

## Shakespeare's Imperfect "Art of Navigation" Controlling the Forces of the Sea in *The Tempest* (1611)<sup>1</sup>

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

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

Not merely an astrologer, Dee was also a hermetic philosopher, an astronomer, a mathematician and a geographer, as well as an early imperialist. His wisdom reflected the dynamic dialogue of the early modern period that still connected various spheres of knowledge before the separation of philosophy and science occurred in the modern age. Dee's polymathic familiarity with different fields of knowledge is what makes him an undisputed representative of the ideal Renaissance man. An enthusiast admirer of Vitruvius, whose *De Architectura* had been rediscovered in 1414, Dee adheres so strongly to the Renaissance model of humanism that we can

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<sup>1</sup> This article stems from my contribution to the seminar "Of Seas and Oceans, of Storms and Wreckages, of Water Battles and Love in Shakespeare's Plays" convened by Dana Monah (University of Iasi) and Estelle Rivier-Arnaud (Grenoble Alpes University) at the University of Roma Tre during the 2019 ESRA Congress. I am grateful to my postdoctoral mentor Maria Del Sapio Garbero (University of Roma Tre) for her essential advice and support throughout the delicate phase of conceiving this study. I am also grateful to Giulia Mattioli for inviting me to see Motus' performance MDLSX in 2015, thus introducing me to the company to whom the third section of the article is dedicated. I would like also to record my gratitude to Peter Douglas (University of Roma Tre), as his generous help in the latter phase of my work has been more precious than he might think.

imagine him corresponding fully to the Vitruvian man that Leonardo drew at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Fitting perfectly into the geometric figures of square and circle, every part of this ideal body is integral to a universal design based on harmonious correspondence. Similarly, Dee is a supremely early modern figure, who strove to unite the human microcosm and the universal macrocosm by means of systematic knowledge. Considered in this light, even the philosopher's tireless efforts to communicate with the "angels" reflect the intensity of his thirst for wisdom. Conceived as benign intermediaries between the human and the divine spheres, these celestial entities were the ultimate beings, capable of delivering God's truth to a devoted scholar.

However, largely on the basis of the mysterious continental mission he undertook with his partner Edward Kelley, Dee's reputation has been overshadowed for centuries by charges of sorcery, his influential persona reduced to that of an obscure conjurer of demons.<sup>2</sup> Like Prospero, who was deposed by his own brother while "rapt in secret studies" (1.2.77), the English magus apparently ventured so far in his "Art" as to be judged unfit for his role at court, leaving him feeling that he had been betrayed by the people he trusted the most. Like Shakespeare's hero, Dee was a castaway, a victim of the political and religious upheavals that marked many European countries between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nevertheless, throughout his life, Dee managed to survive the various witch-hunts that occasionally broke out, and to move nimbly across the shifting political and religious sands of early modern Europe. Yet the fact that he was able to survive while others perished is only one of the specific features that link Dee to the hero of *The Tempest*. Indeed, in *John Dee e il suo sapere* [John Dee and his wisdom], Jesi also suggests that Uriel, the name of one of the angels that Dee conjured up during his *séances* with Kelley, bears a striking resemblance to that of Ariel, the airy spirit that Prospero recruits as his assistant. Moreover, Jesi reminds us that an episode curiously reminiscent of Prospero's masque in 4.1 took place while the young Dee was at Cambridge. Indeed, Dee distinguished himself as a talented director at Trinity College, and when he presented a performance of Aristophanes' *Pax*, his handling of the stage machinery was so expertly done that the astonished public suspected him of recurring to magic. Jesi also emphasizes that, like Prospero, Dee was the owner of an immense library,

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<sup>2</sup> Meric Casaubon's *A True and Faithful Revelation of What Passed for Many Years between Dr. John Dee [...] and Some Spirits* (1659) is largely responsible for Dee's unfortunate reputation among scholars.

which was actually Elizabethan England's most extensive collection of books. This collection was so enormous that the philosopher's house at Mortlake became an important centre for contemporary students and scholars between the 1570s and 1583, the infamous year when, with their owner away on the Continent, the library was ransacked and many of the books stolen. However, as the library catalogue Dee carefully compiled testifies, he managed to circumvent some of the loss as he had taken what he believed to be his most precious books with him on the ship that carried him across the Channel.<sup>3</sup> This fact might well be echoed in Prospero's recollection at the beginning of *The Tempest* when he says that before being exiled he was "furnished / from [his] own library with volumes that / [he] prize[d] above [his] dukedom" (1.2.166-168; Jesi 272-303).

Among Dee's collection, which amounted to 170 manuscripts and 2,500 printed books (Sears 125), there was certainly a number of texts that he might have had in common with Prospero. Indeed, Dee's library catalogue included many works pertaining to Neo-Platonism and Hermeticism, including Plato, Zoroaster, Orpheus and Iamblichus, the *Corpus hermeticum*, once attributed to the mythical Hermes Trismegistus, Cornelius Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*, Francesco Giorgi's *De harmonia mundi*, and writings by Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, as well as works by Galen and Paracelsus. Dee's library was not limited to texts produced for those intent on exploring magic and Hermeticism; it also included an extensive collection of works of ancient poetry and drama, as well as an enormous amount of books pertaining to science, geography, astronomy and mathematics (French 40-61). Moreover, the shelves of his library must have also held a series of manuscripts and printed books that he himself had written. Among these works were less widely-read books, like the highly esoteric *Monas Hieroglyphica* (1564), as well as more popular works, like the *Preface* to Henry Billingsley's translation of Euclid (1570), and a later treatise entitled *The General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation* (1577).

Both in the *Preface* and in the *Memorials*, the author offers practical advice to navigators, artisans and specialists that is based on his deep knowledge of mathematics, geometry, architecture, geography and navigation. It is precisely Dee's

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<sup>3</sup> John Dee's *Library Catalogue*, edited by Julian Roberts and Andrew G. Watson, was published by the Bibliographical Society in 1990. In 2009 Roberts and Watson published their latest updated version online on the Bibliographical Society's website: <http://bibsoc.org.uk/content/john-dees-library-catalogue>.

knowledge in these fields that provides us with another important link with Prospero. This link, as we will see, will enable us to extend Jesi's comparison between these figures from the discourse of Renaissance occult wisdom and magic to the more practical field of navigation and, consequently, to early modern ideas of imperialism and colonization. A friend of the Dutch cartographers Abraham Ortelius and Gerard Mercator, who published the *Theatrum orbium terrarum* (1570) and the *Atlas sive cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica mundi et fabricati figura* (1585) respectively, Dee himself was an experienced cartographer. Indeed, he was one of the leading authorities in map making and topography in the Elizabethan period, and would organize specific training schemes for navigators, furnishing them with precise instructions for their overseas expeditions.<sup>4</sup> Not only was Dee actively engaged in advising travellers in order to guarantee them successful expeditions, but, as his private *Diary* intriguingly testifies, he also cultivated a personal interest in the lands that his pupils were meant to discover. In 1580, Dee made an agreement with Sir Humphrey Gilbert who, being about to make an expedition to North America, would grant any new land discovered north of the 50<sup>th</sup> parallel to his expert adviser. Two years later, Sir George Peckham and Sir Thomas Gerrard assured him a property of 5,000 acres in a colony they were planning to set up on the North American coast (Fenton 8, 46). These expeditions were not successful, and Dee never came into possession of any of the lands he was promised. However, these failures were not enough to discourage him. In fact, in 1583 he went so far as to draw up an alliance with Gilbert's brother Adrian and the explorer John Davis, whose aim was to explore and occupy the lands that Sir Humphrey had not managed to reach (French 179).

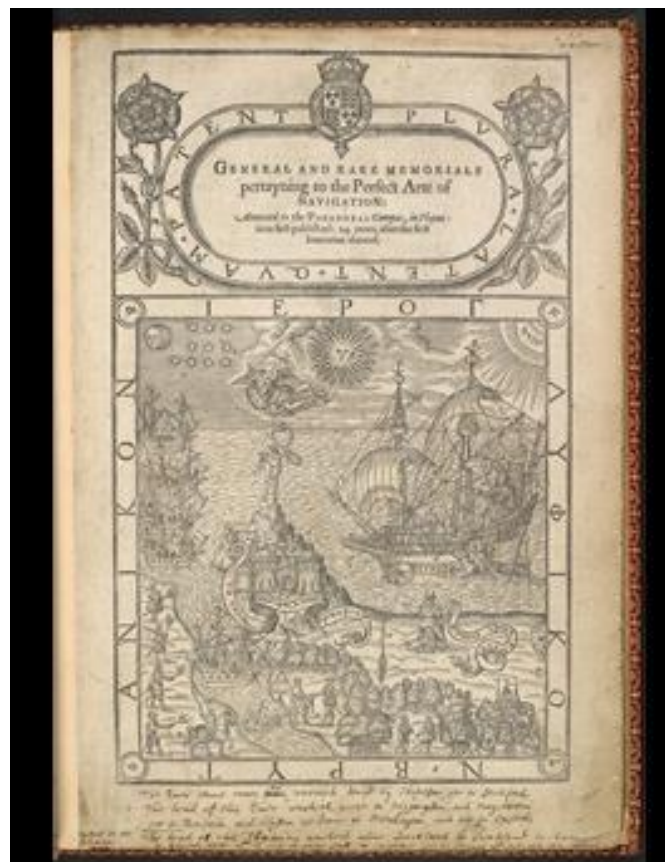
Dee's interest in New World discoveries was not limited to giving individual advice and taking a share in eventual settlements; on the contrary, he was concerned with the complete education of English adventurers. As we will see, it is precisely through the *Memorials* that he intended to offer them the most useful and updated compendium on navigation that the Elizabethan era had to offer<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, in the

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<sup>4</sup> As early as the late 1550s, Dee was instructing the brothers Stephen and William Borough on the Muscovy Company expedition of 1559. In 1576, he advised Martin Frobisher and Michael Lok, again of the Muscovy Company, as they prepared for their expedition to the Northwest Passage. In 1580 he was asked by the Queen to give his opinion concerning Francis Drake's circumnavigation of the world, an enterprise that the explorer might have possibly undertaken based on Dee's training (French 178).

<sup>5</sup> Even though only the first volume of the *Memorials* was actually printed, Dee's work originally consisted of three additional volumes, which only partly survive in manuscript form. In the first, entitled "The British Monarchy" or "The Petty Navy Royall," Dee displays a dual preoccupation: in the first place, the defence of the nation, a programme that he considers achievable through a proper strengthening of the British Navy; in the second place, he encourages the Queen to launch a glorious policy of overseas expansion, which will soon grant her

opening pages of the book, not only does the author invite the Queen to extend the limits of her realm to overseas, but also announces that he will provide the monarch and her subjects with all practical means for this to be accomplished. In Dee's view, and in the light of his extensive studies on mathematics, geometry, geography and cartography, navigation is a perfectly practicable skill, and the sea a dimension where seafarers, if adequately trained, can feel particularly at ease. Dee's beliefs on the control of the seas are epitomized in the beautiful frontispiece of the treatise, a drawing in his own hand that he also defines as a "ΙΕΡΟΓΔΥΦΙΚΟΝ ΒΡΥΤΑΝΝΙΚΟΝ" [figure 1].



**Figure 1. Frontispiece of Dee's Memorials**  
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unprecedented domains throughout the world. The second volume was to have been a collection of navigational tables, entitled "Queen Elizabeth's Gubernautike Arithmetical Tables," which Dee had calculated using a particularly precise instrument, called the "Paradoxical Compass" that he had invented in 1557. These tables would have allowed sailors to navigate in northern latitudes, thus permitting explorers to sail to areas where nobody had hitherto dared to go. However, it appears that the size of the manuscript must have dissuaded any editor from publishing it. The third volume, which probably included a series of historical reasons demonstrating Elizabeth I's rights to North America, must have been deemed dangerous reading by the Privy Council. Indeed, as Dee himself declares in his *Advertisement to the Reader*, it would soon have been suppressed or burned. The fourth volume, partly surviving in the compiler Samuel Purchas' work *Purchas His Pilgrims* (1625), was a history of the 1,200 years of expeditions to the northern seas, probably written with the aim of entitling the Queen to claim her rights to the North American territories.

Here, Elizabeth I is represented sitting at the helm of an imperial ship labelled "ΕΥΡΩΠΗ," turned towards a naked *Occasio* standing on a fortified citadel and offering the Queen a laurel crown. A kneeling figure in front of the ship, we are told in the text, represents the "RES PUBL.[ICA] BRYTANICA" (53). Holding a paper scroll, she humbly petitions the Queen for the construction of a powerful navy. Ten stars, the moon, the sun, and a burning sphere bearing the Hebrew Tetragrammaton appear in the sky, along with the archangel Michael, the combined symbols of divine and astral benevolence. Near the citadel, which is being approached by a large fleet, two figures seem to be making a deal, as if to conclude a treaty, while a skull is half-visible on the right side of the image, as if to warn of the misfortunes that await if the monarchy does not rise to this "OCCASION" (53). The ordered presentation of the elements that make up this harmonious image reveals Dee's confident beliefs in the exercise of navigation and sea control, a confidence that is also underlined by the marginal position given to the skull in the layout of the composition, thus confirming the far-reaching colonial plans that he had in mind (French 182-187).

Indeed, while being only one of the several books on navigation that were published in the Elizabethan era, the *Memorials* also represent a compendium of Dee's theories about what he conceived the British imperial mission to be. It is in these very pages that Dee gives voice to the idea of an emerging "Brytish Impire" (3), which is viewed as the result of a large-scale colonial enterprise. The imperialist project Dee argues for closely mirrors the narrative thrust of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* with its claim that the British people belonged to the ancient lineage of the Roman Brutus, a legend appropriated to support Elizabethan expansionist plans<sup>6</sup>. However, Dee's imperial project is not limited to the newly discovered lands of "Atlantis," as the philosopher termed the Americas (2). As his biographers have demonstrated, territorial conquest was only part of a more far-reaching plan that encompassed the spiritual domain of the American Indians, this further goal being to disseminate a reformed Christian faith among the populations inhabiting their lands (French 179). Conceived in an epoch of great religious controversy and bitter intolerance, Dee's vision of Christianity is generally considered

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<sup>6</sup> Not only was part of the lost third volume of the *Memorials* dedicated to this subject, but also the (surviving) third volume of *The Limits of the British Empire* (1577-78), another work by Dee. The arguments here are strongly linked to the topics put forward in the previous treatise, and the Queen's rights to North America are openly discussed.

to be very inclusive, aimed at softening the contrasts that lacerated the consciences of the faithful in 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Dee's tolerance in this respect is replaced by distinctly narrow views when it comes to non-Christian religions. In line with contemporary ideas with regard to native peoples, Dee saw the American Indians as heathens who were naturally in need of conversion. On the receiving end of an apparently magnanimous mission, the native in Dee's imperialistic vision is irreparably disconnected from the European. A mere instrument in the economy of an expansionistic plan that has the incontestable conversion of the pagan to Christianity at its core, the colonized individual stands as the heedless object in a discourse in which the European is the Self, while the native is the Other. For Dee, the Other, just like the seas and oceans he was so eager to chart, is conceived as a category entirely subject to the control of the Self. A control that if, on the one hand, it purports to be a large-scale mission aimed at the enlightenment of individual conscience, on the other, is the outcome of an enterprise conceived from an exclusively Eurocentric perspective, and thus from an inevitably biased one.

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

The cultural and political premises underpinning Dee's *Memorials* throw light on, and encourage, a specific reading of *The Tempest*, especially as the character of Prospero has often been interpreted in the light of issues connected to British imperialism. This reading is rooted in the play's colonial politics, which, particularly since the rise of Postcolonial studies<sup>7</sup>, have been investigated by many critics. In effect, if Dee played such an important role in promoting the British colonial project, and if he himself has often been considered a possible model for Prospero, it might also follow that Dee's role in early British colonial efforts influenced Shakespeare in creating his hero. Empowered by his precious books, which allowed him to extend his knowledge to the most disparate disciplines, and convinced that his "burden" has committed him to the education of "wild" natives and "fluttered folk"<sup>8</sup>, Prospero is

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<sup>7</sup> Much has been written on Prospero as an archetype of the white imperialist, from Octave Mannoni's pioneering essay "Prospero and Caliban" (1950) to more recent New Historicism studies on the importance of the issue of colonialism in this late play. Chief among these is Stephen Greenblatt's celebrated essay, "Learning to Curse" (1990).

<sup>8</sup> I am quoting here from Rudyard Kipling's renowned poem "The Burden of the White Man: The United States and the Philippine Islands" (1, 6). These lines, written in 1899 at the beginning of the Philippine-American War, represent a heartfelt exhortation to the United States to annex the Philippines on the basis of the presumed civilizing mission that was commonly seen as the role of Western countries at that time. The poem became subject to various interpretations in the following decades, culminating in the Postcolonial readings of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which investigated how the "discourses of otherness and evolution" upon which

certainly not exempt from exercising the psychological oppression that is associated with the white colonizer. However, what the present paper argues is that even though Dee might well have been Shakespeare's model for Prospero, *The Tempest* depicts attitudes to the sea, to journeys of exploration and to Otherness that do not always coincide with those of the Elizabethan philosopher. As we will see, Shakespeare's hero has a distinctive way of dealing with overseas experiences and issues of colonization, both of which are inextricably linked to his own perception of the Other. This is the reason why, notwithstanding the similarities between Prospero and Dee, the "Art of Navigation" that Shakespeare portrays in this late play is actually far from a "perfect" one.

It is undeniable that, like the author of the *Memorials*, Prospero does his best throughout the play to present himself as able to keep absolute control of the forces of sea and water. Already during his long conversation with the astonished Miranda in 1.2, Prospero's confidence in his "Art" is such that the tempest that occurred in 1.1 is claimed as purely his own doing. There are also many scenes in the play where the hero, assisted by the diligent spirit Ariel, again demonstrates that he is the uncontested "director" of the survivors' destinies, not only for the time that they spend on the island, but also in their future lives. Indeed, he meticulously orchestrates a series of encounters and events with the aim of achieving his personal goals, i.e., to regain his position in Milan and have his daughter marry Ferdinand in order to ensure a new kingdom with royal progeny for his family. It is through his magic that Prospero prepares the inviting banquet that is destined to vanish simply in order to deceive Antonio and his attendants in 3.3. Similar "trumpery" (186) will allow him to capture Caliban and the other conspirators in 4.1. In the same scene, it is through magic, that he sets up the elaborate masque to celebrate his daughter's betrothal. Indeed, Prospero's directorial abilities seem to culminate in this moment, when he conjures up the goddess Iris, equipped with her rainbow, creating a wonderful emblem of restored elemental harmony that might majestically draw any storm to its conclusion. In 5.1, having reunited all the characters near his cell, he dramatically opens a curtain to show Ferdinand and Miranda chastely playing chess together. Finally, having regained his position, he delivers his famous closing speech before setting off on a final sea journey to Milan.

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"European/Western identities were constructed during colonialism" legitimated "the white man's burden – to civilize and develop the underdeveloped" (Baaz 35, 37).



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



**Figure 2. De Bry’s Fortune**  
© Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Here, the all-controlling figure of “Fortune”, apparelled as a pagan sea goddess<sup>9</sup>, stands at the centre of the engraving, dividing the space into two separate sections. On her left are those that she addresses as a benevolent mother, to whom she assures prosperity both on sea and on land. On her right, however, are those she addresses as a cruel stepmother, who have their ship wrecked and their city burned. Marked by an uncanny symmetry, the image evidences that there is no way of predicting which face the goddess will show to seafarers. Mysterious and inscrutable, the will of de Bry’s “Fortune” is entirely beyond human control.

<sup>9</sup> The iconography that de Bry draws upon in his “Fortune” is that of the *Venus euploia*, i.e., the protectress of seafarers. In the 1593 image, however, the goddess has a disquieting double face.

It is indeed such a sea goddess who holds sway over the waters surrounding the island in *The Tempest*. Notwithstanding Prospero's later claim of having instigated it, the play opens with a storm that throws an entire crew into the sea (1.1). Soon afterwards he recalls another shipwreck, the one that he and his only daughter survived only accidentally (1.2), while the play also ends with Prospero preparing for his departure on a journey whose destination is announced but not witnessed (5.1 and *Epilogue*). Yet these tempests are nothing compared to another tempest: that which occurs towards the end of the drama (4.1), and which this time is an inner storm that Prospero is completely unable to control. Shaking the hero to his very core, the principal tempest in *The Tempest* seems to be aroused by a problematic encounter with the Other. To be more precise, what Prospero finds particularly difficult to face is a rather "amphibious" kind of Other: it is as though water is inextricably linked to an unknown domain, and a "Perfect Art of Navigation" is the only way for the hero's Self to remain afloat in a dangerous ocean seething with Otherness.

The Other *par excellence* is epitomized in *The Tempest* by Caliban – a character that boasts a particular connection with the sea. Caliban is repeatedly described as a "fish," or a creature that "smells like a fish". More precisely, he is referred to as "[a] strange fish" (2.2.25-27), "[I]egg'd like a man! And his fins like arms" (32-33), or even as "half a fish and half a monster" (3.2.28). Conceived in Algiers by Sycorax, a woman Prospero has never met, but that he does not hesitate to call a sorceress, and by an unknown father, who Prospero ambiguously refers to as "the devil" (1.2.263, 320; 5.1.269), Caliban was born shortly after his mother's exile to the island. He was therefore carried in her womb on the journey that brought them to the island where he was born, the gestation interestingly coinciding with a wretched sea crossing that led to his life-long expiation of an unnamed crime committed by his mother<sup>10</sup>.

In virtue of his indigenous and uncivilized status, as well as of his symbiotic relationship with Sycorax, Caliban not only boasts a particular connection with the sea, but also with the land, which means that he lives in perfect harmony with the

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<sup>10</sup> An interesting hypothesis about the entity of the crime committed by Sycorax in Algiers is suggested by Maria Del Sapio Garbero, who proposes that her guilt may be linked to the Ovidian myth referenced in Prospero's mention of the tree where Ariel had been imprisoned before his arrival. Considering that in the *Metamorphoses* the transformation of the princess Myrrha into a myrrh tree is the punishment for an act of sacrilegious love that the princess committed with her own father, the King of Cyprus, Del Sapio Garbero argues that Sycorax's expiation might have also originated within the disquieting framework of incest (243-245).

luxuriant – but sometimes also problematic – nature that surrounds him. The young creature’s sense of belonging to the places where he long lived alone with his mother is so profound that it seems to exemplify Julia Kristeva’s description of the “semiotic *khôra*” in *La Révolution du langage poétique* (1974). With this phrase, Kristeva intends the realm of primordial, indistinct impulses, the all-embracing maternal body, which nourishes the child and, for the first months of the baby’s life, coincides with the entire known world. This stage in the development of the child, which she also refers to as the “semiotic,” contrasts with the “symbolic” order, which comes to the fore when the child is separated from the mother and is pitched into the “ordered” domain of the father. Here the organized structure of language emerges as a substitute for the loss of the ambiguous, all-encompassing maternal body/world. However, in contradistinction to the typical development of the child, and having no paternal figure to identify with, the “salvage” (*The Tempest’s* List of roles, Vaughan and Vaughan 162) Caliban seems destined to remain caught in the maternal sphere for the whole of his life.<sup>11</sup> Raised only by his mother, and with her “suffocating” influence over him unabated in the delicate phase of his growth, *The Tempest’s* “abhorred slave” (1.2.357) becomes “the final register of Shakespeare’s ambivalence toward what it means – from Hamlet on – to be a mother’s son” (Adelman 238).

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

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<sup>11</sup> Caliban’s entanglement within the mother’s sphere entails a twofold effect. On the one hand, the young native enjoys a ‘uterine’ identification with the ‘maternal’ land he inhabits. On the other hand, he also receives the unexpected gift of being able to recover the original, maternal dimension beyond the organized structure of language, by means of the unbridled poetic word. Indeed, in line with the discussion put forward in *La Révolution du langage poétique’s*, it is Caliban’s closeness to the indistinct, maternal realm of the island that allows him to utter *The Tempest’s* most penetratingly beautiful poetry.

Yet the pervasive presence of Sycorax, however disturbing, is also an important influence on Prospero's designs for the education of his daughter, an education that has apparently been shaped in stark opposition to the model provided by the Sycorax-Caliban dyad. Indeed, just as the witch's authority over her son has long remained unquestioned, the hero's daughter has been raised in absolute absence of a mother, with Prospero's all-embracing influence making her, of all Shakespeare's heroines, the purest example of the "father's child". But how did Prospero achieve such an ambitious goal? The answer is partly thanks to his ambivalent regard for Sycorax. On the one hand, having raised Caliban alone, her maternal role has been magnified to such an extent that Prospero cannot but envisage her as a terrifying sorceress. Being so strongly interconnected with her dangerous maternity, Sycorax's femininity is also viewed as extreme, which makes her the embodiment of unbridled passion and unrestrained lust. Therefore, by association with her son Caliban, as well as her status as woman and mother, Prospero also considers Sycorax in terms of Otherness. As Maria Del Sapio Garbero suggests, "Sycorax is the Other that Prospero continually confronts in his attempt at affirming himself as the matrix of everything"; her malformed amphibious son is the result of a development thwarted by the awkward presence of the mother, inevitably resistant to Prospero's "male and royal will of giving shape, i.e., of conceiving, and conceiving himself". On the other hand, it is precisely in order to achieve this aim that the eerie figure of Caliban's mother takes on such a crucial role. Indeed, "Miranda is brought to the world by means of what Prospero's tongue deletes or, by how he administers the ghost of Sycorax". It is thus "Sycorax's ghost" that is the agent that paradoxically "renders Miranda's mirror almost clear". In line with the theories expressed by Luce Irigaray in *Speculum: De l'autre femme* (1974), Del Sapio Garbero claims that the spectre of the witch guarantees Prospero the exceptionally "good mimesis" that he fiercely yearns for throughout the play. "Miranda's virtue," in effect, "consists in her being absolutely identical to the spotless image that is reflected in the mirror held by her father," and therefore in opposition to the wicked female figure that he evokes for his own purposes (242-243, 248, translation mine).

This management of Sycorax's ghost is thus instrumental in Prospero's attempt at shaping his daughter's identity to produce the clearest reflection of his own image. However, notwithstanding the efforts he makes in order to subdue the sorceress' haunting presence, the dangerous potential her spectre represents is never entirely

domesticated in the play. On the contrary, it often appears destined to re-emerge like a tide that nobody is able to control, not even Prospero, who has previously declared his power over the sea. Like de Bry's "Fortune," Sycorax often surfaces from the waters surrounding the island like an unpredictable goddess, whose face, rather than that of a benevolent mother, is that of "a witch, and one so strong/ That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,/ And deal in her command without her power" (5.1.269-271). The first re-emergence of Sycorax's unchecked passions occurs in 1.2, when her son, who was initially obliging and thus treated affectionately by the newcomers, is described as prey to unexpected change. Prospero recalls that after a few years of peaceful coexistence, and just as Miranda was passing from girlhood to womanhood, Caliban had attempted to rape her, and, consequently, was isolated and enslaved in a narrow, rocky area of the island. What drives Prospero to such harsh measures against the young man is an uncontrollable fear of miscegenation linked to the resurfacing terror of what he perceived as Sycorax's unrestrained sexuality. These risks are made insufferably explicit when a resentful Caliban replies to Prospero's accusation of having tried "to violate/ The honour of my child" (1.2.348-349), that, had his seduction of her not been prevented, he would have "peopled else/ The isle with Calibans" (351-352). The "[h]ag-seed" (1.2.347) Caliban, openly admitting that he wants to fill the island with children identical to himself, thus emerges as the most dangerous threat to the integrity of the daughter's reflection in the paternal mirror.

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

appropriate his paternal power. Caliban's plan to marry Miranda to a man of his choice – the butler Stephano – again causes Prospero to envisage a potentially deep crack in his mirror's otherwise smooth surface.

However, there is more at stake in *The Tempest* than a threat to the integrity of the hero's ideal mirror image. Indeed, in a drama where almost all the characters undergo a "sea-change" (1.2.401), Prospero himself is not exempt from transformation. Moreover, what is particularly surprising is that the unexpected change that he is subject to is linked to the very element that he had been preoccupied with controlling throughout the play: water. In particular, something is finally triggered in Prospero's mind in relation to the fish-like Caliban and his ambiguous mother. A significant clue that a transformation is occurring is given in Prospero's "renunciation speech," which, rather than distancing the hero from his "Art," as is his supposed intention, actually seems to draw on the very kind of magic he has always stated he despises, i.e., black magic. Indeed, by appropriating the words of the Ovidian Medea, herself a literary precursor of Sycorax<sup>12</sup>, Prospero seems to reveal that his purpose is tinged with a deep sense of uncertainty. In the same speech, he also announces that he will "drown" his books in the sea (5.1.57), possibly surrendering to a primordial desire to reunite with that female element that he has so far kept totally separate from himself. In so doing, he would allow the "symbolic" – epitomized by his refined culture – to mingle again with the original, undifferentiated domain of the "semiotic" – represented by water. As we have seen, traces of Prospero's new consciousness can also be found in his sudden interruption of the wedding masque, when his preoccupation with Caliban's plot appears so uncontrollable that it cannot but raise questions in the audience. Indeed, what Prospero sees in such a threat is not only the danger of his usurpation, but also a grotesque parody of his own patriarchal appropriation of his daughter's decision to marry a specific husband; this reduces the woman to a mere commodity in an utilitarian discourse between men. By suddenly presenting Caliban as Prospero's dark double, the play intriguingly throws light on an uncanny similarity between the slave's apparently barbaric behaviour and the master's seemingly evolved habits. Thus finally, at the very end of the drama, when Caliban's plot has been defeated, at the very moment when Prospero publicly denounces his servant's intentions, the

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<sup>12</sup> For an analysis of the connections between Sycorax, Circe and Medea, see Marina Warner, "'The Foul Witch' and Her 'Freckled Whelp': Circean Mutations in the New World," in Hulme and Sherman, 2000.

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

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

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

discovered ambiguity in which he is no longer positioned as an indisputable master of the seas, nor as an all-controlling director of his own plots, but "increasingly as a spectator on the margins of the drama he has created" (Kirkpatrick 84, 96, 89, 94).

So far, the aim of this paper has been to read *The Tempest* in the light of Dee's treatise on navigation, while focusing on how the dramatist partly reshaped, but also reacted against Dee's firm beliefs regarding mastery over the sea. The analysis does not necessarily imply that Shakespeare read the *Memorials*, because the ideas conveyed in Dee's work were well in circulation not only in Elizabethan, but also in Jacobean London, when the play was written. In particular, when the treatise was published, England's colonial efforts were at their very beginnings, and an atmosphere of humanistic optimism surrounded them. In the Jacobean era, in contrast, there would have been a more mixed attitude to such issues. The already well-established ideas of Dee might well have been accompanied – and tempered – by a more troubled state of mind, typical of the late Renaissance, as well as by additional information about recent discoveries and shipwrecks, not least the notorious loss of the Sea Venture on the expedition of 1610.<sup>13</sup> In fact, in Shakespeare's later years, pamphlets and reports about tempests and shipwrecks concomitant with various explorations overseas might have actually contributed to a darkening atmosphere of anxiety that gradually replaced the climate of enthusiasm more typical of the 1570s. It is also possible that Dee's death in abject poverty, which preceded the first recorded staging of the play by only a couple of years, might have influenced the playwright. It is indeed the very concurrence of historical and cultural events that makes Shakespeare's tribute not merely an intriguing memorial to the great Renaissance polymath Dee, but also a complex re-evaluation of him, written in a later period when both experience in navigation and the rise of a new artistic sensibility were putting the latter's ardent beliefs to the test.

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<sup>13</sup> Reports of the Sea Venture expedition are among the few sources that are said to have had an undeniable influence on *The Tempest* (Vaughan and Vaughan 43).



### III. **Motus' *Nella tempesta* (2013): Reclaiming the Forces of the Sea for a Socially Engaged Art**

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

*Nella tempesta* [Into the Tempest], which premiered at Montreal's 2013 Festival TransAmérique, is the "third movement" in the cycle of Motus *Animale Politico Project 2011<2068*. It was preceded by *The Plot is the Revolution* (2011) and *Where* (2012), which in the first case deals with the possibility of imagining and creating utopic spaces where a challenge to the present is conceivable, and in the second with the state of surveillance surrounding us in everyday life. The later *Caliban Cannibal* (2015) builds on one of the main issues in *Nella tempesta*: the rebellion against slavery. Under the direction of Enrico Casagrande and Daniela Nicolò, Motus – or "movement" – is not only an independent company, but also a radical research group that was founded in 1991 in Rimini with the aim of creating an experimental form of theatre where contamination of the theatrical experience beyond traditional genre boundaries is possible. While specifically favouring self-governing cultural centres and independent theatres in Italy, Motus also debuted on the international scene in 1996, and since then has often been on tour in various European and North American countries. Indeed, one of the aims of the company is to provide a "bridge" between the more "bourgeois" traditional theatre, and other, more independent, and less establishment forms of theatrical experience. These aims are shared by the founders of the company and actors alike. Ethical and aesthetic concerns always blend in Motus' productions, all of which reveal a strong concern with contemporary

issues of equality, racism, control, gender difference and respect for human rights.<sup>14</sup> It is again where Shakespeare's *Tempest* ends, i.e., with Prospero finally acknowledging that Caliban is indeed a part of himself, that Motus' production begins. Indeed, the idea that the Other is part of the Self is the very premise upon which the entire 2013 performance revolves.

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

As if in opposition to the intensity of the dialogue on the stage, the scenery in *Nella tempesta* is strikingly absent. Except, that is, for the piles of blankets, which the public has been explicitly asked to bring, and that will be "donated" to independent associations that care for the needy after the performance. The extreme flexibility of these items offers various opportunities for the company to enact the infinite metamorphoses that materialise on an island that is envisaged as a place where change can actually happen. From a quickly assembled Prospero's cell where Miranda and Glen<sup>15</sup> temporarily find refuge, to an unstable skyscraper soon destined to collapse, or the massive writing "this island is mine" (1.2.332) gradually becoming

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<sup>14</sup> Among Motus' most striking productions, it is worth mentioning *Syrma Antigones*, which premiered in 2009 at the Officine Grandi Riparazioni during the Turin Festival delle Colline. In a daring adaptation of Sophocles' work, the tragic events of Oedipus' daughter's life dramatically intersect with the disturbing facts that occurred on the occasion of the G8 summit in Genoa (20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> July 2001), during which anti-global demonstrations were followed by a series of clashes with the police. Several attacks on the protesters by the police took place, and in one of these the young activist Carlo Giuliani was killed. The restless spectre of Giuliani thus hauntingly shadows that of Antigone's murdered unburied brother Polynices, whose disfigured body deserves, according to his intrepid sister and notwithstanding the strict legal restrictions in force, a fitting burial on the basis of higher obligations grounded in respect for human rights.

<sup>15</sup> A newly introduced character who embodies the problems of the actor who plays him: a young immigrant from Albania haunted by his own past.

the provocative final question “and us?”, the play’s unusual scenery suggests that material transformation is possible when accompanied by a change in our perspective.

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

One of the most interesting features of the production is its location or rather, its multiple locations. Indeed, in the first part of *Nella tempesta*, Shakespeare’s uninhabited island becomes<sup>16</sup> the Mediterranean isle of Lampedusa, while in the second part the focus moves to various areas of Rome. Why the unusual link between Lampedusa and Rome? The reason for this choice brings us back to Motus’ preoccupation with contemporary issues of human rights, especially Italian immigration policies with regard to the thousands of refugees undertaking the long journey from Africa to find a new life in Europe. For many migrants Lampedusa represents the first safe haven, a refuge often reached after months, sometimes years, of devastating journeys and terrible disasters at sea that frequently cause the death of hundreds of people, many of them children. In fact, in the very year that *Nella tempesta* was first performed, there was a large increase in migrants landing on the Italian coasts, with 14,753 people in Lampedusa alone.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, a dreadful shipwreck occurred just off the coast of the island in 2013. This became known as “the massacre of Lampedusa” – a tragedy with 368 victims, including many children (Leogrande 147). However, Lampedusa is only a crossing point for migrants who make it to Italy. Also in 2013, many survivors of the Lampedusa massacre moved to Rome, where they found another haven, this time in Palazzo Salaam, an abandoned area that once housed the University of Tor Vergata. It is in this “island” that

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<sup>16</sup> Or remains, given that some critics have hypothesized that it is a possible location of *The Tempest* (Vaughan and Vaughan 48).

<sup>17</sup> “[T]he migrants who landed on the Italian coasts in the past year [2013] amount to 42,925, i.e., a 325 % increase compared to the previous year; 3,818 were unaccompanied minors, 2,500 of whom landed in Sicily. [...] On the island, in fact, 37,886 migrants either landed, or were transferred after sea rescue operations, i.e., 88 % of the total annual number of migrants, 14,753 of whom on Lampedusa alone”. Deposition given by Vice Minister Sen. Bubbico at the Migration Commission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council, Rome, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014 (translation mine).

hundreds of people seeking political asylum waited, sometimes for years, hoping that one day they would be granted a residency permit. In the face of the prejudice that characterizes certain sections of society, self-governed areas like Palazzo Salaam actually serve as micro-societies run by the alternative principles of inclusion, mutual assistance and respect for cultural difference. Moreover, they temporarily allow migrants to steer clear of the CIEs [Centres for Identification and Expulsion], highly contested institutions found in some Italian cities<sup>18</sup> where the intention is to “contain” undocumented migrants until they can be officially deported.

The Lampedusa shipwreck, along with the storm that caused it, therefore lies just below the surface of the Motus production. However, far from being a play about mourning, *Nella tempesta* suggests that we reimagine the Lampedusa setting as a “different ZONE”<sup>19</sup> where new encounters with the Other and new forms of hospitality can take place, and where storms can be valuable opportunities for welcoming unexpected changes in our society. It is thus in order to promote a new way of thinking – and acting – that the Motus production reclaims the disconcerting power of the storm, a power that corresponds with the artists’ ability to incite a revolution in the domain of ideas. Indeed, as remarked in *The New York Times*, “[t]empests may destroy, but they have the virtue of sweeping people into action,” because “[y]ou can talk all you like about ideals and class resentment,” “[b]ut the ingredient most essential to getting a revolution off the ground is energy, the kind that incinerates as it moves” (12.12.2014). The personal backgrounds of the members of the theatre company, with their “life experience in the nomad, vagabond, unstable and [...] pirate community that we ‘uprooted’ artists are a part of,”<sup>20</sup> is certainly of help in the effort to create this new sensibility. Accordingly, the production sets out to achieve this goal from the very first scene, where the words of Judith Malina, the founder of the iconoclastic New York Living Theatre, are quoted, stating that “we do not have to protect ourselves from the storms: we have to instigate them”. In 2011, while Motus was staging *The Plot is the Revolution* at the Living Theatre, which featured an intense dialogue between Malina and Silvia Calderoni – also the leading actress in *Nella tempesta* – they were beset by Hurricane Sandy. It was on that remarkable occasion that the German-American director had told the Italian actress-activist of the

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<sup>18</sup> In Rome there is one in Ponte Galeria.

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

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.motusonline.com/en/2011-2068-animale-politico-project/nella-tempesta/>.

need to welcome change. “Tempest” certainly stands for “revolution” in Motus’ production, although this revolution is not physical in origin. It is primarily a revolution in the eyes of the observer, a revolution of the mind, which can then lead to a series of revolutionary actions.

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

Intermittently captured by the camera’s “eye,” the show is dominated by an androgynous Ariel – majestically interpreted by the aforementioned Silvia Calderoni – torn between her role as Prospero’s slave, her status as an actor and her longing to leave the stage and move freely in the real world. Throughout the performance, she provocatively questions other characters, while also questioning herself, until the decisive moment when, in a visual correspondence between her desires and actions, the stage is physically taken over by a long video projection. With this video, the audience accompanies Ariel to Rome, first to the city centre, to follow a protest march for the rights of African migrants, then to the outskirts, to Palazzo Salaam, where hundreds of those people have found a temporary refuge. Here, Ariel picks up a small tree, evocative of the pine tree where Prospero finds her in Shakespeare’s text, but also emblematic of her new opportunities. She holds the same tree at the end of the performance, thus establishing a symbolic continuity between what happens on the ideal island of the play and what *may* now happen in the material world [see figures 3 and 4].



**Figures 3 and 4. Motus' *Nella tempesta* (2013)**

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

Indeed, the task of *Nella tempesta* does not conclude with the end of the drama, as it is intended that the performance is followed by a series of parallel workshops and events. These follow-ups are meant to take place in particular areas of the cities where the play is performed, according to the specific questions raised by the audience after the show. After the premiere in Montreal, for example, the company was asked to organize a public action at the Hôtel de la Ville, the city hall. Here a law that establishes that, if more than fifty people meet in a public space without authorization, they are liable to arrest was animatedly discussed. Considered from the wider perspective of Motus' public actions, the issues raised during the show are not merely aesthetic, but clearly invite the public to contribute to the company's goals beyond the performance.<sup>21</sup>

The aim of the Motus production is therefore to raise a series of questions that encourage the public to believe that a dialogue between ethics and aesthetics is possible, not only on the imaginary island that they have created on stage, but also in

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.klpteatro.it/motus-nella-tempesta-la-videointervista>. It is possible to see the entire performance on <https://vimeo.com/92512775>.

the complex dynamics of contemporary life. In fact, the goal of *Nella tempesta* is made explicit on the Motus website, which includes Agostino Lombardo's definition of a theatre "not intended as a show, but as an experience, not as an imitation, a reflection, a suspension, or a flight from life, but theatre as life in itself" (L, translation mine)<sup>22</sup>.

### **Conclusion: From Ancient Illusions to Contemporary Utopias**

In the present analysis, Dee's *The General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and Motus' *Nella tempesta* stand as three examples of ways of dealing with the force of the sea, a force which can be seen as epitomizing the fluid, unknown domain of the Other. The illusion, perhaps more typical of the early Renaissance, that human power can extend beyond the limits of our experience without calling into question our cultural bulwarks, is evident in Dee's extremely optimistic treatise, but is seriously put to the test in Shakespeare's play. A genuine product of the late Renaissance, *The Tempest* presents the shattering of illusions that were hitherto pervasive, painfully questioning the assumptions of a culture caught in the grip of a dramatic identity crisis. *Nella tempesta*, staged some 400 years after the original play was written, is entirely reimagined as a way of relating with the Other, there being no reason to continue to pursue ancient illusions. Indeed, what Shakespeare himself had finally revealed as a chimera in his play is explicitly dismissed in the 2013 production, and the narrow-minded belief that the Other represents a menace to the integrity of the Self is replaced by a new vision. Conceived in a world that has to face apparently uncontrollable waves of migrations, which are essentially nothing but the drawn-out consequences of a phenomenon that was emergent in the Elizabethan and Jacobean age – i.e. colonialism – the Motus Theatre Company passionately strives for the chance to create a "different ZONE"<sup>23</sup>. Here the Other and the Self, stimulated by the powerful changes brought about by contemporary "tempests," can finally set us free from narrow-minded power dynamics so that we can peacefully enjoy mutual enrichment and concerted growth.

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<sup>22</sup> See also <http://www.motusonline.com/en/2011-2068-animale-politico-project/nella-tempesta/>.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.motusonline.com/en/2011-2068-animale-politico-project/nella-tempesta/>.

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### Illustrations

Figure 1. Frontespiece of John Dee's *The General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation* (1577) © British Library Board, General Reference Collection 48.h.18

Figure 2. *Fortuna*, Theodore De Bry's *Emblemata* (1593) © Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Figure 3. A scene from Motus' *Nella tempesta* (2013) © Tiziana Tomasulo

Figure 4. Another scene from Motus' *Nella tempesta* (2013) © Tiziana Tomasulo