

RESUMO PARA COMUNICAÇÃO ORAL PRESENCIAL - EPISTEMES DE
TRANS-FORMAÇÃO

'TEMPEST MASQUE' AND CONTEMPORARY MYTH

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This presentation investigates the dramaturgical structure of the Jacobean masque and its adaptation in 'The Tempest' as a framework for questioning contemporary political myth. Drawing on masque traditions and Shakespeare's play, it examines connections between topical concerns with timeless mythic narratives.

In the early seventeenth century, court masques created symbolic spectacles in which the "present occasion", the political and social circumstances of the moment, was framed within what masquewright Ben Jonson described as "removed mysteries", mythological fables and archetypal forces that gave philosophical meaning to contemporary events. Through live music, dance, poetry, scenic arts, and participatory performance, the masque synthesised multiple art forms into a collaborative spectacle approaching what later theorists might call a "total artwork."

In Jacobean court culture, the monarch was placed at the visual and symbolic centre of the event, elevated physically and dramaturgically as both spectator and object of spectacle. Mythological deities, allegorical figures, and courtly masquers reinforced royal authority through praise, ritual choreography, and the harmonious ordering of the stage. The masque's characteristic structure juxtaposed the antimasque, a carnivalesque prelude of disorder, grotesque figures, or social inversion, with the main masque, where mythic harmony was symbolically restored in "the revels" dances with the audience.

In our present political landscape, hegemonic narratives are often constructed through simplified or fabricated modern myths, rhetorical frameworks that legitimise authority and shape public perception. Through practice-as-research staging experiments, this study explores how the contrastive relationship between masque and antimasque can be used to expose and dismantle such narratives. At the centre of this enquiry is 'Tempest Masque', a mixed-form, performance-as-research project. Using playful challenges, the work cultivates heteroglossia—multiple, sometimes contradictory voices, against monoglossic structures of dominance. Through structured improvisation, ranging from martial physical challenges to poetic débats, it reframes the agon as a generative, communal negotiation of shared place. Like Thomas More's 'Utopia', the island oscillates between "not-place" and "perfect place," revealing gaps between aspiration and reality while opening space for collective reinvention. This research argues that the masque creates a liminal performance space in which communities temporarily suspend ordinary social structures to imagine alternative realities and a movement from disorder to renewal.

Shakespeare denotes epic movements and trans-historical events through single representations and characters, as Jan Kott explicates: 'Caliban was overthrown by Prospero, just as Prospero had been overthrown by Antonio. Even before the morality proper is performed, and Prospero's enemies undergo the trial of madness, two acts of feudal history have already been played out on the desert island' (Kott, 2015, p. 115). In 'labs', the imagined early exchanges

between Prospero and Caliban evoked the early days of European exploration of the "New World" and a mythical dimension in the scenic atmosphere. This version of the agon developed the archetypal 'meetings' with capoeira songs or chants from 'The Tempest' text.

I argue that contemporary masque-theatre can offer flexible frameworks for innovative theatre-makers seeking to interrogate the present through the language of archetypal performance.

Palavras-chave: william shakespeare; 'the tempest'; adaptation; jacobean masque; ben jonson; 'tempest masque';.