

The Tempest in the “Third Space”: Finding a Place and Value for Shakespeare’s Play in a Bicultural Context

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Introduction

Finding a Place and Value for Shakespeare’s Play in “The Third Space”

The bicultural space is constantly shifting and transforming. Our New Zealand of the last two or three decades has been marked by a visible growth of cross-cultural interaction... this kind of dynamic and evolving interaction (is called) “the third space”. [1]

In the last thirty years, paralleling the debates about New Zealand identity, New Zealand theatre has been asking the question: “what is an appropriate theatre form for New Zealand?” Should our theatre reflect the contemporary writing and production sensibilities of the West; should we focus on bicultural theatre; if so where does Māori Theatre, Marae Theatre fit in?

In an attempt to respond to these questions, I undertook, in June 2008, to direct Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* within a bicultural school context, hoping to create a bicultural production marrying the traditions of Shakespeare & western theatre practices with Māori tikanga (custom and practice) & Māori taonga: symbols of Māori mana and prestige. In short, I hoped to use Shakespeare’s play to investigate what Janinka Greenwood (Greenwood, 2002, p 8.) calls “the third space”, an emergent, shared space between Māori and Pākehā, in an attempt to shine a light on my understanding of bicultural identity.

To investigate this idea through *The Tempest* was a conscious choice. The text contains echoes of the early New Zealand experience for both Māori and Pākehā: a European arrives on an island, displaces the local population, and then latterly the two groups fight over rights, access, and governance of the island. Furthermore Māori are “tangata whenua”, or people of the land, or moreover the first peoples to have populated Aotearoa New Zealand. Māori have rights and responsibilities towards the land and consider the land as the earth mother. In fact whenua can mean both “land” and “placenta”, the latter definition strongly underlining the Māori relationship to the land of Aotearoa. Pākehā on the other hand are “manuhiri”, visitors or outsiders to Māori, and since arrival, and latterly colonisation, the tension between these two groups has led to some troubling interactions: war, protest, and now social disadvantage.

Methodology

This project involved 100 performing participants, and those that gave their permission have had photographs from the production included in the paper. Two cultural advisors, Whaea Bloss and Kim, from the High School, gave advice and counsel on all areas that related to

Tikanga and Maoritanga (aspects of Maori culture and customary practice).¹ Drama and theatre practitioners Robert Gilbert, Christian Penney and Michelle Johansson were interviewed by me to enable me to broaden my perspective.² Furthermore, over fifty teachers, students, and audience members were invited to complete a questionnaire on the efficacy of my work on *The Tempest*.³ The questionnaires were collated and a qualitative analysis comparing responses was undertaken.⁴ The interviews were also collated and a qualitative analysis was undertaken, and the interviews and questionnaires were compared.

My findings are that there is a place and value for such work as I undertook on *The Tempest* but with reservations that such work should never be tokenistic, or motivated by political correctness, but rather it should be authentic and respectful.⁵ In the final analysis bicultural theatre is an area we are only just starting to come to terms with in mainstream education and theatre in general.

Discussion

Finding and demonstrating the value: describing the production process and product.

We also must fashion the bicultural world of inter-connections and common pathways and understandings, but we will not be successful in this until the Maori world is respected, is resourced, is in good health and strength, and is in a true state of equity. [2]

Before I begin describing the production I would like to establish that one location, employing the skills of one iwi, (or Māori “tribe”) cannot represent Māoridom across the country.⁶ Between iwi, there are many divergences in both the style and the manner of representation of Māori performative arts, such as we included in *The Tempest*.⁷ In the next section I will talk about how I used specific facets of Māori performative identity in the production, looking at “Mana” or Māori power, authority and honour, and “Utu” or revenge in Māoritanga.

Mana and Utu; Caliban and Prospero

Prior to production, as I read and considered *The Tempest* from a bicultural perspective, characters’ mana was clear and dynamic, and to an audience in Aotearoa New Zealand, if framed well, the foregrounding of mana would root Shakespeare’s play in something that speaks specifically to this nation, and to its past and present, thus indicating the production’s ambitions to speak to the idea of Greenwood’s third space.

For me there were many influences that shaped the production of *The Tempest*, but one of the most profound was the way that Prospero usurped the mana of Caliban: his position, his power, and his place upon the island.⁸ And, how latterly, Caliban schemes and then enlists the help of Stephano and Trinculo to be revenged upon Prospero: such an action is well known in Māoritanga and is called “Utu” in te reo Maori.⁹ The play between mana and utu became the central tension in my production: it was not solely born from Shakespeare’s text but rather was a marriage of text with a quality that was specifically Māori, clearly New Zealand, hopefully directing the audience towards the third space.

We learn that prior to the start of the play, where we meet the central characters, there had been a mutually beneficial arrangement: Caliban showed Prospero the best parts of the isle (“and then I loved thee/ And show’d thee all the qualities o’ the isle”^[3]) for which Caliban in turn was taught, amongst other things, astronomy (“and teach me how/ To name the bigger light, and how the less,/ That burn by day and night”^[4]) by Prospero. This contract failed when Caliban attempted to rape Miranda: “till thou didst seek to violate/ The honour of my child”^[5], an act that has led to a breakdown in civilised relations between the two men.

To make this clear to an audience I employed the concept of mana to make the tension between Caliban and Prospero clear. Firstly, (at the initial meeting between the two men, as seen by the audience) Prospero and Caliban meet, in a sense, as equals: both men proud, tall, strong and neither giving ground; qualities that one would find in a haka prior to a battle between two warring iwi. But what separates them visibly is the wielding, and use, of the taiaha (a Māori warrior’s fighting staff) by Prospero and the facial moko (elaborate tattoo) of Caliban. Both taiaha and moko are signs or symbols (semiotics) of the mana the two men possess on this island.



Prospero: “I’ll rack thee with old cramps,/ Fill all they bones with aches, make thee roar,/ That beats shall tremble at thy din”. The Tempest, I/ii, lines 371-373. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.

Semiotics of taonga: taiaha, moko, and Maui’s hook

I’ll break my staff

Bury it certain fathoms in the earth

And deeper than did ever plummet sound

I’ll drown my book.^[6]

To make the central tensions between Caliban and Prospero clear I decided to utilise symbols, or signs, recognisable to a New Zealand audience. In-keeping with my desire to make the production bicultural, and to draw attention to the third space, these icons needed to be visibly Māori, and ideally taonga. A taonga is an object or practice that is either deeply precious or highly prized to Māori, for example the Māori language, te reo Māori, is the most prized taonga in Māoritanga. Both the taiaha and the facial moko

are taonga and thus symbols that Shakespeare's play is not being produced solely to highlight the original concerns and ambitions of the author. Rather it is being used to draw attention to the third space, a neutral space where a potentially new and exciting cultural discourse, between Māori and Pākehā, might take place.



Prospero in possession of the Taonga: a taiaha and a hook of Maui. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.



A member of the kapa haka troupe displaying the facial moko of the Ngapuhi iwi. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.

The Māori position as “tangata whenua”, or the first peoples to have populated Aotearoa New Zealand, and Prospero's usurping of that position, led to conversations with my cultural advisors and collaborators (Kim and Whaea Bloss) in which we discussed how the island could be seen as the root of mana, of power, and that we might utilise a taiaha as both symbolic, and as a conduit, of the island's mana and power. This idea came to me when reading Prospero's lines from Act V (quoted on the preceding page) and, Prospero's lines from I/ii: “Lend thy hand/ And pluck my magic garment from me. So:/ Lie there my art.”^[7] I believe that the original implication of the lines was to describe an item of clothing,

a cloak, but I decided that I needed an icon to clearly demonstrate, at least in part, the root of Prospero's power, and how this power had changed hands from Caliban to Prospero.

The chosen symbol, the taiaha itself is an icon of the Māori warrior, and is usually around one and a half metres in length. The taiaha is a wooden close quarters weapon used for short, sharp strikes or stabbing thrusts. One end of the taiaha is flattened to a broad blade, and the other narrows to a point with a carved face. The image of the carved face is often different iwi to iwi, but for most it details a challenge to the opposing warrior who may feel the force of the weapon. Taiaha are also often passed down, father to son, Rangatira to Rangatira, and in doing so the taiaha can come to represent the whakapapa (or genealogy) of whosoever who wields it.

In *The Tempest*, I was keen to underline the mana of the taiaha we used through a ritual, not necessarily Māori in origin, but an action that would underline the role of the taiaha. To do so, at I/ii, Lines 23-25 ("Tis time/ I should inform thee farther. Lend thy hand,/ And pluck my magic garment from me. So:/ (Lays down his mantle) Lie there, my art") the actress playing Miranda (at Prospero's bidding) took the taiaha and with great reverence laid it upon a stage box downstage centre, it now being the closest element of the set, or property, to the audience, seated less than two metres away.



Prospero: "Tis time/ I should inform thee farther. Lend thy hand,/ And pluck my magic garment from me. So:/ Lie there, my art". *The Tempest*, I/ii, Lines 23-25. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.

It was also centrally located; you had to look over and beyond the taiaha to see the rest of the stage space and the action that happened upon it.

Latterly, after Prospero has recounted to Miranda the story of their "sea sorrow", he declares that "Now I arise" at which point he '(Resumes his mantle)' [8]. I took this to mean that he once more took up his taiaha as he was thinking ahead to the meeting with Caliban, and needed the taiaha as a defence; Prospero's wielding of a stolen taonga, or precious artefact, belonging to Caliban, would be greatly offensive to Māori, and would therefore provoke anger and tension from the very start of any meeting between the two men. With the actors we discussed that there would be no before time (as Stanislavski would have defined it), no back story that detailed how and when Prospero stole the taiaha, but theft would be implied in two ways: one, by the way that Caliban reacted to the taiaha wielded by Prospero, and; two, the poroporoaki (a ritual of departure, such as one might encounter at a Tangi, a Māori

funeral) that would be enacted at the end of the play.Â During the poroporoaki (along with the wooden taonga: Maui's hook) the taiaha, and therefore control of the island, is returned to Caliban, from Prospero, by way of the spirits, Juno, Ceres and Iris.

I also though needed a device to communicate that Caliban was not a willing slave but an equal, possessing more nobility than Prospero would have the audience believe.Â As Caliban declares of himself: "For I am all the subjects that you have/ Which first was mine own king!"^[9], Caliban's former mana, I decided, was best represented by a full facial moko or tattoo.



Caliban, adorned with the facial moko of the northern Ngapuhi iwi. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.

Moko were (until the arrival of the Missionaries, whose influence slowly undermined its popularity) highly valued facial taonga, which detailed many things from whakapapa, to rank, to iwi affiliation.Â In our production we utilised a moko design that was worn by members of the school's kapa haka troupe, a moko that reflected the location and importance of the school, (its northland-ness) and a moko that was specific to the local Ngapuhi iwi.

To reference the local iwi in such a way I hoped would also reflect positively upon the students in the audience who recognised it as such, and augment the mana of both the forefathers who wore this moko, and the ancestor who wore this design in the performance.Â This concurs with the findings of another New Zealand drama Practitioner.Â During Robert Gilbert's interview (March, 2009), he spoke of a similar occurrence happening in one of his Christchurch school productions.Â The student playing the role of Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* wore a moko to designate her rank and status.Â This moko, as is appropriate for a woman, is a moko worn on the lower lip and chin, the design of which has been in this student's family for generations; it speaks to the whakapapa of both her iwi and her hapu (a sub tribe, with members belonging to more than one iwi).Â As a consequence it will reflect great mana on the student, and her whanau (immediate family).

So I had now carefully placed icons as protagonists: a taiaha and a moko, but I felt that I needed one more icon; with an odd number one character can hold the balance of power by possessing two of the three taonga.Â With Kim and Whaea Bloss I discussed the appropriateness of something worn around the neck that would have symbolic meaning and therefore potent strength.Â If Caliban wore the moko, and Prospero a taonga of some kind

around his neck, then the taiaha would act as the deciding factor: whoever possessed the taiaha had two of three taonga and therefore had the balance of the power. And then a cast member suggested we use a hook of Maui, made of wood.



Prospero, whose mana is underwritten by the taonga (especially the Maui hook) declares to Sebastian and Antonio: “But you, my brace of lords, were I so minded,/ I could here pluck his highness’ frown upon you,/ And justify you traitors”. The Tempest, V/i, Lines 126-128. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.

Māori lore is replete with Myths and Legends concerning the origins of Aotearoa, just as with any other civilisation. The story of Maui it was decided was a perfect one as in this myth Maui, who was a fisherman, used an enchanted hook to raise the islands of Aotearoa from the seabed. With the play being set on a magical island such an icon was a perfect choice; its magical overtures fitted perfectly with the nature of Shakespeare’s, and our, island and the remarkable powers that Prospero possessed and had appropriated. For me this resolved how the characters would represent their relative positions in the story/production, but what job could the theatre space itself do in affecting this distinction?

Vertical/Pakeha; horizontal/Maori

Beyond the visible, personal icons, (on a micro level) used or worn by the actors that draw upon Māoritanga, I also wanted to make gestures at the macro level. To do this I organised the theatrical space in a specific way. My ambition was to create a visible distinction between what I imagined might be the ‘vertical’ world of Prospero/Pākehā, and the ‘horizontal’ world of Caliban/Māori.

This choice was inspired by two ideas: the first an image in my mind’s eye of the ships of both Prospero (albeit “A rotten carcass of a butt”^[10]), and of the King of Naples, as seen from the shore of the island, a harbinger of change, and; the moment in the play when in II/ii Trinculo hides beneath the “gaberdine”:

Alas, the storm is come again! my best way is to creep under his gaberdine; there is no other shelter hereabouts: I will here shroud till the dregs of the storm be past.^[11]

The arrival of the Pākehā is often described as the coming of technology, technology that would radically affect the balance of power, and stability, in Māoridom. The most important technological advance that Pākehā brought with them was the musket, a weapon that had been around for 200 years in Europe but to Māori was seen as a new and potentially dynamic functionary in the wars between iwi that so often occurred in Aotearoa New Zealand in the 800 years of Māori settlement.

And so the image I had of a ship coming towards the island with visible canons, masts upstanding and proudly declaring that change was coming represented the technological Pākehā; in fact this is the image that Māori first had of the Pakeha and indeed is where their names derives from. Pākehā means white skinned super-natural beings, as they would have appeared to the Māori arriving in their ships, craft of remarkable sophistication. The Pākehā also brought God with them, in the guise of Missionaries, who went quickly to work converting Māori to Christianity. The symbol of this God is the crucifix, another dynamically upward symbol, and reflected in the vertical and horizontal beams of the mast within my onstage ship.

Māori in contrast are tangata whenua, their spiritual beliefs rooting them strongly to the land, the seabed at the foreshore, the trees and plants; Māori are part of a consistent continuum of life upon the island and not separate to it. When a child is born the placenta is buried in the earth in order to give thanks to mother earth for the gift of another life.

I therefore was inspired to create two planes: the vertical, Pākehā plane, was dominated by a tall ship stage left, and by images cast by a data projector (high above the stage on the rear wall), which, almost exclusively, detailed the characters and the experiences of the Pākehā; the court of the King of Naples especially. The stage floor covered in long strips of newsprint paper dominated the horizontal plane; this was replaced each night.



An image reflecting the tension between the vertical: the ship, and projected visual images on the rear wall; and the horizontal: the paper floor and the actors' interaction with it. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.

Upon the paper we painted a map of the two islands of Aotearoa New Zealand. Each of the characters who were indigenous – Caliban, Ariel, the three spirits – were instructed to always walk lightly and gently so as not to rip or tear the easily torn paper. They did this to show their knowledge of the delicate balance of the island and as a sign of respect to its nurturing nature; in short their actions reflected their cognisance of being tangata whenua. The

Pākehā characters: Prospero, the Royal Court, Stephano and Trinculo, were instructed that during their acting, and actions, they should not be concerned if they tore the paper. My hope was that the audience would read into these contrasting relationships to the paper that Māori had a respect and care for the land that eluded the understanding of the Pākehā manuhiri. In doing this I was drawing the audience back to the central concept of the third space, showing how “space is conceived and of how individuals and groups see their role within it”, (Greenwood, P. 8).



Trinculo, manuhiri, declares: “Alas, the storm is come again! my best way is to creep under his gaberdine; there is no other shelter hereabouts: misery acquaints a man with strange bed-fellows. I will here shroud till the dregs of the storm be past”. *The Tempest*, II/ii, Lines 38-42. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.

The idea of visitors versus those indigenous to the island found further representation in other ways. My ideas were inspired from the protocol a visitor may go through at a Marae.

Such protocol had implications for the production: on first arrival Prospero would have been manuhiri and Caliban the tangata whenua, but at the point that we joined the story it was clear that the roles, along with the symbols of power, had changed. To represent this on first entering the stage space I had Caliban visibly, deliberately enter the stage from a door that is never used in performances. This door was down stage right, closest to the left hand section of the audience, allowing entrance from the outside, that outside world was at that time in winter (we were performing in June). When Caliban is first called upon by Prospero: “What, ho! slave! Caliban! Thou earth, thou! speak.”^[12] Caliban’s retort came from the other side of the door, outside of the playing space: “There’s wood enough within.”^[13] I observed in performance that this quite shocked the audience, as they had become quite used to the action occurring within a very specific onstage frame. I cannot tell what they might have made of the meaning of such an act but my hope is that they realised that Caliban was less worthy of occupying the stage space than Prospero, that, along with other clear symbols and indicators, the status of Prospero was something greater than that of Caliban. The dialogue that followed between Caliban and Prospero was then tightly limited, controlled by Prospero, so that it happened down stage right in that uncomfortable corner drawing attention to the door and to the world outside: “and here you sty me/ In this hard rock whiles you do keep from me/ The rest o’ the island.”^[14]

In the interchange that occurred between Caliban and Prospero, Caliban became more demanding and passionate-critical of his state: the inequity of his position. He challenged

Prospero and Prospero responded in kind and in doing so combined many of the ideas and theatrical devices that I have been detailing:

*For this, be sure, to-night thou shalt have **cramps**,
Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins
Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,
All exercise on thee; thou shalt be **pinch'd**
As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more **stinging**
Than bees that made 'em (my emphasis). [15]*

At this point, with Caliban dangerously manifesting covetousness of the taonga, Prospero attacks him with the taiaha, punctuating each of the action words – “cramps”, “side-stitches”, “pinch’d”, “stinging” – with a vicious swing of the taiaha. The taiaha does not make contact with Caliban but Prospero’s actions lead to violent convulsive reactions in Caliban, leading to Caliban writhing upon the floor in pain. This writhing made large tears in the paper floor, thus underlining Prospero’s lack of true understanding of, and sympathy for, the taonga he possesses and the island he controls. It is director-inspired action that underlines a profound criticism of the character, and his behaviours. This lack of true, full understanding is Prospero’s failing, and it foreshadows his departure at the end of the play, a departure in which Caliban will be in the ascendant. To establish this in the minds of the audience I will utilise a final Māori performative act: the poroporoaki.

Poroporoaki, Karakia and Prospero’s departure

As the cast and I rehearsed (under the ever helpful-watchful eye of my Māori collaborators, Whaea Bloss and Kim), something unexpected but welcome happened. The rehearsals and thus the production started and progressed in a predictable way in which we honoured the English text, took some liberties in exploring a bicultural concept, but the production remained a version of a Shakespeare play. In the second half (of rehearsals and also therefore of the play) Bloss, Kim, and myself grew in confidence, and we decided to utilise the kapa haka troupe and have them perform instead of the scripted Jacobean Masque. It worked far better than I could have hoped and, even though the singing was in te reo Māori and the symbolic gestures generally beyond the ken of our audience, the performance was indeed as Ferdinand describes it: “This is a most majestic vision, and/ Harmoniously charmingly.” [16]



The kapa haka troupe performs in place of the Masque. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.



The kapa haka troupe performs in place of the Masque. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.

As a replacement for the Masque, the use of Māori performative arts, or kapa haka (Māori cultural identity and heritage as shown through movement and song) worked successfully within the frame we had conceived. Partly this was due to the fact that the dialogue preceding the Masque explains and justifies what is to follow: Prospero – “Now come, my Ariel! bring a corollary,/ No tongue! all eyes! be silent.” [\[17\]](#)

IRIS

*A contract of true love to celebrate;
And some donation freely to estate
On the blest lovers.* [\[18\]](#)

...

CERES

*You sunburnt sicklemen, of August weary,
Come hither from the furrow and be merry:
Make holiday; your rye-straw hats put on
And these fresh nymphs encounter every one
In country footing.* [\[19\]](#)

I laid emphasis on “country footing” at which point the kapa haka group entered dancing and then singing, or haka and waiata in te reo Māori. The examples of the waiata and haka were chosen for their uplifting, joyous, and celebratory quality. After these lines spoken by Ceres all semblance of the Elizabethan Masque was replaced with this Māori performative art form.

Subsequent to the success of rehearsing the Masque and sharing it with the rest of the cast, I began to think about the finale of the production. I realised that in my ambition to create a bicultural vision of the play I had (through rehearsals) journeyed from simply reproducing an English text and was now more and more confidently inserting a greater degree of

Māoritanga, Tikanga Māori, and ultimately te reo Māori, into the production. I was moving from an “interpretation” to a “Deconstruction”, as Richard Schechner (1999) defines it.^[20] I therefore decided, in discussion with my collaborators, that the most logical way to proceed, a way to both fulfil our bicultural ambitions (to speak to the third space) and to create an equity balance, was to finish the play in a particularly Māori way. The use of Poroporoaki as a final performative gesture was born.



A karakia rings out to announce the arrival of the kapa haka troupe, and the Poroporoaki. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.

The idea was initially inspired by a few words spoken prior to the finale in which Prospero declares to King Alonso: “And thence retire me to my Milan, where/ Every third thought shall be my grave.”^[21] This line, suggesting Prospero’s demise, excited me as I realised he could take his leave from the assembled company, and from the audience, in a dramatic fashion utilising this important aspect of Tikanga Māori: a poroporoaki. Initially I had thought of a simple Karakia, or keening prayer, but in discussion with Kim and Bloss they suggested the more holistic poroporoaki. The power of the poroporoaki was also in the fact it would come to an audience as a surprise, because kapa haka groups in competition do not perform the poroporoaki nor is it used in the school context. Thus it would be fresh to an audience, contrasting with the familiarity of the kapa haka performance given in place of the Masque.

The school’s kapa haka group was employed once more to perform the poroporoaki. Their faces were rendered white to represent the face of death; the cast members wore clothes of traditional mourning black; the male members of the kapa haka also wore a warrior’s pui-pui (short beaded skirt). In the hands of the female lead member was held Pare Kawakawa, a plaited wreath of leaves that signifies a tangi. As the kapa haka group assembled Prospero performed a solemn ritual of return of the taonga: his book, the taiaha and the hook of Maui, followed by his declaration that “Now my charms are all o’erthrown,/ And what strength I have’s mine own,/ Which is most faint: now, ’tis true”^[22]. These charms, the taonga, were taken by Ceres, Juno and Iris, and then Prospero came forward to deliver his final lines:

*Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
And my ending is despair.*^[23]

Immediately after he had finished speaking he was enveloped by the kapa haka group who had slowly, dramatically, and menacingly framed up around him.



The kapa haka troupe performs the Poroporoaki, with Prospero at their centre. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.

The group would now escort him from the stage. As the kapa haka troupe departed the stage with Prospero at their centre, Caliban replaced him centre stage to receive from the spirits the taonga he had so coveted during the play. The spirits though did not give up the book that Prospero relinquished, but rather held onto that for themselves, by way of insurance. Caliban received the taonga standing upon the same downstage raised platform that the taiaha had been placed ceremonially upon, by Miranda, earlier in the play. Upon the platform he posed powerfully, visibly a newly ennobled Māori king, whilst behind him Prospero was led from the stage. The sense that I personally was left with is ‘the king is dead: long live the king’.



Caliban stands proud, possessed of the three taonga that announce him as a Māori king. In the background the kapa haka troupe escort Prospero from the stage. Photography reproduced with the kind permission of the photographer, Jan Ravlich.

With the help of my collaborators we had shaped an action that symbolised a fair and equitable transition of power, through the interplay of text, the performance of the *poroporoaki*, and the reassignment of *taonga*.¹⁴ For me this act not only served the play in this bicultural context, but also it served my audience and community, and also my ambition for Shakespeare to be seen as a bicultural model of performance.¹⁵ The final action symbolised a sharing of power and responsibility – something that has only begun to happen in Aotearoa New Zealand in the last thirty years since the formation of the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal – and was a symbolic recognition that Pākehā cannot govern alone but that equity is the way forward: equity in gesture, in language, in cultural recognition.¹⁶ However, this is my assertion: what evidence is there that other commentators, practitioners, and those that saw the production, share this viewpoint.¹⁷ This will be the focus of my last section.

Findings

So, is there a place and value for Shakespeare’s play in “The Third Space”?

My experience of working on creating a bicultural version of *The Tempest*, a production that embraces new “challenges, opportunities and understandings” (Greenwood, P. 8.) through working in the third space¹⁸ has been for me a stimulating, rewarding and surprising one; but can I evaluate whether there is a place and value for Shakespeare’s play in Aotearoa New Zealand?¹⁹ To me it is a clear ‘yes’, underlined by strong evidence, from research, to audience, and students’ reactions as evidenced in questionnaires²⁰ I created, and via the activity of a few like-minded peers.²¹ In this final section I will position my work in the context of other discourses, and I will begin with place, both in the sense of Aotearoa New Zealand, and also as in the imaginative-creative possibilities in transposing seemingly well-known drama texts, such as Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*.

Firstly the Place

My ambitions for *The Tempest* found an ally in the writings of Michael Neill who wrote:

The business of New Zealand Shakespeare... is not merely to give the plays a local accent but to realize their inescapably local dimension... this means effecting the kinds of cultural translation necessary to remove (the play) from the pieties of the ‘universal’ stage... and to place them in the historically charged arena...[24]

The idea of an “arena” excites me, as it speaks not only of the theatre arena but also the arena as a place of confrontation.²² My ambition was in part to confront, to question current cultural equity.²³ As Jim Moriarty put it, a theatre maker’s role is to “Motivate change, question apathy, challenge indifference”.²⁵ Using Shakespeare’s play as a model for bicultural performance was my attempt to fulfil this idea.²⁶ The vast majority of audience feedback, via the questionnaires, reflects Moriarty’s sentiments: “Loved it.²⁷ Made me feel at home (place) and was crafted to suit the audience (of New Zealanders)”, Kate.²⁸ “It made the play more relevant to the audience and to the players”, Sam.

The manner in which I attempted to build *The Tempest*, encompassing two cultures and merging them to create something that speaks of the third space, can be seen as an example of

what Christopher Balme calls “syncretic theatre”, which is “...a process of cultural exchange based on mutual respect and sympathy” (Balme, p. 272).

Syncretic theatre is one of the most effective means to decolonise the stage, because it utilizes the performance forms of both the European and indigenous cultures in a creative recombination of their respective elements, without slavish adherence to one tradition or the other. [26]

Secondly the Value

For me this is reflected in the quotes from audience members, and of the three theatre makers I interviewed: Robert Gilbert, Jim Moriarty, and Michelle Johansson. As Gilbert (March, 2009) said in his interview, for his students bicultural Shakespeare “got them engaged... got them excited... for the participants it broke down barriers... it was an affirmation of their culture (and) its status”. For Moriarty it was crucial that “there’s got to be a place for all contributors”, and for Johansson bicultural re-imaginings of Shakespeare is an appropriate way to communicate to actors and audience alike “who they are, and where they come from”. Kate, an audience member, reflected that for students of both cultures

The Tempest was a fine example of honouring the differing world views. And of giving the opportunity for expanding those world views, by understanding that of another. [27]

Another audience member, Ria, recognised the value in

...productions that celebrate, record, comment on our bi-cultural identity. I would like work that ... challenges our everyday perceptions and that raises questions about our future.

The Future

As I reflect upon the place and value of Shakespeare’s play, I realise that I have not considered the future, a future that announced itself as I was writing.

In March 2009 I read in The Education Weekly the proud claim by an academic (Professor Wally Penetito from Victoria University), that biculturalism is today a “reality rather than a goal” [28], and that all New Zealanders are now “able to walk confidently and knowingly in the two... founding cultures of the nation... biculturalism is... real, and it is happening everywhere”. However, less than one week later the managers at The Warehouse in Thorndon declared to staff that the only language to be allowed on the shop floor was English. Less than a week later, at Wellington’s Mana Coach Services, managers made a similar declaration: an “English only!” [29] policy, at all times, even in the break room. These two incidents underline that although ‘yes’, there is a place and value, there is much to be done as such work is fighting against an external reality. As Christian Penney (from Toi Whakaari drama school) stated in his questionnaire, “it’s a very big area we are only just coming to grips with.” [30] But I believe there is a place and value for experiments such as mine, and that they can have a positive affect, in however small (or maybe large) a way. There is still space for more work to be undertaken, in other contexts and at other times, but I am confident that Shakespeare’s plays are a good model to express the ambitions I have outlined in this thesis.

In this battle it is probable that Shakespeare will once more prove himself a useful tool. This is a fact he foresaw when he had Cassius state the following in *Julius Caesar*:

How many ages hence

Shall this our lofty scene be acted over

In states unborn and accents yet unknown. [31]

The future state that I hope for is one of cultural equity; the accent truly bicultural in expression.

Nau i whatu te kakahu, he taniko taku.

Yours is the useful work, mine ornamental.

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1 J. Greenwood, *History of Bicultural Theatre – Mapping the Terrain*, Christchurch College of Education, 2002, p. 8

2 J. Ritchie, *Becoming Bicultural*, Huia Publishers, 1992, p. 11

3 W. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, Methuen, London, 1954, lines 338-339

4 *ibid*, lines 336-338

5 *ibid*, lines 349-350

6 W. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, Methuen, London, 1954. V/i, lines 54-57

7 W. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, Methuen, London, 1954. I/ii, lines 23-25

8 W. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, Methuen, London, 1954. I/ii, line 169

9 *ibid*, lines 343-344

10 W. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, Methuen, London, 1954. I/ii, line 146

11 *ibid*, lines 38-42

12 W. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, Methuen, London, 1954. I/ii, lines 315-316

13 *ibid*, line 316

14 *ibid*, lines 244-346

15 *ibid*, lines 327-332

16 W. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, Methuen, London, 1954. IV/I, Lines 118-119

17 W. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, Methuen, London, 1954. IV/I, Lines 57 & 59

18 *ibid*, Lines 84-86

19 *ibid*, Lines 134-138

20 R. Schechner, *Re-Writing Shakespeare: Teaching Shakespeare Through Performance*, Milla Cozart Riggio (Ed.), New York, MLA, 1999, p. 95

- 21 W. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, Methuen, London, 1954. V/i, lines 310-311
- 22 W. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, Methuen, London, 1954. Epilogue, lines 1-3
- 23 *ibid*, lines 13-15 & 20
- 24 M. Neill: *Shakespeare Upside Down: World and Stage*, Otago Studies in English 6, Dunedin: University of Otago, 1998, p. 149
- 25 As expressed in a phone interview with Jim Moriarty, Thursday 26th March 2009
- 26 Christopher B. Balme, *Decolonizing The Stage: Theatrical Syncretism and Post-Colonial Drama*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999, p. 2
- 27 Kate, an audience member present at a performance of *The Tempest*, as quoted from her questionnaire (see Appendix B)
- 28 As quoted in *The Education Weekly*, Vol. 20, Monday 30th March 2009
- 29 As quoted in the *New Zealand Herald*, April 17th 2009
- 30 Christian Penney, as detailed in his questionnaire (Appendix B)
- 31 W. Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Methuen, 1998, London, III/i lines 111-113

Biography



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