

**IN EXILE WITH SHAKESPEARE'S *THE TEMPEST*:
SOLO PERFORMANCE AS 'ANALYTIC THEATRE'ⁱ**

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In Exile With Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: Solo Performance As 'Analytic Theatre'

"The concept of the self as a work of art, an idea which became central to Renaissance culture, expresses the tendency of the period to allow 'art', in the broad sense of "human creative activity", to compete with divine grace as the shaping force in human life and destiny".ⁱⁱ

Throughout this paper I discuss my project working on Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as a solo performance. My underlying directive for the project was to performatively explore the notion that the character Prospero as Shakespeare's alchemical operator in the play, experientially works on himself, to bring his physical self into harmony with this spiritual self, to create a more total and harmonious Self. I suggest that to do this, Prospero, magically creates a tempest with the assistance of Ariel, his servant-spirit, to instigate physical and spiritual change. I also set out to explore how, from out of the chaos of the tempest, Prospero contrives the ritual and alchemical combination of Miranda (Luna) and Ferdinand (Sol), and by so doing, facilitates the birth of a new 'individuated' and teleological social and political order. Moreover, this new providential order was to be founded not on ambition and egotistic self-hood, but rather, a transformed Self, that acts out of forgiveness and love: notably an ideal of the Renaissance Humanists and Alchemists who attempted to purify the fallen world by bringing earthly creatures into more perfect unity with their governing Ideas:ⁱⁱⁱ

"The alchemical operator consists essentially in separating the prima materia, the so-called chaos, into the active principal, the soul and passive principle of the body. They are then reunited in a personified form in the coniunctio the ritual combination of Sol and Luna which yields the magical child, the reborn self, known as the ultima material."^{iv}

Employing psychoanalysis as a frame through which to evaluate my process, I adhere to the notion that 'constructing the Self' is seen as an essential and integral process, of what is called, 'individuation'. By individuation, I refer to processes that occur in the psyche when inherent parts of the self are integrated through consciousness and brought together into a more total harmonious Self.

I propose that this activity, is inherently alchemical, because it is about the *consciousness* of joining together separate parts of the Self – a process that is commensurate with the narrative content and action of the play, where the alchemist Prospero undertakes to unite opposites, internally in his own psyche and, externally through the calling to task of his brother Antonio, who usurped his role as King, and his Court, when they arrive on the island.

Having recently completed a reflection and analysis of my project, my findings indicate that the solo performance of Shakespeare can provide a container, or Alchemical Still, where these processes of self-transformation can take place. I ascertained this through the success of my performance that proved to be a deeply transformative and ‘individuating’ experience both for me as performer, and, by all accounts for my audiences. Moreover, my successful explorations in rehearsal and performance, lead me to consider that the *key* to this transformation was due to the match between the plays inherent individuating and restorative power, focussed through Prospero as its central conduit, and the intense focus of my own self-exploration while performing Prospero.

Focussing my attention on Prospero, as the ‘individuating’ archetype of the play, and taking into account Shakespeare’s creative device to isolate Prospero, by sending him into exile, to live on an island surrounded by sea, I worked with the concept ‘exile’ not only as an image of geographical distancing, but as a pervasive state, or psychic space. I did this to see whether the exploration of personal self-consciousness demanded the ‘space’ that exile could provide for the unfolding drama of individuation to take place.

Exposing Prospero’s psychological exile as a directive to individuation proved to be highly significant to the outcome of the project. Through my own lived-activity, as the performance interfaced with my life, I discovered that through physical and psychological exile, experiences of the ‘numinous’ or, transcendent consciousness, where something other than rational thought assisted in interpreting life, had the possibility to be experienced.^v The variety of characters in the play representative of distinct opposites, such as Ariel (spirit/space/thinking) and Caliban (physical/earth/willing), were vital participants in my experience, as I was challenged to hold the psychological tension between them in my performance generating an equilibrium that would otherwise not have been possible if I had only played one character.

To evaluate my process, I employed two critical frames: Psychoanalytic critique for the more theoretical investigation, and, psycho-physical performance techniques for my performance practice. Psychoanalysis proved useful as a way to revealing and articulating phenomenological explorations, where my own contemporary subjectivities, interfaced with the characters subjectivities as they appear in the historically inscribed text. Likewise, the psycho-physical techniques of the Russian actor and director Michael Chekhov facilitated my entry into phenomenologically embodied process.^{vi} I discovered that working between and within these two forms of critique, there were moments that came together in a balance or sense of wholeness, and I found myself ‘performing’ theatre while analysing it. I had the experience of being simultaneously both inside, and outside, of the process where I became the object of my own critique.

Extending the notion of theatre as a forum for analysis, and individuation, Inge Wise and Maggie Mills in their book, *Psychoanalytic Ideas and Shakespeare*, explain a psychoanalytic process that they term ‘Analytic Theatre’.^{vii} Wise and Mills describe this theatre as an internal theatre that enables us to make a link between the theatre in everyday life and, the internal theatre in each of us. Because Wise and Mill’s are exploring the idea that ‘theatre of individuation’ takes place in the psyche, and because my exploration extends this process into live performance, I have adopted Wise and Mill’s term ‘Analytic Theatre’, to use in the title of this paper, signalling to the reader that the process of my performance project is a journey of self-exploration and analysis.

The Project

I began my performative journeying with Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* when I discovered that I needed to return to New Zealand to restore my health, having contracted an illness in Asia. I had not lived in New Zealand for twenty five years, when I returned to recuperate, having spent most of my adult life in Australia and Europe. Because of the years that had passed since being in New Zealand, the experience of my return was like that of entering a foreign country, and I was challenged to find a renewed relationship both to the psychological isolation of living on an island, and, a culture that had become foreign to me.

Faced with geographical isolation and closely surrounded by mostly cold and tempestuous seas, dispirited memories of a sea-centered upbringing, where the sea and its moods had to be negotiated to do just about anything, together with a cultureless childhood, proved to be confronting. My decision to work on Shakespeare's *The Tempest* seemed therefore, to be a fitting choice.

At the very beginning of the play, Prospero the alchemist scholar asks Miranda his daughter, who was also exiled along with him, when she was a child of three years old, to *recall* her arrival on their island:

Prospero: "Dost thou remember a time before thou cam'st into this cell...? I do not think thou canst, for then thou wast not out three years old...?"

Miranda: "Certainly, Sir, I can."

Prospero: "By what? By any other house, or person? Of anything the image tell me, that hath kept with thou remembrance." ^{viii}

Prospero's insistence on Miranda's remembering *images* of their past together is a crucial element in the play - as though he was gathering their difficult past together, to mend it so as to create the image of a new future. Performatively exploring their conversation, it seemed to me that remembering through images had the power to deepen the relationship between them by putting into context their early life together and, generating the imaginative power needed to create a new familial and social order. It is interesting, that in recalling their previous life, Prospero emphatically insists, indeed demands, that his 'dear heart' listen intently to him. He does this (on several occasions in the first scene) by calling Miranda into a conscious relationship with past events where the story he is about to tell her can become an *active* part of her imagination: "Dost thou attend me?"^{ix}

Philip Armstrong, a New Zealand academic, critiquing *The Tempest* from a psychoanalytic perspective, reminds us that the substance of the sea has reflective [and restorative] power. Armstrong points out how memory and the sea work together in *The Tempest*, he states: "Recalling the pervasive association in *The Tempest* between the ocean and the functions of memory and forgetting, it seems appropriate that Ariel's 'sea-change' represents a process of preservation...of primal memory..."^x

Surrounded by sea, Prospero and Miranda can reconstruct the memories of their lives – the sea serving as mirror [of images]. Not unlike Miranda and Prospero’s re-membering, when I arrived back in New Zealand, I was also faced with having to recollect my past, thus raising a number of important ‘sea-change’ challenges for me. Accordingly, recalling and remembering became contributing factors to the development of my performance: Memories, both real and actively imagined, gave me the impetus that I needed for my own story, as it interfaced with Prospero’s.

The poignant image of Prospero and Miranda on an island surrounded by sea, has the effect, as Armstrong points out, of inducing a dream-like quality, where the past can be remembered and where futures can be created. Prospero’s action to create the tempest with Ariel’s assistance, where his brother, family and court are seemingly drowned, facilitates an initiation of emotions. Alchemically speaking, the activity of the tempest separates the prima materia (gross emotions), dislodges fragments of Prospero’s own tormented psyche, and prepares the conditions for the ultimate forgiveness and reunification of the families. The sea, a metaphor for the prima materia, or what is termed in alchemy ‘seed of the process’, the mercurial element, and substance, necessary for transformation, becomes the [solution] of Prospero’s project.

Finding his self alone on the island, “a kind of self-exile from self”; aside from the ‘nave’ Caliban, an indigenous inhabitant of the island, who becomes Prospero’s slave (not servant as in the case of Ariel), with his daughter Miranda - Prospero finds he has the time and space to study without the burden of Kingship duties.^{xi} His exile can be seen therefore, as a pre-condition to his own self-knowledge. It is in exile, that Prospero is given the opportunity, not only to study his books, but more importantly, to *practice* the knowledge of his ‘art’. As a psychological image or archetype, the [i]sland therefore serves as the Alchemic Still or Vessel, where Prospero ‘performs’ his experiments and, where his own little self-concerned unforgiving ‘i’ is put to the test. As a consequence of his practice of “rough” magic, Prospero becomes consciousness of his goodly-true, ‘authentic Self’ and transforms the, ‘I’ that ultimately, has the power to serve his fellow human beings through genuine love.

George Lammings poetically points out that the play could only be performed on an island, as it is an island surrounded by sea, that has the power to be a place of exile and, as Armstrong also points out, a place, of self-reflection:

“It is not only aesthetic necessity, but the facts of lived experience which demanded that the territory of the drama had to be an island. For there is no landscape more suitable for considering the question of the sea, no geography more appropriate to the study of exile...”^{xii}

Given the not dissimilar parallels between my own arrival on an island, through an act of necessary, and self-imposed exile, and Prospero’s arrival and exile to his island, devising in rehearsal, I noticed my process had gradually become a semi-biographical undertaking, a biographical fiction, where my life and the life of the play, were interfacing. Taken quite by surprise, due in part, to years of repressed memories, I also found that my personal need for restoration paralleled Prospero’s, particularly, his need to find a renewed relationship to his family through forgiveness and love.

To begin working on the reconstruction of the text for my solo performance, I began to explore my own home island imaginatively searching for parallels between Prospero’s island, and my own, so that I could personally find access to the narrative.

In a useful act of synchronicity, a friend suggested that I read a recently published, but controversial book. The controversy surrounding the book was due to its description of New Zealand Maori nature magic secrets that the author Samuel Timoti Robinson, claims are being revived by indigenous magician priests, referred to by Maori, as Tohunga. The revival of Tohunga practices is significant for a number of different reasons, to include, a new direction in New Zealand indigenous spirituality. Moreover, the revival of these practices is particularly important as a constructive affront to the many years of suppression by white colonizers, enforced by the Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907.^{xiii} In a trend towards renewal, Robinson claims that Maori are currently experiencing a renaissance where people are hungering for the ways of the old. On my return to New Zealand, I had become aware that these arts were more prevalent and this was confirmed in my discussions with Maori friends.

A young ‘in-training Tohunga’ himself, Robinson interestingly, likens the magic of Tohunga, to Prospero’s own magical abilities, which seems fitting to me, seeing both Maori Tohunga and Prospero, as magician priests, practice nature magic from their island homes. Robinson compares the practice of Tohunga with Prospero’s magic in the following way:

“Tohunga could work miracles such as healing and witchcraft, and to perform such feats as quelling the winds, calling rain, securing good weather, causing love overcoming illness and invoking the gods. He was a wizard and a wise man. Like Prospero, he spoke in epithets and proverbs, echoing the words of the gods and ancestors”.^{xiv}

I found Prospero likening to Tohunga, a very potent imagination, inspiring a host of possible critical issues to do with the legacy of colonization. However, reading the book it is clear that Robinson’s focus is on the shared experience of the art of magic and meaning making, rather than any ‘political’ agenda. And so, allowing myself to be drawn imaginatively into the new and mysterious landscape of nature magic, my performance practice was becoming more than ever before a magical act where I was being influenced by my active imagination of the island.

Employing psychoanalytic ideas in order to find a relationship to this new internalized landscape, I further explored the notion that Prospero’s island was a metaphor for a phenomenological space/place, where the ego or ‘*I Am*’, could find and identify it-self in [i]solation. Working out of this imagination, I found that my own ‘potential’ [i]sland space, was not dissimilar to Prospero’s in that it had become a powerful source of phenomenological meaning and, surprisingly the ‘alchemical’ substance for my creative work.

Alone in rehearsal, I found that this unfolding landscape was proving overwhelmingly challenging to my staging of the performance. As an actor I trained in techniques that supported the creation of character and, in formulating imaginations that could be projected through characters and on to the stage. As a private person however, images of this imaginative landscape became confusing to me, and I found that I was not easily able make sense of deeper subjective issues that I was experiencing. Because I had found that reading psychoanalysis was useful to the critical mapping of my journey, I decided to enter into the process of Jungian psychoanalysis, due to its known potential to identify and make-sense-of individual and collective psychic experiences. Analysis also considers ‘irrational’ psychic experiences as archetypal forces that can be understood through dreams and active imagination. Quite unexpectedly, entering Analysis had the effect of extending my performance research into a far more complex domain, than I could ever imagine.

Discussing the ideas of J. McDougall, Wise and Mills describe how he sees that the characters in our own little universes are vital psychic contributors, to how our ‘internal’ theatres work. He states:

“...parts of ourselves that frequently operate in complete contradiction to one another, causing conflict and mental pain to our conscious selves. For we are relatively unacquainted with these hidden players and their roles. Whether we will it or not, our inner characters are constantly seeking a stage on which to play out their tragedies and comedies. Although we rarely assume responsibility for our secret theatre productions, the producer is seated in our own minds. Moreover, it is this inner world with its repeating repertory that determines most of what happens to us in the external world.”^{xv}

Extending this notion that theatre, more particularly Shakespearean theatre, can serve as a form of ‘analysis’ and importantly, an internal stage upon which the unconscious can be played-out, supports my long-term research working with Shakespeare as a vehicle for psychic transformation, in the training of actors. Throughout the many years that I have worked with Shakespeare, I have observed in workshops and in rehearsal, Shakespeare has the potential to provide an analytic framework to the staging of our own internal dramas, in archetypal form, due to his individuating power. In my project working on *The Tempest*, I wanted to test this possibility out. I wanted to explore how the staging of psychological processes, performed as ‘archetypes’ can ostensibly assist in mapping pathways to existential reconciliations between split aspects of ourselves. Moreover, when working with the plays in this way, I wanted to examine whether the characters themselves can serve as allies or guides, who could empower us in our self-transformation.^{xvi}

Bearing Shakespeare’s ‘prompting power’ in mind, it is worth recalling that *The Tempest* begins with a shipwreck where the boat carrying Prospero’s brother and retinue, splits. As the boat sinks one of the boats men cries out: “We split, we split, we split”.^{xvii} The splitting of the boat, from a psychoanalytic perspective, can be seen as devise to portray the projected image of the internal self breaking up. Moreover, as audience, hearing these lines “We split” we are invited to become both colluders and, observers, to the splitting of the boats, as vessels of the split ‘self’.

Delivering us from potential misfortune and appeasing Miranda, Prospero informs us that he has done “no harm” in creating the tempest and moreover, to “take comfort”, indicating that we will eventually be put-back-together throughout the course of the play, as you would, presumably in undertaking psychoanalysis:

“Wipe thou thine eyes; have comfort, the direful spectacle of the wreck, which touch’d the very virtue of compassion in thee I have with such provision in my art so safely ordered, that there is no soul, no, not so much perdition as an hair, betid to any creature in the vessel, Which thou heard’st cry, which thou saw’st sink...”^{xviii}

I have found that as a solo actor, living and working in the ‘space’ of exile, exile has become necessary precondition to my performance work. Being alone in rehearsal requires a self-containment that is both subjectively active, but paradoxically, at the same time, objective, as though being one’s own director and actor, can lead to a process of self-knowing. When I stand alone on the stage to deliver a performance that is entirely autonomous, self-sufficient, self-generating, and which combines acts of mental concentration and bodily focus, a performance that is totally reliant, on my ‘Self’, my own internal characters are given an outer voice through the characters in the script.^{xix} It is for this reason, that the challenge to be self-reliant on stage, and in particular when performing Shakespearean text solo, has the potential to be both a deeply confronting (analytic) and potentially, transformative experience.^{xx}

Because of the intense focus on the Self, working solo in performance, meanings are heightened and magnified that might otherwise remain hidden if the script had been worked on in ensemble. The importance for the solo actor to be the imaginative centre of the play, means that for the characters to come alive, they must *all* be internally ‘digested’ and outwardly characterised by the same actor, prompting a wholly focussed and different imaginative dimension for both actor and audience.

Extending the notion that working with Shakespeare can prove personally transformative and therapeutic, Murray Cox and Alice Theilgaard describe the power of Shakespeare as ‘prompter and amender of the imagination’. Cox and Theilgaard research in clinical environments with Shakespeare describe how he can provide a rich landscape to “...facilitate the blocked narrative, and to make the patient a main character in his or her own life.”^{xxi}

Publishing the results of their work at Broadmoor Hospital, in their book *Shakespeare As Prompter: The Amending Imagination and the Therapeutic Process*, Cox and Theilgaard narrate Shakespeare's power:

“In Shakespeare's company we grow more sensitive to the promptings of the unconscious, so that we stand a better chance of really seeing and hearing that at which we look and to which we listen. Prompting encourages us to ‘note the qualities of people’ (Antony and Cleopatra 1.1.53) and thus become better phenomenologists”.^{xxii}

Phenomenologically becoming more sensitive to what Cox and Theilgaard describe as promptings of the unconscious, I discovered that when I took-on the character of Prospero, my action seemed to give transgressive entitlement to the other characters: Historical or classical meanings of the text (old and new meanings) were negotiated and, renegotiated in rehearsal as I formed contemporised relationships with them. Not unlike Prospero's experience of the other characters in the play, I found that I also became the conduit, or, point of focus for an entire drama of characters. What became particularly interesting to me was that these characters not only found expression through performance, but also as qualities acted out through people in everyday life, seemingly, as extensions of my own unconscious.

In this way, Prospero and I became One.

Working to embody Prospero and, by extension *The Tempest*, I discovered in very real experiential terms that the initiatory journey of ‘individuation’ expressed through the play was without doubt, an exploration of ‘alchemy’.^{xxiii} The fact that Shakespeare wrote Prospero to represent, and effectively emulate his philosophy of possibilities for the human being, is what I believe infuses the play with its ‘transcendent or numinous’ possibility. As John Mebane suggests:

Alchemy, in particular, is an attempt to purify the fallen world by bringing earthly creatures into more perfect unity with their governing Ideas, and Shakespeare may well have been aware of the alchemical meaning of the term *tempest*: it is a boiling process which removes impurities from base metal and facilitates its transmutation into gold.^{xxiv}

Shakespeare expresses this alchemical ‘philosophy of possibilities’ through Miranda when towards the end of the play we find her in Prospero’s cell playing chess with Ferdinand. Seeing Antonio and his retinue for the first time, she exclaims: “Oh Brave New World that hath such people in ‘it’”. Miranda’s exclamation alerts us to the fact that the characters in the play have finally been redeemed and in the process have become more noble human beings than they were at the beginning of the play. ^{xxv}

When I was reconstructing the text for my solo performance, I was challenged to consider whether it was worth omitting any one of the characters in order to focus my performance of Prospero and his narrative. However, as hard I tried to extract characters, I discovered that each character has a particular task, performing specific aspects of Prospero’s psyche. As each of the characters goes through their own particular trails, they are dependent upon Prospero’s spiritual and psychic processing for their redemption. And so, to perform this process for the audience, I notably established each character through Prospero, as the central figure, before performing them.

As a stylistic choice for my performance, I have been significantly influenced by the fifteenth century father of Japanese Noh theatre, Zeami Motokiyo. Noh theatre actors, like those influenced by the more contemporary stage work of Samuel Beckett, focus on the centrality of the body, through which the mind works, often stilling movement in a restrained acting style to capture human experience. As Gay Gibson Cima points out, they work in a "single economical or paradoxical gesture."^{xxvi} And because my acting training was based on the speech and drama techniques of Michael Chekhov, who focussed his techniques on a psycho-physical approach, that uses inner and outer gesture to inform emotional and psychological states in the actor, I was able to develop and portray the variety of characters from the play, and to make the psychological transitions needed to play them in rapid succession. Dramatically, the internal shifts between the different characters, required all my stage technique, and it was at this nexus in my work in performance on the stage, that I was fortunate to experience glimmers of my conscious and unconscious selves coming together into a more total harmonious whole.

The stage setting for my performance of *The Tempest* is simple. Rather than relying upon elaborate sets, I work with minimal symbolic props and costumes, so as to focus the audience attention on the actor’s body and, inner intention as it reveals itself in gesture through the performance.

Behind me, as I face the audience, hangs a large sheet of silver paper as a backdrop that serves several needs: it becomes Prospero's mirror; his oracle or book of magic; a focal point for his and the audience's inner self-reflection. It also becomes Prospero's cell. A fleet of silver origami ships also sails across the backdrop, as though the ships were navigating the seas around the island.

Working with Psychological Gesture to developing Performance

As I mentioned above, it became clear to me that for the sake of the project, *Prospero* needed to be the absolute focus of the play as 'prompter of the imagination' towards individuation. And so, to map moments of the play, where there were clear transitions between the other characters and Prospero, I employed Michael Chekhov's Psychological Gesture or 'PG' to focus audience attention. Mapping my own process alongside the play text, I infused the 'PG' with reflections from sessions in analysis so that my own individuating journey, together with Prospero's: The advantage of working with Chekhov's 'PG' is that it provided the tools to enable me to performatively externalize my imagination of the play as it worked through me, and to mark moments of transition and psychological change for the viewer. Analysis added another dimension to this process as it provided me with the tools to make sense of 'promptings' from my own unconscious as it interfaced with the text.

I discovered that working with the 'PG' in rehearsal became the *key* to my own inner world and the inner worlds of the characters. The 'PG' enabled me through gesture to reveal particular characteristics of the characters of the body. To capture these qualities, I spent a significant amount of time developing 'PG's in rehearsal. In his book *To the Actor* Chekhov describes how using physical movement to stimulate inner states of consciousness using the 'PG' can work in the following way:

“You can easily prove it to yourself by trying to make a strong, well-shaped but simple gesture. Repeat it several times and you will see that after a while your will power grows stronger under the influence of such a gesture. Further, you will discover that the *kind* of movement you make will give your will power a certain direction or inclination; that is, it will awaken and animate you in a *definite* desire, want or wish. So we may say that the *strength* of the movement stirs our will power in general; the *kind* of movement awakens in us a definite corresponding *desire* and the quality of the same movement conjures up our feelings.”^{xxvii}

In rehearsal I also extended my work with Chekhov’s lexicon of ‘PG’s’ into a lexicon of my own ‘PG’s’, by developing refined gestural versions peculiar to the characters themselves as they appeared through myself as actor - a process that Chekhov encouraged actors to undertake so that they could ‘individualise’ their psycho-physical explorations for performance.^{xxviii}

By way of example, at the opening of the play, I create the tempest by constructing a container out of my costume. The ‘PG’ that I worked with became a ‘PG’ in motion – a gesture that was infused with movement while at the same time I created a sense of inner stillness. To gesturally image the tempest, I take one of the silver boats with my right hand and ‘sail’ it into white apron which becomes an alchemical still or vessel (alembic). Working with the notion that the force behind the tempest is the result of Prospero’s anger made visible, I created the tempest by shaking the apron up and down, as though I was mixing up an alchemical solution and then releasing it by expelling the ship onto the floor, speaking the Mariners lines “All lost! To prayers, to prayers! All lost!”^{xxix}

The Tempest^{xxx}



Click image to view associated video clip

To depict the character of Miranda, I wear a long white dress glove on my left hand symbolising her emergence from a naive un-awakened (virginal) state, into an informed consciousness. I am working here with the image that Miranda is symbolic of Prospero’s un-awakened heart or feeling forces and, in psychoanalytic terms, his anima. It is at the beginning of the play that we as audience are given a clue to the deeper meaning of the play as an initiation drama, to do with the transformation of feelings, when Miranda exclaims: “Oh I have suffered with those that I saw suffer, a strange vessel that had no doubt some noble creature in her, Oh, the cry did knock against my very heart...”^{xxxi}

Building up this picture so that it reveals the transformative possibilities of emotional change, Prospero himself identifies Miranda as an extension of his own heart, when he wakes her from the dreamlike sleep that he has induced upon her, so that he can focus on his meeting with Ariel, the archetype of his imaginative thinking, when he says to her: “Awake dear heart awake, thou has slept well...”^{xxxii}.

Miranda ^{xxxiii}



Click images to view associated video clips

To portray Ferdinand I wear a long black dress glove on my right hand to portray his worldly consciousness and the archetype of thinking from a masculinist perspective.

Ferdinand ^{xxxiv}



Click image to view associated video clip

In the middle of the play when Miranda’s and Ferdinand love brings about the ‘conunctio’ or alchemical marriage (sol and luna), that is, the marriage between heart, mind, I symbolise their coming together by cupping my hands. Wearing the white and black gloves respectively, the two characters, come together in a long slow gesture in the form of a heart, finally resting at my own heart centre.

Conunctio ^{xxxv}

Click image to view associated video clip

Chekhov's acting technique is based philosophically on the notion that the human being is constructed in a three-fold manner: thinking, feeling and willing.

Accordingly, working with his indications, I identified body centres as centres of intention and motivation for all the characters.^{xxxvi} Establishing the characters out of this three-fold process made a lot of sense: Ariel for instance, seemed to exemplify the force of thinking, because it is through Prospero's active thinking or active imagination that Ariel can appear as an independent creature, even though he is in reality an extension of Prospero's own thoughts.

Representative of the 'finer' substance of the ether's, I portray Ariel, with my arms high up in the air, which has the dramatic effect of impacting upon my breathing and, speech for the character. Working with my arms high up also had the effect of reminding me that my spatial imagination for Ariel, was to come from my back space, forwards into the performance space, to create a transcendent and heightened impression.

Ariel ^{xxxvii}

No video clip available

The three-fold quality that I attributed to Caliban is the quality of willing. From the text we are given to believe that Caliban is a beast of the earth and that he struggles to come to grips with his 'natural will'.

It is therefore Caliban, who as servant slave to Prospero and Miranda, attends their physical needs by fetching wood and food. Ariel in contrast to Caliban serves Prospero's need for psychic transcendence through his thinking. And so, the 'PG' I use for Caliban, is lower in the body, in the realm of the chthonic will.

Caliban ^{xxxviii}



[Click images to view associated video clips](#)

Throughout the performance, the reconstructed script becomes a score – each word, each line is speech music and can be heard and read as such. The performance therefore, is an attempt at freeing physical gesture and speech gesture through creative intention (Chekhov), an aspiration of the heightened consciousness of the psycho-physical actor who becomes shaman/magician/chemist. To figure this onstage, I stand in one position on the stage for the entire performance, moving only slightly to change direction or character. In this way, my performer's voice and body is what creates the still magic of the performance and, the audience is transported through the text as though it were a ritual incantation or spoken song where internal and external worlds can meet.

Actor as Alchemist ^{xxxix}



[Click image to view associated video clip](#)

I play all the Lords on an anticlockwise circle – moving slightly into different positions on the circle like the hands on a clock. The anti-clockwise movement signals to the audience the lack of harmony in their intentions.

Lords ^{xl}

[Click image to view associated video clip](#)

I also perform Caliban and the Clowns or Boats men, walking a half- circle, to depict the incompleteness of their plans and the unformed qualities of them as characters.

Clowns/Boats Men ^{xli}

[Click image to view associated video clip](#)

Before Ariel is released from servitude by Prospero, he shows us that he has the capacity to vicariously experience human emotion. For instance, when he speaks to Prospero about Gonzalo's tears, he speaks with such compassion, indicating to us, that he is in actuality an extension of Prospero's own psyche and his awakening emotional compassion.

Ariel's Tears ^{xlii}

[Click image to view associated video clip](#)

To perform Prospero's final scene when he relinquishes his book magic for the magic of love, I stand on the stage directly facing the audience.

I do this to visually portray that there is a resolution and coming together of the opposites spatially: right/left; up, down; horizontal and vertical in balance –, identified at the beginning of the play when the drowning boatmen, call out: "...We split, we split, we split..."^{xliii}

'Third space' reality ^{xliv}



Click image to view associated video clip

Using Chekhov's acting indications, I was able to *distil* and analyze essential moments and qualities in the play. These moments existed between my own subjective life experience and that of the 'objective' text. By working in this way, I found moments when I was able to live in 'third space' reality, where the tension between opposites on stage through the characters and, as qualities in my own life, were able to be unified and transcended.

This 'numinous' experience had the effect of revealing unconscious and phenomenological meaning, that could only be performed to be understood, and, by extension, to generate new meaning and ways of working.

The Shakespearean scholar, Martin Lings points out that Shakespeare is sacred art, and this becomes evident in Prospero's words of his final speech, when he describes how he is ready to give up his 'art' and retire to Milan in contemplation: "Every third thought shall be my grave".^{xlv} Prospero's need to spend time in deep contemplation could ostensibly be considered relative to contemporary notions of third space (Helene Cixous) or, potential space (D. W Winnicott), or a *space* that Gillies Deleuze and Felix Guattari suggest is rhizomatic; it is a space that has the power and potential to exist in the moment, between things, and to be performatively 'intermezzo'.^{xlvi}

A literary alchemist like Shakespeare, or the psychoanalyst Carl Jung, might also suggest that this *space* is a Hermetic vessel, a uterus where spiritual renewal can take place, and from there an imaginative rebirth.

Lings himself, suggests that this third space is perhaps the place of transubstantiation where the gaps of exile can be closed, and understood, and that the prompting of an ‘amended imagination’, not only for the ‘Self’ or performer of the ‘Self’, can then be conveyed to the audience in an *act* of conscious ‘transference’ and hopeful restoration:

“Prospero is set before us from the start as a supreme spiritual master, and as such he must have died, before his death, that greater death that is implicit in the Lesser Mysteries...His soul will thereby be conscious of a certain separation albeit within the framework of Union; and since he knows that he has tasks to accomplish, he is bound to give them some thought. Secondly, he is bound to be always reiterating thoughts of gratitude for the great blessings of his spiritual state as it is. But thirdly – and three is a celestial number – he has the right to give “every third thought” to the eventual death of his human nature and its final re-absorption into the Spirit, a transubstantiation that will close forever the gaps of seeming exile”^{xlvi}

Throughout the project, I experienced moments of individuating consciousness that ‘closed the gaps of exile’ on my own split consciousness contributing to the restoration of my health. In this way, the idealism of the Renaissance philosophers had succeeded: Shakespeare as a ‘prompter-of-the imagination’ had the power to facilitate individualising transformations where our ‘strength can become our own’ and, as Prospero suggests, (not without hard work), we can be set free.

Notes

ⁱ ‘Analytic Theatre’ is a term coined by Inge Wise, & Maggie Mills (eds) *Psychoanalytic Ideas and Shakespeare*, London & New York: Karnac, I will discuss the use of the term in more depth in the course of this paper.

ⁱⁱ Mebane, John, *Renaissance Magic and the Return of the Golden Age: The occult tradition & Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare*, Publ. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln & London, 1989, pg 11.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mebane, John, *Renaissance Magic and the Return of the Golden Age: The occult tradition & Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare*, Publ. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln & London, 1989, pg 181.

^{iv} Wikipedia, 10th July 2010 6.10 pm.

^v The numinous experience is important to Prospero as he strives to transform his feelings of negativity and hatred towards his usurping brother and his court and to be restored to his rightful place in the world. The Jungian psychoanalyst Murray Stein refers to the numinous as a hint that larger non-egoic powers exist in the psyche, which need to be considered and ultimately, made conscious. From Stein’s essay: *On the importance of the numinous experience in the alchemy of individuation*.

^{vi} Michael Chekhov, 1891-1955. Chekhov was a student of Stanislavsky and worked with him at the Moscow Art Theatre. Chekhov believed that imagination was the key to all art. His book has become a seminal work in actor training. Chekhov, Michael, *To the Actor: On the technique of acting*. Published Routledge 2002. First publication by Harper & Row, New York, 1953.

^{vii} Wise, Inge & Mills, Maggie(eds) *Psychoanalytic Ideas and Shakespeare*, Karnac: London & New York, pg, 3.

^{viii} William Shakespeare, *The Tempest Act 1 Sc ii*

^{ix} Shakespeare, *The Tempest Act 1 Sc ii*

^x Philip Armstrong, *Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis*, London & New York Routledge, 2001, p 178.

^{xi} B. J Sokol (ed) *The Undiscovered Country: New Essays on psychoanalysis and Shakespeare*, London: Free Association Books, 1993, p 191.

^{xii} George, Lammings, *The Pleasures of Exile*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991, p 96.

^{xiii} Dow, Derek A, *Health and History*, 2001. 3: 41-64.

^{xiv} Samuel Timoti, *Robinson, Tohunga: The Revival Ancient Knowledge for the Modern Era*, Reed: New Zealand, 2007, p 11.

^{xv} Wise, Inge & Maggie Mills (eds) *Psychoanalytic Ideas and Shakespeare*, London & New York: Karnac, p 3. Also see: McDougall, J, *Theatres of the Mind: Illusion and Truth on the Analytic Stage*, Publ Free Association, London, 1986.

^{xvi} I am aware that the question of using Shakespeare as a prompter to psychological amendment could be contentious raising questions to do with what the content of the plays is actually offering us in the 21st century. I am addressing these issues. However, for the purpose of this paper, I have chosen to focus my attention on my solo performance process suspending discussion on these issues for another paper.

^{xvii} Shakespeare, *The Tempest Act 1 Sc i*

^{xviii} Shakespeare, *The Tempest Act 1 Sc i*

^{xix} Taken from a discussion between Chris Lee Ph D candidate and myself in Singapore, April 2010.

^{xx} As suggested by Sokol *The Undiscovered Country*.

^{xxi} Murray Cox, & Alice, Theilgaard, *Shakespeare As Prompter: The Amending Imagination & The Therapeutic Process*, London: Jessica Kingley, 1994. From a review about the book on the back cover by Finn Magnussen, MD.

^{xxii} Cox & Theilgaard, *Shakespeare As Prompter*, p 4.

^{xxiii} For a definition of ‘individuation’ ...”is a process of psychological integration, having for its goal the development of the individual personality. In general, it is the process by which individual beings are formed and differentiated [from other human beings]; in particular, it is the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology.”From Carl Jung *Psychological Types Collected Works Vol 6 para 757*. Quoted from Wikipedia 19/07/10 at 3.31 pm.

^{xxiv} Mebane, John, *Renaissance Magic and the Return of the Golden Age: The occult tradition & Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln & London, 1989, pg181.

^{xxv} Shakespeare, , *The Tempest Act IV Sc i*

^{xxvi}For an excellent coverage on theatre styles and how they can be employed to influence the performance of women, cf. Gay Gibson Cima, *Performing Women*. See Gibson Cima's discussion on breathing and how it can be effective on the stage, p. 235.

^{xxvii} Chekhov, *To The Actor*, p 72.

^{xxviii} Chekhov, *To The Actor*, p 72.

^{xxix} Shakespeare, *The Tempest Act 1 Sc i*

^{xxx} Photograph taken by Monica Lim May Ching with assistance from Noor Lyna Bte Zainuddin, Singapore

^{xxxi} Shakespeare, *The Tempest Act 1 Sc ii*

^{xxxii} Shakespeare, *The Tempest Act 1 Sc ii*

^{xxxiii} Photograph taken by Monica Lim May Ching with assistance from Noor Lyna Bte Zainuddin, Singapore

^{xxxiv} Photograph taken by Monica Lim May Ching, with assistance from Noor Lyna Bte Zainuddin, Singapore

^{xxxv} Photograph taken by Monica Lim May Ching, with assistance from Noor Lyna Bte Zainuddin, Singapore

^{xxxvi} Chekhov developed his techniques of the Psychological Gesture from Rudolf Steiner's Eurythmy gestures – see *Eurythmy and the Impulse of Dance*, Marjorie Raffe, Cecil Harwood, Marguerite Lundgren, London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

^{xxxvii} Photograph taken by Monica Lim May Ching, with assistance from Noor Lyna Bte Zainuddin, Singapore

^{xxxviii} Photograph taken by Monica Lim May Ching, with assistance from Noor Lyna Bte Zainuddin, Singapore

^{xxxix} Photograph taken by Monica Lim May Ching, with assistance from Noor Lyna Bte Zainuddin, Singapore

^{xl} Photograph taken by Monica Lim May Ching, with assistance from Noor Lyna Bte Zainuddin, Singapore

^{xli} Photograph taken by Monica Lim May Ching, with assistance from Noor Lyna Bte Zainuddin, Singapore

^{xlii} Photograph taken by Monica Lim May Ching, with assistance from Noor Lyna Bte Zainuddin, Singapore

^{xliii} Shakespeare, *The Tempest Act 1 Sc i*

^{xliv} Photograph taken by Monica Lim May Ching, with assistance from Noor Lyna Bte Zainuddin, Singapore

^{xliv} Shakespeare, *The Tempest Act V, Sc i*.

^{xlvi} Gillies Deleuze, & Felix, Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London: The Athlone Press, 1988, pgs 21 & 25.

^{xlvii} Martin, Lings, *The Sacred Art of Shakespeare: To Take Upon Us the Mystery of Things*, USA Inner Traditions, 1998, p 181-182.