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Critical Revisit of *The Tempest* in Dhaka in 1987
The Aesthetic Subversion of an Analytical Guerrilla[1]

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Abstract: The theatrical practice of the plays written by the English author William Shakespeare has been an omnipresent cultural phenomenon across the globe. Shakespeare is also a significant proponent of living performance culture through translation, adaptation and reimagination in Bangladesh. This essay critically revisits and scrutinises a theatre production of Shakespearean romance, *The Tempest*, produced in Dhaka in 1987 by using data collected from primary sources and secondary materials. This research employs a semiotic mode of theatre analysis and critical theories to understand how *The Tempest* had been appropriated as an analytical guerrilla regarding translation, creation (rehearsal and performance) and reception.

Keywords: Shakespeare, The Tempest, Renaissance, Humanism, Colonialist Allegory, Theatre of Reflection, Decolonisation.

1. Introduction

The current state of knowledge about theatrical practice of plays written by the iconographic English poet and playwright William Shakespeare (1564-1616) confirms that the great author is omnipresent across the world with the "universality" of his plays' themes. His ability to transcend linguistic, racial, and geographical

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barriers as a symbol of "liquid modernity" have made him 'a "rhizomatic" figure' – decentred, irrepressible, erupting and "disturbingly relevant" (Dickson). The existing data informs us that through the English colonisation in the mid-eighteenth century, Shakespeare was introduced on stage in the Bengal region. From colonization, to decolonization, to liberation, Shakespeare is still alive on stages in Bangladeshi theatre. In the post-liberation era, from 1972 to 2020, the Shakespearean theatre has continued to be practiced on translations and adaptations of his tragedies, comedies and historical plays by the different Group Theatres, universities, colleges, and cultural organisations all over Bangladesh. In order to understand how theatrical production and reception of Shakespearean text has impacted the modern and contemporary cultural landscape in the country through a dialogue between two cultures (source culture of the text and receiving culture of the play), this essay aims to examine a theatrical case of the appropriation of Shakespeare in Bangladeshi theatre. Therefore, this section draws an outline of how *The Tempest* was appropriated in Dhaka in 1987 in terms of translation, production (rehearsal and performance) and reception of the spectator society. Employing the primary data by interviewing the on and off-stage personas along with secondary sources, this essay applies the semiotic method of performance analysis and critical theories to situate the production of *The Tempest* in a socio-aesthetic context of this region.

2. Story of wreckage and magic: Renaissance humanism and postcolonial narrative

One of the world's largest Shakespeare encyclopedic collecton defines *The Tempest* as "a story of shipwreck and magic" (Folger Shakespeare Library). As the collection describes:

The Tempest begins on a ship caught in a violent storm with Alonso, the king of Naples, on board. On a nearby island, the exiled Duke of Milan, Prospero, tells his daughter, Miranda, that he has caused the storm with his magical powers. Prospero had been banished twelve years earlier when Prospero's brother, Antonio—also on the doomed ship—conspired with Alonso to become the duke instead.

Prospero and Miranda are served by a spirit named Ariel and by Caliban, son of the island's previous inhabitant, the witch Sycorax (ibid).

The story of the play eventually complicates through a formation of romantic relationship between Ferdinand and Miranda. According to Folger Shakespeare Library description:

On the island, castaways from the wreck begin to appear. First is Alonso's son Ferdinand, who immediately falls in love with Miranda. Prospero secretly approves of their love, but tests the pair by enslaving Ferdinand. After secretly watching Miranda and Ferdinand exchange vows, Prospero releases Ferdinand and consents to their marriage.

The play climactically employs a new plot against Prospero as Folger Shakespeare Library figures out:

Other castaways who appear are Trinculo and Stephano, Alonso's jester and butler, who join forces with Caliban to kill Prospero and take over the island. The nobles from the ship search for Ferdinand and are confronted with a spectacle including a Harpy, who convinces Alonso that Ferdinand's death is retribution for Prospero's exile.

All dramatis personas except two natives leave the island and the play ends happily:

Having all his enemies under his control, Prospero decides to forgive them. Alonso, joyously reunited with his son, restores Prospero to the dukedom of Milan and welcomes Miranda as Ferdinand's wife. As all except Caliban and Ariel prepare to leave the island, Prospero, who has given up his magic, bids farewell to the island and the audience (ibid).

Shakespeare's one of the most powerful plays, generically defined as a romance, *The Tempest*, has been understood by many modern critics "from two important perspectives: as a fable of art and creation, and as a colonialist allegory" (Garber 852). The first school of interpretation follows the humanism of European Renaissance as Garber argues that "The ideas of Renaissance humanism and the place of the artist/playwright/magician offers a story of mankind at the center of the universe, of "man" as creator and authority" (ibid). The critique understands that the ontology of this analytical method is "aesthetic, philosophical, and skeptical" (ibid). It is argued that "Prospero is man-the-artist, or man-the-scholar: Ariel and Caliban represent his ethereal and material selves—the one airy, imaginative, and swift; the second earthy, gross and appetitive" (ibid). The distinguished Shakesperean scholar Marjorie Garber figures out the whole gamut of liberal apolitical humanist interpretation of *The Tempest* into three categories: the macrocosmic design, the microcosmic structure, and the humanist doctrine. In the macrocosmic design of The Tempest: "Caliban is a spirit of earth and water, Ariel a spirit of fire and air, and together they are elements harnessed by Prospero, here a kind of magician and wonder-worker closely allied to Renaissance science. Together these figures give us a picture of the world" (Garber 853-4). The microcosmic structure of The Tempest provides "a mirror of the human psyche" as Garber interprets that "Caliban, who is necessary and burdensome, the libido, the id, a "thing of darkness" who must be acknowledged; Ariel the spirit of imagination incarnate, who cannot be possessed forever, and therefore must be allowed to depart" (854). The third category the humanist doctrine of Renaissance philosophy illustrates that Shakesperean play's design of "mankind is a creature a little lower than the angels, caught between the bestial and the celestial, a creature of infinite possibilities. In all of these patterns Prospero stands between the poles marked by Ariel and Caliban" (ibid).

However, the second perspective of interpretation proposes that *The Tempest* narrates a postcolonial narrative of European "early modern voyages of exploration and discovery, "first contact," and

the encounters with, and exploitation of, indigenous peoples in the New world" (Graber 854). English early modern history reveals that "during the years when The Tempest was written and first performed, Europe, and England in particular, was in the heyday of the period of colonial exploration" (ibid). The colonialist reading therefore seeks a postcolonial meaning of the play within a political context rather than the idealized aesthetic hermeneutics. As Garber argues:

The Tempest is not idealizing, aesthetic, and "timeless," but rather topical, contextual, "political," and in dialogue with the times. Yet manifestly this dichotomy will break down, both in literary analysis and in performance. It is perfectly possible for a play about a mage, artist, and a father to be, at the same time, a play about a colonial governor, since Prospero himself is, or was, the Duke of Milan. His neglect of his ducal responsibilities ("rapt in secret studies," he allowed his brother to scheme against him) led first to his usurpation and exile, then to his establishment of an alternative government on the island, displacing and enslaving the native inhabitant Caliban, whose mother, Sycorax, had ruled there before Prospero's arrival and who, as Caliban says, "first was mine own king" (ibid).

Shakespeare's late romance *The Tempest* thus intricates an apolitical humanism of the Renaissance and the colonial political allegory within its very fictional fabrication. The multivocalities of the text allures many theatre artists around the world to reconstruct it in respond to their own contextual histories and human conditions. The story of shipwreck and magic with its colonial allegory as well as the polyphonic semiotics can also be read, which is profoundly evident in a unique theatre work that produced in 1987 in Dhaka in Bangladesh.

2.2 Heterogenous Site of Theatrical Act

Bangladeshi theatre spectated a collaborative venture of a heterogenous site generated by the staging of *The Tempest* in 1987 while the Bangladesh Centre of the International Theatre Institute

(ITI, Bangladesh centre) conjoined the Dhaka British council inviting Deborah Warner, a distinguished theatre director of England. The organisers also initiated a workshop led by Warner to cast the actors, whereas many enthusiastic performers from the various theatre groups of Dhaka participated to be selected. Tanvir Mokammel, a well-known film maker and cultural critic, defined this process of casting as a pioneering footstep to enhance the reciprocal existence of collectivity among the urban theatre groups in Bangladesh (cited in Harun 276). Apart from the fourteen performers from the different theatre groups, an eminent theatre designer, director, pedagogue, and scholar Syed Jamil Ahmed also, who then was a freelancer, had involved in this project to design set, light and costume for *The Tempest* while preeminent writer Syed Shamsul Haq again had been invited to translate this play into Bengali. The mode of organisation and participation in producing *The Tempest* made it a heterogenous site that generated a remarkable scope for creative acts to be done critically instead of naïve undrstanding. As a critic argues that "[..] tendencies in our societies - tendencies toward uniformity, sameness, and homogeneity-which in the worst case could lead to a simple and naïve understanding of life, society, and culture" (Varkøy).

2.3 Theatre of Reflection: "Hidden behind the Surface"

How *The Tempest* embraced such a creative process beyond the "naïve understanding of life" is reflected in interviews I have taken to explore the first-hand experiential knowledge about Shakespearean practice in Bangladesh. For instance, a distinguished director and academic, Israfeel Shaheen, who also acted the role of Sebastian in that production, indicated to me in his interview that Deborah as the director appeared to the performers like a co-creator: "her process of directing the rehearsal was collaborative and participatory." Syed Jamil Ahmed, the designer of the production, also described in a personal interview that Deborah Warner attempted to direct *The Tempest* against the typical

aesthetic procedure that was followed in the early *Macbeth*[2] production in the 1980s in Dhaka. Arguably, *The Tempest* reflected a shift from the canonical Shakespearean practice, as Jamil Ahmed defines it as a continuation of Peter Brook's[3] revolutionary production *A Midsummer Night's Dream*[4] in the 1970s at RSC (Royal Shakespeare Company) in the UK. Peter Brook's legacy can be argued as the theatre of reflection, whereas he considers this art form a mirror by quoting Shakespeare that "I am holding a mirror—we hold a mirror up to nature" (cited in Brook 22). The theatre of reflection can be elaborated by taking his statement, as Brook reflects,

A true mirror of life is never cultural, never artificial, it reflects what is there. And a theatre does not only show the surface, it shows what is hidden behind the surface, in the intricate social interrealtions of the people and, behind that, what is the ultimate existential meaning of this activity called life—all of these go together, and are shown in the great mirror (Brook 23).

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[2] *The Tragedy of Macbeth* is one of the most performed Shakespearean plays, called "the Scottish Play" superstitiously, deals with the theme of tyrannical power, state and ontology of political desire as well as acting art. This tragedy has been produced many times in Bangladesh. Here Syed Jamil Ahmed indicates the production that was created in 1982 in Dhaka by the British Council in collaboration two renowned theatre group Theatre and Nagorik Natyasampraday while Christopher Sandford directed it.

[3] Peter Brook (1925-2022) was an eminent English theatre and film director, writer, and performance theorist. His book titled The Empty Space has been considered one of the most influential books of theatre theory since its publication in 1968. He directed a landmark production of Shakespeare's comedy A Midsummer Night's Dream in 1970 at Royal Shakespeare Company at Straford-upon-Avon in England that celebrated a new theatre idiom in reimaging Shakespeare

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[4] A Midsummer Night's Dream is a widely performed early modern English comedy by Shakespeare written between 1595 to 1596 that was premiered in 1605. The play contains the thematic elements such as "night, illusion, dream, disguise and play, self-dramatization".

Deborah Warner, in *The Tempest* in Dhaka in 1987, employed Brook's creative method of exploring the "hidden behind the surface", as one of the actors of that production, Israfeel Shaheen, states that Deborah established a democratic process where performers were able to participate freely to explore the subtextual or subterranean meaning of Shakespeare's text. As if Deborah listened carefully to Brook's warning while rehearsing *The Tempest* in Dhaka:

You have to ask yourself as director: are you in touch with all the levels of writing which are rich, fruitful and meaningful and life-giving as much today as in the past […]. You can do what you want—but one must recognise the gap between a crude modernising of a text and the amazing potential within it that is being ignored. (Brook 25)

To understand Warner's the "life-giving" process of theatre-making here, writer and critic Rupert Christiansen can be addressed who elaborates that Warner's "approach transcends national barriers and cultures – to a remarkable degree, her productions have travelled globally, their resonances subtly transformed by exposure to different environments and atmospheres. Skeptical of the conventional division between stage and auditorium, she has a keen interest in exploring 'found' spaces, both large and small" (Christiansen).

Postcolonial legacy against the Colonial Canon

The atypical, collaborative and transcendental creativity of Dhaka's *The Tempest* can be understood by borrowing from Kamlauddin Nilu's articulation, who also worked on Aime Césaire's *Tempest* in the neighbour country India "a non-canonical way". Being informed by many postcolonial cultural theoreticians, he argues that Shakespeare's *The Tempest* has been considered "as a reading of colonial expansion, and Prospero emerges as the archetypical paternal figure of colonial domination and authority" in this region (Nilu 116). In this regard, Nilu considers Paolo Frassinelli's statement as a reminder that "*The Tempest* is an allegory of the colonial encounter and of master-slave dialectics […]" (ibid).

Frassinelli signals "the transformative role of Caliban" that is defined strikingly in Césaire: "Caliban is also a rebel – the positive hero, in a Hegelian sense. The slave is always more important than his master – for it is the slave who makes history" (cited in Nilu 116).

If Cesaire's deconstruction of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* attempted to let the slave make history, Warner's working on the original *The Tempest* rejects, as Jamil Ahmed determines, the typical aesthetic canon of Shakespearean performance in Dhaka. Against the grain of colonial discourse, Warner set a method to empower the performers who were considered not the colonial object but the postcolonial subject of the creative agency. As The Sunday Times critic John Peter writes of Warner's visionary theatre "is an adventure, a journey of the mind, a discovery of other ages, other countries, other people, other minds" (cited in Christiansen). To understand Deborah Warner's sense of "other", it is fruitful to remember here Caliban's strategic warning about how Prospero can be defeated:

"Remember
First to possess his books; for without them
He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not
One spirit to command. They all do hate him
As rootedly as I. Burn but his books" (Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 3.2.92–96).

Warner, the white director as Prospero, became the self-denial creator who instead got to know how to burn her own "books" as the colonial arsenal of knowledge/creative strategy to make theatre arts. Thus, she employed the notion of "decolonisation" as a "critical methodology" in her creative process in Dhaka in 1987. As Nayar argues, "Decolonisation seeks freedom from colonial forms of thinking, to revive native, local and vernacular forms of knowledge by questioning and overturning European categories and

epistemologies" (3). The process of decolonisation in the creation of *The Tempest* can be traced back when Shaheen reminisces that

Warner never tried to make a scene by herself. She never imposed any ideas upon us, and she didn't dictate us. Instead, she inspired us to explore our very own understanding of a particular scene or a character. I think she wanted to explore our collective souls. In doing so, she set a process that valued much actor's point of view.

Similarly, being informed by the interview of Shankar Sawjal, who played Caliban in *The Tempest*, Harun argues that the proficient director got profit from letting the actors imagine and think freely (277). The process the director of *The Tempest* followed thus questioned the stereotypical representation of colonial discourse. As Nayar narrates,

Colonial discourse is the construction of the native, usually in stereotypical ways, in European narratives, images and representations in a variety of modes and genres such as the arts, literature, the law, science writing and administrative reports. The native is constructed as primitive, depraved, pagan, criminal, immoral, vulnerable and effeminate in colonial discourse. Such a discourse then constructs a reality where future European administrators would not only see the native through the lens of this discourse, but also enact policies or initiate political-administrative measures because they believe in the truth-claims of the discourse. Discourse becomes, in other words, the mode of perceiving, judging and acting upon the non-European.

The Role of Moral Complexity in Directing as Decolonising

The creative process of *The Tempest*, which has been hailed by many who either participated as a performer or a designer, is also evident in Christiansen's reflections on its director's work: "Warner's process requires long, rigorous, and intensely exploratory rehearsal periods and she commits to a continual development of interpretation throughout a production's lifespan of runs and revivals […]." Again, Christiansen states that "Over four decades, Deborah Warner has constantly extended theatrical boundaries and

redefined the vocabulary of performance through an oeuvre of rare consistency and integrity marked by its raw energy, sharp wit and moral complexity." Arguably, the "moral complexity" triggered her to transcend the colonial positionality of constructing natives stereotypically. Therefore, she navigated the method for improvisation and playfulness to explore the text by the performers within the rigorous rehearsal process of *The Tempest* (Ahmed; Shaheen).

Negotiating the Cultural Difference in Rehearsal and Translation

However, Judith Cook, in an interview of Warner, reveals a problem of cultural difference that she faced in the process of rehearsing *The Tempest* in Dhaka:

The problems lie elsewhere. You're dealing with different culture, unused to the rude honesty of the rehearsal room. I'm used to actors telling me what they think and if they really don't want to do something I need to know. Bengalis are always very polite and they didn't want to tell me if they didn't like something so that took some working out (Cook cited in Harun 277).

Cook also identifies an artistic problem of engaging "different language" and the behavioural difference in rehearsal Deborah found in Dhaka. As Warner confesses to Cook: "In fact, it was premier of the play in Bangladesh [,] and it was like nothing I've ever done before. It was an exciting [,] enchanting time. What was interesting was that the area I was most frightened of, which was working in a different language" (cited in Harun 277). However, the problem of "different language" was tackled by the translator of *The Tempest*, Syed Shamsul Haque, who also translated Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Julius Cesear*[5] into Bengali. Critical

[5] *Julius Caesar* is a subtle Shakespearean historical play of ethics and statecraft. Syed Shamsul Haque adapted and reimagined this play as Gononayak, which was produced by Chakrabak, a Dhaka based group theatre, in 1992.

reception of this performance confirms that the translation was successful since Haque avoided recreating Shakespeare's "word play". Instead, he attempted to maintain the dramatic quality of the script so that it could be performed easily and spontaneously in the Bengali language (Harun 276). In doing so, Haque maintained an "energy of relations" what Brook elaborates that

With Shakespeare the mysterious power is there even in translation, out of which comes the energy that can lead to performance. It is there in the characters, in their relations, in all the other aspects, and also in the ideas that are within his language—all of that leaves something tremendous even when this magical level of the words is diminished (27)

Since I have examined Haque's translated script of *The Tempest*, it can be argued that in the act of translating *The Tempest* from Shakespearean English into contemporary Bengali, as if Haque imagined earlier what Brook suggested later. To understand the translational method of rediscovering the textual purity that Haque employed, here, Brook can be rephrased "he [had] to make a choice and simplify the line to rediscover its purity, at the expense of sacrificing some of what in English is part of its real value" (Brook 27). Thus, Haque's effective technique of translation saved the energy of the Bengali *Tempest* from being "extraordinarily artificial, pompous and flowery" (ibid). Furthermore, according to the information disseminated by Jamil Ahmed, Warner also worked with the translator residentially outside of Dhaka city so as she could also take part in the creative process of translating. Here Pym can be referred to what he discussed theories of translation based on Chesterman and Spivak. The Sanskrit term "anuvad" or the Bengali term "anubad"

[F]or written translation that basically means, I am told, "repeating" or "saying later" […]. According to this alternative term, the main difference between one text and the other could be not in space, but in time. Translation can then be seen as a constant process of updating and elaborating, rather than as some kind of physical movement across cultures (Pym 2).

If a translation is "a constant process of updating", then the Bengali translation of *The Tempest*, because of its processuality, became an act of transcultural creation that sought further possibility in the rehearsals, as Shaheen informs, where verbal became physical, an organic part of the whole embodiment.

Rediscovering the Empty Space: Less is More

The Tempest in Dhaka celebrated a nodal point of direction and design where the British director was from the former colonial master's country at one hand, and on the other, the designer and the performers were from such a country which was colonised by the British from 1757 to 1947. The creative process of *The Tempest* obtained a set of new idioms in terms not only of directing and acting but also of designing. When the graphic representation of symbolism was predominant in the urbanised practice of modern theatre in the late 1980s, *The Tempest* saw a "turning point" in terms of its innovation of staging vocabulary, as the designer Jamil Ahmed illustrates,

When I started theatre design, Bangladeshi theatre followed a normative ideal of the box set and simplified realism. I began diversified practices that mainly employed symbolist design inspired by Adolphe Apia and Gordon Craig. In that time, I was also looking for a way to depart from the symbolism to get a new creative zeal in designing. In the context of the then Bangladeshi theatre, for me, *The Tempest* was a turning point in designing the space to perform the play's story effectively. Interestingly, Deborah Warner's creative method of directing also transmuted into my enthusiasm for a new design. She also wanted an open space indeed.

Therefore, in collaboration with the director, the designer created a space by removing the proscenium arch, borders and wings so as the stage had been turned into an "empty space". The back wall and sidewalls of the stage were also white. An intervention had also

been possible to get the ceiling white, changing its previous black colour. Thus, it became absolutely a white box, and the light did not use any colour except the opening scene that was performed in the dark to represent the shipwreck without employing any scenic representation. Instead, Performers used balloons to make the sound of breaking the ships and storms. Ahmed adds, "I didn't use any scenic representation for the island or anything else. Rather, dialogues and actor's performances expressed the stories and places." Ahmed informs about the costume as well. Ariel wore blue shari while the aristocrats wore silk dhoti-pyjama (cross of dhoti and pyjama) and punjabi. Prospero wore a jacket of patchwork, and the surface was removed from. Costumes of the production critically referred to a rejection of Victorian norms of dressing. Instead, it enjoyed the culture-specificity of the performers. After all, Ahmed recalls that "*The Tempest* was performed in a white cube."

Ahmed exchanges his memories with me in the interview that there was no apparent effort in designing to create any specific place and time for that production. Instead, the design reinforced the overall creative process making an abstract space to be performed the story of the play so as the performance could engage the audience simply but effectively. *The Tempest* what sought in Dhaka that can be realized by quoting Bejzek: "[a] rigorous engagement with questions of the body, of image and of dramatic representation." In doing so, what I have understood from Jamil Ahmed's interview is the design of the production that had not been "oscillated between a spatial and perspectival understanding (spatial representation) on the one hand and a surface and decorative understanding (graphic representation) on the other" (ibid). Hence, being informed by Ahmed's interview, what I understand that can be articulated by borrowing from Brejzek, *The Tempest* sharply employed the "spatial representation" rather than the "graphic representation" "to condemn decorative elements in favour of the modernist dictum 'Less is more'" (ibid). Moreover, Brejzek argues that "In the performative environments of productively 'blurred genres' between theatre and architecture, the discipline's twentieth-century battles for dominance between the tectonic (structural,

meaningful) in architecture and the scenographic (decorative, effect-producing) in theatre have simply evaporated" (ibid).

Here the argument helps me to relate Ahmed's testimony about the collaborative practice of *The Tempest* that also attempted to evaporate the difference between "the tectonic" and "the scenographic" in designing. Therefore, Dhaka witnessed such a production in 1987 that regained the essential ephemerality of theatre. As Brejzek argues, "The realisation of theatre does not comprise the material realisation of the model box, but encompasses beyond the stage design the entire mise-en-scène for the duration of the performance. Theatre thus is realised in the ephemeral, unrepeatable live performance" (ibid).

However, post-colonialist critics argue that the anti-colonialist theatrical canon from Africa to South Asia often celebrates the multiplicity of human history and shapes their theatrical narratives to accommodate, and sometimes opposing, colonial [Shakespearean] dramaturgy and Euro-centric theatre studies (Crow and Banfield,10-11). In this line of practice, arguably, *The Tempest* production also negated the Euro-centric way of Proscenium Arch staging and set a political shift of theatrical narrative. As Brejzek argues that "The shift towards an understanding of space as social practice, as dynamic rather than static and political rather than neutral [...]."

Nilu describes the colonial context that "Shakespeare has been rooted in India's [Bengal's] public theatre since the 1750s, when the Old Playhouse was established in Calcutta." He argues that "such theatre spaces are the footstep of the 'imperishable Empire of Shakespeare" (cited in Nilu 118). In this line of argument, he quotes a Shakespeare critic Parmita Kapadia: "Initially, Shakespeare was simply transported to India [Bengal] and imposed on the colony" (cited in Nilu). Making on the works of R. K. Yajnik, Kapadia elaborates: The new theatre came full-fledged. There was no

question of the model to be followed. [Bengali] simply adopted the mid-Victorian stage with all its accessories of painted scenery, costume, and make-up" (ibid).

Ahmed attested that *The Tempest* rejected colonial mimicry of mid-Victorian staging strategies and accessories. Instead, it celebrated an innovated space of emptiness where stories attempted to be performed on the limitless imaginative mind of the audience. It had been possible due to the collaborative method that practised "so honestly" in the rehearsal of *The Tempest*. As a critic argues, "The collaborative dialogue and exploration of the design and rehearsal process build a production that both responds to the original material and derives from its cultural and socio-political context." (Burnett) Moreover, what I learn from the interviews of the actors and designer, the collaborative process of *The Tempest* can be understood by revisiting the phases that are followed in many Shakespearean productions:

A first stage of any new design or piece of writing might be to interrogate the source materials from a range of perspectives and to research related or tangential materials. The second stage would be to make the evolving piece "their own", whether the working team be auteur/director, or close creative team, or an ensemble model of company creativity. The creeping authorship of this stage gives way to a third stage of performance and engagement with the audience/readers; a fourth stage sees the cycle renewed by the resulting and differing "readings" and "writings" made and found in response to the original, by artists, audience and critics (Burnett).

Example of a Unique Creative Device

The creative process Deborah Warner pursued in the production *The Tempest*, according to the designer, performed some wonderful devices. Ariel, for instance, never stares at Prospero. Prospero always looked at the broken glass and attempted to call on her. Ariel's movement was prolonged, and Prospero always tried to talk to her through the glass, not the direct gaze. According to Ahmed,

Bangladeshi theatre witnessed an excellent example of performing magic that signified the politics of innovation based on alternative facts of new aesthetics.

Instead of Epilogue: Dilettante vs Analytical Guerrilla

The performance making process of *The Tempest*, as Ahmed defined, was neither the illusionist nor the false. The process appropriated an empty space, localised costume, white light and the truthfulness of actors' psycho-social embodiment so that the story could be told spontaneously. Ahmed also referred to Deborah Warner's word "dilettante" for the actors of *The Tempest*, for whom, as the designer, now he thinks that "the production was a missed opportunity" since they had not revealed their true selves enough. On the contrary, what Shaheen argues about actors' creative roles in the production of *The Tempest* can be expressed by using Pollock's performance theory that focuses on the body as the ultimate site of hegemonic reproduction/disruption, forms a powerful analytical space" from where a performer engages in Scott's "undeclared ideological guerrilla war" of a particular socio-cultural context (Alexander).

Hence, a Bangladeshi production *The Tempest* initiated, in terms of translation, direction, design and acting, a shift from the canonical/colonial Shakespearean practice that can be scrutinized using a critical statement on a Korean Tempest: "aesthetics from text-centered (sic.) modernism to the performance-centered (sic.)" invention (Kwon). The critical review and historiographic revisit of *The Tempest* production figure out a unique aesthetic example of a Shakespearean practice that depended more on the interaction of imagined space and creative body and cultural translation of the play rather than the mimicry of literariness of the drama. Therefore, the creative strategy of *The Tempest* production enjoyed a symbiotic relationship in making art on the one hand; on the other, it reimagined both the humanist narrative and political allegory of

Shakespearean drama by operating an analytical guerrilla that subverted orthodox canon of making theatre in Bangladesh.

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