



**HAL**  
open science

## Edward Gordon Craig and The Tempest

Patrick Le Boeuf

► **To cite this version:**

Patrick Le Boeuf. Edward Gordon Craig and The Tempest. Shakespeare in Performance. I, The Comedies, Nov 2011, Le Mans, France. pp.48-68. hal-00854111

**HAL Id: hal-00854111**

**<https://hal-bnf.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00854111>**

Submitted on 29 Aug 2013

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# EDWARD GORDON CRAIG AND *THE TEMPEST*

PATRICK LE BŒUF

*Abstract.* Although he never produced *The Tempest*, Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966) proved interested in that play throughout his life. The opinion expressed by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) that Shakespeare's play was intended only for the imagination was regarded by him as a challenge to stage directors. He set the action undersea, on a sunken island. He devoted most of his efforts to the opening scene, for which he envisioned a number of distinct solutions, until in 1942 he decided that Prospero should be alone on stage for this scene. His discussions with Peter Brook (born 1925) led to some of his conceptions being realized in Brook's 1957 and 1968 productions of the play. His ideas were so bold and so much ahead of their time that they were only realized in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, in stage and film productions of the play by directors who were not aware of their predecessor.

*Biography.* Patrick Le Bœuf is a library curator at Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. From 2006 to 2009 he worked in the Performing Arts Department of this institution, where he was in charge of the Edward Gordon Craig Collection.

Over a very long period of his life—at least from 1900 to 1957—the English stage director and theoretician Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966) felt now and again a need to think about ways of staging Shakespeare's last play, *The Tempest*, even though he had no prospect for an actual production.<sup>1</sup> This is a scarcely known fact, for three reasons. First, Craig never published in his lifetime any reproduction of the designs he drew for *The Tempest*.<sup>2</sup> Second, Craig's biographers did not mention that project—not even Craig himself in his partial autobiography published in 1957, *Index to the Story of My Days*—or they merely alluded to some designs made by Craig in 1905, allegedly “at the suggestion” of Max Reinhardt (1873-1943).<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, theatre historians who studied Craig's work were mainly interested in his few productions that were actually performed before an audience.

However, Craig's ideas about the play deserve to be examined, were it only because a topic to which he returned throughout his career was necessarily significant in his eyes. Besides, some of the solutions he envisaged were realized—by others, of course—only in the second half of

the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and might still be deemed daring today, which shows once again how much ahead of his time he stood.

As a preliminary caveat, it should be noted that it is not possible to “reconstruct” in a consistent way what “Craig’s *Tempest*” might have looked like. In 1939, he collected all his scattered staging notes, most of which are dated 1922, in a single document,<sup>4</sup> and he made additions to this document until 1956. These notes do not cover the entire play (e.g., Craig devoted more thinking to the opening scene than the last two acts), and they bear testimony to how his thought changed over time: sometimes, Craig did not choose between several different ways to treat a single passage. As a consequence, this work in progress with no definite version does not lend itself to the same kind of synthesis as Craig’s actual productions.

## Ambivalent Feelings

As a matter of fact, Craig’s interest in *The Tempest* is a paradox in itself. He kept repeating he loathed the play, and judged it in the harshest terms. As a young actor, in the years 1890-7, when he could have played “Florizel in *The Winter’s Tale* or Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, or the forest lovers in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*,” he “had no liking” for such roles: “I was neither drawn towards them at all, nor did I comprehend what the plays were about. They seemed too vague, mystic, bodiless.”<sup>5</sup> In 1922, he was convinced that

this is an old play rewritten by Shakespeare [...] it is a play by a *young* man—very young—taken by Shakespeare who [...] comes across this and *likes*—rather likes—the boldness of the youth in taking fairy people, spirits, and *magic* for his stage.<sup>6</sup>

He also thought that Shakespeare’s associate Richard Burbage (1568-1619) had taken part in the rewriting, and was responsible for all the passages he deemed too grossly spectacular: “Burbage is here pandering to the pit.”<sup>7</sup>

Why did Craig devote such efforts to a play he loathed so much, even though nobody asked him to stage it? Indeed, he admitted that it was not without some beauty, but more importantly, he regarded it as a wonderful challenge to stage directors, if they were bold enough to create a show entirely based on dream and unrealness. In the 1950s, Craig wrote on the cover of his manuscript the three words that sum up how he then viewed the play: “Sleep—Dream—Intoxication.”

Craig found another challenge in the warning expressed by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Coleridge opined that the play may lose its spiritual value once it is put on a stage, because

It addresses itself entirely to the imaginative faculty; and although the illusion may be assisted by the effect on the senses of the complicated scenery and decorations of modern times, yet this sort of assistance is dangerous.<sup>8</sup>

Craig “replied” to Coleridge:

Yes, but you should tell us *how* to deal with act I, scene 1 for example – for after all we have only our eyes and ears to help us when in a theatre.<sup>9</sup>

This confrontation with Coleridge’s challenge constitutes the hidden meaning of Craig’s article “On *The Tempest*,” published in *The Mask* in April 1924 and incorporated in 1925 in his collection of essays entitled *Books and Theatres*, which it concludes. Externally, this article reads like a comment on a sentence in which Lytton Strachey criticized “the dreary puns and interminable conspiracies of Alonso, and Gonzalo, and Sebastian, and Antonio, and Adrian, and Francisco, and other shipwrecked noblemen.” This quotation is taken from Strachey’s “Shakespeare’s Final Period,” published in *The Independent Review* in August 1904. But Craig found it more probably in the reprint of the article as part of Strachey’s *Books and Characters* published in 1922.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, it is quite possible that Craig’s title *Books and Theatres* deliberately echoes Strachey’s title *Books and Characters*.

Coleridge’s name is never explicitly mentioned in Craig’s article, in which it is suggested that the first scene of act 2, deemed “dreary” and “interminable” by Strachey, could be “quickenened” by some “inventive yet reverential stage-manager” who would set the action, not on the ground of an ordinary island, but of a sunken island. He fancies that coral grows between blocks of marble of an ancient city, “the sun pours through the pale blue green water,” and when “these deadly men” who move “heavily like divers in deep seas” are “wearily talking in their deadly sleep,” “the dreary puns are issuing like bubbles” from their mouths. Then Craig wants his readers to believe that “an old and troubled mariner once came to me to tell of an island placed beneath the sea—a sunken island” on which he had lived for seven years, during which he had seen and heard “something very beautiful to see and to hear,” beyond any description. “What happened under the sea [...] is what I should like to make visible in *The Tempest* upon a stage,” Craig concludes.<sup>11</sup> Quite obviously, this “old

mariner” never existed. Craig only devised this character to the purpose of instilling subliminally Coleridge’s name in his readers’ minds, by referring clearly to his most famous poem, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Craig’s intention, in this article, is to take up covertly Coleridge’s challenge, by insinuating that a daring and imaginative stage director can stage *The Tempest* without betraying any of its spiritual value. Prospero’s enchanted island is situated in the hereafter.<sup>12</sup> This is suggested through a deliberately altered quotation of one of Ariel’s songs: “In such an isle full fathoms five indeed our fathers lie.” In Craig’s view, staging *The Tempest* amounts to realizing in this world the beauties that await us after death.

## Main Outlines of an Imagined Mise-en-scène

To sum it up, Craig wished to stage a play he disliked, in which he just saw the matter for an essentially dream-like and metaphysical spectacle, and the lines of which he compared with the gurgle of bubbles issuing from the characters’ mouths. It will therefore be an amazement to no one that Craig was not particularly eager to make the text of the play *audible*. He highlighted the fact that it is Prospero himself who bids Ferdinand (4.1.59)<sup>13</sup> be “all eyes,” not “all ears.”<sup>14</sup> He wanted actors to talk as fast as possible. At the end of 2.1, he even wanted all of them to “overlap very cleverly.”<sup>15</sup> The broad outlines of his mise-en-scène are summarized as follows:

*The words to race along. Splashes of words.*

The action to be slow—a *flow* of action.

The faces—eyes—queer and startled mostly—and as in the Pompeii paintings.

The magic. The grotesque and gruesome.<sup>16</sup>

Music was to play a prominent part throughout the spectacle.<sup>17</sup> Craig suggested that it be based on a music-hall tune.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, sound effects in general would have been extremely important:

Here as you begin this scene [1.2], read the strange lines pages 61 and 62—*“The Isle is full of noises—sounds and sweet airs—instruments—voices”* [3.2.127-128] etc., for it gives us the direction we need. IT MUST NOT BE AT ALL A REASONABLE place—for there [to] be an overplus of magic in place—people—doings—sounds and sight.<sup>19</sup>

The dances required in some scenes should not look like classical ballet. Ideally, Craig would have rather used dances conceived by Isadora Duncan, or ethnic dances, or indeed dances that only exist in dream.<sup>20</sup>

## Characters

Craig did not write much about most characters of the play. He mentioned that Sebastian must be evocative of a dog, and Antonio of a cat.<sup>21</sup> Ariel is referred to once as “she” (p. 59r), once as “he” (p. 99v); as a consequence, it is impossible to determine whether Craig thought of an actor or an actress. The only two characters about whom he provided somewhat more detailed information are Prospero and Caliban.

He regarded Prospero as another Faustus, who does not sell his soul to the devil, and who drowns his books instead of burning them (a difference to which Craig seems to have assigned a deep symbolic meaning).<sup>22</sup> He thought Leonardo da Vinci provided the direct model for Prospero: his contemporaries sometimes regarded him as some kind of a magician, and Craig fancied that Shakespeare had had an opportunity to see one of his manuscripts.<sup>23</sup> Craig compared the moment when Prospero renounces to magic (5.1.33-57: “Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves...”) with the moment when Faustus is made young again. As he loses his magic power, Prospero also loses his bitterness and cruelty—which indicates that, until that moment, Craig found him bitter and cruel. Prospero is then to show the audience that he is being transfigured and regenerated: “*The aged man. He too must emerge a young spirit—all affection and no longer bitter or cruel. He is a kind of Faust—not sold to the Devil. This must be more than a renunciation—an ecstasy.*”<sup>24</sup> In spite of this, Prospero cannot help displaying “sharpest irony—almost cruel”<sup>25</sup> towards Gonzago, when he tells him somewhat later (5.1.123-124): “You do yet taste / The subtleties o’th’isle...”

As to Caliban, Craig insisted on three occasions that it is a “tragic” character.<sup>26</sup> His “*movements* must be as strange and require all that a tragedian can imagine and control,” his voice must be “tragic and deep” on the words “I will kiss thy foot—I prithee be my god” (2.2.125-126), and it is “trembling tragically” on the words “We shall lose our time, / And all be burned to barnacles” (4.1.243-244). Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano are “not *always* to be raising a laugh: only rarely that.”<sup>27</sup> However, Craig regarded their first meeting (2.2) as a moment of *commedia dell’arte*.<sup>28</sup> Caliban’s physical appearance is certainly grotesque, but it is also based on representations of mythological beings: the Egyptian god Bes, or a “white fat Giant” from a *wayang kulit* show.<sup>29</sup> Caliban is also a symbol for the “mob,” when he demands “freedom, high-day, freedom” (2.2.162).<sup>30</sup> On the whole, it is therefore an ambiguous character, and it is difficult to determine whether Craig had a positive or a negative reading of it.

## Decors

Craig designed sets for *The Tempest* with particular care. He chose this play, in his article “Thoroughness in the Theatre,” as one of two examples<sup>31</sup> for the care that is required in designing scenes. He reckoned that the play requires eight distinct scenes, and expressed his belief that “*The Tempest* can be produced in ten or even twenty different ways, and that each interpretation can be right.”<sup>32</sup>

In his main *Tempest* manuscript, Craig alternated between a minimalistic approach calling for just lighting effects and a set of gauzes that forms some kind of box in which the action was to take place, and more elaborated sceneries that may include a revolving stage.<sup>33</sup>

Craig made five drawings for the scene during which Sebastian and Antonio are prevented from killing Alonso and Gonzalo by Ariel’s arrival (2.1): two are to be found in his main *Tempest* manuscript<sup>34</sup> and are dated 1922, and the other three are separate designs: one is dated 1905, another is dated 1939, and the last one is undated but might have been drawn around 1905.<sup>35</sup> Despite many differences between these five designs, they all show the same principle: the action takes place under the water, and seaweeds cover partially three blocks of marble separated by rifts. It seems that the underwater effect is achieved only by lighting multi-layered gauzes. The design held at Osaka shows that Craig intended to materialize the bubbles issuing from the characters’ mouths that he mentioned in his article “On *The Tempest*.” But how was this to be achieved? Through lighting effects? He did not specify it.

The first two drawings enable us to reconstruct the way Craig envisioned the action. Alonso, Adrian, and Francisco are sleeping on the left-hand block of marble. Gonzalo is sleeping alone on the right-hand block. Sebastian and Antonio stand on the central block, plotting their conspiracy. Ariel emerges from the rift between the central block and the right-hand block, and whispers the song *While you here do snoring lie* in Gonzalo’s ear before he swims on upwards.

The design held in Vienna, Österreichisches Theatermuseum,<sup>36</sup> dated 1905, also shows an underwater set for an undefined scene.<sup>37</sup> No human figure is to be seen here, but Craig introduced nevertheless two rows of bubbles supposed to issue from characters’ mouths. Were they intended to remain visible throughout the scene, or are they an indication that the presence of characters is actually implied? At any rate, it seems once again that the underwater effect was to be achieved by lighting multi-layered gauzes.<sup>38</sup>

On the drawing for 2.2, of which Craig sketched a copy on manuscript EGC Ms B 18 (p. 61v), and the conception of which he dated 1922, the action takes place on dry land. An indigo cloud claws at the top of a steep cliff the bottom of which is bathed by white breakers. Craig specified that, throughout the scene, Stephano was to remain “always on the edge of the precipice” (p. 62v).

It seems that the same setting was already sketched on one of the three designs<sup>39</sup> (see Figure) drawn by Craig six years earlier, in June 1916, which represent a quite original and stunning scenic device to which, oddly enough, Craig never alluded in his manuscript. On these three designs, the performance seems to take place in a circus, or at any rate on a circular stage. The audience is sitting on seats disposed on one half only of the circular hall. The arena is divided by what Craig labelled as a “mirror.” This “mirror” is circular, has a diameter of 6 metres, is supported by a black plinth with wrought edges, and held by two wires. Craig wrote that it was “like a crystal,” and specified: “For *The Tempest* seen through the ‘water’ of the mirror—‘The yellow sands.’”<sup>40</sup> This device used a technique called by Craig “White Fx” but he did not explain what this technique was. It seems difficult to imagine that the action took place behind the audience’s back and was reflected in an actual mirror; more likely, this so-called “mirror” was to be transparent. Was it meant to be a disk of gauze producing mirror effects when struck by slant beams of light? It is also difficult to determine whether the entire performance was to take place behind the “mirror,” or whether the fore side of the arena was to be used occasionally. Craig specified that the space situated behind the “mirror” was a “place for distance pieces and play,” which would tend to show implicitly that the action takes place alternately behind and before the “mirror.”<sup>41</sup> The size of this device seems to have entailed a technical challenge, since Craig wrote: “Too big for W[hite] F[x], otherwise allright.”<sup>42</sup> However, such a way to set a distance between the audience and the action is evocative of the “*Figurenspiegel*” built fifteen years later, in 1931, in Vienna, by puppeteer Richard Teschner (1879-1948).<sup>43</sup> It is also possible to be reminded of the device designed by Romeo Castellucci in 2008 for his spectacle entitled *Purgatorio*, in which part of the action is seen through a circular gauze.

The absence of any allusion to these three designs in manuscript EGC Ms B 18 makes one wonder whether they were meant for Shakespeare’s play. The date of 1916 and the insistence with which Craig mentioned “yellow sands” could be thought to lead us to the masque entitled *Caliban by the Yellow Sands* which was organized that same year by Percy MacKaye (1875-1956) in a New York stadium on the occasion of the



Shakespeare Tercentenary. Craig and Percy MacKaye were very good friends, and one might imagine that he designed this scenic device for a spectacular show meant to be performed in an atypical place. However, the correspondence of Craig and MacKaye shows that it is not the case: prior to 1916, MacKaye mentioned his project in very vague terms, without even revealing its title to Craig, and he wrote to him on 13 August 1916, several weeks after the play had been performed for the first time by the end of May: “How I wish I might have done it with you.”<sup>44</sup> These three designs, which are so difficult to understand, remain therefore quite mysterious.

Craig made almost no further designs and comments on the last three acts of Shakespeare’s play. He actually focused on the very first scene, which he deemed the most challenging part of *The Tempest*.<sup>45</sup>

## Opening Scene

This is a tricky scene, a “mixture of the symbolic and naturalistic” with “almost prosaically ‘realistic’” details.<sup>46</sup> Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century productions of the play indulged in spectacular renditions of the storm, “leading to an increasing concern with realism, often at the expense of the text.”<sup>47</sup> But Craig was a declared enemy of realism, and for him the issue was: How to approach the initial storm in a symbolic rather than realistic way?

The first dilemma he faced was the question of whether or not to display the ship. On a design dated 1905,<sup>48</sup> Craig envisioned a single set divided in two parts distinctly separated by a diagonal; the lower part, on the right side, shows caves situated on the island, as it seems; in the upper part, on the left side, the ship is depicted in a still fairly realistic way. Craig specified “each part to be lighted separately.” In 1935, the ship was reduced to a representation of the deck (with a mast) and cabin; characters were to be “running up and down all the time.”<sup>49</sup> In the 1950s, he envisioned “another way—the way of the puppet show,” based on a reproduction of Saint Peter’s fishing boat, a fresco by Taddeo Gaddi in the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence,<sup>50</sup> but he did not explain what he meant by “the way of the puppet show.”

However, Craig found it of course potentially much more interesting *not* to show either ship or storm. He wrote in 1939: “We are left with: (1) *suggestion* by lights and this and that of a storm and wreck, (2) the hypnotic powers of Ariel seen at work upon the eight or ten [or] twenty more passengers. I have not heard of nor seen either of these two possibilities attempted.”<sup>51</sup> Craig thought about the first possibility in 1905,

1921, 1930 and 1939. A lantern was to swing “round–across–shadows moving as a result.” Beneath it, the actors were to stand on “a double-way which clanks this and that way [...]; all four sides slope a little towards centre–result effect of some sort of bridge all dusk and indigo below the [...] moving lights and shadows above it.” The second possibility occurred to Craig in 1922. Apart from the boatswain, who was to lie prone on the ground, all characters were to stand “lined up on deck.” The sun was to be shining in a “pale blue sky;” in the background, “hills” and “yellow sands” were to be displayed. Ariel, with the help of musicians, was to hypnotize both passengers and mariners, and create in them “a sense of storm calamity and wreck” while they were to “sway like waves” and “whisper or yell or chatter as in their sleep.”

On 3 May 1942, very precisely, Craig had new, much more radical ideas for this passage where “the words are the Essence of the Scene” (for a transcript, see Appendix A). Prospero was to be sitting in an armchair, listening to the lines that were to be delivered offstage, and reacting to them. Or he was himself to deliver them, “reporting as one who is mesmerized reports in regular, quiet, unemotional tones.” Craig envisioned a third possibility: the text could have been prerecorded and played on a gramophone close to Prospero.<sup>52</sup> At this point in time, Craig did not choose between these three possibilities. But in his satisfaction that he had found the beginning of a solution for the opening scene issue, he seems not to have worked on *The Tempest* again between 1942 and 1955.

In that year, 1955, he resumed his annotations on his *Tempest* manuscript. Two articles published in 1956 by Kenneth Tynan and Peter Brook, who had both visited Craig at his home, bear evidence that by then *The Tempest* had become again a major concern for him. Tynan wrote: “He explained that he had much to do: there were some new ideas about *The Tempest* that needed his attention,”<sup>53</sup> and Brook added: “The next moment he is dreaming of a new production of *The Tempest* or *Macbeth*, and will begin to make a few notes, perhaps a drawing or two.”<sup>54</sup>

Craig was extremely fond of Peter Brook and Natasha Parry, to the point that the entry dated 9 April 1956 in his day-book reads as follows: “I told Peter of a few of my secrets for *Macbeth*–‘May I use them?’ ‘OF COURSE as you are Peter.’”<sup>55</sup> Given Craig’s paranoid tendencies (he thought any stage director was eager to plunder his ideas without crediting him), such a dialogue is quite amazing. Although Craig mentions only *Macbeth* here, it is clear that he told Peter Brook of a few of his “secrets” for *The Tempest* as well.

Craig pasted in his manuscript a letter sent to him by Peter Brook during the summer of 1956:

The news is that I'm doing *The Tempest* at Stratford with cousin John [= John Gielgud (1904-2000)] next year: once again I'm going to take your counsel and try to work all from one hand, sets, costumes and all [...]. Have you any wise words on the play you'd care to drop this way? It's fearfully difficult. [...]  
Send me a clue!  
I send you fond love,  
Peter.<sup>56</sup>

On 20 August 1956, Craig wrote a detailed answer (see transcript in Appendix B).<sup>57</sup> He suggested that the whole production be built on the two words *dream* and *sleep* from Prospero's famous line in 4.1.156-158: "We are such stuff / As dreams are made on, and our little life / Is rounded with a sleep." At first, the stage would be empty and dimly lit. Then Prospero would be discovered asleep in a rocky armchair, "his elbows on the arms and his hands held in air [...] swinging gently from side to side." In his sleep he himself would deliver "all the words printed as Act I scene I." Progressively a "tangle of ropes and shadows" would be discerned on the ground, representing the stage of the Lyceum Theatre, such as Craig knew it in his youth. Colours would be evocative of an undersea landscape, and fish would "seem to be swimming in and out of the ropes." Then figures would appear, not walking but seeming to "float down or bubble up." Voices would be heard but the text would not be clearly perceived, except for a few words such as "Sword" or "Milan." Craig stopped there: he had rather meet Peter Brook and tell him the rest from face to face. He invited him to carry out "the massacre of the awful rubbishy lines and ideas" in which the play consists.

Was this letter actually sent to Peter Brook? Most probably, as Craig did not write on it the word "Not sent" as he used to when he deemed it wiser not to transmit his letters to their intended recipients, once he had written them.<sup>58</sup> At any rate, Peter Brook seems not to have answered it.<sup>59</sup>

On 18 December 1956, Craig wrote another letter, meant this time for his cousin John Gielgud. Once again, he deemed it important enough for a partial copy of it to be kept in his *Tempest* manuscript (see transcript in Appendix C).<sup>60</sup> At the beginning of the play Prospero was to be alone on stage; in his sleep he was to move perhaps one hand, while he was dreaming the shipwreck. Several voices were to deliver the text offstage, on a background of music making and singing. The actor was to focus exclusively on the mimics of his face, the rest of his body was not to move at all. Then the sun was to rise, its beams pouring through deep waters, conveying the idea that perhaps the action was taking place under the

sea.<sup>61</sup> A few moments later the sun was already to set, and Prospero to start his long speech (1.2) in order to put Miranda “quite to sleep.” Did John Gielgud receive this letter? There is no physical evidence that he answered either. Whether Craig eventually refrained from sending his letter to his cousin, or his cousin found his suggestion too bold to be acknowledged, must be left to speculation.

The first performances took place at Stratford in August 1957. Craig eagerly read the newspapers in order to know more about Brook’s mise-en-scène and how both the audience and the critics received it, and he was somewhat disappointed. He pondered over the reasons why that production could be regarded as a semi-failure, and concluded that it confirmed that the play was intrinsically unplayable.<sup>62</sup>

If the press notices on Peter and John’s attempts on Shakespeare’s *Tempest* do not read that hearty as they might, it’s because *Tempest* is a real problem for the stage, and I have doubts about Peter’s and John’s ability to solve this problem. Report seems to suggest the two did not move along the same lines. It’s well nigh an impossible play to stage—it’s not of a piece—it has not the clearness of *Hamlet*<sup>63</sup> or *Othello* or *Midsummer Night’s Dream*—it’s another dream and *all* dream and Peter has failed to see this. He seems to have used my idea of the swinging lantern in scene one.

Indeed, Peter Brook used some of Craig’s “secrets.” He “managed to impact an underwater effect by decorating the stage with streamers suggesting seaweed, as the company moved through the maze at least full fathom five.”<sup>64</sup> He also “made the play a projection of Prospero’s inner world [...]—a dream world.”<sup>65</sup> The electronic music he himself composed created an uncanny atmosphere—the isle was full of noises. And one of the scenic effects that impressed contemporary critics most was the use of “an enormous poop-lantern which swung slowly through a tremendous arc at the front of the stage as the curtain rose on the storm.”<sup>66</sup>

But is this swinging lantern really an original idea of Craig’s? According to Cary M. Mazer and Stephen Orgel, Frank Robert Benson already used the same device in his production of *The Tempest* at the London Lyceum Theatre in 1900.<sup>67</sup> And Craig attended those performances, as he explicitly stated in his memoirs.<sup>68</sup>

## **Resurgences and coincidences**

Over time, Peter Brook became very critical of his 1957 production at Stratford, in which he deems he introduced “some very extravagant ideas.”<sup>69</sup> After 1957 Peter Brook and Natasha Parry exchanged fewer and

fewer letters with Craig, and although Brook never completely denied Craig's influence on him,<sup>70</sup> he admits more easily his debt to Antonin Artaud (1896-1948). He had several opportunities to stage *The Tempest* again, notably in 1968 in London, at the Roundhouse. This production was deemed particularly striking because it approached Shakespeare's text with an extreme sense for freedom and did not care to deliver it literally any longer: "While key words from Shakespeare's text were occasionally used [in the shipwreck scene], the non-verbal sounds of destruction really carried the meaning."<sup>71</sup> Such an approach may seem to put into practice, some ten years later, Craig's advice to "massacre the awful rubbishy lines" except, occasionally, for some important words such as "Sword" or "Milan."

Craig's ideas about the staging of *The Tempest*, such as he conceived them in the 1940s and 50s, were very much ahead of their time. The image of an actor whose body does not move at all and whose acting focuses exclusively on his face is evocative of *Happy Days*, which Samuel Beckett wrote in 1960-1, or of *That Time*, which he wrote in 1974-5. The image of a figure sitting in a rocky armchair, moving just his forearms in a slow, mechanical swing, and delivering a text in a somnambulist tone, is echoed, for instance, by *Rockaby*, written by Samuel Beckett in 1980.

A number of 20<sup>th</sup> century productions of *The Tempest* bear fortuitous similarities with some of Craig's ideas. In 1951, at Stratford, Loudon Sainthill designed for Michael Benthall a submerged island the ground of which was covered with submarine plants and sea shells.<sup>72</sup> In 1978, at the Young Vic Theatre in London, Michael Bogdanov chose to present *The Tempest* as a sequence of fantasies that take place inside Prospero's head.<sup>73</sup> In Braham Murray's production in 1990 at the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, Prospero was alone on stage during the initial storm scene, the text of which was barely audible.<sup>74</sup> In 1991 at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, Jennifer Tipton symbolized the initial storm with a light swinging back and forth over the stage.<sup>75</sup> In 1993, at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford, Sam Mendes had the storm figured by a lantern that Ariel set swinging.<sup>76</sup> Although none of these directors was aware of Craig's ideas on *The Tempest*, it is striking that they all shared some common concepts with him.

Can Derek Jarman be labelled a "Craigian" film director? Most probably not, even though the sets designed by Christopher Hobbs for his *Edward II* movie (1992) sometimes seem to have sprung straight from designs and woodcuts by Craig (very likely undeliberately). Jarman was no more familiar with Craig's manuscripts than Beckett, but his adaptation of *The Tempest* (1979) sometimes seems close to Craig's conceptions. The

initial wreck scene is shown as a dream that Prospero is having: images of Prospero sleeping and muttering in his sleep a few words from the dialogue alternate with more or less blurred images, distorted by a blue filter, of a sailing ship on a stirred (although not stormy) sea. From the very beginning, the sound track creates a submarine environment: faint rumblings and a regular, hypnotic deep breathing convey the idea of what a diver can hear under the water. Derek Jarman kept only a small portion of the text, and some scenes are totally speechless. Images and sounds, much more than verbal communication, are Jarman's preferred channels to convey the content of Shakespeare's play. At the end of the movie, Prospero is shown sleeping again. This symmetry between the beginning and the end of the movie may convey the notion that all events in between were but a dream—and the images proposed by Derek Jarman enforce that notion. Most of the action takes place in the spacious, unfurnished rooms of a castle, with damaged walls, more like the reverse side of a decor than a decor. Straw and disparate properties are scattered on the floor, making the sets look somewhat like an empty stage (not necessarily the stage of the Lyceum Theatre, of course) after a performance, before it has been cleaned up for the next performance.

In 1991, Peter Greenaway proposed another cinematographic vision of *The Tempest*, entitled *Prospero's Books*, with John Gielgud as Prospero. Craig and Greenaway were influenced by the same sources: Rembrandt, early Italian painters, Baroque and Classical architecture, which may explain that it is possible to discern a number of common features between Greenaway's movie and Craig's conceptions. Once again, sounds play a significant role: Caliban's line "the isle is full of noises" was a clue to Greenaway the same way as it had been to Craig. Water is omnipresent throughout the movie, visually and in sound effects, and some scenes are shot under the water. There are many dances, which, although they do not look like what can be reconstructed from Isadora Duncan's art, are just as alien to classical ballet. Among the books that Prospero brought with him on his island, Greenaway mentions a Leonardo da Vinci sketchbook. More importantly, the feature that was deemed most striking and innovative by critics is that, during most of the movie, all characters' lines are delivered by John Gielgud, who was evidently not aware that fifty years earlier, his cousin had envisioned the same treatment<sup>77</sup> (at least for the opening wreck scene—nothing proves that Craig would have dealt with the entire play as a monodrama).

## **By Way of Conclusion**

Where does Craig's modernity reside in this project? Surely, he did not have a "political reading" of the play, nor an anticolonialist interpretation of it. Even though he ridiculed the stage directions devised by Arthur Quiller-Couch, which turned Miranda into the archetypal chaste and bashful Victorian maid, he certainly did not have a feminist approach to this character. His purely dreamlike and metaphysical conception of the play might even be deemed retrograde by those who want the theatre to be primarily the expression of political awareness.

Craig's modernity must be sought elsewhere. He passed the notion that the text can be sometimes a cumbersome burden (which can—or should—be discarded) on to Peter Brook. The kind of acting he fancied in 1942 is a prefiguration of Samuel Beckett's theatre to come. It also foreshadowed the "postdramatic" treatment of classical drama, such as Hans-Thies Lehmann analyzes it.<sup>78</sup> The scenery he conceived in 1916 for a circular hall, which highlights the theatricality of the action by showing it through a circular "mirror," can be compared with devices used by Romeo Castellucci in 2008 in *Purgatorio*. And eventually, it was the avant-garde cinema of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century that realized some of the ideas he had conceived for the theatre, without film directors being aware that such ideas had already been expressed decades earlier.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, no one active in the art of the theatre could ignore Craig. He had his devotees and his fierce detractors, but every stage director felt compelled to articulate their position as to his bold ideas on mise-en-scène. It seems that after the 1950s some link missed in the transmission; Stanislavsky's teachings are still very much alive today, but Craig is virtually unknown to younger generations of actors, scenographers and stage directors. I hope that the present essay will contribute to demonstrate that Craig's radical conceptions are just as relevant today as they were ahead of his own time.<sup>79</sup>

## Appendixes

*Appendix A. Note dated 3 May 1942 about The Tempest I, 1 (EGC Ms B 18, p. 16v and 18r)*

May 3, 1942. Paris. Suddenly! a thought about the *Tempest*, act I, scene I, where the words must all be heard above any howl of the winds and the roar of the waves—for the words are the Essence of the Scene.

How to do it? Every way done already I know, and every possible way to do I seem to have thought of. And now I—now I see no more a ship—mast, sailors etc., I hear no more howls and roars nearby... I see PROSPERO (Ariel nearby), Prospero alone on his island and *afar off* the howls, roars, cries—*diminuendo—rather nearer*, the voices of the mariners (crew, boatswain, etc.) and the passengers, there to tell clearly the tale of the disaster. The face and movements of Prospero tell us of his reaction to the unseen action going on *off the stage. Prospero as he listens in...*

*Or* indeed the whole thing (the *words* I mean) could be (could it?) spoken *by* Prospero as a receiving instrument speaks in a room. *As he listens in, as he looks on*, hearing and seeing *and reporting* as one who is mesmerized reports in regular, quiet, unemotional tones—a monotone—till the climax comes: “We split—we split—we split.”

A wail (recorded on gramophone). In fact we will try the whole 65 lines of text as a record—and let it slowly out (close to Prospero) who notes each sentence—*Prospero the listener*. He will be seated in [a] large ample chair in which he can (if he wish) sprawl. This way we can reveal the idea in Shakespeare’s mind.

Short or long pauses between the several bursts of speech. Slow or rapid, loud or soft, jerked or smooth, maybe something in the lights, colours, shades coming and going. But Prospero remains still—and the commanding presence.

*Appendix B. Draft of a letter from Craig to Peter Brook, 10 August 1956 (EGC Ms B 18, p. 121-3)*

20 August 1956, Venice.

Dear Peter.

“*Tempest*”. I have reread it slowly, and I am again (as ever) furiously sad to see such a tangle-muddle-dull-vivid-all sorts. [...]

Now to the “*clue*” you wrote of, which I was to give you. It is maybe in the utter senselessness of all which happens—solemnly happens—grand parade about nothing—the words just mere sounds, more than often, fade in



an ahhh of fog or in a rap-a-tap of a cracker firework, senseless, everlastingly empty... talk... Until those few moments when, in middle of this fog, come the slow bell-like words of Shakespeare. I find very few: "... Such stuff as *dreams* are... little life... sleep." And so I (as a producer) *start* on that last word—sleep—my stage absolutely *empty*, not dark, not light—sleepy light. What ever comes onto that stage must be able to melt away easily, and to *reform* perhaps (*no trick sceneries*), ALL SOLIDS GONE.

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

"Did you say 'mad'—not yet—Lear, my brother, was mad—I'm only asleep—and the whole of this stage is an island—you see *boards*—and ropes and litter—it's only your fancy—it's the empty Lyceum Theatre at day-night-day, which was all a tangle of ropes and *shadows*. 'The best of this kind,' said Theseus in another play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*."

A big STAGE—pale, *grey, brown*, shot with all the undersea pale greens and blues and crimsons. Yellows here and then—*shot*—with these—*not spread*. Fish seem to be swimming in and out of the ropes... I saw some anyhow. All vague underwater apparitions—Dream place.

But I saw the figure on the rock seat and *only later* the bits of wreckage did form slowly, imperceptibly drift into a sort of undersea scene as above of "brown and grey shot with pale lights," and *there* was the old Lyceum stage—*empty*. Empty of persons, silent, motionless, to be filled later (sooner or later) with *talk*, then with *figures*, which did not seem to me to walk in and out, but somehow to float down or bubble up... Voices clear at times, but lost when tittering rubbish... beginning well such as: "Listen—I....." (much of the long useless speeches *lost*). The voice sounds on—fades, but goes on; an occasional word: "Sword," or "Milan," sounds clear or far off; the rest (all idiotic) fades away. And, let us thank God, *speech after speech start going and fade away*.

Now, to most folk these scrappy scribbles of mine would mean nothing. To you they will have some significance. If we were *talking*, night after night, and someone recording, we would get clearer about it all. It's the "*such stuff as dreams*" which Prospero utters which is to me the only clue to island, to movements, to voices. If followed, it might lead to

the massacre of the awful rubbishy lines and ideas, and to the sunrise of the main hope.

What Shakespeare must have suffered over this horrible work is a crushing thought.

I haven't said all about the empty stage—full of *dream*, stuff to come and go, but we must meet, and drink, and, steady on, *get* at this.

Love to you old fellow,

EGC.

*Appendix C. Copy of part of a letter from Craig to John Gielgud, 18 December 1956 (EGC Ms B 18, p. 17r and 17v)*

To John Gielgud, 18 December 1956.

"*Tempest.*" *Idea* I have none—but a few ideas—yes. One... which is, since that old magician kept all the wreck neat and trim, it was and could only be in idea that the dam wreck ever existed—so I see beginning of that piece this way.

Prospero stands, or sprawls, sleeping, alone on the stage... He moves a hand, maybe—he is such thing as *Dream* is made of—and he dreams the wreck. The words are shot out by several voices—all the scene is in sound only—mumblings and cries—the words—maybe noises—and music (oboes, flutes and *singing*)—the voices do everything. Prospero listens in his sleep—his *face* (some acting for John Gielgud—what!) rather a wicked face—he is motionless—the sounds increase—he laughs—he does what you will—but he does not move.

The dam silly *imitation* of a wreck on the boards is swept away—the labour—the expense—the puzzlement all avoided.

Scene 2 begins as the sun comes out—seemingly through deep waters. Are we under the sea? All's one if we are or not. I see a flow of water, I hear it and see bubbles, such things as *dreams* are *made* of. A little sleep. The sun dies down—evening, and Miranda is already sleepy and papa stirs and begins his long talk seemingly to put her quite to sleep.

There's more to follow, so much to begin with.

What think you? Did you say "Bosh!"?

## **Illustration**

Edward Gordon Craig, set design for *The Tempest*, undefined scene (2, 2?). 1916. Paris, BnF, ASP, Maq 10958. © BnF. Reproduced with the consent of the Edward Gordon Craig Estate.

---

<sup>1</sup> The earliest known evidence is an annotation made by Craig in 1900 on his “Note-Book T.” For a transcript, see Edward Craig, *Gordon Craig: the Story of His Life* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1985), p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> However, he intended to do so on two occasions: firstly in 1913, in *Towards a New Theatre*, then in June 1942, when Joseph Gregor (1888-1960), head of the Nationalbibliothek’s Theatersammlung in Vienna, proposed to devote a volume of the *Monumenta scenica* series to Craig—which eventually did not happen.

<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, a letter from Craig to Count Harry Kessler (1868-1937), in September 1904, shows that it was Craig himself who mentioned *The Tempest* as a possible collaboration with Reinhardt. See L. M. Newman’s edition of *The Correspondence of Edward Gordon Craig and Count Harry Kessler, 1903-1937* (Leeds: W.S. Maney & Son, 1995), p. 26. See also L.M. Newman, “Reinhardt and Craig?,” *Max Reinhardt: the Oxford Symposium* (Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic, 1986, p. 6-15), p. 7. On 20 December 1905, Craig wrote to Count Kessler that it was better to give up the whole project, as “I think *The Tempest* is a little beyond the present possibilities” (L.M. Newman, *Correspondence...*, p. 59).

<sup>4</sup> Manuscript EGC Ms B 18 in the Edward Gordon Craig Collection of the Performing Arts Department (département des Arts du spectacle, ASP) of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF).

<sup>5</sup> Edward Gordon Craig, *Woodcuts and Some Words* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1925), p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 9r.

<sup>7</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 34v.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Coleridge’s Essays and Lectures on Shakespeare and Some Other Old Poets and Dramatists* (London: J. M. Dent; New York: E. P. Dutton, undated—Craig purchased his copy in 1915), p. 66.

<sup>9</sup> Undated annotation by Craig on his copy of *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare Edited by Horace Howard Furness. The Tempest* (Philadelphia-London: J. B. Lippincott, [1920]), p. 9, where the quotation from Coleridge is reproduced. BnF, ASP, 4-EGC-942(7).

<sup>10</sup> In Craig’s library, which is part of the Craig Collection at the BnF, there is no copy of *Books and Characters*. But this does not mean that Craig never possessed one: a number of the books he owned disappeared from his library before it was acquired in 1957 by the Bibliothèque Nationale.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Gordon Craig, “On *The Tempest*,” *Books and Theatres* (London & Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1925), p. 161-4.

<sup>12</sup> See Katharina Wild, *Schönheit: die Schauspieltheorie Edward Gordon Craigs* (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2011), p. 92: “Schlüssel zur vollendeten Schönheit ist [...] der Tod. [...] Die Orientierung an Tod und »Jenseits« ist für Craig unabdingbare Voraussetzung für eine Inszenierungs- und Spielweise, die sich durch Schönheit auszeichnet.”

<sup>13</sup> Line numbers are given according to David Lindley’s edition in the *New Cambridge Shakespeare* series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

---

<sup>14</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 88r : “Why doesn’t he make him say “all ears”—why *all eyes* (1938).” Besides, Craig inscribed, probably in the 1950s, on his copy of *The Tempest* which is now part of the Eton College Library’s Craig Collection, in front of Shakespeare’s words “No tongue! All eyes!”: “Shakespeare’s order.” I express my gratitude to L.M. Newman and Michael Meredith for sending me a reproduction of this document.

<sup>15</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 59r.

<sup>16</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 12r (undated annotation). Craig’s emphasis.

<sup>17</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 12r: “Entirely accompanied by music and then I should enjoy to produce it and to see it performed—if not—not. (1923).”

<sup>18</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 24r: “I am reminded of ‘Shift up a little bit further [...]’ That was the refrain of an old Music Hall song in the 1890s in London. [...] I will suggest that the composer of the music for this scene [1, 2] shall take this old tune [...] and giving it a double turn make new music of the old.”

<sup>19</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 19r.

<sup>20</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 82r: “*Ballet*—but NOT of Sadlers Wells—NOT of Covent Garden—NOT of the Scala in Milano—NOT of Paris Berlin Barcelona New York and not of the School of I.D.; only I.D. at her very best could and did. Somewhere in Java—or in Scotland or in Dream—such a ballet could be met with.”

<sup>21</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 45r: “Sebastian: heavy insolence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and idle brother—a dog (1922). Antonio—malicious and thin and like a cat.”

<sup>22</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 12v: “And had Shakespeare in mind to draw a Faustus who did *not* sell his soul to the Devil?—who drowns his book, not burns his books—who with a devil at heel, an angel ahead, drives his purpose on to a perfect end.”

<sup>23</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 13r: “*Leonardo da Vinci* was at this time beginning to be a mythical figure—he was known as someone who lived in Italy and made magic—his books reveal much of this—he believed he could make men fly—Stories of his midnight experiments reached England—one of his manuscripts was seen by Shakespeare—Yes—I only guess at this—but I guess after reading Prospero.”

<sup>24</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 100r.

<sup>25</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 104v.

<sup>26</sup> And even four, including the copy of *The Tempest* that belongs to the Eton College Library’s Craig Collection, and on which Craig wrote, in the 1950s, the words “nigh tragic” in front of Caliban’s last lines in 2.2.

<sup>27</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 12v.

<sup>28</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 62r.

<sup>29</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 12v. There is, on p. 164 of L.M. Newman’s edition of Craig’s *Black Figures* (Wellingborough: Christopher Skelton, 1989), a photograph by Helen Craig of a wooden figure designed and cut by Craig in 1914 for a William Butler Yeats play, and later renamed “Caliban.” This figure is now in the Eton College Library (as L.M. Newman and Michael Meredith notified me, for which I thank them). The circumstances for its renaming are unknown. It is crouching, in a posture very similar to the one displayed by William Poel (1852-1934) on a photograph taken ca. 1897 of his own production of *The Tempest* (reproduced for

---

instance in David Lindley's edition of the play (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 23), and to a drawing by Craig in EGC Ms B 18, p. 95v.

<sup>30</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 68r (an annotation dated 1922).

<sup>31</sup> First published in *The English Review*, October 1911, Vol. IX, No. 3, p. 494-504, and reprinted in Craig's collection of essays *The Theatre—Advancing* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1919), p. 179-195. The other play is Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

<sup>32</sup> *The Theatre—Advancing*, p. 192.

<sup>33</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 14r: "Scenery. Only a scheme of lights and gauzes: top, sides, in front, at back, and under stage. *C'est fini*.—And on the gauzes some mast or two and some rigging—water, strips, gauzes, floors."

<sup>34</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 51v and 58v.

<sup>35</sup> Respectively: Paris, BnF, ASP, Maq 10979 and Maq 10980, and Osaka, Ohtani University Library.

<sup>36</sup> ÖTM HZ-HS13182.

<sup>37</sup> There is no textual annotation on the drawing to identify the scene it represents. In 1942, Craig wrote a description thereof, without specifying for which scene it was meant: "*The Tempest*. Scene design (pastel on grey paper). Signed 'GC.' 1905. Under-sea. A bed of blue, green and black seaweed fronds, and white stones." (Catalogue of the drawings handed over by Craig to Joseph Gregor in June 1942, BnF, ASP, no shelfmark).

<sup>38</sup> Vana Greisenegger-Georgila's description of this stage design in the exhibition catalogue *Ungezähmte Natur als Schauplatz: Bühnenbilder aus drei Jahrhunderten* (Vienna: Brandstätter, Österreichisches Theatermuseum, 2011), p. 106, is largely erroneous: this scene does not make use of Craig's famous "screens," since in 1905 he had not invented them yet; this is not a heath landscape, since we are under-sea; this is no vegetation one "typically encounters close to the sea," since these are sea-weeds that grow *under* the sea, and it does not "bend in the direction where the tempest wind blows," but it drifts with marine currents. Besides, the two rows of bubbles are not mentioned at all, although they are somewhat surprising in what is interpreted as a "heath landscape." But the exhibition curator's other comments on this drawing are relevant, especially when it comes to the importance of verticality.

<sup>39</sup> Paris, BnF, ASP, Maq 10957, 10958 and 10959.

<sup>40</sup> Maq 10958.

<sup>41</sup> Maq 10959.

<sup>42</sup> Holograph annotation on design Maq 10957.

<sup>43</sup> It is a puppet stage seen through some kind of a window with a diameter of 112 centimetres. It is a permanent exhibit in the Österreichisches Theatermuseum's Teschner-Raum, and was described in detail by Jarmila Weißenböck in *Weihnachtsspiel: Figurenpantomime von Richard Teschner* (Vienna: Österreichisches Theatermuseum, 1992).

<sup>44</sup> BnF, ASP, EGC Mn MacKaye (Percy).

<sup>45</sup> In 1930 Craig was invited to attend a performance of *The Tempest* at the Old Vic Theatre in London, in which his cousin John Gielgud was acting as Prospero for

---

the first time in his career, but he left the theatre immediately after the end of the first scene, which grieved John Gielgud tremendously. See Jonathan Croall, *Gielgud: a Theatrical Life* (London: Methuen, 1002), p. 137.

<sup>46</sup> David Lindley, introduction to his edition of *The Tempest*, p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Christine Dymkowski, introduction to her edition of *The Tempest* in the *Shakespeare in production* series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 72.

<sup>48</sup> This design was inserted in the cover of manuscript EGC Ms B 18 (p. 130).

<sup>49</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 16r.

<sup>50</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 15r and 16r.

<sup>51</sup> This quotation and the following ones: EGC Ms B 18, p. 13v.

<sup>52</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 16v and 18r.

<sup>53</sup> Kenneth Tynan, "Gordon Craig," *The Observer*, 29 July 1956; reprinted in *Curtains*, 1961, then incorporated in the collection of Tynan texts edited by Kathleen Tynan as *Profiles* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2007), p. 105-108 (quotation: p. 108).

<sup>54</sup> Peter Brook, "Gordon Craig," *The Sunday Times*, 29 July 1956; incorporated as "Gordon Craig: a Meeting in 1956" in *The Shifting Point* (London: Methuen Drama, 1988), p. 23-35 (quotation: p. 25).

<sup>55</sup> "Daybook 1956," BnF, ASP, EGC Ms B 540(2), p. 5. The emphasis is Craig's.

<sup>56</sup> EGC Ms B 18 (p. 127-128).

<sup>57</sup> He kept a draft of that letter in manuscript EGC Ms B 18, pp. 121-123.

<sup>58</sup> It is the case, for instance, for a typically venomous letter that Craig meant for Kenneth Tynan in August 1956, but eventually refrained from sending (EGC Ms B 18, p. 125).

<sup>59</sup> Neither the manuscript EGC Ms B 18, nor the correspondence between Craig and Peter Brook and Natasha Parry (BnF, ASP, EGC Mn Brook (Peter)) contain any letter referring to Craig's suggestions.

<sup>60</sup> EGC Ms B 18, p. 17.

<sup>61</sup> Kenneth Tynan reported in his article that Craig enthused over Commandant Cousteau's (1910-1997) documentary movie *Le Monde du Silence*. Although his idea of an undersea staging of *The Tempest* occurred to Craig quite early, it is clear that this movie influenced him and enabled him to refine his vision. According to Tynan, Craig said about it: "It's like nothing you've ever dreamed of. Or, rather, it's like *everything* you've ever dreamed of." (Kenneth Tynan, *Profiles*, p. 106-107).

<sup>62</sup> "Daybook 1957," BnF, ASP, EGC Ms B 541(3), p. 55.

<sup>63</sup> However, Craig regarded for quite a long time *Hamlet* as an unplayable play as well, e.g. in *On the Art of the Theatre*, ed. Franc Chamberlain (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 75: "*Hamlet* has not the nature of a stage representation. [...] *Hamlet* was finished—was complete—when Shakespeare wrote the last word of his blank verse, and for us to add to it by gesture, scene, costume, or dance, is to hint that it is incomplete and needs these additions." And again on pp. 138-9: "Not if the finest and most passionate actors in the world were to come

---

together and attempt to perform Hamlet could the right representation of Hamlet be given, for I fear to represent *Hamlet* rightly is an impossibility. Yet since this was written (...) I have myself attempted to produce *Hamlet* (...). Knowing it was impossible, why did I attempt it? There are many reasons: I wanted to strengthen my belief—I wanted people to realize the truth.”

<sup>64</sup> Edward Trostle Jones, *Following Directions: a Study of Peter Brook* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1985), p. 107.

<sup>65</sup> Stephen Orgel, introduction to his edition of *The Tempest* in *The Oxford Shakespeare* series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 83.

<sup>66</sup> Muriel St. Clare Byrne, “The Shakespearean Season at the Old Vic, 1956-57 and Stratford-upon-Avon, 1957,” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 1957, Vol. 8, No. 4, p. 461-492 (quotation: p. 490).

<sup>67</sup> Cary M. Mazer, *Shakespeare Refashioned: Elizabethan Plays on Edwardian Stages* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1981), p. 72: “a lantern swung back and forth on an otherwise dark and bare stage, while the actors tumbled about.” But Mazer does not state explicitly that this was in the 1900 revival of Benson’s production. Benson’s production was revived again, at Stratford, in 1904, 1908, and 1911, and the lantern could have been introduced at any of these later dates. It is Stephen Orgel, in his introduction to *The Tempest* (p. 73), who asserts that the swinging lantern was used by Benson in 1900 (as opposed to his 1891 performances, which omitted 1.1 altogether). I do not know on which sources he draws (the only source he mentions is Mazer), and I would tend to regard this assertion as dubious.

<sup>68</sup> Edward Gordon Craig, *Index to the Story of my Days* (London: Hulton Press, 1957), p. 221: “F. R. Benson had a season at the Lyceum Theatre. It seemed to me rather ridiculous. I saw him as Caliban in *The Tempest*. [...] Benson’s idea of Caliban was to come on the stage with a fish between his teeth.”

<sup>69</sup> Jonathan Croall, *Gielgud...*, p. 403.

<sup>70</sup> See the interview that Georges Banu had with Peter Brook and Natasha Parry, and that was published by Banu as an appendix to the 2004 reprint of the French version of Craig’s *On the Art of the Theatre*. Georges Banu, “Souvenirs de Craig avec Peter Brook et Natasha Parry,” in: Edward Gordon Craig, *De l’art du théâtre* (Paris: Circé, 2004), p. 215-223.

<sup>71</sup> Edward Trostle Jones, *Following Directions...*, p. 110.

<sup>72</sup> Christine Dymkowski, *Tempest*, p. 83-84.

<sup>73</sup> Christine Dymkowski, *Tempest*, p. 85.

<sup>74</sup> Christine Dymkowski, *Tempest*, p. 106.

<sup>75</sup> Christine Dymkowski, *Tempest*, p. 104.

<sup>76</sup> Christine Dymkowski, *Tempest*, p. 106.

<sup>77</sup> Jonathan Croall, *Gielgud...*, p. 519: “He was amazed when Greenaway suggested he speak all the parts.”

<sup>78</sup> Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Le Théâtre postdramatique* (Paris: L’Arche, 2002), p. 201 ff.

<sup>79</sup> This is also the conclusion of the recent book by Katharina Wild, *Schönheit...*, p. 257: “Craigs Arbeiten können heute immer noch und vielleicht mehr denn je



---

wichtige Impulse für die Erkundung eines neuen, zukunftsweisenden, macht- und kraftvollen Theaters liefern.” And Peter Brook said once to Georges Banu: “Il est bon qu’il [= Craig] soit accessible aux gens qui sont en train de faire le théâtre d’aujourd’hui.” (Georges Banu, “Souvenirs de Craig...,” p. 221).