his music. They plot to kill the King while he is sleeping, but when the two are about to stab the man Ariel wakes Gonzalo up, stopping the conspiracy and setting the group in motion again, wandering around bewildered.

In a third part of the island, Caliban while hauling wood encounters jester Trinculo and Alonso's butler Stephano who he mistakes for gods. They get him drunk and Caliban opens up about his resentment for Prospero and persuades them to help him burning the magic books and murdering the master, promising to serve them. But Ariel is listening and temporarily prevents the plotting by playing tricks on them to get them confused.

Later, when Antonio and Sebastian resume their scheme against Alonso while he is resting exhausted a banquet appears in front of them set up by spirits, but when they are about to help themselves the feast vanishes and Ariel arrives in the shape of a Harpy to torment the party reminding each of them they have been shipwrecked and have lost Ferdinand because of their past deeds. Only repentance can save them, but they are driven mad with guilt and grief and run away.

Back at Prospero's cave, Prospero releases Ferdinand from his duties and gives his blessings to his and Miranda's marriage, summoning spirits to perform a celebratory masque where they assume the shape of Ceres, Iris and Juno. However, a dance of reapers and nymphs is suddenly interrupted when Prospero remembers that Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo are still plotting against him.

At this point, all Prospero's plans start to come together and he is ready to confront his enemies in what is the play's final scene. Ariel brings all the courtiers to the cell where Prospero, renouncing his magic, reveals himself and decides to forgive the

sinful men rather than enacting his revenge. All ends well: he is restored as Duke of Milan, Alonso and Ferdinand are reunited, the two reigns are unified thanks to Miranda and Ferdinand engagement, Caliban regains power over his island and Ariel is set free after having accomplished one last task – to make the sea waters calm for the return voyage to Italy. Finally, Prospero delivers his last speech, an epilogue, asking the audience for forgiveness and to release him from the stage by applauding.

1.1.2 Main themes

The Tempest is a highly controversial play, the points explored in it through a rich imagery are numerous, thus it should come as no surprise that through the centuries critics have changed interpretation “whether from a Romantic, Christian, Darwinian, Freudian, allegorical, autobiographical, cultural materialist or post-colonial perspective” (Vaughan 2021, 2). Actually, Umberto Eco has written on interpretation that “to critically interpret the text means to read it in order to discover, along with our reactions to it, something about its nature. To use a text means to start from it in order to get something else” (Eco 1994, 57).

Therefore, the themes that critics have identified can be summarized in five major categories as Rothschild points out: [1] social hierarchies and politics, [2] travel, geography and colonialism, [3] gender, sexuality and marriage, [4] music and masque and lastly [5] magic and education. This means that all concerns of Shakespeare’s time, a period generally referred to as the Early Modern Period or English Renaissance due to the rapid development of art, literature, politics and science, are mirrored in the play.

The Elizabethan and Jacobean periods saw ideological as well as scientific, political and social changes such as the discovery of new lands where different models of social organization and religious beliefs were to be found, then the astronomical discoveries such as the sun-based solar system theory published by Copernicus and confirmed by Galileo afterwards, moreover the questioning of authority and hierarchy that had obvious implications for both the state and the church.

Prospero has been referred to as a reflection of James I, in fact he too faced conspiracy and possible usurpation in 1605 due to the Gunpowder Plot, he too was concerned with the negotiations for the marriages of both Prince Henry, who suddenly took ill and died, and of Princess Elizabeth who then married The Elector Palatine. In addition, in his treaty *Demonology* James I shows his interest in issues including

government, authority and supernatural and in the *Basilicon Doron* he tells his son that “it is necessarie ye delight in reading, & seeking the knowledge of all lawfull 9ndeav” (Craigie 1944, 143), something very close to Prospero’s study of magic.

At the time it was thought that “civilisation had to provide an education which controls and utilises to the full the natural potential of humanity” (Hirst 1984, 18), that art was juxtaposed to nature. It is not a surprise then that Caliban is seen as raw nature, exploited by the white European usurper who tries to also nurture him.

Moreover, magic was taken very seriously, in fact neo-platonism and the study of alchemy were well-known, not only by James, but by other important figures to name a few Giordano Bruno in Italy and Dr John Dee in England. Dr John Dee was largely influenced by Henricus Cornelius Agrippa who saw in the magus a “studious observer and expounder of divine things” (Hirst 1984, 23), this means a man grounded in scientific reality capable of exploiting natural phenomenon, just like Prospero.

The reflection and consequent commentary upon the above-mentioned changes and human existence in general were carried out through the stage, for this reason English Early Modern writers were fond of the image of life as a performance. Theatre was seen as a powerful agent for changing the world – it is estimated that 3.000 plays were written between 1560 and the closure of the playhouses by the Puritan Parliament in 1642 – and this is mirrored in the image of Prospero, the stage-manager mage who stresses how reality is as evanescent and illusionary as the stage.

1.2 “The World’s a Theatre, the Earth a Stage” (Heywood 1612)

1.2.1 The Theatre as a mirror of nature

“[...] for any thing so
Overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end,
both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as ‘twere,
the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature,
scorn her own image, and the very age and body of
the time his form and pressure.”
(*Hamlet*, 3.2.19-24)

During the Renaissance the theatre spaces reflected the ideal environment for staging the ancient *Theatrum Mundi* metaphor originated in the Greek-Roman world, a concept widely used by Shakespeare in his plays to provoke a critical thinking about

contemporary society as some critics assert. Through it he showed how theatre and life are interconnected and how people adopt different roles throughout their lives, just like actors do.

As above-mentioned, the analogy comparing the stage to the progress of man's life was easily achieved thanks to the theatre physical structure itself, which used to have consequences also on plays' structures: the stage consisted in a platform projecting in the yard (B), the stage level was called earth (H), below this area there was the hell (K) with its trapdoor (L), the roof was known as the heavens (U) which was decorated with stars and other celestial bodies as a symbol of night. The pillars connected hell and heavens and they could be used to hide characters from other actors but not from the audience. The backstage was named scene (P), was located behind a wall through which actors entered and exited – this gave the perception that a new literary scene was beginning. Above the scene lied a gallery, the balcony (O), which was called also tiring-house because it resembled the façade of a house and here there were the dressers and the prompter. Furthermore, the tiring-house might have contained a discovery space to conceal characters behind a curtain (N) or to, more generally, represent an inset space.

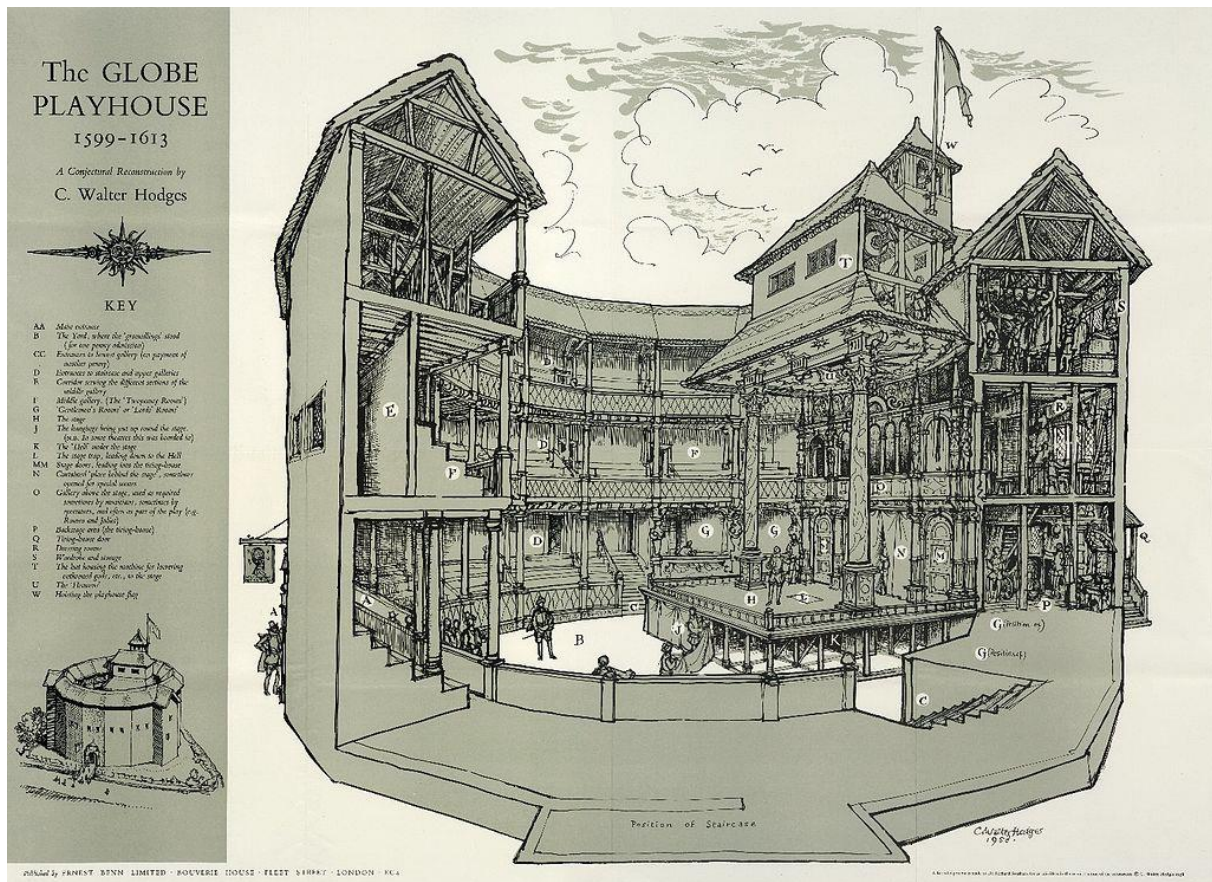


Figure 1. C. Walter Hodges , *The Globe Playhouse 1599-1613, A Conjectural Reconstruction, 1950*

The limited space of stage representation, the absence of stage sets evoking a particular space and time and, lastly, the open roof that bathed players in broad daylight, called for the employment of redundant verbal discourse, repleted with spatial indicators, which was also highlighted by ostensive movement on the actors' part. Moreover, not all spectators held the same view, in fact poor people used to stand in the yard, then there were the galleries for those who could afford to pay a bit more and, at last, the gentlemen's rooms for posh people, so that communicational redundancy and energetic, clearly visible gestures worked also to overcome auditorium distance and the poor acoustic given by the open-air theatre. Along with these factors, the impediment in establishing any realistic illusion was given from the intimate contact between audience and actors whose physical proximity depended on the thrust stage.

Along with language and movement, companies adopted cutting-edge visual technologies and materials to create special effects: firstly curtains, that linked with movable props, were part of the action framing it identifying the play's genre and signalling a closed and fixed world where time is suspended, moreover they were strategies to engage spectator's imagination; secondly elaborate costumes, which marked different figures and their social status, in fact one actor could embody more than a character in each play just changing clothes; then appearances or disappearances through the trapdoor, descendances from the heavens with the support of special machinery; lastly wires to make a character fly.

Staging technologies began to be improved when indoor theatres, also known as private playhouses, started to be built. Here performances relied on candlelight illumination, which created mysterious atmospheres and focused the audience's gaze on particular props or characters when chandeliers were raised or lowered. These theatres create the right environment for the exploration of new spectacularity.

1.2.2 All the World's a Stage

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts"
(As You Like It, 3.1.139-142)

“Shakespeare’s theatre was a multi-media affair that combined speech, music and other sound effects, costumes, props and choreography, in-site specific and time-specific” (Karim-Cooper and Stern 2014, 172).

This multi-mediality enabled theatre to “actively reflect upon its own spatial mode of representing significant relationships” (Russel 2002,27) raised questions about drama functioning and its interactions with other art forms and drew attention to the physical construction of the stage itself. This practice takes the name of metatheatre. Metatheatre establishes hereby an infinite mirror effects and, if it is true that the stage reflects the world, this implies that the play-within-the-play can show the dark side of characters and of the happenings.

According to Lionel Abel, the first critic to use the term metatheatre, there are plays that identify immediately that what is happening and characters within the play are of the playwright’s imagination as “there is no world except that created by human striving, human imagination” (Abel 1974, 113). “Metatheatre finds its full and unique articulation in the modern works of Genet, Beckett, and Brecht, but which is anticipated in the work of Shakespeare, Calderón, Racine, and Pirandello” (Dustagheer and Newman 2018, 4). For sure, this practice can be found already in the Stoic doctrine with Cicero, but also in Aristophanes and Plautus and can be regarded as an extension of the *Theatrum Mundi* motif.

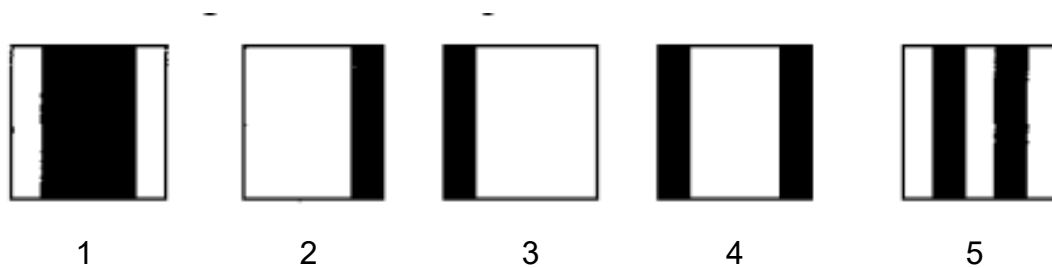
Richard Hornsby identifies five metatheatrical devices: “play within the play, ceremony within the play, role-playing with in the role, literary and real-life reference and self-reference” (Hornby 1986, 32), but to deliver the meaning and break down the fourth wall the tools are many and they generally overlap one another. In the following study what is going to be considered is: [1] playwright-character, [2] role-playing, [3] inset-play or play-within-the-play, [4] manipulation of the audience and [5] real-life reference and self-reference.

Playwright-character alludes to the character who invents plots and arranges dramatic action just like a playwright, an artist. This person manipulates other characters and controls their action through means of illusion.

Role-playing refers to deception, disguise, dissimulation. In truth in many cases it comes with changes of costumes, but regards also gestures, facial expressions, voice and movements. Elizabethan and Jacobean drama with role-playing shows how identity in the Early Modern Period was linked to social position and testified through

behaviours and clothes. Moreover, it shows how the fixed places that permeated society could be subverted into social mobility.

The play-within-the-play consists in the representation of two or more plans of dramatic illusion where the inset-play mirrors the outer play. One can distinguish five models of play-within-the-play according to the relation between the main play and the inner-play: [1] the inner-play is framed in the main play, [2] the inner-play follows the main play, [3] the main-play follows the inner-play, [4] the inner-play frames the main one, so that we have an inversion between the two, [5] alternate structure.



The manipulation of the audience involves the mechanism of audience engagement and detachment, in fact one can define two different attitudes: the Johnsonian response and the Coleridge one, the former expresses the ceaseless awareness that “what one is experiencing is just unreal, an illusion, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players” (Shapiro 1981, 146), whereas the latter involves a rapt absorption in the masterpiece, an engagement as in a dream. Asides and soliloquies, as well as prologues and epilogues – hence the direct address to the spectators – are the major tools to manipulate the audience and acknowledge its presence, nevertheless detachment originates also from the bare stage, the daylight, the visible crowd and the audience acknowledgment.

Lastly, the self-reference and real-life reference is expressed by a direct allusion respectively to being in a play, stage directions, scenes, acts and real-life elements such as pubs, theatres, people or past plays or literature.

Since metatheatres exposes the play’s status as an artefact, thus its artificiality, it establishes the spectator detachment, that refers to its heightened self-consciousness, the main originator of the critical thinking. As a matter of fact, “the more an audience is reminded of the fiction, the more it falls for the invention” (Hsiang-Chun 2008, 213).

1.3 *The Tempest* illusion

1.3.1 Prospero's art

The Tempest is one of Shakespeare's best-known drama containing several metatheatrical moments, in fact it can be read as a radical meditation on art and, in particular, on theatre. For the themes covered the text seems to keep reminding the audience that what they are witnessing is nothing but an illusion created by Shakespeare in the first place and, in addition, by his creature Prospero aiming at changing heart of those who have wronged him.

Prospero is at the same time character, actor and director. He, through his magic, conducts the events in the island and moves the members of the shipwrecked group as a stage-director does, with the aid of his stage-manager Ariel. Thus, the island becomes a stage where the actors follow a performance that the stage-director and actor has designed for, with the only difference that the spirits have knowledge of their status, while the castaways are oblivious of their roles. "The isle is full of noises, Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not" (3.2.130), therefore this place is suspended in time for the duration of the play, even for the characters themselves it is not clear if they are sleeping or awake.

First of all, Prospero conjures up the tempest that leaves the Boatswain and the courtiers ashore, the first step towards his masterplan to gain back his dukedom that will prove immediately to be an illusion created by Ariel upon his request when he directly asks "Hast thou, spirit, Performed to point the tempest that I bade thee?" (1.2.194).

The doubt that the storm was not a real natural event is anyway installed in the mind of the audience a little before, right after Miranda has witnessed the shipwreck:

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 th' welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer – brave vessel
(Who had no doubt some noble creature in her)
Dashed all to pieces. O, the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perished.

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 swallowed and
The fraughting souls within her.
PROSPERO Be collected;
No more amazement. Tell your piteous heart
There's no harm done.
(1.2.1-16)

The fact that no harm has been done is then reinforced by Ariel's review of the performance, that he delivers when Miranda falls asleep so that she cannot see him:

PROSPERO But are they, Ariel, safe?
ARIEL Not a hair perished;
On their sustaining garments not a blemish,
But fresher than before; and, as thou bad'st me,
The King's son have I landed by himself,
Whom I left cooling of the air with sighs,
In an odd angle of the isle, and sitting,
His arms in this sad knot.
(1.2.216-224)

From now on, the other characters are controlled by the stage-director and the stage-manager's will, they are left falling asleep or awoken according to their needs. The main objective that they have to achieve is to reverse what happened "twelve year since" (1.2.53), having the nobles repent and, not less important, letting Ferdinand and Miranda fall in love so as to unite the reigns of Naples and Milan.

In this regard, it is necessary to highlight other three scenes that show Prospero's directing attitude: the banquet scene, the masque and the lovers playing chess. The first one is enacted in Act 3 while Sebastian, Antonio, Alonso, Gonzalo and others are strolling around the strange maze – which is the island – looking for Ferdinand:

*Solemn and strange music, and PROSPERO on the top (invisible).
Enter several strange shapes, bringing in a banquet, and dance
about it with gentle actions of salutations, and inviting the*

King etc. to eat, they depart.

ALONSO What harmony is this? My good friends, hark!

GONZALO Marvellous sweet music!

ALONSO Give us kind keepers, heavens! What were these?

SEBASTIAN A living drollery! Now I will believe

That there are unicorns; that in Arabia

There is one tree, the phoenix' throne, one phoenix

At this hour reigning there.

ANTONIO I'll believe both;

And what does else want credit, come to me

And I'll be sworn 'tis true. Travellers ne'er did lie,

Though fools at home condemn 'em.

GONZALO If in Naples I should report this now, would they believe me?

If I should say I saw such islanders

(For certes, these are people of the island),

Who, though they are of monstrous shape, yet note

Their manners are more gentle, kind, than of

Our human generation you shall find

Many – nay, almost any.

PROSPERO [aside] Honest lord,

Thou hast said well, for some of you there present

Are worse than devils.

ALONSO I cannot too much muse

Such shapes, such gesture and such sound, expressing

(Although they want the use of tongue) a kind

Of excellent dumb discourse.

PROSPERO [aside] Praise in departing

FRANCISCO They vanished strangely!

SEBASTIAN No matter, since

They have left their viands behind, for we have
stomachs.

Will't please you taste of what is here?

ALONSO Not I.

GONZALO Good warrant of?

Faith, sir, you need not fear. When we were boys,

Who would believe that there were mountaineers

Dewlapped like bulls, whose throats had hanging at 'em

Wallets of flesh? Or that there were such men
Whose heads stood in their breasts, which now we find
Each putter-out of five for one will bring us
ALONSO I will stand to and feed,
Although my last; no matter, since I feel
The best is past. Brother, my lord the Duke,
Stand to and do as we.
(3.3.25-51)

Here Prospero watches how the spirits under Ariel's control set up a banquet for the crew, in order to remind them of how desperate they are. He achieves his aim when the banquet itself vanishes before any of them can eat, replaced by Ariel disguised as a Harpy condemning the men for their sins against Prospero. The spirit has performed the scene so well that he congratulates him.

The second important example of Prospero's directing attitude can be found in the masque scene, when all of a sudden he recalls that Caliban is conspiring against him hence he decides to stop it right away "I had forgot that foul conspiracy Of the beast Caliban and his confederates Against my life. The minute of their plot Is almost come, [to the Spirits] Well done. Avoid, no more! [Spirits depart.]" (1.1.139-151). Prospero is rapt by the wedding celebrations, but time cannot be halted, therefore he resumes his part as director of the play delivering the famous speech about the power of theatre which produces illusions, where he parallels life to an actor on stage.

At last, "Now does my project gather to a head" (5.1.1) just in time as planned, Prospero becomes more reasonable thanks to Ariel's suggestion that "Your charm so strongly works 'em That if you now beheld them, your affections Would become tender" (5.1.20) and he changes his mind about the vengeance. At this point he requests the spirit to gather all the characters in front of his cell, the place where he unfolds in front of them the two lovers playing chess:

Here Prospero discovers Ferdinand and Miranda, playing at chess.

MIRANDA Sweet lord, you play me false.

FERDINAND No, my dearest love, I would not for the world.

MIRANDA Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle
And I would call it fair play

ALONSO If this prove

A vision of the island, one dear son
Shall I twice lose.
(5.1.171-175)

This is the last act, now that Prospero has fulfilled all its major aims, the play can finally end at six o'clock, after three hours from the starting storm and many reminders showing Prospero's preoccupation with "the time o'th'day" (1.2.238). He accepts the return to his dukedom, quits his magic – drowning his books – and unbounds Ariel and Caliban. The only thing missing, in order to be released from his role of stage-director and actor, from the stage, is the audience's applause.

1.3.2 Role-playing

The characters that are using disguise in the play are, of course, the magus and the spirits, obviously they need to change costumes to carry out Prospero's project.

Prospero has two different facets and along with them come two different set of clothes: the politician ones and the magic mantle that is the source of his powers "So, Lie there my art" (1.2.24). For this reason Prospero works on stage always "in his magic robes" (5.1), however he takes the magic garment off at two points in the play, the first when he tells the backstory to his daughter "Lend thy hand And pluck my magic garment from me" (1.2.22-23) and lastly when he gives up his magic "I'll break my staff" (5.1.54), "I'll drown my books" (5.1.57).

Ariel is a tricky character per se, it is seen only by Prospero "Be subject to no sight but thine and mine, invisible" (1.2.302) and the audience, this means that he disguises himself throughout the play. He is not limited to be invisible but takes different shapes "Go make thyself like a nymph o'th' sea" (1.2.301), "Enter ARIEL, like a mater nymph" (1.2.316), "Thunder and lightning. Enter ARIEL, like a harpy, claps his wings upon the table, and with a quaint device the banquet vanishes" (3.3.53-82). Yet, he is perceived by the characters through his music "ARIEL, invisible, playing and singing (1.2.376), actually he sings three songs – "Come unto these yellow sands" (1.2.376-387) "Full Fathom Five" (1.2.396-405) and "Where thee Bees Sucks There Suck I" (5.1.88-94) – in order to control some characters and attire them or, moreover, to create confusion as in the comic scene in Act 3 where he speaks to Stephano and Caliban mimicking Trinculo's voice.

Lastly, also Ariel's fellow spirits assume different semblances according to the need, they can be "several strange shapes, bringing in a banquet, and dance about it with gentle actions of salutations" (3.3-18-19), "Then, to soft music, enter the shapes again and dance with mocks and mows, and carry out the table" (3.3.82), or "certain Reapers, properly habited. They join with the Nymphs in a graceful dance" (4.1.139), to conclude "diverse Spirits in shape of dogs and hounds" (4.1.254).

1.3.3 The play-within-the-play

One of the most talked about scene of *The Tempest* is the masque in Act 4, being this the metatheatrical device per excellence.

Prospero wants to give celebrations for the just-engaged couple, therefore he requests Ariel to summon spirits to perform the masque, a symbol of harmonious social order. When the visionary show is ready to be performed Prospero commands the opening of the masque saying "No Tongue! All eyes! Be silent!" (4.1.59) and the spirits take the shapes of three mythological figures Juno, Ceres and Iris who bless the lovers, wish them honor and riches as well as natural prosperity. Then, Iris is sent fetching some nymphs and reapers to perform a dance that is subsequently ended by Prospero once he is reminded of Caliban's "foul conspiracy" (4.1.139).

The scene relies on music and song, captivating dance, marvelous costuming and stage spectacle: "JUNO descends" (4.1.72) from the heaven through a chariot, she probably used to float in the air thanks to some wire, "They sing" (4.1.105) and then, they suddenly depart when Prospero says "Well done. Avoid, no more!" (4.1.142) perhaps through the trapdoor.

The masque is not only celebratory in this occasion, but it focuses on the power of art to shape and control nature and it is turned into a metaphor of the theatre as well as of the evanescent human existence. This vision relies on the fact that the masque works here as a single dramatic unit completely detached from the general happenings of the play, Prospero opens and closes it, exactly like a stage performance starts and ends with the rise and fall of the curtains. Nonetheless it is the mirror of the pattern of the play's plot, here as well there is a movement from disjuncture to harmony.

1.3.4 Audience manipulation and real-life and self-reference

The play exhibits asides spoken by different characters, audience acknowledgment, a soliloquy and an epilogue.

At the beginning Prospero asks various times for attention when he rehearse the events that brought them to the island, “Dost thou attend me?” (1.2.78), “Thou attend’st not!” (1.2.87), “Dost thou hear?” (1.2.106), but these are not directed to Miranda only, he is actually trying to get the full attention of the spectators too. Furthermore, Miranda refers to both the castaways and the people in the theatre when says “O wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world That has such people in’t.” (5.1.182-183).

The soliloquy refers to his farewell-to-art-speech delivered when there is no listener on the stage, only the audience:

PROSPERO [Traces a circle.]

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 bedimmed
The noontide sun, called 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 plucked up
The pine and cedar; graves at my command
Have waked their sleepers, ope’d and let ‘em forth
By my so potent art. But this rough magic
I here abjure; and when I have required
Some heavenly music (which even now I do)
To work mine end upon their senses that
This airy charm is for, I’ll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I’ll drown my book.

Solemn music

(5.1.34 -57)

This passage sounds like an enchantment, it is permeated by fairy superstitions. He talks to all the magical beings, he traces back all the things he has been able to achieve thanks to their help and, consequently, he says farewell to all the spirits and elves and most importantly to his art. Nonetheless, he closes this speech calling for music, as a director or actor on stage.

As the last point, Shakespeare recurs to references to the theatre itself. The first hint can be found in Act 4, when after the masque Prospero answers to Ferdinand:

You do look, my son, in a moved sort,
As if you were dismayed. Be cheerful, sir.
Our revels now are ended. 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-capped 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. Sir, I am vexed;
Bear with my weakness; my old brain is troubled.
Be not disturbed with my infirmity.
If you be pleased, retire into my cell
And there repose.
A turn or two I'll walk
To still my beating mind
(4.1.146-163)

The actors of the masque vanished, as the power of magic and theatre “are melted into air, thin air” and “the great globe itself” might be a reference to the theatre where Shakespeare’s company used to stage his plays. The message he wants to pass on

is that life is a short performance, lived like an actor on stage, and theatre produces illusions just like life is, in fact, a dream.

The play's metatheatrical meaning is confirmed with a short and innocent question, the one that Ariel raises to Prospero "Was't well done?" (5.1.240), in the end was all but a deception. The epilogue reinforces this interpretation, as a matter of fact when everything has been said and done "Now my charms are all o'erthrown" (5, epilogue), he asks the audience "release me from my bands With the help of your good hands. Gentle breath of yours my sails Must fill, or else my project fails, Which was to please", "As you from crimes would pardoned be, Let your indulgence set me free" (5, epilogue). The theatre experience has come to an end, the actors and the stage-director can now leave, all they need is just the audience's applause.

2

Adaptation, an ever-ending story

2.1 Adaptation and Appropriation

Ideas are reworked and relocated in an ongoing innovative process that through the interaction of texts creates ever-new hybrid products. Adaptation can hold different intentions and aims, it can comment on the source-text revising the point of view, make it more comprehensible via updating and proximation or add motivations. To such degree sequels, prequels, compressions and amplifications play a key role in the adaptive mode which often involves a shift from a genre to another. This process concerns not only literature but also other forms of art, to name a few music, film and painting and the major genres of adaptation are various, nonetheless the most frequent one today is from the page to the stage and screen.

Deborah Cartmell pointed out three categories of adaptation: [1] transposition, where a text is adapted into another genre, medium or also into another context, either cultural, geographical or temporal, [2] commentary, that creates something more culturally-laden by means of alteration or addition, as well as interpretation, [3] analogue, where the new product is not equivalent to the source-text, but it acquires similar autonomy of form and content.

Although the interplay between source and appropriation is a key point in this process, the relationship between the two is not always that clear and this is why in various occasions questions about intellectual property and plagiarism are raised. As a matter of fact, if adaptation shows a relationship with the source, appropriation differs from the original creating a new cultural outcome and domain.

Shakespearean adaptations have always been studied appraising how faithful to the original they were, but what scholars have to

consider is how an adaptation works aesthetically in itself; how it was produced; how it was received; and what, if anything, it might show us retroactively about Shakespeare's

world” (a post-structuralist approach), or about imagined theatrical and fictive versions of that world, and how we can use these “creative collisions”.

(Holderness 2014)

The meaning behind it is that “adaptation is a form of collaboration across time and sometimes across culture or language” (Sanders 2006, 47), as a matter of fact it is an idea that comes from the past and also include myths, fairy tales and folklore presented using different social and psychological points of view.

Deepening into this subject what appears is that there is no “authentic Shakespeare” (Orgel 2002, 231-56), what readers can appreciate today is already a mediated product, a process of collaboration and editorial creation. This is true especially for *The Tempest*, that was included in the First Folio in 1623 in an already edited style, in truth the scrivener Ralph Crane, employed by the King’s Men, probably created the handwritten manuscript copying Shakespeare’s draft altering it with the division in acts and scenes, elaborate stage directions, some general additions and improvements such as elisions and joint words.

Shakespeare’s plays began to be knowingly used during the English Restoration with William Davenant and John Dryden and he is still to the present day one of the most arranged authors since the adaptation of his works make him coherent and fit to different cultures and contexts. In this long journey novels, poetry, plays, films, animations have been created out of the Early Modern Period playwright’s works.

Likewise, Shakespeare himself adapted a broad range of sources, he imitated, borrowed and appropriated fairy tales, myths, folklore, historical events and works of other authors such as Ovid, Plutarch, Holinshed to name a few. Anyway, this should not come as a surprise since during Shakespeare’s times there were no property or copyright laws, hence imitation was allowed and actually taught in schools, moreover collaboration with other authors was widespread.

2.2 *The Tempest* sources

This play is not an open adaptation of any previous work of art, nonetheless it debts to three types of sources – classic and contemporary literature, along with historical narrative – the traces of which appear in the form of analogues and allusions for the length of the play.

2.2.1 Classics

Among the classical sources one can find myths, medieval literature and folklore, the opening passages of the Book of *Genesis*, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, especially its English translation by Arthur Golding.

Genesis is a story of creation and, as it is well known, it opens with turbulent waters and a stormy sea, to which follow chaos and the voice of the creator who imposes separation. In the same way *The Tempest* begins with the storm called up by Prospero, the director of the play, who then separates the shipwrecked party in various parts of the island forcing chaos because they do not understand what is happening.

The allusions of the *Aeneid* lie in the figure of Alonso's daughter Claribel who has married the King of Tunis and mirrors "widow Dido" (Virgil I, 343-52) who escapes to North Africa and supervises the founding of Carthage. In fact, when talking about her, Adrian, Gonzalo and Sebastian draw this connection clearly:

GONZALO Methinks our garments are now as fresh as
when we put them on first in Africa, at the marriage of
the King's fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis.

SEBASTIAN 'Twas a sweet marriage, and we prosper well
in our return.

ADRIAN Tunis was never graced before with such a
paragon to their queen.

GONZALO Not since widow Dido's time.

ANTONIO Widow? A pox o'that. How came that widow
in? Widow Dido!

SEBASTIAN What if he had said widower Aeneas too?

Good lord, how you take it!

ADRIAN Widow Dido, said you? You make me study of
that. She was of Carthage, not of Tunis.

GONZALO This Tunis, sir, was Carthage.

ADRIAN Carthage?

GONZALO I assure you, Carthage

(2.1.70-86)

Moreover, both texts start with a tempest provoked by supernatural means and have the same outcome of having the character arrive at a certain place after a shipwreck

and consequently relate with other characters. Lastly, Ariel disguised as a harpy and the banquet appearing and disappearing echoes the events in *Book III* of Virgil's epic where three harpies remove the food the crew is starting to eat.

In Ovid's book the perception that literature itself is responsible for changes in the world and that it can make the ordinary seem magical is a re-occurring theme. The parallel with *The Tempest* is easily drawn since the plot shows the conflict between art and nature, stage and life and the metamorphosis of the main character from a vindictive magus into a restored duke. The main allusions are two: the Tale of King Ceyx and Queen Alcyone, *Book XI*, and Medea's speech, *Book VII*. The former regards Ceyx "traveling to the oracle at Delphi on a ship that will be drowned in a great tempest. Alcyone, lost and alone, prays to Juno" (Lerer 2018, 11) that resonates in the Renaissance text in the first scene when all that can be heard is the Boatswain's cries and the noise of storm and also in the masque scene. The latter calls attention to Medea's incantation "Ye airs and winds; ye elves of hills, of brooks, of woods alone, Of standing lakes, and of the night, approach ye every one, Through help of whom (the crooked banks much wond'ring at the thing) I have compelled streams to run clean backward in their spring" (Ovid 7, 265-8), through which she calls on gods for assistance, lines that has been directly translated in Prospero's farewell to his magic.

2.2.2 Contemporary literature

Critics assert that Shakespeare did not consider only classics while writing *The Tempest*, he took extensively into account also contemporary works of art such as Montaigne's essay *Of Cannibals*, Jonson's masques, Marlowe's *The Tragedy of Doctor Faustus*, traits of the Italian Commedia dell'arte and, interestingly, some of his previous plays.

Michel de Montaigne traveled to Brazil in the mid-1500s where he had the chance to observe the natives and write his impressions on them in his *Essais* written in the 1580-1588 and translated into English by John Florio in 1603. According to him natives were savages still commanded by the laws of nature:

It is a nation, would I answer Plato, that hath no kinde of traffike, no knowledge of Letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politike superioritie; no use of service, or riches or of povertie; no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupation but idle; no respect of kindred, no use of wine, corne, or mettle. The very

words that import lying, falsehood, treason, dissimulations, covetousness, envie, detraction, and pardon, were never heard of amongst them. How dissonant would hee finde his imaginarie common-wealth from this perfection? (John Florio 1603, 258)

and this idea is reflected in Gonzalo's description on his ideal commonwealth in Act 2, scene 1:

I'th' commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things, for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty
And use of service, none; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard – none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine or oil;
No occupation, all men idle, all;
And women, too, but innocent and pure;
No sovereignty –
[...]
All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or 27ndeavor; treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth
Of its own kind all foison, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people.
(2.1.148-165)

Moreover, the name of Caliban is an anagram of Cannibal, not coincidentally this character was welcomed by Prospero and Miranda in the family and was taught language until he showed his natural behavior attempting to rape Miranda, this fact related to the bottom of the Elizabethan social hierarchy where stood people that indulge in desires without control.

Ben Jonson, the chief writer of masques at the Jacobean court, was an enthusiast for order and naturalism which frequently contradicted through the representation of excess, grotesque and bizarre. He sought the favour of James I and Anne of Denmark since their accession in 1603 writing the masques that were performed by the Queen

and her ladies at court. This kind of plays were celebrations of harmony and order, hence of the monarchy and were generally linked to an anti-masque which exhibited forces of chaos conquered and dispersed by the forces of virtue. This pattern can be found in *The Tempest*, in the celebratory masque requested by Prospero to honour Miranda and Ferdinand's engagement and also in its contrary that is to say the chaos that follows when Prospero draws the action back to reality.

Prospero personifies the Renaissance thinker – a figure closely related to that of the alchemist such as John Dee – similarly to the central figure of Marlowe's *The Tragedy of Doctor Faustus* that is to say Dr. Faustus. Both characters share some features, they both try to get new realms of knowledge for the pursuit of power and they both renounce their magic at the end of the play even if in different ways, one drowning the books and the other burning them. Moreover, they both have a similar relationship with the spirit who accompanies them, in fact Prospero exercises his magic requesting Ariel to perform tasks for him in the same way Faustus does with the demon Mephistopheles, but unlike Prospero who is in a position of power over Ariel, Faustus is under the unwittingly control of the devilish figure. This difference is due to the amount of knowledge possessed, that is what gives a person a position of superiority as opposed to another, in fact knowledge is in some way superior to power.

Then, *The Tempest* shares some devices with Commedia dell'Arte. He borrowed from it the patterns of dialogue called theatregrams in which he could improvise his words, the plot, the typified figures especially the comic characters, the sections and ultimately the rhythm of improvisation with its tricks and repetitions. In the Italian theatre of improvisation playwrights and actors constructed plays starting from units of plots, typified characters and speech-forms. Equally Shakespeare's play shows the Italian plot template unfolding in an isolated pastoral setting and some fixed chunks of character-types: it takes place in a remote territory (the island) which is ruled by a person with magical powers (Prospero), the characters include non-human-indigenous such as Spiriti (Ariel and his fellow spirits) and earthy Satyr (Caliban). The magus with a backstory to unfold (the usurpation) interferes in the affairs of the humans also reducing them to a temporary insanity (the shipwrecked are moved in the maze of the island) and the plot alternates *parti serie* and *parti ridicole*, that is to say gentlemen and clownish characters. Deepening into this last point one can find seven archetypes: the spirit and the magician-ruler have just been mentioned, then there are the savage servant in the figure of Caliban, the fools Stephano and Trinculo, the villains Antonio

and Sebastian, the sage Gonzalo and to conclude the innocent lovers Miranda and Ferdinand.

Ultimately, according to some critics Shakespeare seem to convey in this play his final thoughts and comments on his previous works, mixing and matching part of other plays in order to reach a conclusion. What has to be kept in mind in order to understand this possible process is that *The Tempest* is the last solo-play written by Shakespeare, so this text can be read in a certain way as a farewell on art the playwright's part just like Prospero does. Here one can find all those unresolved existential cruxes such as Hamlet's desire of revenge, Othello's obsession with jealousy, Macbeth's lust for power, King Lear's ungratefulness and Romeo and Juliet's contrasted love. The possible purpose of the reenactment of these images is to achieve a higher comprehension of the human contradictions and their overcoming: forgiveness after a wrong suffered, atonement after a fault committed, spiritual renaissance, thus the necessary mastering of passions. The parallels can be traced between structures, motifs, but also characters: first of all *The Tempest* shares its pastoral structure with the other romances namely *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, secondly the magic, supernatural and oneiric atmosphere created by Prospero mirrors that of *A Midsummer's Night Dream* where also the figure of Puck is similar to that of Ariel. Alike, Ariel resembles Paulina from *The Winter's Tale* in their use of theatrical manipulation. Ferdinand and Miranda's love cannot not let one think about Romeo and Juliet's love at first sight, whereas Prospero's matches the figure of Hamlet. The play's characteristics might be read as the final new conclusion given by Shakespeare to all the previous situations.

2.2.3 Historical narratives

The last two likely sources used by Shakespeare in order to write *The Tempest* are historical-real-life events.

The first one, and the more plausible between the two, is the Virginia and Bermuda pamphlets that is to say a series of reports containing William Strachey's *True Reportory of the Wracke, and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates*, Silverston Jourdain's *Discovery of Bermuda* and The Council of Virginia's *True Declaration of the State of the Colonie in Virginia*. The most important one between the above-mentioned texts is Strachey's which traces the happenings of the Sea Venture, a ship that left England in 1609 headed to John Smith's colony in Virginia and which was separated from the rest

of the fleet due to a storm. Luckily enough the crew and the passengers reached the shore of Bermudas safely, place where they lived for several months before leaving for Virginia. There are significant parallels between what is described in the letters and both the storm and Prospero's island, in fact verbal coincidences can be found in the description of the birds and the berries, moreover it also contains a comment on the impossibility of reforming the savage Indians that let one think to Caliban's figure. Nonetheless, Ariel directly mentions Bermuda at a certain point "Thou called'st me up at midnight to fetch dew, From the still-vexed Bermudas" (1.2.228). This not-so-subtle assertion on the "O brave New World" (5.1.183) has given rise to a great debate between the critics on the exact location of the island, whether it lies on the Mediterranean as it should, since the courtiers were going back to Naples from Tunis, or in the Caribbean.

The other real-life-event that has probably served Shakespeare as a source is William Thomas's *Historie of Italie*, a tale that tells the story of Prospero Adorno, a man established Governor of Genoa by the Duke of Milan. However, this Prospero experienced the same fate of the play's magus since his relations with the King of Naples Ferdinand led to his deposition and subsequently his brother Antony Adorno was made governor of the city. Evidently, here both usurpation and the name of characters provide a great analogue to the play.

2.3 Stage adaptations from the Restoration to the twentieth century

2.3.1 The Restoration

"Shakespeare's text flourished on stage for 30 years – at least twice at James's court, then for an unknown number of performances at Blackfriars and presumably also at London's outdoor theatres. Then for nearly two centuries after the Restoration, Dryden and Davenant's French-inspired corruption monopolized performances" (Vaughan and Vaughan 2014, 6).

There are no other recorded performances before the theatres closure in 1642 due to the Civil War except those at Whitehall in 1611 and at court in 1613. In 1660 the playhouses reopened under Charles II who brought from his exile in France the theatre and opera's aesthetics which led to some renovations. At this time playhouses were indoor and lit by candles, stage curtains were introduced and were raised at the beginning of the show and dropped only at the end of it. Nonetheless, the audience could still spot the changing of sets and the intimate relationship between actors and

spectators was untouched due to the fact that the stage still thrust out into the hall as in the Elizabethan times, as a consequence metatheatrical effects were still widely used. However, some transformations regarding the stage took place inspired by French theatrical practices and Italian opera, in truth the surface of the area of the apron was reduced in favour of the backstage; lightning still relied on the candelabra but already provided for chiaroscuro effects; music, song and dancing were introduced; at the back of the stage there were painted shutters that were regularly changed; stage machinery was developed and the musicians could now be seen standing on the upper gallery.

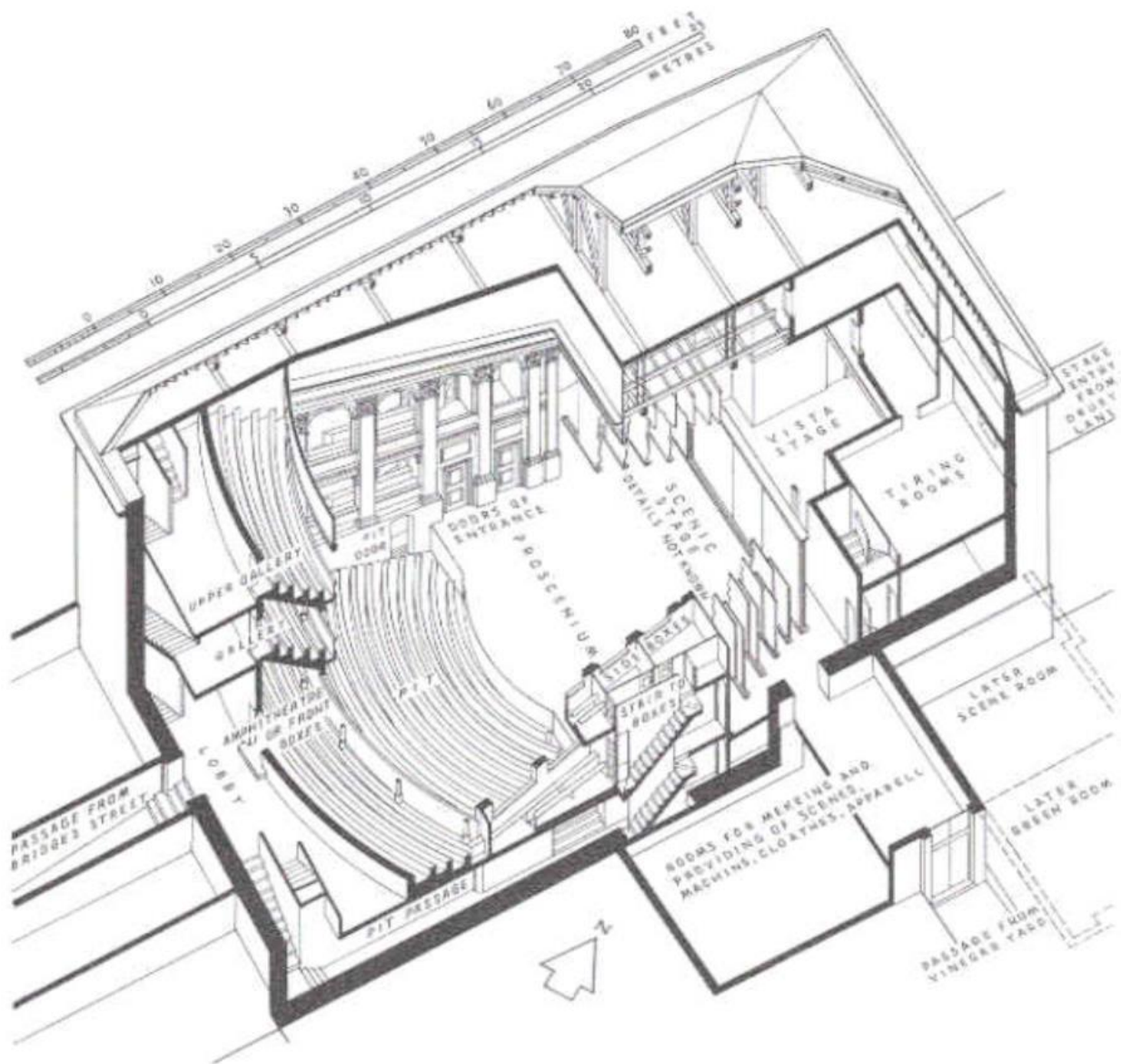


Figure 2. Christopher Wren, Reconstruction based on a drawing of Drury Lane

During the Restoration Shakespeare's texts started to be rewritten and revised and in 1667 Dryden and Davenant adapted the play into *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island* which dominated the staging throughout the Restoration until the nineteenth century. This version shows two more characters such as Hippolito and Dorinda, respectively Prospero's foster son and Miranda's sister, while Sycorax is Caliban's sister. Furthermore, Caliban's role is reduced, Ariel's one is more important than the Folio's and Prospero is a moralist, controlling people and events on the island but not undergoing any change of heart. Lastly, thanks to the figures of Trinculo and Stephano the play relies on a comic subplot that satirizes Restoration concerns. Critics still debate on this adaptation's message, what is sure is that the visual performance gained spectacularity thanks to the new mechanics.

Out of the Davenant and Dryden's revamping in 1674 Thomas Shadwell developed an operatic version with the same title which included more songs and spectacular scenery, as a matter of fact according to John Downes:

Scenes, Machines; particularly, one Scene Painted with Myriads of Ariel Spirits; and another flying away, with a Table Furnisht out with Fruits, Sweetmeats, and all sorts of Viands; just when Duke Trinculo and his Companions were going to dinner; all was things per- form'd in it so Admirably well, that not any succeeding Opera got more Money.
(Downes 1708, 34-5)

In conclusion, during the Restoration the stage starts to become a place where the visual with its set design gains importance over the verbal enunciation and where also music gets its relevance.

2.3.2 The eighteenth century

Most audiences of the eighteenth century apparently assumed that Davenant and Dryden's interpretation along with Shadwell's operatic one corresponded exactly to Shakespeare's drama, therefore the adaptations in this century continued the Restoration's spectacular tradition foreshadowing the filmic illusion. The painted shutters began to be slid along rails and were positioned on stage at different distances so as to create trompe-l'œil effects and the representation started creating imaginary spaces which brought to an ever-proliferating scenery realism.

Since the play was staged with “Scenes, Machines, Habits, Flyings, Sinkings, and other Decorations proper to the play” (24 January 1733, Drury Lane) for the role of Ariel young actresses with a marvellous voice and graceful movements were required, whereas by contrast, Caliban was generally personified by a comedian.



Figure 3. The Drury Lane Theatre, London, during the 18th century

From 1756 new versions came out, starting with actor-manager David Garrick's operatic adaptation which showed two additional characters and omitted Dorinda and Hippolito, but it was not so successful that Garrick dropped it until 1757 when he presented a new restored and heavily cut interpretation. Davenant and Dryden's Hippolito and Dorinda were reintroduced in 1789 by Philip Kemble, but this was the last time they were to be seen on stage.

Theatre started to become more popular and for this reason in the second half of the century actor-managers tried to increase the number of spectators decreasing the front stage area and adding space for new seats, hence the division between audience and actors started to be carried out and was completely established in 1762 when David Garrick prevented the spectators from sitting on the stage. Moreover, he

contributed to various improvements which set a tradition that brought to the process of film illusion developed throughout the nineteenth century. First of all, he imported from Europe a new lighting technique consisting in small reflectors tied on candles which made more light suggesting different moments of the day and which could be pointed onto different sections of the theatre so as to focus the spectator's attention on a particular actor or action. Then, machinery started to be hidden by curtains stimulating curiosity and painted scenery began to be inserted in a rectangular stage taking the name of tableau. At last, special effects started to be more and more convincing thanks to the introduction of both visual and sound devices.

The theatre was aiming at reproducing a very plausible imitation of life and this was achieved thanks to the blend of naturalism and magic, real scenery, special effects, the creation of the so called fourth wall and therefore the audience passivity and voyeuristic position.

2.3.3 The nineteenth century

In the nineteenth century, with Romanticism, Shakespeare began to be seen as a genius who "followed nature rather than the ancients' rules", "an artist who understood the truths of human nature and whose words could arbitrate morality and wisdom" (Vaughan and Vaughan 2011, 85-88), whereas his works as a great example of creative imagination and this brought to a new focus on *The Tempest*. Romantics believed that poetry is personal expression, thus they began to identify Prospero with Shakespeare himself being the former the expression and speaker of the latter.

Caliban and Ariel got more visibility and started to be seen under another point of view, the former as an element of the earth but still a noble and poetical being linked to nature, whereas the latter as an image of the air, both from the heaven and the earth.

Between 1830 and the end of the century actor-managers rewrote the original text in order to give more space to spectacle just like the burlesque interpretation *The Enchanted Isle* released by Robert and William Brough in 1848. Nonetheless this century also saw the uncut version of William Charles Macready performed in 1838 at the Drury Lane.

What is certain is that the movement from verbal to illustration and the consequent journey that brought to filmic illusion reached its highest moment when close to the turn of the century actors started to play on a totally encased and protected stage thanks to the apron disappearance. Musician could no longer be seen by the audience

even if music was extensively used in order to intensify the emotional response, something that is mirrored nowadays by the extradiegetic music in cinema. Furthermore, the new elements of lighting effects given by the introduction of the electric limelight in 1885 allowed the stage to pass from gloom to bright light and the actors to be seen even at the end of the stage, while the hall remained in complete darkness. This lightning variation enabled the alternation of different narratives and set the foundation for the cross-cutting effect proper of film cutting and editing. The tableaux prefigured the slow motion, whereas the quickly changes of scenery foreshadowed the cinematic fading in where the scenery appears progressively after having been in the dark, fading out through which the stage is darkened before the appearance of the new scenery, and cross-dissolving consisting in the slow disappearance of one set and the simultaneously appearance of the new one behind or in front of it.

In this century not only the precursor of filmic techniques were developed, but also new ideologies such as Darwinism and British Imperialism started to be used in order to understand the play, so that the figure of Prospero begins to be seen as a portrayal of the white European that has to civilized the inferior native servant-monster.

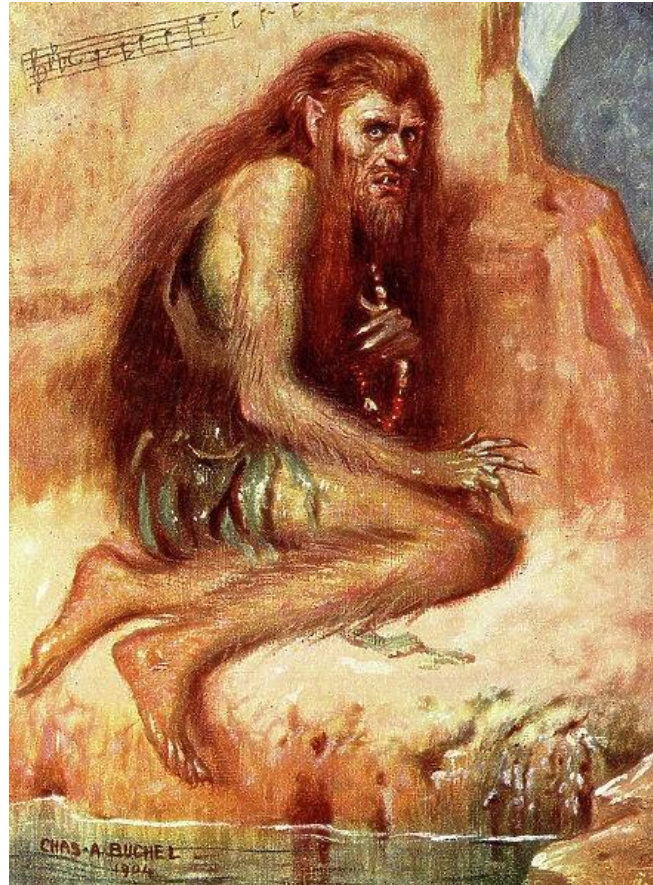


Figure 4. Charles A. Bucher, Herbert Beerbohm Tree as Caliban

Thus, stage productions were dominated by leading actors performing the figure of Caliban through the primitive man symbolism, for this reason in a 1900 representation the actor Frank Benson imitated monkeys and baboons on stage climbing trees and hanging upside down, while Herbert Beerbohm Tree, manager of the Haymarket who first carried out the transition to the screen, portrayed an apelike Caliban – half-human and half-animal – donning fur and seaweed as well as an uncombed beard just at the beginning of the twentieth century, more precisely in 1904.

2.3.4 The twentieth century

The focus on Caliban that emerged in the late nineteenth century developed further into the 1900s giving way to an increasingly American perception of the play due to images involving imperialism, materialism and racism.

For slightly more than the first third of the century Herbert Beerbohm Tree's Darwinian approach persisted. For example, Robert Atkins played Caliban twice, firstly at the Old Vic Theatre in London around the 1920s showing "with superlative art the malevolent brute nature with the dim, half- formed, human intellect just breaking through" (Crosse 1953, 58) and then in 1938 portraying a Neanderthal man. Furthermore, other productions that took place in England between 1940 and 1951 depicted Caliban as a prehistoric figure, a later one is Peter Brook's *The Tempest* staged both at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon and at the Drury Lane where Alec Clunes played an apish, gorilla, anthropoid character.

Beginning in mid-century Caliban was transformed in the symbol of South and Central American population facing an aggressive and colonist United States embodied by Prospero. Philip Brockbank wrote in the 1966 that the play is "about colonization" in fact in this period while the latter was depicted as a slaver imposing his own culture, the former was ennobled and empowered. One of the most noticeable examples of this trend is Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête* that casted an African field hand Caliban and a mulatto house servant Ariel. Moreover, the black-and-white power relations were not limited to the Americas but were broadened also to the West Indian and African worlds, in this particular case the RSC's 1978 performance can be mentioned.

Then, this century saw the psychoanalytic readings of the play as well as hues on sexual tensions influenced by Freud. This psychological approach was attempted by Gerald Freeman in 1981 at the American Shakespeare Theatre, but also by the RSC

in 1982 and 1998. Generally in these performances Caliban and Ariel were depicted as two aspects of the magus's character and to reach this aim the actors sometimes could be dressed with different colour coding such as black and white.

In the second decade of the twentieth century stage productions began to stress again the metatheatrical nature of the play, thus emphasizing magic and spectacle as well as focusing on the figure of the stage-director Prospero. Under this category fall two foreign productions such as Italian Giorgio Strehler's *La Tempesta* (1978) and Japanese Yukio Ninagawa's *Ninagawa's Tempest: A Rehearsal of a Noh Play on the Island of Sado* (1988), which both toured in English-speaking countries.

The former was firstly performed at Boboli Gardens in Florence for the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino where the setting was designed by the Gardens' fountains, lake and statues and the production featured the Commedia dell'Arte figures of Brighella and Pulcinella for Stephano and Trinculo and spectacles such as fireworks for Prospero's magical powers. The play was afterwards moved to the Piccolo Teatro in Milan, an indoor venue, where metatheatre relied on the visible stagehands at work, a visible wire thanks to which Ariel could enter and exit the stage, trapdoors for appearances and disappearances and moreover a set and cyclorama that collapsed into pieces at the conclusion before reassembling as if by magic after Prospero's epilogue and the audience applause. Furthermore, during the initial storm the magus could be identified as the orchestrator of the scene and Ariel exited through the audience after being freed by the master.

The latter was staged in the Nissei Theatre in Tokyo by the Toho Company who set the play on the island of Sado, the home of Zeami who was the founder of the Noh theatre. Here metatheatrical elements are highlighted by different levels of illusion possible thanks to the general framework created by the use of a fictitious rehearsal of a Noh play. First of all when entering the theatre the audience could spotted the director Yukio Ninagawa sitting in a director's chair conducting the actors rehearsal, the chair was then left at the beginning of the play to the actor playing Prospero for him to supervise the action. Another level was then unlocked when the performance took the shape of a "Noh rehearsal where Zeami himself gave instructions to the actors and directed wind machines and musical instruments to create the tempest" (Vaughan 2021,152). Lastly, the play moved to the last level of illusion when on Prospero's island the magus put on his black robe and took his wand to direct the action.

In contrast to this metatheatrical approach the twenty-first century productions have shifted to a negative view of Prospero's authority taking liberties on settings – the RSC set *The Tempest* in the Artic wasteland in 2006 under the direction of Rupert Goold and in the African jungle in 2009 thanks to director Janice Honeyman – as well as gender relations, in fact Prospero has become Prospera in 2000 at the Globe Theatre with Vanessa Redgrave and in 2001 at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival with Demetra Pittman.

3

Adaptation, from stage to screen

“In any kind of art film, you’re creating an illusion for the audience to look at reality through your special eye”

(Brian de Palma)

3.1 From verbal to visual

3.1.1 Film adaptation

In the 1970s scholars have distinguished different stages of film adaptation, Roger Manvell in *Theatre and film* proposed “a system of six stages of adaptation, depending on their distance from the stage productions” (Hatchuel 2004, 16), whereas Jack Jorgens in *Shakespeare on Film* identifies three modes, the theatrical one where the text is stressed as in a filmed theatre performance, the realistic mode which emphasizes the spectacle, settings and landscape, at last the filmic one that relies on extensive imagery and cinematic competence. Parallel to these three categories Jorgens proposes another classification regarding firstly presentation where the original play undergoes little alteration by the director, secondly interpretation and its shaping point of view, finally adaptation where the original play becomes the source from which a new related work of art is created.

Every Shakespeare film can be appraised as an adaptation for it moves away in some way from the original text and it is possible to identify four major kinds of adaptations: [1] adaptations that transform the original text more or less broadly changing the sequence of scenes, importing hints to other plays, or through cutting, [2] adaptations where dialogues are translated into another language and these along with particular situations can differ from the original text, [3] films inspired by the plot of one of the plays, but this is either present in just a few scenes or fully absent as in the case of the science-fiction *Forbidden Planet* (1956) which does not use not even a word from *The Tempest*, [4] films in which characters play either Shakespeare

himself, a director or somebody who teaches the play, but the film does not display the plot of play.

To associate the verbal with the visual in Shakespeare film adaptations, so as to present a more comprehensible work of art, directors have employed the literal illustration and the metaphorical associations strategies. The former involves showing through pictures what has been expressed verbally, whereas the latter regards visual analogies carried out through a succession of images that go beyond the literal meaning and can be found in different forms such as repetition, insistence or amplification.

In filmic terms, there are two approaches to adapt Shakespeare's play:

the most conservative Shakespeare films are those which adopt as many features of a given play's structure and language as possible, while adapting them to the accepted rules of mainstream cinema in continuity editing, clarity of character and story, and intelligibility of speech. The most radical seek to achieve the play's ends by using as fully as possible the medium's ability to juxtapose images and narrative elements, to superimpose one element of the narrative upon another, shift point of view and register, and disrupt the sense of a coherent world seen clearly. In such films the original's form and methods are not respected, but replaced.

(Jackson 2007, 16)

Cinema has widely engaged with Shakespeare in varied and exciting ways, one can find full-scale adaptations and appropriations of the plays or even just a brief allusion. To mention one in *Skyfall* (2012) directed by Sam Mendes James Bond found himself confronted with the latest innovation supplied by "Q", played by Ben Whishaw – Ariel in Julie Taymor's *The Tempest* -, who responds to Daniel Craig with "Brave New World".

With regards to *The Tempest* there are some issues of adaptations, in fact directors have to decide how to transpose at the cinema those key points that result tricky also in the play. Firstly, the genre, is better to film a comedy, a tragedy or a sci-fi? Secondly, the timeframe, grounding it in the classical past or use an allegory of the future? Thirdly the setting, should it be set in the Mediterranean, in the Caribbean or islands linked to mythology or English Imperialism such as Ireland? Fourthly, how to transpose the figure of Ariel and Caliban, who and what are they really like? What about the figure of

Miranda, who is at the same time the object of gaze and someone who exercises the privilege of gazing? Then, what technique is better to use for Prospero's backstory? Lastly, how should a director adapt the "isle full of noises" and the magic? And how to render the masque, which is a form unknown to the modern audience? One will see that directors have recurred to different solutions throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century.

3.1.2 Cinematic narrative techniques

Adapting Shakespeare on screen implies a shift from an enunciation mode to another, from the theatrical verbal mode – telling - to the filmic visual one – showing. Plato in *The Republic* asserts that narration results from diegesis, when a storyteller speaks with his own voice, or mimetic diegesis, when he imitates other characters, thus narration contains imitation. In the 1980 "Genette proposes to designate by story the narrated events (or narrative content), by narrative the account that organizes the events in a particular order and filters them through some specific perspective, and by narration the very act of telling and producing the story" (Hatchuel 2014, 35).

Cinema merges telling and showing creating the figure of an exterior narrator and its techniques are used to add elements into Shakespeare's play and transform their mimetic aspects.

A film construction undergoes three stages, firstly the organization of what unfolds in front of the camera that is to say the *mise-en-scène*, the setting and acting, secondly the framing process consisting in the actual camerawork during the shooting, lastly the assembling and editing process that regards the connection of the filmed images, a feature that enabled the suppression of the lecturer's oral narration.

"Film editing is considered to be a very useful device for constructing a story. Montage and camerawork turn a show into a narrative in which space is fragmented through time" (Hatchuel 2014, 36), therefore editing is particularly important because produces meaning contextualizing the various images and creating associations that enables the director to provide a definite vision of reality and, therefore, manipulate the spectator reception. This device can be regarded as a producer of meaning, as an ordering process of both story and narrative, as a producer of distinct narrative rhythms and as a process capable to manage the quantity of information given about the story by the narrative through the alternation of points of view.

Film theorist Christian Metz identifies the presence of an invisible film narrator, exterior to the told events, which unfolds the images in front of the spectator's eyes in the same manner a novelistic narrative delivers sentences to the reader. Both in novels and in cinema the audience can come after two narrative lines occurring in different places at once, for narration is omniscient, and this is rendered through cross-cutting technique also known as parallel or alternated editing.

Cinema is a time-exploring machine, in fact the organization of events can be influenced and time can be dilated through the introduction of flashbacks and flashforwards that allow the exploration of the past or the anticipation of the future. Nevertheless, the act of recalling and the process of memory is far more natural than premonition, for this reason prolepsis is very rare in movies on the contrary of analepsis. Along with the organization of events, editing can challenge the narrative rhythm creating a discrepancy between the story-order and the narrative-order through ellipsis, slow motion and quick motion. Genette distinguishes four major narrative rhythms that create different relations between the time of narration and time of the story: [1] pause, when the storyteller focuses to a great extent on one event in particular so that narration results longer than the diegetic time, [2] scene, in which both times are equal, [3] the story is unfolded through a series of episodes distant in time, so that the action speeds up and, consequently, the time of narration is shorter than the diegetic time, [4] ellipsis, a period of time between two actions is suspended resulting in a shorter narration compared to the diegetic time.

Through editing directors can point spectators' attention on the various characters one after the other, alternating shots of action and shots of reaction which also generate identification mechanisms. The change in point of view takes shapes also in the variation in the scale of shots among which one can point out long shots that highlight the set, medium long shots which frame characters in their wholeness from head to toe, medium close shot that cut the figure at the knees so as to stress the actor's gestures, close shots which highlight the character's expressions by cutting them at the waist, close-ups that frame the face and, lastly, extreme close-ups that make the visage the focal point. Close-ups create an emotional private contact with the actor that intensifies the mechanism of identification.

According to Freud there two types of identification, the primary which is linked to the infant stage mirror, and the secondary rooted in the Oedipus complex. In Freud's secondary identification Metz identifies a primary and secondary cinematic

identification, the former relies on the spectator self-recognition as the favoured subject of the show, whereas the latter depends on the spectator projections of the self within the fiction. Identification is thus a structural result more than a psychological one, in fact spectators identify with a character not for the personality, but because placed in a particular situation or narrative structure.

3.1.3 Staging vs. filming

The theatre performance and film have more differences than similarities, as Michèle Willems has identified:

Superficially, the cinema, television and theatre all appear to rely on the layering of signs to communicate with their publics. Viewer and audience alike must apprehend a variety of signs simultaneously: aural signs such as words spoken by actors, music and other sounds; visual signs such as costumes, setting, lighting and sometimes special effects. But there the similarity ends, because the respective importance and status of these signs vary enormously from one medium to the next. On the stage all the other signs are subordinated to speech (in monologue, dialogue or aside), while on the screen words are secondary: the dialogue follows the image.

(Willems 1994, 70)

Robert Edmonds in *The Sights and Sounds of Cinema* asserts that “in the theatre...we are interested in what is happening on the stage...In film what we are interested in is the performers’ reactions to what is happening in the drama” (Edmonds 1992, 13), as a matter of fact the main difference in staging Shakespeare for theatre and Shakespeare film resides in the medium as well as the relationship with realism. Theatre is a verbal medium where theatricality is accepted, whereas films use visual techniques and what is sought is actuality, furthermore in theatre action is performed whereas in cinema action is reported. In this regard Michéal Macliammóir, the actor who played Iago in Welles’ adaptation of *Othello*, wrote in his diary:

Find what I have long suspected: (a) that one’s first job is to forget every single lesson one ever learned on the stage: all projection of personality, build-up of a speech, and sustaining for more than a few seconds of an emotion are not only unnecessary but superfluous, and (b) that the ability to express oneself just below the rate of normal behaviour is a primal necessity...

(Macliammóir 1952, 96-97)

In theatre actors rehearse a lot in order to ensure high quality performance for they have to play in front of a live audience, hence they have to project their voices in order to be understood. New theatres are replacing the proscenium arch with a single room that creates an intimate relationship between actors and public, here the audience chooses what to focus on and the impressions are shaped by the actor presence on the stage who communicate with the audience through a series of convention. For this reason, theatre is an interactive and collective experience where the audience is asked to use the imagination in order to understand the performance and its reality created through words.

On the contrary, in film the actors perform in front of the eye of the camera so that sound amplification technology can be used and what becomes more important are bodily gestures and facial expressions recorded by cross-shooting and over-the-shoulder shots. Multiple takes can be taken, the final cut can be repeated various times and movie producers, directors and actors pay a lot of attention on how spectators receive and engage with what they are watching. Movie spectators see only what the eye of the camera shows them, so their viewpoint and their feelings are shaped through various techniques, consequently film is a psychological and emotive private experience produced by images and sounds. Thus, the spectator is pushed to identify with the figures on screen, believing that what is experienced is the reality and this illusion of reality is never broken thanks to film editing.

Nowadays one can easily find also live performances recorded on video, which is something highly paradoxical since something ephemeral and never-the-same experience is thus preserved for further repetition in time. In this case the passive cinema viewer becomes active through the power of controlling the performance making it move faster or slower, going backward or forward thank to the remote control. Taking into account filmic techniques, if the general use of the camera differentiates theatre and cinema, the movements, effects and focuses achieved through the camera mark the separation between filmed theatre and cinema. Nevertheless, stage acting with its unity of scene and emotion, can be protected when filming through the use of long takes, a technique widely employed by Kenneth Branagh, that present the text as a continuous flow and a unified, unvarying sound pattern achieved through close-ups.

With regards to *The Tempest*, it has been said that the features of the play suits more live theatre than the cinema:

Though its supernatural spectacles might seem to suit it to the magical technologies of cinema, *The Tempest* has tended to resist direct translation to film. This resistance may derive from other features of the text. The play's large-scale spectacle is balanced by the small-scale intimacy of many of its scenes, which gives it a character akin to chamber music. Shakespeare's observance of the theatrical unities generates a rather small number of rather long scenes ... All these features suit the text to the live theatre rather than the cinema.

(Miller 1997, 24)

However, also Anthony Miller affirms that "One pleasure the films offer is the recognition of ... original Shakespearean features in their modern cinematic guise. This activity of recognition affords the modern audience its equivalent to the Renaissance pleasure in 'imitation,' the reimagining of classical texts in a Renaissance guise" (Miller 1997, 25).

Critics assert that compared to cinema, television is the medium that better fits to retain Shakespearean theatricality. Actually, television drama presents an almost continuous dialogue track, in truth montage sequences, lyrical passages underscored with music, extended action sequences and silence are not featured. Televised Shakespeare shows theatrical bias with regard to setting, movement, lighting and so on.

3.1.4 From metatheatre to metacinema

The Hollywood aesthetics is based on the assumption that the experience of watching a film is similar to the state of dreaming, it is not a coincidence that the name of the studios is DreamWorks. However, film illusion can be supplanted by the reflection of Shakespeare's *mise-en-abyme* through cinematic counterparts to the theatre's self-reflexivity so as to avoid the spectators' identification with the characters and encourage distance and criticism. Thus reflexive cinema breaks the enchantment, but anyway its reception depends on spectators themselves, on their emotional involvement as well as distancing.

In cinema, in order to unveil the piece of art as such both strategies and devices are employed, among the former one can find awkward camera angles, powerful camera presence, aggressive montage, black and white films, captions, missing soundtracks whereas the latter count voice-over gazes and speeches addressed to the camera, flashbacks, film quotes, mirrors and film-within-the-film.

First of all, specific camera movements and angles are strategies adopted to make visible the enunciation and alienate the spectator, who otherwise identifies with the camera's gaze when the ordinary camerawork is used.

Secondly, both a directorial or an authorial figure can be inserted so as to mirror the director of the work of art in the act of creating the production, furthermore prologues and epilogues already present in the original play can be highlighted. Additionally, also the spectator figure can be duplicated recurring to the use of mirrors which creates an analogy between the actors on film and the spectators in the cinema considering the screen as a kind of mirror. Mirrors lay the foundation for the identification between actors and spectators, but also for the frame within the frame. As well as mirrors, doors can create a reflective such effect, in fact doors can open on other spaces generally evocative of a fictive world or of a stage, moreover shot through keyholes can be taken to introduce a secondary screen.

Thirdly, the actors can establish a contact with the spectators, looking or speaking at the camera, thus reproducing the theatrical devices of asides and soliloquy. Therefore, the audience is forced to realize that what is perceived is not reality but a trick produced by the camera.

Then, the theatrical device of play-within-the-play is reproduced in the cinema through the film-within-the-film and the screen-within-the-screen. The former shows two levels of fiction in which the including film is almost forgotten, this generally happens when flashbacks, flashforwards or quick inserts from other times and places are added. The latter occurs when the filmic conditions are embedded in the main action creating a series of frame contained in the same shot, this is generally the case of characters filmed watching a film on a TV set, hence reintroducing the notion of backstage inside the film.

The last self-reflexive device employed in cinema is film quoting, that is to say references to other films pertaining to the same genre, a trend widely used in the Shakespeare films of the nineties.

In this section is particularly important to cite two versions of *The Tempest*, one is Jarman's *The Tempest* and then the metacinematic film par excellence Greenaway's *Prospero's Books*, part of respectively the avant-garde and experimental currents.

Jarman's film opens and closes with the figure of Prospero with his eyes closed, with a voice-over speaking the words of the preliminary scene and then the words "Our little life is rounded with a sleep". Prospero is dreaming it all, being the film a "metaphor for Prospero's own desperate struggle against the alienation of self from self and society, as well as self-referentially Jarman's own split from conventional movie-making" (Rothwell 2004, 196). The Gothic narrative is set all in the dark, candle-lit Stoneleigh Abbey in Warwickshire, the hall of the house is the island, but also Prospero's mind and psyche, in fact the impression of dreaming is heightened by the blue filter used to shot the outside scenes which gives the impression of twilight. The film director is not at all interested in any power theme or postcolonial reading of the play, he focus more on characters and especially in Prospero and Ariel's relationship with its sexual undertones, for this reason the film is said to be a commentary on counter-culture movement of the 1970s. The cinema technology used is very modest, what Jarman's employs is the voice-over for both the opening and closing scene, as well as for presenting Ariel for the first time since he cannot be seen but heard as just a voice in Prospero's head, then the mirror device to show Ariel or some characters or scenes through the magic glass on the magus' staff. The mirror is used to show memories and is a *mise-en-abyme* of the film process itself, in fact images of the plot and of documentary are mixed together and the spectator moves from a room to the other in a maze-like situation losing his path through the extraordinary visions reproduced by filming tableaux through a static camera.

Prospero's Books is the most radical variation or derivation of the play even if much of the original text is maintained and very little or nothing verbally is added to it, nevertheless almost all the dialogues are spoken in the magus' mind. The action takes place in an indoor set with a series of rooms, where tableaux appear corresponding to the leaves of the twenty-four books that can be found in Prospero's library and are forthcoming of the book entitled *Prospero's Book* in which the protagonist is writing the play as he thinks and speaks it. The magus is the creator of the action and of characters, writing the play's text, voicing the lines he is imagining. This way, the film which is excessively visual oscillating between painting and film, flamboyant and eccentric in style is a paramount example of self-reflective cinema, reflective on the

founding moments of the cinema through its frames, pictures superimposed one upon the other and pictures within the pictures. On the contrary of Jarman's film, Greenaway's exploits a combination of film-video-computer based technologies to get high-definition video imagery, in order to project the conscious and subconscious mind of Prospero who is at once poet, playwright, actor, filmmaker and magician, therefore to deliver the tension existing between the Shakespeare, Prospero, the performer John Gielgud and the director himself.

3.2 The evolution of Shakespeare films in the twentieth century

3.2.1 Silent cinema

Cinema makes its appearance at the end of the nineteenth century fulfilling the need for naturalism of the spectators that confronts the realistic trend of the theatre productions of that particular century. The new medium aimed at telling Shakespeare's stories including also those scenes that were either described only on the original text or non-existent instead of communicating the language.

The pioneers of the art of film are said to be The Lumière Brothers and Georges Méliès who pulled the new medium in two different directions, that is to say realism and magic. The Lumières arrived from a background of photography and tried to record reality, reproducing accurately both time and events through the cinematograph, whereas Méliès was an illusionist hence he brought into cinema theatrical magical shows through the superimposition of images, the stop-action technique and other tricks such as dissolve, multiple-exposure, scale models, transparency and matte shots. Méliès used to plan the film as a sequence of multiple scenes or motion tableaux shot in front of a static camera so that looking at the screen resembled looking at the stage through its proscenium arch, in fact both spectacles were framed in the same way.

"At the beginning, cinema was used to record stage productions. The first kind of adaptations, therefore, worked in the mode of filmed theatre. The camera remained fixed, and the shooting was frontal. Everything was done to reproduce the theatrical experience and to immortalize the acting of great players" (Hatchuel 2004, 13). At the beginning of the twentieth century playing roles in cinema films was not yet accepted because the motion pictures were considered inferior with respect to the theatre, but in a short time cinema became the extension of theatre. The person who transitioned silent cinema away from theatre conventions is told to be D. W. Griffith, whereas Edwin

S. Porter is credited to be the person responsible for the discovery of editing and creating editing methods including the cutting and joining together technique employed to order scenes that have already been shot.

At first theatre tried to compete with the cinema in terms of realism, ergo on the visual, but then after World War I investors started to believe that those productions were no longer profitable, therefore theatre started to shift from a romantic spectacle with realistic reconstructions to symbolism and neo-realism, thus from imitation to the verbal and interpretation again. With regards to this, it is important to name William Poel, the founder of the Elizabethan Stage Society, who at the turn of the century fought against the sumptuous spectacles of Henry Irving reproducing Shakespeare's original texts of the plays. Furthermore, the return to the Elizabethan aesthetic simplicity can be found also with Tryron Guthrie, who in the 1920s reacted against the voyeuristic experience of the new theatres using bare thrust stage which stressed once more the metatheatrical nature of the plays.

Opposed to the filmed theatre that aims at photographing the stage performance through a fixed camera so as to preserve it, cinema implies different movements of the camera to film characters displacement, various camera effects to represent a highly subjective vision of the play and, moreover, the succession of shots within the film. The adaptation of *The Tempest* by Percy Stow (1908), the first film adaptation of Shakespeare's plays, is a 12 minutes black and white silent movie that evolves in chronological order starting from Prospero and Miranda's arrival on the island - so focusing principally on the backstory as well as on magic - and shows the dichotomy superior-inferior (or animal) as well as good and bad typified obviously through the figures of respectively Prospero and Caliban. It displays editing, fading and superimpositions and it features intertitles and music. As a matter of fact, silent movies before the 1930s were delivered along with either sound effects, music played by a live performers or singers, phonograph recordings or a lecturer providing narration.

In the era of silent movies the adaptations of Shakespeare plays abounded both in Europe and in the US, but with the advent of the talking movies this interest decreased and with it, consequently, the number of adaptations. The new technique introduced in the twenties thanks to Alan Crosland brought the possibility of using the verbal through the Vitaphone, a device which allowed recording soundtracks and spoken texts on disks that were then reproduced contemporarily to the film. The first device was soon replaced by another called Movietone, invented by Lee de Forest, which allowed to

record audio directly onto the film. This created three main problems when it came to Shakespeare's plays: first of all the sound technique was expensive and the shooting time needed was long, secondly the new medium still needed to find its legitimacy and respectability so that theatre performance represented the way to win acclaim, lastly Elizabethan language was not suitable for the new medium. Moreover, with talkies actors were forced to expose their possible limitations as actors and also directors, such was the case for example of Charlie Chaplin.

3.2.2 The Talkies

In the 1920s and 1930s cinema was regarded by intellectuals as entertainment for the poor and uneducated masses, therefore producers desired to plead a broader range of tastes. Between the 1927 and the 1941, the Golden Era of Hollywood, producers began to see in Shakespeare the tool capable to bridge the gap between the working class who already relied on movies and the bourgeoisie who still evaluated it as a futile entertainment not suitable for them.

The first Shakespeare talking film is an adaptation of *The Taming of The Shrew* shot in 1929, whereas the first film shot in colours was released in 1944 and it is Oliver's *Henry V*, even though technicolour was actually introduced in 1916. Until the 1950s such films used to combine and alternate the theatrical mise-en-scène for the dialogues and film direction for crowded sequences. Then Orson Welles at the turn of the 1950s brought a cinematic style approached in his three adaptations of *Macbeth* (1946), *Othello* (1952) and *Chimes at Midnight* (1965), cutting the text and transforming it into prose, changing the order of the scenes and adding cues to various characters. To create links between textual and visual elements he adopted first of all metaphorical associations and his filmic style was "marked by fast editing, chiaroscuro effects, oblique shots, extreme high and low angle shots and great depth of field – meaning that a large zone is in focus" (Hatchuel 2004, 21).

The 1950s mark the start of diversification in Shakespeare film adaptations, directors could either favour literal and historical reconstruction, or the transposition to different time and space, or even avant-garde innovation. The movement away from the fairy-tale or realistic designs regained power at the end of the 1960s when designs become austere as in Polanski's works, in some films the focus was no more on the environment but on the character's emotions and reactions, thus on their faces.

The 70s and 80s screen adaptations relied widely on the redefinition of what cinema is through avant-garde orientations as in Jarman's *The Tempest* (1979) where Prospero's island is turned into a large residence made of a series of dark rooms. Other directors like Paul Mazursky freed the narrative widely changing some features of the play as in his *Tempest* (1982), an adaptation regarding a famous New York architect living a mid-life crisis that leads him into smoking and excessive drinking and who tries to escape from this neurosis taking his daughter Miranda to a Greek island. Here not only the set has changed, but one can find also many more female characters in fact he turns Ariel, Antonio and Gonzalo in women. What is sure is that the 1970s saw a shift in *The Tempest* adaptation from the Darwinian approach pivotal in the first third of the century to the colonial themes, widely studied especially in the stage performances.

However, at the end of the 1980s Kenneth Branagh made his appearance as director and his adaptations worked against the avant-garde trend presenting Shakespeare's plays in a more understandable and approachable way. He aimed at reaching a wider public and to accomplish so he took on the Hollywood realism style and combined metaphorical association and literal illustration so as to smooth the comprehension of both story and language. His approach influenced the production of the 1990s, as a matter of fact in the last decade of the twentieth century Shakespeare film got rid of the effect of strangeness produced by the original language and started to express their meaning through cinematic means.

Unquestionably there were directors still experimenting the previous tendencies and avant-garde style such as Peter Greenaway who proposed in 1991 with his *Prospero's Book* an adaptation to a certain extent far from the classical realistic narrative of the period. His film embodies the metafilmic adaptation par excellence, dense with visual signs and references to the Italian Renaissance world ruled by Prospero, furthermore it also includes various literal illustration of the original source and the addition of scenes not present in the text, such as Prospero's backstory, Sycorax's delivery of Caliban and Alonzo's thoughts regarding Ferdinand's drowning.

Between 1989 and 1995 three cartoon versions were made, one is *Resan till Melonia* (1989) a Swedish-language animation epic directed by Per Åhlin, the other is *The Animated Tales* (1992) coming from a collaboration between Russian animators, Welsh producers and English actors, the last is Disney's *Pocahontas* (1995) directed by Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg. *Resan till Melonia* is set in Melonia, the Great

Wizard Prospero's isle of abundance, growth and magic, full of bizarre and alien vegetation as well as strange and alien characters. The place is enchanting, colourful, and extravagant and sees the presence of Miranda, Caliban, Ariel and Ferdinand even if in other forms compared to the original text. *The Animated Tales* shows the plays' in its integrity and widely treats the issues of ethnicity and race. It employs puppets which of course struggle in showing emotions, so the characters are developed through music. *Pocahontas* can be seen as an echo of *The Tempest* due to the opening shipwreck and some characters such as Grandmother Willow who resembles Ariel locked in the cloven tree, Pocahontas who is the female native who returns the gaze mirrors Miranda and John Smith parallels Ferdinand's surprise in hearing a woman from a far-away land speak his own language.

In the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century productions displayed the personal vision of the plays through a considerable use of metaphorical association. At the turn of the century, then, what can be witnessed is a shift in trend in the representation of the figure of Prospero. The magus has always been played as the island's dominant male since the Darwinian ideologies and colonialism themes began to be used in order to understand the play, then the twentieth century have seen also Freudian influences and sexual tensions, but with the new millennium directors have started to blurred the gender line relying on female actors to play the magus, an example can be Helen Mirren in Julie Taymor's *The Tempest* (2011). Moreover, the twenty-first century productions emphasize different aspects highlighting those issues that are so important for the public nowadays: colonialism, slavery, male control over the female body.

4

The 21st century, the digital technology era

“Animation can explain whatever the mind of man can conceive. This facility makes it the most versatile and explicit means of communication yet devised for quick mass appreciation”
(Walt Disney)

4.1 “A Brave New World”

The twentieth century has undergone a series of rapid advancements and great achievements in the filmmaking technology and technique fields, from the first motion picture cinema rapidly evolved into talkies with sound, technicolour films, animated films, computer-generated graphics, 3D animation, the birth of computer-generated imagery also called CGI. What was at the beginning a series of still images shown at 24 frames a second to create an illusion of motion is now a series of digital images stored in binary code and played through a computer programme.

The shift from analogue to digital in professional filmmaking has been unavoidable for various reasons, but mainly for accessibility and economic resources. Half a century ago cameras needed a full crew in order to operate due to their dimensions and weight, moreover the shooting required extensive lighting set-ups and the film reel had to be switched every ten minutes, then editing was accomplished by physically cutting and pasting the film together. Today the digital cameras are smaller and lighter and enable to record for extended periods and with less light-exposure, moreover they allow to view the footage straight away after the filming with the consequence of erasing or reshooting unacceptable footage immediately. Photography costs are therefore cut down and the video is easily transferred to computer and worked on even if digital post-production has shifted the necessity of montage to the manipulation of frame. Being

the quality of image intact, in fact it is also clearer, it is very hard for the spectators to tell if a film is shot on a digital or film camera, it has manipulated or edited.

Technology has not only changed the equipment thus how movies are shot, but the film industry in general, consequently also how movies are thought, edited and the ways audiences watch them.

Considering the pre-production, new technology has brought various tools that allow to create in a more innovative, cost-effective and time-effective way set, props and so on. For example, the 3D printing is used to print costume design, prop building, whereas 3D previsualization helps producing immersive, digital replicas of the physical set or locations to be used on a live-action production, this way designers can increase precision in construction and directors of photography can find accurate technical solutions. Moreover, 3D previsualization works hand in hand with real-time rendering through which the digital environment can be created and changed almost instantaneously.

Nowadays editing is easier and cheaper and thanks to the cloud it can be achieved by a team working from different parts of the globe, moreover Algorithmic video editing helps optimizing the post-production operation organizing the material by visual identifiers. Then with the digital intermediary, the DI, filmmakers can change the colour or other image characteristics to everything.

Regarding the audiences, the fruition of a film, or even of a theatre performance, does not require anymore the physical presence in a local theatre due to the on-demand, streaming services reachable from the TV or the mobile phone whenever and wherever a person wants.

At present also the telephone has shaped the new approach in cinema, influencing the processes of representation – being a movie apt to be filmed on iPhone -, but especially parallel editing. “Interaction with computer technologies has led to a more complex cinematic style involving multiple windows, algorithmic and architectural mise-en-scène, and a combination of text, information and audiovisual immersion” (Daly 2009), in fact cinema combines moving photographic images, sounds, music, as well as speech and writing. The digital style creates a more emotional relationship.

With regards to Shakespeare, “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” (Rivier-Arnaud 2020, 139). Both in the Early Modern Period and today audiences are seeking

novelties, thus what is important is to find a way to entertain them through the collaboration of genres and new cinematic technologies so as to develop new means of expression.

Television and film adaptations and appropriations of Shakespeare have kept improving the tools used thanks to the new technologies, while theatre performances themselves have changed due to the proliferation of the live theatre broadcast, consisting in the digital stream in real time to screens, which leaves the audience in the theatre in the company of television cameras.

Besides, nowadays Shakespeare pervades not only stage and screen, but also the online world, with its presence in digital games and the social media such as Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook, Youtube and other digital media that heightened the audience agency like BuzzFeed quizzes, satirical memes, movie trailers, and live-performance tweets.

4.1.1 Digital animation, digital games

Digital animation has always been a very expensive operation, for this reason from its beginning in 1927 thanks to Walt Disney it has been carried out only by The Walt Disney Company and later Pixar and DreamWorks with investments on huge projects. The animation has undergone some improvements, from the initial sound cartoon to the rotoscoping technique capable of producing realistic action through the separation of images into layers that could be painted, manipulated and moved from frame to frame, as well as the multiplane camera which provided it with at-the-time-innovative three-dimensional effects. When Disney acquired Pixar and the two companies brought together their knowledge, they implemented the CAPS system - the Computer Animation Production System – also known as 2D digital software, which allowed to digitally colour hand-drawn animations reducing labour costs and post-production processes. This last tool has been supplanted from 2007 by the Toon Boom Animation's commercial computer software, which offers an up-to-date digital animation system.

In the twentieth century the digital animation has moved from puppet theatre or animated film to programming artificial intelligent performing agents, capable of executing both in a virtual environment - as digital game and virtual world does - and in a physical reality producing sequences of performing events. Digital games include the popular genre of digital role-playing games, called also “new performance art”

(Mackay), “internet theatre” or “digital and networked performance” (Jamieson) because the gaming fictional worlds expand the horizons of theatre and performance and rely on the character control and/or embodiment through avatar add-ons.

Shakespeare’s plays gamification follows analogical and digital forms, having inspired both analogical forms of gaming, such as board games or storytelling RPGs, as well as digital gaming and virtual world. Bloom classifies digital games based on Shakespeare into three categories based on a frame criterion: [1] theater-making games, that is to say games that turn their player into a creator of theater (actor, dramatist, theater manager, or designer), [2] drama-making games, in which the player inhabits or controls a Shakespearean character, [3] scholar-making games, which turn the player into a student of Shakespeare and his theatre. The narrative-driven video games give agency to the user that has to take decisions and take specific actions that regulate the course of the game, therefore the gaming experience gives the impression that the choices made and the action taken influence the outcome of the game.

Under this category falls *Tempest*, a live, interactive VR show created by Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro, co-directors of and art and game studio called Tender Claws which walks the line between art and entertainment. This immersive experience relies on live actors who appear as one plays through the experience and is available to be purchased as an in-app purchase within *The Under Presents* game. This experience blurs the boundaries between digital game and immersive theatre show.



Figure 5. *The Under Presents Tempest*

4.1.2 Computer-generated images, CGI

This kind of computer-generated graphics began to be experimented in the 1940s and was firstly introduced successfully in filmmaking back in the 1958 with Alfred Hitchcock's thriller *Vertigo*, but from that moment it underwent a very slow evolution until today. The era of CGI starts with the advent of digital filmmaking in Hollywood - the first digital film using CGI is George Lucas' *Star Wars* – and underwent an extensive growth during the 1980s thanks to the use of morphing, wireframe rendering and 2D graphics. Nevertheless, the real milestone in the graphics evolution is the turn of the century with an ever-growing number of films residing on it such as *Jurassic Park*, *The Matrix*, *Fight Club* and so on. At this point the flawless use of technology made difficult for audiences to differentiate natural scenes from CGI animation.

The twenty-first century sees exponential evolution of the computer-generated images with the release of films entirely relying upon this kind of technology amongst other *Avatar*, which also led to the creation of photorealistic 3D characters, photorealistic 3D world. And performance capture which enables to keep the essence of the actor's interpretation. Right now almost every mainstream film uses CGI to create either characters or virtual worlds, the name a few *Dune*, *Gravity*, *The Planet of The Apes*, *Life of Pi*, The Marvel movies, Julie Taymor's *The Tempest*, but this tool is also used to have a stunt resemble perfectly the main actor, to de-age actors and so on.



Figure 6. Mark Quartley playing Ariel in the 2016 RSC production of *The Tempest*

The CGI can also be used along with other technologies, for example the Chroma keying, a visual-effects post-production technique used for layering two or more images or video streams together based on chroma range. The technique is employed in many fields to remove a background from the subject of a photo or video – particularly the newscasting, motion picture, and video game industries. Another tool used in combination with CGI is photogrammetry which records and manipulates spaces through multiple overlapping photographs to build a 3D photographic image. The combination of the two technologies enables the blurring of video games, computer interface and cinematic forms.

The popularity of this technology is the cost-effectiveness that enables, in fact extraordinary cinematic experience can be delivered without building film sets demanding major time and funds to be constructed and maintained. Moreover, it grants filmmaker their creative liberty because CGI makes possible to make a reality out of any idea, even the most bold and courageous.

4.1.3 Shakespeare and the Live Theatre Broadcast Experience

“To date, there have been three periods in which stage-derived Shakespeare films for cinema have been produced with particular frequency: the first decades of silent filming, the 1960s and the period since 2009, during which theatre performances have been filmed live for digital streaming to cinema audiences around the world” (Aebischer et al. 2018, 19). Beginning in 2003 with the BBC’s broadcast of *Richard II* from Shakespeare’s Globe, live digital reproductions of Shakespeare rapidly proliferated and exploded in 2009 with the launch of NTLive which gave rise to a new digital outlet for filmed theatre.

Broadcasts are a hybrid artwork exploited by the joint work of the major British theatrical and media institutions such as the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) and BBC, which main characteristic is the interplay of theatrical, televisual and cinematic notions and conventions:

Whereas the medium’s most explicit theatricality consists in its capture of an entire and continuous performance on stage for a live audience, the use of multi-camera techniques and live editing derived from outside television broadcasts provides ways to offer “an apparently direct and comparatively unmediated form of access to the staging” (Wyver

2014, 104) combined with a 'cinematic take on the theatre experience' that is mindful of the big-screen context of reception (Van Someren in Handley 2016).

(Aebischer et al. 2018, 6)

They are generally captured in the theatre in front of a much alive audience but can differ with regards to the modes of production - that is to say their simultaneity in production and reception – as well as distribution. Therefore there are three categories of recordings: the first consists in live theatre broadcasts that are simultaneously captured and distributed on television, cinema or online and can be accessed for some time afterwards, the second sees theatre broadcasts filmed with multi-camera setups during various live performances and then broadcasted to cinema, television or online after being edited together during the post-production, the last category still resides on recorded live theatre captured during more performances and edited in the post-production, but these edited theatrical films rather than be broadcasted in cinema or television are released on DVD or as a web-based stream. Undoubtedly “broadcast theatre offers a spectrum of ‘expressive potentialities’ arising from who is behind the camera; where, when and how the performance is filmed; how it is mixed together either ‘live’ or in post- production; and how it is framed by additional paratexts” (Aebischer et al. 2018, 5).

This new means of theatre experience has produced new forms of audience participation and liveness, it enables audiences beyond the time and place of the original theatrical staging some kind of access to the experience relying on a range of both in-person and digital interactions with broadcasts and audience members across devices, using platforms such as Buzzfeed, Facebook Live or Twitter. This implies that the audience is not anymore passive as in the cinema, on the contrary becomes active creating a networked community of fans. The individual experience becomes collective and socially involving through social media, through tagging emoticons, photographs and likes. As Aebischer has pointed out “technologies are deployed as a means of creating intense, and sometimes disturbing visceral, individual and collective experiences that adapt the types of relationships possible in the early modern theatres for the digital age and a stratified neoliberal social environment” (Aebischer 2020, 3).

With the advent of digital technologies, viewers attending live theatre becomes a troupe of performers who actively participate to the event. The co-presence between actors and audience is the basis of the latter performance, which is produced through

the paralingual and verbal expressions, nevertheless also digital spaces like Twitter work as an environment for the audience since there individuals can voice their reactions or read those of others through live tweeting as in the case of the final applause, share pictures and screens of the show. This practice is heightened by the presence and responses given to the audience by NTLive and RSCLive, who started to give updates, re-posting comments.

Digital technologies not only affect the audience experience outside theatre, but also inside the theatre. As a matter of fact, their viewing behavior is troubled by various factors thus the experience is never the same. One of the major influences is played by the presence of cameras that are placed around the thrust stage, so that the vision is disturbed by both them and the lights on the camera monitors, as well as the audio since they move on the tracks present at the rear of the stalls on either side of the stage.



Figure 7. Track and crane cameras in the RST stalls

Consequently, the experience of the broadcast performance for the theatre audience is enriched with extra content, focal points, and distractions and, as in the case of the RST, becomes a vital part of the performance on screen joining the “transformative communion” (Sedgman 2018, 20) typical of theatre. Therefore, the medium is used to emphasize the theatricality of its modern stage designs,

technologies, and performances, hence in a certain way metatheatricality is reactivated thanks to the digital technologies.

4.2 An overview of four selected 21st century screen adaptations

4.2.1 Julie Taymor's *The Tempest* (2010)

Taymor's adaptation on the big screen is a computer-enabled new world of contemporary fantasy, where the computerized camera work along with computer-generated images technology enhance a special effects spectacle.

Through her direction she supports the current debate regarding genders equality - pinpointing the patriarchal entrapment of women - and the minorities equality, in this precise case those of indigenous people. In order to achieve such a purpose Taymor changes the gender of the magus bringing on the screen a female Prospera, the wife of the former Duke of Milan. She was exiled when her husband died because her brother Antonio spread the voice she was a witch, hence she was accused of having killed the Duke. In fact she was studying liberal arts and magic, for this reason she shares the same powers of the magus and is able to control both Ariel and Caliban. This shift in the story has made necessary the insertion of such explanation in what is Prospero's backstory in the play. Moreover, in the film minorities are personified by Djimon Hounsou, the actor who plays Caliban, a black African man who evokes parallels with colonialism and otherness. His custom is really well rooted in the *mélange* of elements one can find in the play, as a matter of fact he is described as "fish", "of the earth", "mooncalf" and in the film he is presented with webbed fingers and scales, naked and covered in mud with a circular patch of vitiligo on his face.

Yet, the presence of Prospera is not the only change from the original text, in fact the director has argued that the masque was unplayable and she replaced this spectacle with "a celestial panorama of stars moving in geometrical patterns that culminate in an androgynous image of Vitruvian man/woman as one being" (Vaughan 2021, 159). Moreover, Taymor cut some lines for example the ones regarding the final confrontation between Prospero and Caliban, in fact they do not talk to each other but just stare at each other in mutual respect before Caliban exits Prospera's cell to start a new life.

The film is shot in Hawaii and Lanai, a set that provides pictures with a wild, romantic and idyllic dimension is then turned into a magical atmosphere thanks to the CGI which is used to create both virtual landscapes and characters, more precisely for both the

storm and the figure of Ariel. Furthermore, the images in the film are theatricalized, for this reason “the special effects, used in all contents, either to animate the architectural environment or to create fantastic visions, do not seem to have impeded the theatrical scope of the piece” (Rivier-Arnaud 2020, 134).

4.2.2 *The Tempest*, Live record at Globe (2014)

This performance directed by Jeremy Herrin was staged at Shakespeare’s Globe in London in 2013 and filmed under the supervision of the screen director Ian Russell. Then years later, more precisely in 2020, it was shown as part of *Culture in Quarantine* series on the BBC iPlayer.

The Tempest is played in the New Globe, this means that occurs on an open thrust stage, in the broad sunshine of the afternoon, with all the ambient noises specific of the twenty-first century such as low-flying aircraft and tourist-toting helicopters. For this reason, new millennium and Early Modern Period performance intertwines in this adaptation: first, the location calls for the audience’s complicity in order to create the illusion, then the play lasts almost three hours, moreover actors play in period clothing speak Shakespeare’s words in a straightforward way.

Production elements such as lightning and sound supports the performance, the sounds and sweet airs of the island are reproduced through gentle music played on mandolin, saxophone and didgeridoo. This could be interpreted as a throwback to the Shakespearean theatre before the advent of technologies, but

theatre buildings themselves are technologies of performance whose affordances have a determining impact on how plays may be staged and viewed within them. Moreover, there is ample evidence, in the plays themselves, of the use of technological special effects and “devices” – from stage and ceiling traps and fireworks, disappearing banquet tables, thunderclaps, and the artificial lightning provided by candles, torches, and on-stage fires.

(Aebischer 2020, 13)

This adaptation does not rely on magic – there is no spectacular island and magic is created only through means - but on the love, both the love story between Miranda and Ferdinand and the love of the father for the daughter. Nevertheless, the themes of slavery and colonialism are still present, Colin Morgan’s Ariel is calm and graceful,

whereas James Garnon's Caliban is a grotesque creature waddling nakedly around in fright wig and body paint.

4.2.3 RSC's *The Tempest*, Live Broadcast from Stratford-upon-Avon (2017)

The RSC moved into live broadcast in 2013, the year after Gregory Doran became the artistic director. He transformed the RST into an all-embracing auditorium with a bare thrust stage which creates intimacy and interactivity with the audience and enables creative and flexible movement of the cameras used for broadcasts, positioned on tracks in the center and along the back of the side stalls. With regards to the broadcasts, RSCLive's peculiar employment of the crane camera allows to take in both the entire stage and the audience through spectacular shots.

In today's everyday-life people are hyper attentive due to the new technologies and consequently they are struck by an increase load of information. In order to follow this trend theatre companies have started to deploy performance technologies not as a means of enhancing stage design, lighting and music, but "as an additional means of characterization and intensifying the spectators' experience of co-creation, tying audiences affectively into the plays' fictional worlds and ethical dilemmas" (Aebischer 2020, 85). Thus, performance technologies provide multiple focal points that can give both interactivity and immersion in the performance, furthermore, "become a means of promoting the companies' brand identities as "cutting-edge" innovators and of extending their reach, via digital platforms, to a potentially global market and new audience demographics" (Aebischer 2020, 87).

Doran's adaptation of *The Tempest* is a highly self-reflective, digitally enhanced staging using projection mapping and live performance capturing enabled by the creative collaboration with Intel - a tech company - and Imaginarium Studios – a pioneering Performance Capture and Virtual Production facility. Therefore, this production widely relies on digital technologies in order to deploy a majestic illusionist spectacle such as Ariel staged as a live digital avatar or the multimedia masque shown through astonishing effects, enhanced also by social media interaction through the hashtag #ProsperoIsland.

"Heightened technological means were used solely to organize theatrical space and action into orderly displays of artistry to be marveled at" (Aebischer 2020, 122), in fact new technologies and practices can be regarded as a continuation of Shakespeare's experimentation with the at-the-time special effects technologies. Doran's direction

brought innovation that intertwined with past technologies, that is to say traditional theatrical tricks like the disappearing banquet or costumes inspired by Inigo Jones' "Drawing of a Lady Masquer". As a matter of fact, in each century there has been an increment in the sophistication of technology and the consistency of intertheatrical allusions that brought to present-day stage. For this reason the audience has to see this production as a linear evolution of Shakespeare's play which showed recycling of the performance technologies Inigo Jones had in turn recycled from Italian court shows.

4.2.4 *The Under Presents: Tempest* (2020)

The Under Presents: Tempest is "a live, scripted, participatory play that you attend, from home, using a virtual reality headset" (NYTimes). This technological first is an experiment whose development has been accelerated during the pandemic when theatres were shutdown, a very dramatic moment in which creativity and resourcefulness have actually increased. The lack of traditional performance spaces has brought to a project in which audiences could attend a show comfortably from home, just with the use of a VR headset – a device available since the mid-2010s which enables the wearer to focus anywhere within its 360-degree view, something that VR setup shares more with theatre than film where the director decides the focal point.

After having purchased an in-app ticket for the virtual reality game called *The Under Presents* on either Oculus Quest or The Rift Platform, the live audience composed of six or seven people meet the live actor in a shared space at a precise time. Here the actor leads the group's avatar clad in a black cloak and glowing mask in a virtual theatre lobby and then Prospero's island. The border between real and virtual, truth and fiction is blurred as the members of the audience are enlisted as the island's spirits.

The avatars cannot talk, cannot show the spectator's facial expression, but can gesture, just a general one and not specific even if they can track movement, unfortunately bots are lousy at improvement. Sharing the virtual space with a live actor means that there is the responsiveness of a real person who honors the choices the audience make, generating an experience that feels really live. Actor Brandon Bales has said in an interview about this point:

Acting is reacting—haha. We are doing pieces with this work that does not exist without a live audience, so that's where we start. I may have ideas of a scene in *The Under Presents* for example, but they only truly take shape when the audience is there and reacting to the story. So much of what we do is shaped by the audience, so with open hearts we go in with big plans that inevitably change shape in the transmission. *The Under Presents: Tempest* should be no different!

(Bales 2020)

Samantha Gorman, one of the founders of Tender Claws, came up with this idea of *Tempest* in order to keep employed some of the actors of *The Under Presents* after their gigs were canceled, as a matter of fact eleven actors alternate as Prospero, for this reason and for the interactivity with the audience it is not possible to find two performances exactly the same.

5

***The Tempest* on screen in the New Millennium**

“Reality is merely an illusion,
albeit a very persistent one.”

(Albert Einstein)

5.1 Metatheatre in the four chosen adaptations

In the four chosen adaptations metatheatre can be found in extremely different degrees. The first distinction that can be made is from filmed theatre and movie, for sure the former delivers the idea of fictionality thanks to the fact that the spectator can spot the audience in the theatre and hear them laughing, applauding, also coughing, whereas the movie is the actuality the spectator is living, rapt in a situation where there are no distractions and no signs saying that what is witnessed is not real, but a mere illusion. For this reason, the metatheatrical elements of the original play are showed and are perceived divergently in the two mediums, but it is true that also Herrin’s and Doran’s stage performances differ, one being more traditional hence felt as fiction and the other more concrete and at times close to the cinema experience. As a matter of fact at the Globe the audience is constantly visible especially thanks to the day light – it is not until evening that some dark starts to hide the galleries - moreover the people in the yard are even leaning against the thrust stage. On the contrary, in Stratford-upon-Avon the theatre is all dark, the audience cannot be seen except for the moments in which the light games are used and some of it illuminate the sits close to the stage, something very similar to what happens in the cinema and that helps the spectators to be immersed in the show, in fact they are literally included in the performance and actors are totally submerged by the illusionary environment. As Aebischer writes:

In the broadcast, by contrast, the individual positioning of the spectator vis-à-vis the performer and the avatar was turned into a collective positioning, as all viewers saw the

exact same shot of the stage, and that shot was selected for its ability to offer the best possible sightline and an experience of spectatorial plenitude.

(Aebischer 2022, 147).

Moreover, the RST's performance is built on spectacularity hence on technology, it is less comical than Herrin's so that the flowing is almost never interrupted by laughs. If it was not for some man coughing every now and then, at times it could have really resembled a movie experience. Lastly, in Herrin's *The Tempest* the actors often witness the presence of the audience looking at them while talking, making faces to them, whereas this device is not exploited this much on the RSC's staging. Apart from these few metatheatrical means, Herrin's staging does not rely on any hi-tech device, it keeps its technology to a minimum - something very close to what could have been the performance in Shakespeare's times - whereas Doran's direction widely relies on advanced technology to create an immersive experience which blurs the boundaries of the metatheatrical moments. Nevertheless, the double presence on stage of actor and avatar in the RSC performance is di per se metatheatrical.

Taymor's movie relies on some particular filmic technique to render metatheatricality, which at this point become metacinema. Not all the metatheatrical scenes are transposed on the big screen as such, on the contrary the director creates metacinematic moments out of scenes which are not such in the original play. For example, both the revised masque and the farewell to art are not metacinematic at all if not for some details, in fact in the former shows translucent Prospero, as well as Miranda and Ferdinand looking at the spectacle created by Ariel whereas in the latter Prospera looks directly at the camera for a brief moment at the end of her speech. Moreover, Julie Taymor inserts in the film a film-within-the-film which is the flashback of the backstory she recounts to her daughter and quick motion pictures at certain points in order to alienate the spectator.

As for the VR game *The Under Presents: Tempest*, it is all a metatheatrical experience from the beginning to the end, for the people of the audience become protagonists taking different parts depending on the scene - this is the reason why performances can be seen by a maximum of six or seven people at a time. They are led through the major moments of the play by the live actor who explains the story and what is going to happen so that gamers can play their parts properly. Spectators can move freely in the scenes, can explore – for this reason also the frame depends on

where the avatar is and what he is looking at. Furthermore, the actor interacts with them not only recounting the story, but also commenting on what they are doing, giving directions on how to do something, for example how to put on a hat and so on. This leitmotiv can be found in many parts of the game, from the first recreation of the tempest to the harpy scene where the actor at the end says to the spectator that the new avatar is actually him playing the part of the Harpy to scare them.

In the following paragraphs some metatheatrical elements present in the original play are going to be studied to see how technology has been employed and how it helps drawing attention on the theatre's own nature.

5.1.1 The Tempest

The opening scene has been transposed in the New Millennium in various ways, from the classical representation of Jeremy Herrin, very similar to what should have been in the Early Modern Period stage, to the more living and concrete storm of Doran achieved through the vivid 3D image.

In Herrin's *The Tempest* the scene opens with the image of the bare stage in its entirety, both the galleries and the yard full of people. On the balcony some musicians can be spotted and what emphasizes the start of the play is the sound of thunders. The audience is murmuring but silence falls as soon as some men enter the stage from the doors right below the balcony. At this point the camera shifts from a wide shot to a full shots of the actors and sometimes the camera changes from the one at the back centre to the ones at the left or right of the stage. Other thunders are heard and the Boatswain fall down as in a boat in the middle of a sea storm. More mariners enter and they scream precise directions of what to do.

The storm is performed with wind machines and rattling metal sheets, thunder and lightning are "heard" as in the original text, thus the scene is full of sounds and screams. When the nobles come out from their cabin the shots keep changing and what can be seen in the middle of the audience is a miniature of a boat brought on shoulders by the mariners through the yard, a means that helps the action to be felt as merely fictional.



Figure 8. *The storm, Jeremy Herrin's The Tempest*

As soon as the boat reaches the stage Prospero enters, he is on the balcony dressed in his magical garments, he has his stick and book, he can be perceived only by the audience and not by the mariners. Then the boat exits, as well as the Boatswains and the noble party, through the yard hence passing through the audience and next to the actress who plays Miranda, who is waiting in the crowd for her moment to climb on the stage.

In this performance the actors play gesticulating and projecting their voices so as to overcome the issues created by the open theatre and the distance of some part of the audience.

On the contrary Doran's staging opens with a frontal shot of a dark stage, just a low blue light can be perceived, especially when the Boatswains enter the scene from the back of the stage. All of a sudden lights accompanied by the sound of thunders invade the scene and the audience can finally have a glimpse of the set, it is plain, made of just the side of the boat, so there are two woody levels with doors from where actors can come and go. The storm resounds while the mariners start to scream, the lights focus on the figures and at the bottom of the stage lightnings and waves can be seen broadcasted on a black screen. The shot changes from wide to medium and all that

can be perceived are the actors since the audience is hidden by the darkness of the room. Therefore, the ocean seems to invade the theatre.

During the scene a cyclorama is lowered from the ceiling which shows firstly water invading the vessel then, after the tune shifts into the sound of underwater, the image turns into blue water, full of bubbles where people are seen falling lower and lower. Suddenly the darkness surrounds the entire set, the thunders are still resonating when a white light focuses on Miranda. She is on set facing Prospero who stands next to the audience, while she is speaking the camera shifts from a high angle shot to a front one, this way one can see the dark clouds on the screen at the bottom of the stage. Lights keep changing, from light to bright to low again. In this staging too, actors projects their voices and gesticulate, but not as much as in Herrin's one, in fact here words have no such importance since what is said is strongly supported by a high-tech interactive and immersive imagery which enables spectators to see and perceive instead of imagine. For all these reasons this sequence could be compared more to a cinema experience than a theatrical one, if it was not for the short moments in which the audience comes into view thanks to the lights.

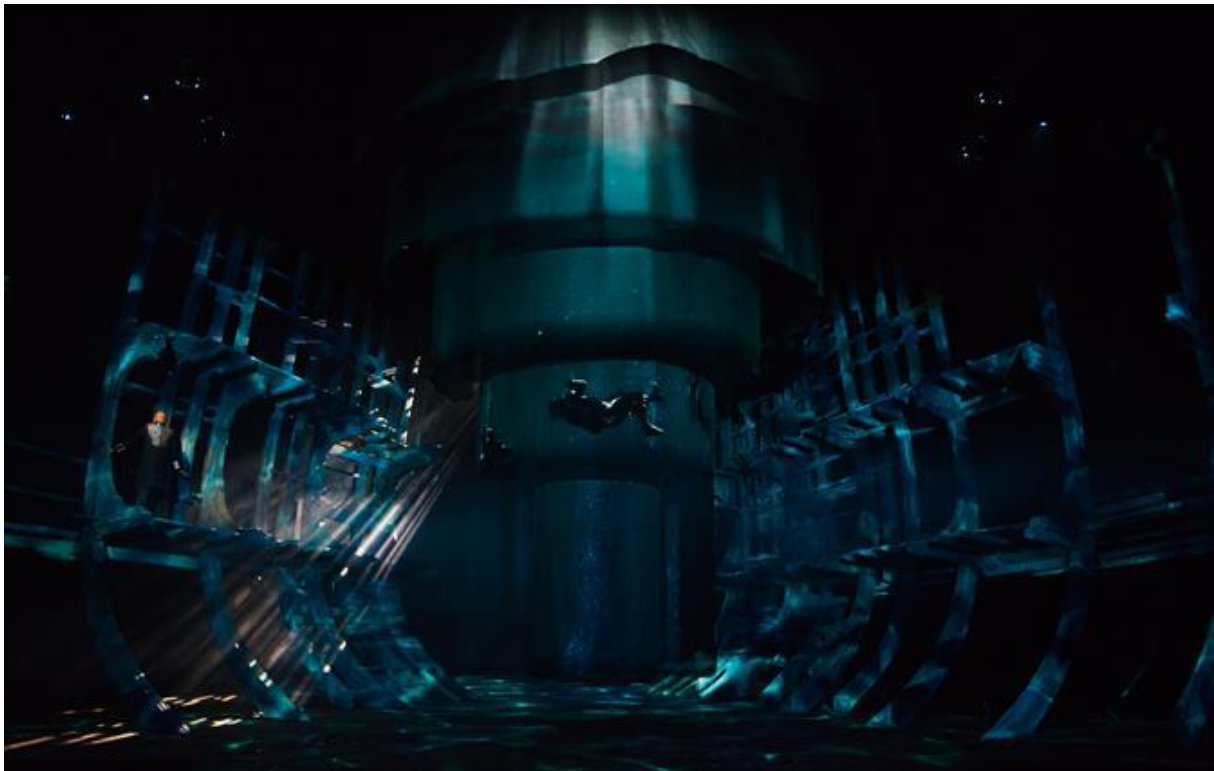


Figure 9. Topher McGrillis, the storm in Gregory Doran's The Tempest

Noteworthy is the entrance of Ariel right after Prospero has put Miranda to sleep. Prospero has the lights focused on him and in the darkness the cyclorama is lowered

showing the blue figure of the spirit moving while the audience can hear his voice talking. The screen behind the avatar is all black and shows what seem stars, Ariel moves, dives and flies, moreover he is kind of translucent, insubstantial. The cyclorama moves and from it the avatar is then shown on the screen at the bottom of the set, in front of what is the figure of the vessel. While recounting the happenings Ariel starts to show some red parts in him, until he becomes pure flames, tripled in different parts of the display: he is water and air, but also fire. The stage acquires a dreamy-like atmosphere, in the foreground the lights are red and blue and on the floor there are white spots moving as if little stars, whereas in the background the green moving lights resemble the northern lights. Moreover, the music played is a gentle one which can be confused for a lullaby.



Figure 10. Topher McGrillis, the recount of the storm in Gregory Doran's The Tempest

The main focus of the entire scene are always Prospero and Ariel, who thanks to the CGI can show the wonderful light-blue-almost-immaterial vessel in all its entirety on the screen. At a certain point of the tale Ariel's avatar is shown on the right side of the stage while the real actor takes place on the stage too, hence it is now possible to understand that the blue airy avatar is not recorded but is created in real time because it moves just as the actor below it does. At the end of the sequence the avatar vanishes

along with the green lights and the actor jumps forward to reach Prospero in a place from which the audience can appreciate all the spirit's costume.

Julie Taymor's film begins with white opening credits on dark screen, on the background sounds of waves and thunders. Suddenly the black shifts into shades of black and blue and in the foreground appears a dark castle on a rock, then the rain begins to fall heavier and the castle starts to shutter and the spectator can now understand that the castle is made of sand. All of a sudden the camera moves back changing the angle and shot size showing first of all a hand holding up the castle and lastly the shoulders and face of a girl. While moving to reach the face of the girl in a close up, the scene is supported by classical-tense music, suggesting that something mischievous is about to happen. Miranda looks out at the sea and the next scene unfolds a computer-generated vessel caught in the middle of a dangerous sea-storm, the extremely wide shot shows just the dark sea and the dark blue clouds full of rain, but the voices of the Boatswains can be heard. Then shots of the interior of the boat and of the black-volcanic-sandy beach where Miranda is running alternates. The camera zooms on the faces of the sailors and of the nobles, then when the fire invades the boat the Boatswains fall into the sea and the waves are all the spectator can see on screen before the girl reaches the pick of the cliff where her mother is abjuring the



Figure 11. Prospera abjuring the storm in Julie Taymor's The Tempest

tempest. Prospera has her black-magical garment on, holds the stick above her head and is focusing all her energy on conjuring the storm up against her enemies, in fact she also screams. But then Miranda arrives and she release it, restoring the sun.

In this case too it is necessary to have a look at Ariel's recount of how he performed the tempest Prospera bade him. The sequence is created all through hi-tech

technologies and accompanied by fast-paced-action music. The spirit's voice functions as a voiceover reinforcing what the images shows: thanks to the CGI he doubles and triples himself, moving faster than the wind, he is made of flames and through the storm he puts the boat on fire until it catches completely fire and explodes. The scene is extremely animated, rapidly changing the type of shots, the angles, duplicating both Ariel and the boat and showing at the same time a wide shot and a close up of the same event.

The audience cannot but be absorbed by this intense scene, where blue, black and red are the main colours, the happenings rapidly follow one another accompanied by the music that beats the time. Thanks to this reconstruction one does not need to ask himself if what is witnessed resides on reality or not.



Figure 12. Ariel recounting the storm in Julie Taym's *The Tempest*

In *The Under Presents: Tempest* the VR experience begins not with the storm, but before it, when each person of the audience is transported into a new weird land called the Mud Desert. This place is very odd, the sky is made of shades of blue and grey and the sound of a tempest can be heard. The hands too are made of mud which goes away snapping the fingers, when this is done two golden circles appear and place themselves to root of the hands as if being some sleeves. The avatar can move in this land so as to reach a cave in front of which resides the portkey for the theatre - a black and white mask. Once the character wears it the set changes for a theatre entrance. The building resides in the middle of nowhere, there is just a car and another building around. Here on the signboard one can read the name of the theatre - Decameron -

and the hours in which *The Tempest* is on-air, moreover as in real theatres there is a man in front of the entrance where one could buy tickets, in this case it is the place where you can snap fingers to find the right show.



Figure 13. *The Theatre in The Under Presents: Tempest*

Once all is done the avatar is taken inside the hall of the theatre, the colours finally change from gloomy to bright red and shades of orange. Each spectator waiting for the show to start awaits here, in the memorabilia museum as the voice over calls it, a real lobby with soft blues music, a bar where one can pour a glass of red wine and statues all around. What is interesting is that avatars cannot talk, but they can exchange things like the masks or the glasses and can move around. Then a voice gives the start to the show and the avatar can enter from a door into a completely new world. Sounds of thunders can be heard even before the set is revealed and all the people of the audience find themselves around a bushfire in the yard of an elevated house in the middle of a forest.

Once again here is a change in the colours, now the dominant ones are the tones of pink, brown and yellow. Waiting for the characters there is a man whose avatar is Prospero with beard and glasses, he can talk and actually is the actor who gives hints of the story during the experience and helps the audience to take an active role in it. After a brief summary of the opening of the play the actor divides the group into two and asks to some of them to go up in the house and to others to stay below lighting and shaking some torches they are provided with to simulate lightnings. This little

scene is the real-time remaking of the Boatswain and nobles in the ship during the storm, the actor giving instructions as a stage-director does with the performers – he also says “cut” to stop it. Before moving further, he presents the figure of Ariel and reveals that in the play it was him causing the storm to happen, hence it was all an illusion created by his magic.



Figure 14. The storm in *The Under Presents: The Tempest*

The characters are asked to remove the masks, put a stick on in and then snap the fingers, they are summoning a boat that appears on the fire and at this point Prospero tells them:

make thyself like nymphs of the sea, be invisible to every eyeball else but thine and mine, subject to no one. Join dear Ariel in summoning the tempest; are you ready to join Ariel? Hands in the air, Ariel we are ready for you mount the sea to the vulcan's cheek.
(*The Under Presents: Tempest*).



Figure 15. The recount of the storm in The Under Presents: The Tempest

Suddenly the set changes and the spectators found themselves in the middle of a sea storm, in front of them a boat is burning while the actor speaks Ariel's words related to the recount of the tempest.

5.1.2 Ariel and the invisible spirits

Ariel is the tricky character seen only by Prospero and the audience and who takes different shapes throughout the performance.

In Jeremy Herrin's staging Ariel is played by a male actor coated in feathers and indulging in some acrobatics, climbing round the set and hanging from the balcony and the galleries. He has a red make-up around the eyes that make it seem fire flames, he wears a lilac top made of spines which makes him look like an airy character, agile, almost invisible. Nevertheless, to understand he is witness by no one the audience has to play with the imagination.



Figure 16. Colin Morgan as Ariel in Jeremy Herrin's The Tempest

Along the play he disguises into a harpy and in one of the goddesses of the masque. His Harpy is quite scary, it comes out from below the balcony on some tambourine sound, followed by three other spirits who support and move his wings. On the contrary of the Harpy of the Greek Mythology, Ariel does not show a woman's face and the body of a bird, he is in his entirety a dead bird with a bustier of a skeleton woman. On his face he wears the skeleton of a bird with a huge beak and on his feet he has monstrous bird feet raised from the floor so that the spirits seem taller than he actually is. The wings are actually detached from the body and kept by the other spirits who also move them, following Ariel's movements, to give the impression he is floating but also to beat the nobles.

With regardig to the masque, costumes are plain and except for some scenery smoke, music and the wire to descend Juno from the heavens, no technology is used. Two female actresses play Iris and Ceres, both have a gold helmet showing what are blonde locks, but they differ for the collars. The former's one is made of colorful feathers while the latter has fruits and spikes that recall the harvest. Ariel plays Juno, he does not wear any bustier, only the helmet and a collar made of peacock feathers.



Figure 17. Colin Morgan as the Harpy



Figure 18. Colin Morgan as Juno

Then in Act 4 Scene 1, the spirits should take the aspect of some hounds, but they do not disguise as such in this staging, on the contrary they enter the scene just carrying the skeleton of the dogs, that actually resemble some little dinosaurs, the imagery reinforced by the sound of barking. While the hounds hurl against Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban the music becomes more comical, reminding the one that can be heard in circuses with clowns. Once again the yard is used by the spirits to exit the stage.



Figure 19. A hound in Jeremy Herrin's *The Tempest*

In Doran's production Ariel's translucent and gigantic avatar movements are created through the use of the motion capture technology, in fact his movements are mimetically reproduced thanks to the multiple sensors the actor is connected to during the performance and twenty-seven projectors. The spirit's figure, as well as some scenes in general, are all a synchronization of virtual and real therefore of physical and digital as well as human and non-human. The double living presence of actor and avatar onstage creates a sense in the audience of watching a double spirit, thus a double event which enables them to suspend their disbelief thanks to the fact that they understand what really lies behind the theatrical illusion. Nevertheless, these metatheatrical moments have also the effect of trigger in the audience a sense of empathy and affective affinity with Ariel. Being the mesh of a cylindrical shape the actor's movements are actually limited instead of being increased, this because every gesture expanding on a horizontal plane could not be caught and showed by the cyclorama. For this reason, Ariel and his spirits are forced to use a set of gestures and movements that do not result in an exhibition of distress on the technology part and therefore deformed avatars.

The actor playing Ariel is dressed in a suit evoking anatomical drawings regarding the exposure of the human muscle system, his face and hair are “modelled on Inigo Jones’ design for a ‘star masque’ with flaming hair” (Aebischer 2022, 137). On the contrary, the avatar is translucent, mainly of blue shades but also of red fire at times.



Figure 20. Tophér McGrillis, Ariel's costume in Gregory Doran's The Tempest

In many scenes Ariel is supported by many fellow spirits and if they are not present on stage they pretend to be hidden behind the woody boards of the boat's sides. They are covered in make-up and light-coloured costumes.

Ariel disguises as a Harpy at a certain point of the story, but in this performance the actor is actually present on stage with the costume he wears all along the play. In this case the scary creature is created live through the avatar showed at bottom of the stage, his movements enhanced by the actor's movement. Therefore, the stage is filled with the projection, the human actor and three spirits who threaten the men with some swords. Thanks to this duality the metatheatricality of the scene is preserved from begin to end, showing the audience the procedure that lies behind the great avatar.



Figure 21. Topher McGrillis, the Harpy in Gregory Doran's The Tempest

The hounds are presented on stage first of all as red and white projections on the screen at the bottom of the stage, where also the floor is illuminated by red lights. When the barks become more pronounced and the chasing starts, the camera shot shifts from high angle to low angle and Trinculo, Caliban and Stephano are joined onstage by the spirits. Each one of them carrying a simile shield depicting the dog's muzzle, which thanks to the lights game seem to actually move and bark.

Once again, the changing of lights from red to dark helps the actors to leave the stage almost unnoticed and, in the same way, Prospero along with Ariel enter it unseen, as if they have been there all the time.



Figure 22. The hounds in Gregory Doran's The Tempest

In Taymor's movie Ariel's figure was added in post-production, something possible thanks to digital graphics, in fact he is enhanced by CGI, he is translucent and insubstantial and is able to multiply in motion leaving trails of vapor when moving. He is perceived always as invisible, except for the scene in which he gets close to Prospera and says that if he were human his feelings would have softened at the view of Gonzalo's cry. In that exact moment his figure does not seem insubstantial anymore, but much alive, made of flesh and blood. He is played by a male actor, but sometimes he has also female characteristics, he is quite androgynous.



Figure 23. Ben Whishaw and Helen Mirren in Julie Taymor's *The Tempest*

In his first shot Ariel appears naked, when Prospera asks him to describe the storm, he comes out from the water and suddenly flies in the air, two elements of which he has the light blue colour. Right after he is disguised as a supernatural creature resembling Neptune, coming out of the waters to inflict pain to the vessel, he has red and gold flames sparkling from the hair and the grey-blue body. Actually, being insubstantial his body is chameleon-like, in fact it seems to take the colour of what resides behind him.

Nonetheless he duplicates and triplicates in additional scenes, he takes the shape of frogs when Trinculo falls in the pond or of bees when he goes to fetch Trinculo, Caliban and Stephano before the epilogue. He can become smaller or bigger, he moves really fast and he is also shot as an airy flying thing, as when Prospera tells him "thou shalt be free as mountain winds" (Julie Taymore, *The Tempest*).



Figure 24. An airy Ariel and Prospera in Julie Taymor's *The Tempest*

In this film there are no spirits aiding Ariel, everything that happens is an illusion created by Prospera's magic or is Ariel disguised. In all the scenes where the audience should perceive the presence of them, they will find only Ariel and crows in the case of the banquet, doves during the masque and barking dogs in the case of the hound scenes.

In the banquet scene he appears disguised as a huge black bird, with female body and human face with huge black wings, speaking with a metallic voice. The scene is shot through a high angle shot, while Ariel specifically is recorded through a low-angle shot or a close-up so as to show the three men more vulnerable compared to him.



Figure 25. Ben Whishaw as the Harpy in Julie Taymor's The Tempest

The hounds are created by Prospera's magic, three black dogs similar to rottweilers made of fire go for Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban who are inside the cell playing with the ladies' dresses. The attack starts with a close up on the dogs, they exit from a hole in the floor and in the distance in a very corner Prospera can be spotted. All the sequence is obviously complemented by the music and shows the three men followed by the dogs, a fiery-black-and-red Ariel and Prospera stirring up the animals. The scene ends with the three men escaping from the cell haunted.



Figure 26. The hounds in Julie Taymor's *The Tempest*

What has to be highlighted is that Ariel in many scenes takes a black shape, showing flames coming out from his body, exactly like the elements that are the foundation of the Hawaiian islands: volcanic lava and volcanic black rocks. He is part and parcel of the setting, at times rock and fire, at times air, at times water.



Figure 27. Ariel as fire in Julie Taymor's *The Tempest*

In *The Under Presents: Tempest* Ariel is not so much present as in the plays or in the film. The spectators can appreciate his presence as Nymph of the Sea during the actor's recount of the tempest. The audience is underwater with the gigantic mask with strange air, this Nymph resembles a fish somehow, a voice over sings.



Figure 28. Ariel as a Nymph of the Sea in The Under Presents: Tempest

After the storm scene, Ariel comes back only for the banquet as the Harpy. In the game the Harpy keeps in some way the shape of half woman and half bird figure having a woman face and claws in lieu of the hands. Furthermore, the fire is present here too, in fact the body is bright red, and in the middle of this fiery torso one can see the burning boat.

Regarding the masque, Ariel does not take part of it. The actor chooses two goddesses - Juno and Ceres - and they are played by two spectators.



Figure 29. Ariel as the Harpy in The Under Presents: Tempest

5.1.3 The banquet

In Herrin's staging the nobles are on stage, tired for wandering around the island in search for Ferdinand. Suddenly they hear some music which signals the entrance of Prospero on the balcony and the spirits on stage, they are all invisible. Spirits are both male and female, they are dressed very similar to Ariel – all in pale colours – and the actresses are the ones who confound the nobles letting them move as they please, while the actors are the ones taking into the stage the banquet. The soft music vanishes as well as the spirits and people on stage can finally spot the food. The camera keeps shifting from wide shots to medium shots, letting the spectator see all the actors, Prospero and the musicians, as well as focusing on the table. As soon as the nobles are about to eat the camera zooms off the banquet and the audience can see the balcony where the musicians play a dark-tense music while Prospero is setting fire to the food. Right after enters Ariel from the door below the balcony disguised as a Harpy, followed by three spirits who support and move his wings, while two others bring out the banquet table. When he exits, invisible Prospero comments the events from his privilege position on the balcony.

On the contrary, in Doran's production the banquet scene opens with the nobles gathered on the stage, they are talking when suddenly they hear sweet music. Light games change the colour of the set from green to blue and create figures on the floor,

therefore the atmosphere becomes dreamy-like. At the same time four spirits dressed as Early Modern Period people enter the stage and start to dance in the middle of the crowd. Prospero is on an upper level of the vessel hence oversees the happenings from above. The camera front shot zooms on the nobles so that the spirit can leave the stage almost unseen, when the camera zooms out allowing space for a wide shot the table of the banquet can now be perceived at the bottom of the stage covered by the actors. Again, the camera takes a medium shot on Prospero before he leaves from the dark door, then the light is lowered only on the nobles, all the rest of the set design falls into darkness, a trick that has allowed the three spirits who have taken on the stage the table to leave it completely unnoticed. Behind the men now there is the projection of a forest at night in front of which resides the table, fully illuminated from below. They move behind the table and as soon as they are about to eat the white tablecloth catches fire through CGI and is removed. Nevertheless, the fire keeps burning on the burgundy tablecloth when a thunder and the noise of a gigantic bird is heard. The cowboy shot on the table and the nobles shifts into a full shot of the stage, the lights turn to red and a display is lowered from the ceiling.

Therefore, the bottom of the stage is now filled with a huge image of the Harpy, a half female-human and half bird creature. As the camera moves from a frontal shot to a side shot Ariel's human character can be perceived on the first level of the side of the vessel, a white light focuses on him. In this case both human and avatar are on stage at the same time, moving in the same way. Other three spirits with covered faces then enter the stage, threatening the men with swords in their hands. The scene is filled with red lights except for the Harpy's wings which are blue, behind him black little birds are flying. When the creature leaves the scene the display is raised through some smoke effects, the lights turn green and the sweet classical music is restored. To conclude, the spirits enter to take away the table while Prospero is already on stage walking in the middle of the distressed nobles.

In Taymor's film the banquet takes place in a black volcanic esplanade, here the nobles hear a gentle music and all of a sudden a table full of delicacies shining as if not real appears in front of them. When they are about to eat the screen shows Prospera in her cell inserting a black little feather inside an ampoule filled with water, something like black ink and bubbles start to be seen while a bubbling sound comes up, the potion explodes pouring out water and black feathers that turns into crows. A screeching sound accompanies the shift of scene from the close up on the birds to the

harpy, a black half bird and half human escorted by many crows flying in the middle of a storm, in fact the colours are the same as the opening tempest. The sequence is all quite gloomy for both the colours and the Harpy's metallic voice and ends in fast motion with the nobles fighting against the birds, their figures leaving traces as moving fast, blurring the lines of the real timing of the happenings.

In the VR game experience the actor playing Prospero takes the audience on his Island, it is made of green land and there are birds singing. He gathers the players all around him so as to explain to them what is going to happen and what they will have to do. This stage divides in two parts: firstly he chooses the spectator who plays Miranda and the one who takes the part of Ferdinand, the others are there as spirits. Then, after the lovers have promised themselves love, all the players are dressed up as the nobles – hey also get collars – and are instructed to race behind a tree where they find the banquet table. As soon as all the spectators have reached the table and start to eat the sky darkens and the Harpy makes his appearance as a dark green face with green hands with bright-red-flaming body. The body is like an open window on the burning boat and he tries to frighten the nobles, until the actor says it is just him and asks the spectators if they are scared.



Figure 30. The banquet in *The Under Presents: Tempest*

5.1.4 The masque

Herrin's masque begins with festive music and scenery smoke that seems abjured by Prospero. Enters the first spirit disguised as Iris, but the only difference in the clothing that can be perceived from the normal costume is the collar made of colorful feathers, the gold helmet symbolizing blonde locks and the visible simile crinoline. After her speech, moving around the stage while Prospero, Miranda and Ferdinand are watching, she calls for Ceres who appears on the balcony and enters the stage descending the staircases. She differs from Iris for her collar made of fruits of autumnal colour and spikes and after having talked to the lovers she leaves the scene to Juno, who descends from the heavens thanks to a wire. Juno is played by Ariel, this time the collar is made of peacock feathers and his way of speaking is a little bit more feminine. While he descends from the balcony all the goddesses and Prospero start to sing for the lovers who takes then part to the chorus. At the end only the music is kept and from the galleries a shower of petals is left pouring down, at this point a marveled Ferdinand asks Prospero let him live here forever before the latter asks for silence again in order to let the masque continue. Iris gives her blessings to the wedding and then all the actors start to dance to celebrate the event, that ends in the moment which Prospero remembers Caliban's conspiracy and tells the spirits "Avoid, no more" (Jeremy Herrin, *The Tempest*).

The costumes are plain and the technologies used in this scene basic, in the same way as the original play words are the device used at the most to deliver the metatheatricality.



Figure 31. The masque in Jeremy Herrin's *The Tempest*

On the contrary, in Doran's staging the technology enables to add something to the masque, in fact it adds elements such as landscape projections and Juno's peacock feathers. The scene opens with a wide angle shot showing the two lovers along with Prospero on a side on the stage and Ariel illuminated by a blue light on the first floor of the vessel. The flute music accompanies the entrance of Iris, the stage illuminated in shades of blue and red with little enlightened points similar to stars. Nevertheless, the atmosphere changes rapidly when the lights turn into a landscape showing lawns and wheat fields made of bright colours. Iris is dressed in something similar to a seventeenth century woman dress ending with what resembles a Hawaiian Hula gown, the wide collar is made of colourful feathers and on the head has a long wig. At a certain point she is joined onstage by seven other spirits who disclose Ceres.

The second goddess rises high from the ground, her white dress has a long gown that covers the device below her. Her figure is not colourful as Iris, on the contrary she is made up in gold and dressed in white, on the long-gold-loose hair something like a little gold braid. On her skirt – moved by the spirits - the lights project flowers, the same that can be seen on the display at the bottom of the stage. Then she is lowered and as the spectator perceives this the shot changes on Miranda Prospero and Ferdinand. When the camera turns back on the stage the display is now showing the sky with the sun with light colours, the spirits are helping Ceres to get rid of the long gown and when they finally exit Iris has reached the middle of the stage. The front crane camera zooms in on the two goddesses, in the meantime the sky gets filled up with clouds.

At last, the two ladies call for Juno, the lights turn down leaving the stage in darkness except for Ariel, Iris and Ceres and the clouds in the sky leaves space for peacock feathers. The black, translucent curtain is raised to unveil Juno who seems optically connected to the green feathers projected on the display. She has a wonderful Early Modern Period



Figure 32. The masque in Gregory Doran's *The Tempest*

blue dress. The three goddesses bring the lover on stage and they start to sing, the scene turns into an operatic moment, the stage projections shift from the peacock feathers, to the colourful meadows and again to corn fields and then a forest.

The last part of the scene sees more spirits on the stage, both men and ladies are dressed as peasants, dancing as in a village feast while the goddesses are singing opera. Unfortunately, the festive atmosphere is abruptly interrupted by Prospero who has remembered Caliban's conspiracy. The stage turns black, the spirits are like frozen in their places until the magus commands "Avoid, no more" (Gregory Doran, *The Tempest*).

Julie Taymor preferred to change the masque for another spectacle, more understandable for a contemporary audience. Prospera through her magical stick shows the lovers a piece of deep blue universe, full of stars and planets and zodiac signs in what could be defined as an immersive spectacle. The wide-angle scene shows not only the sky, but also Ariel's figure and doves all doubling up along with Miranda and Ferdinand almost translucent watching the show and at the end a close up of Prospera, as if insubstantial in front of the new masque, remembering the "foul conspiracy of the beast Caliban" (Julie Taymor, *The Tempest*). This film-within-the-film opens a new level in the fiction creating an exact parallel to the play-within-the-play.



Figure 33. Ariel creating the planets show for the lovers in Julie Taymor's *The Tempest*

In *The Under Presents: Tempest* the masque scene comes right after the banquet. Prospero takes the spectators in a new setting - a palace - and looks for the people who played Miranda and Ferdinand before. Then, he tells Ferdinand that his father is actually alive and recalls the audience the names of the nobles. Furthermore, he picks two goddesses – Juno and Ceres – then forgives his brother before going on officiating the wedding. The masque here consists only in Ceres giving her blessings to Miranda and Ferdinand, the goddess moves her hands while the actor playing Prospero says the words.

5.1.5 “Our revels are now ended” (4.1.148)

Right after Prospero has remembered the plot and ended the masque, he speaks these famous lines.

In Herrin's *The Tempest* he sounds really sad, as if heartbroken for his forgetfulness due to his potent vision. At this point he is again so rapt in his magic that he is again about to lose everything because of it, in fact someone is once more plotting against him and he seems forgetting the business of real life. Here he emphasizes both the beauty of the world he has created but also the misery that comes from it being a mere dream, completely insubstantial and for this reason meaningless. While delivering this speech Prospero looks at the audience, from left to right and vice versa, stressing “the great globe itself” and “we are such stuff as dreams are made on” (Jeremy Herrin, *The Tempest*), hinting that what the audience itself is witnessing in that exact night at the Globe is nothing but an illusion created through the actors and the stage-director.

However, the profound sadness leaves for another moment of rage, so before calling for Ariel he sends the two lovers to the cell where they will be later discovered playing chess.

In Doran's staging Prospero is less sad than in Herrin's one. The actor never looks at the audience, but only at Ferdinand and Miranda, furthermore he does not stress any word in particular, for this reason the hint to the "Great Globe itself" pass almost unnoticed. Also, the part where he states "we are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep" (Gregory Doran, *The Tempest*) is not delivered in a passionate way, it is more the speech of a disillusioned man. Unfortunately, in this particular case the metatheatricality of the scene along its parallelism between world and stage, life and dream is lost.

In Julie Taymor's film the speech begins with Prospera in the background in full shot, while in the foreground there are Miranda and Ferdinand looking at her, shot in medium close up giving their back to the camera. Then, the shot shifts to a close up, first of the two lovers and then of the mother, then again to a medium shot of Prospera and a final close up. She recites the words with a hint of sadness, not really looking at anything as lost in her thoughts. The scene feels like circular, it ends as it began with a full shot of Prospera asking the lovers, in a medium close up, to go back to the cell.

In the VR game, right after the masque the players hold hand and find themselves back at the campfire where now the sky is darkened. Prospero asks the spectators to take off the mask and bow. After everyone has done as requested, he goes on with the famous speech, slightly revised:

friends our revels now are ended and you - the audience, the actors - as i foretold you are spirits and you will soon dissolve into air, into thin air. The cloud-capp'd tower as you can no longer see, the gorgeous palaces of memory - remember those? - the solemn temples of love, the great globe itself. Yea, all which it inherit, shall disappear and like this insubstantial pageant faded, leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff that dreams are made on, and our little life is wrapped with a sleep.

(*The Under Presents: Tempest*)

The actor says he does not need the staff because the players are his magic and he thanks them for their help.

5.1.6 The farewell to arts

This soliloquy should engage the audience and let people overtly understand the hints to illusionary reality given all along the play.

Here Roger Allam traces the circle with his stick and then directly addresses the audience when delivering his charm. The full shots alternate the over-the-hip shots and move from centre to both left and right following Prospero's gaze. During the speech he fights many frames of mind, he is enraged, then resigned and almost with relief when he finally says he is going to break his staff and drown his book.

Doran's *The Tempest* shows for the first time Prospero alone on stage facing the audience. The atmosphere is gloomy and still, it seems to be in a dark forest at night, a moment in which a person can really face and reconnect with his inner-self thanks to the surrounding silence. Prospero is sat on the stage, his stick on his legs, his voice is more peaceful than before and while delivering his charm, at times he addresses his gaze directly at the audience. After saying "I'll drown my book" (Gregory Doran, *The Tempest*) he gets up and in complete silence he traces a golden circle on the floor with his stick, then when he has completed the ring a "solemn air" begins to be played and he breaks the stick. Here "the breaking of the staff and the relinquishing of technology is a profoundly nostalgic gesture that seeks to return theatre to its non-technological basics" (Aebischer 2022, 141).



Figure 34. Topher McGrillis, Prospero farewell to arts in Gregory Doran's *The Tempest*

In Taymor's film this scene takes place on a hill where Prospera with her stick traces a circle on the sand, speaking the words of what seems an enchantment. The shot alternates close ups of her and shots of the environment, she puts the circle on fire and the landscape behind her starts to spinning around her figure. The computer-generated flames increase at the climax of her speech to end as soon as the landscape stops spinning at the end of the soliloquy. Then, at the sound of "But his rough magic I here abjure" (Julie Taymor, *The Tempest*) the spectator can enjoy a close up on Prospera, who for a very brief moment addresses her gaze to the camera. The camera keeps zooming in on her face to reach an extreme close up, showing the fragility in her eyes when she says she is going to break her staff and drown her book. The last part of this scene is accompanied by very low classical music.



Figure 35. Prospera gazing at the camera in Julie Taymor's *The Tempest*

In the VR game there is not a real farewell to arts, nevertheless the actor tells the players he does not need the staff anymore "you know what, I don't need my staff anymore because you guys are my staff, let's burn it" (*The Under Presents: Tempest*) and asks the spectators to throw it in the fire.

5.1.7 Epilogue

The grand finale in Jeremy Herrin's staging begins with only Prospero and Ariel on stage, the former frees the spirit and breaks the stick. Then, he turns towards the audience and tells them "please you, draw near" (Jeremy Herrin, *The Tempest*), before placing the two sides of the stick at the very end of the stage and talk directly to them. The scene is shot predominantly with the back camera through the over-the-hip-shot,

which shows how Prospero is really looking and talking to the people in the theatre, more serene than before. He is now calm, all he has sought has been achieved and he has also forgiven the sinners, furthermore he has understood that it has come the time to leave behind the world of illusion he has created in order to go back to his Dukedom. Prospero has finally realized that what he needs is the audience's applause in order to be set free and this is what he is now asking for.

In Doran's final soliloquy Prospero directly addresses the audience once more. He is alone on stage and at the sound of "please you, draw near" (Gregor Doran, *The Tempest*) the lights are turned off and Prospero gets the entire focus thanks to a round white light. For the first time he does not only look at the entire audience, but he also points at the people in the theatre. His speech is straightforward and delivered gently and with dignity. When this ends Prospero throws his hands up in the air, both signalling the end of the play and requesting the ovation. He is finally free, in fact he exits the stage in darkness. The scene is shot firstly with a wide high angle shot taken from the frontal crane camera, then after a zoom in it changes to a medium shot.

In Julie Taymor's film the epilogue is actually missing, in fact the director has explained in some interviews that she thought it would not work in a film as it does in the theatre. So, the last scene opens with Prospera freeing Ariel and on the notes of "where the bees suck" sang by the spirit, on a cliff Prospera throws her stick down in the ocean, smashing into seems glass pieces when reaching the black shore. And like this the movie ends, in fact next there are the end credits and soundtrack, supported by the images of books drowning in deep blue waters.

The Under Presents: Tempest does not provide the Prospero's soliloquy of the epilogue. On the contrary, when the players burn the staff in the fire a festive music starts to play and Prospero thanks the spectators. The set begins to vanish as sucked by some invisible force and leaves what seems a struggle of the game to become something else, in fact geometrical colourful figures come out from the fire until the spectators find themselves in a plain dimension made of only bright changing colours. This fantastic realm then fades to grey and brings back the players to the lobby.

Conclusion

This dissertation has attempted to demonstrate how new technologies enhance a more innovative and interesting metatheatrical experience. *The Tempest* is a play that relies widely on moments that draw attention to its own nature as a theatrical performance, in fact the text structure allows the suspension of the spectators' disbelief that might ignite in them a critical thinking over the contemporary society. Undoubtedly metatheatrical moments were easily achieved during the Early modern Period thanks to the playhouses architecture with the open roof and the consequent sunlight, the audience closeness to the actors and, lastly, the names of the playhouse structure referring to Christian beliefs. Nevertheless, even if the innovation in technology over the centuries have for sure challenged the traditional norms, it has anyway enhanced the theatrical experience thanks to new means of staging conventional theatrical devices.

From the bare stage with just a trapdoor of the Early modern Period to the introduction of small reflectors tied on candles and then that of the electric limelight at the end of the eighteenth century, the advancements in technology have happened ever more quickly. As a matter of fact, the twentieth century has seen the advent of cinema, along with motion picture, sound, technicolour techniques, animated films, computer-generated graphics, 3D animation and lastly the birth of computer-generated imagery also called CGI which was perfected in the New Millennium.

Furthermore, the twenty-first century has seen the emergence of digital approaches such as augmented reality, virtual reality, AI and gamification with their immersive world marked by avatars. It might be easy to reckon metatheatricality something difficult to render both on stage and on screen with the presence of such instruments, but this belief could not be less accurate, after all dramatic techniques, genres and methodologies can co-occur alongside digital means. All four chosen screen adaptations present to a greater or lesser degree metatheatrical devices, in all cases truthful to the particular medium, something that has brought a less truthfulness to the original text at times.

In my opinion Jeremy Herrin's *The Tempest* can be defined as the performance that draw nearer to what I imagine should have been the experience during Shakespeare's

time in an open theatre. The reasons reside on the live record of the play staged at the New Globe with no support of any particular technology, thus all the metatheatrical elements related to the Early Modern Period playhouses architecture are still present. In addition, both the staging choices made by the director and the camera frames choices preserve the audience disillusionment.

On the contrary, the live broadcast from Stratford-upon-Avon of Gregory Doran's staging deviate from the tradition and embraces high-tech, AI and CGI to create an immersive-not-so-alienating experience. In fact, the lighting techniques, the camera movements and the players acting make this performance in some ways close to a cinematic experience. Nonetheless, in this case technology is the means that at the same time distances and provides metatheatrical moments. In truth metatheatre here is less evident than in Herrin's direction, in fact the audience is not visible due to the dark room and the lights focused on the stage and the actors do not address directly the audience so often, nonetheless the sight of tracks and crane camera along with its lights and sounds, in addition to the double presence on stage of the actor playing Ariel and his avatar which creates a mirror effects and a sense in the audience of double event, makes understand what really lies behind the theatrical illusion.

With regards to *The Tempest* directed by Julie Taymor one has to consider metacinema instead of metatheatre, for this reason the devices are very different from the two examples before mentioned. Movies seek actuality and therefore they are an escape from reality in which the spectator is completely rapt in what it is shown on screen which also create mechanisms of identification. Taymor employs metacinematic devices such as quick motion frames or direct look at the camera as well as the insertion of a flashback and the duplication of the figure of the spectator.

The most striking evidence of the possible co-existence and co-occurrence of new technologies and metatheatre is the VR show created by Tender Claws and presented to the public through *The Under Presents: Tempest* game. This experience clearly blurs the boundaries between digital-virtual reality game and immersive theatre show providing the player with a live actor who leads them through the event. The main purpose of this new adventure is the interactivity between actor and players – acting and reacting - which is one of the devices at the root of metatheatre.

To conclude it is possible to affirm that the twenty-first century, along with all the new technologies, has brought on screen various nuances and shades of metatheatre. To exploit the potentialities of the medium, in some instances adaptations have been

near to the original text adopting metatheatrical devices in the same mode and in the same moments, in some others a shift has been made always maintaining alienating effects. At last, occasionally adaptations can be such an immersive and all-absorbing experience - enhanced by the new digital approaches – thus defining the event itself a metatheatrical practice per se.

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