

Marius D'Assigny

1643 - 1717

and

Performance Processes

by

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Synopsis.

This thesis examines the mnemonic practices of Marius D'Assigny (1643-1717) in relationship to the developing methodology and discoveries of contemporary performance research. The context for my study is provided by the historical work of Frances Yates (1899-1981), which focuses upon the Renaissance European "Art of Memory" and its importance to the development of *Hermetic* thought. She suggests avenues of enquiry which my study investigates. .

A practical exploration of D'Assigny's "Art of Memory" is offered, through the rehearsal and performance experiences encountered while developing a solo performance of Shakespeare's "Macbeth". The discoveries of this project permit a new consideration of the mnemonic processes in dramatic performance, and in particular an development of Yates' propositions concerning the significance of Shakespeare's performance space, The Globe Theatre. The thesis proposes that the performer's *action* has a mnemonic dimension which might be considered a means of *knowing by doing*.

Words: 29,439.

"After we have thus gotten into our Memory a discourse in the beginning we must suppose that it is not confirmed in us, and must therefore run it over by a frequent Meditation... Truly without this action a discourse can never be digested, but will come from us raw, perhaps as a lesson from a schoolboy, neither can we be able without it to make it our own, nor to give it that life and Virtue to it that is needful to affect the Mind of our Auditors. Therefore a Discourse ought to have a convenient time to settle in our Memories, that they may often run them over by Meditation."

Marius D'Assigny.

"A man of knowledge has at his disposal *the doing* and not the ideas or theories. The true teacher - what does he do for the apprentice ? He says: *do it*. The apprentice fights to understand, to resolve the unknown to the known, to avoid doing. By the very fact that he wants to understand he resists. He can only understand after he *does it*. *He does it* or not. Knowledge is a matter of doing."

Jerzy Grotowski.

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Introduction.

My theses considers the significant form in dramatic performance. Through the work of Marius D'Assigny (a seventeenth century mnemonist) and William Shakespeare, I investigate the relationship between mnemonic arts which began as an aid to rhetorical oration and the mnemonic practices of a modern dramatic performer. The processes of rhetorical oration and dramatic performance are clearly linked as both disciplines require the acquisition and absorption of a text to be spoken before an audience. This link is very interestingly considered by Frances Yates in her historical analysis of the late English Renaissance, when the mnemonic art and its use of notational imagery reached a peak of complexity and involved cross-pollination from other arts and sciences. I compare my discoveries with Yates' work on the mnemonist Robert Fludd. Her study of Fludd's *theatrical* mnemonic system and "The Globe" theatre opens many avenues of possible investigation. My study focuses upon the performer and the dramatic action in Shakespeare's dramas when viewed in the light of the mnemonic arts. I consider what new insights might be gained from this vantage point.

I investigate the proposition that every dramatic performance must to some degree employ mnemonic principles. In order to establish the matter of the work, the performance must be connected with the audiences' Memoria - that is, those memories of past events which create experiences and a field of understanding. I suggest that the drama's ability to create significance is dependant upon the series of events of which it

is constituted "not completely unhappening", but remaining in the audience's mind to permit a comprehension of the over all whole of the performance. It is such a continuation of events which De Bono describes as vital to organising experience, and that which Warnock calls the "never ending dreams" that enrich the present.¹

My study investigates in detail the processes described in D'Assigny's "The Art of Memory" (1699). In order to examine their relevance to the dramatic performer, I used the work to make a practical exploration of Shakespeare's "Macbeth". Importantly, my application of D'Assigny's techniques was informed by contemporary understandings of methodology stressing the physical basis of dramatic performance. Fundamental to such methodology is the primacy of action as the core of dramatic performance.

I suggest that dramatic performance may be considered as a physical manifestation of the mental activity of mnemonic practices. D'Assigny turns the matter of a discourse into images in a building; the text is notated as imaginary objects of sense-perception, memorised in a spatial-temporal process. This process relates closely to performance preparation, in which the text becomes integrated with actions tangible to sense-perception through a spatial-temporal mnemonic process.

¹ BONO, Edward De. The Mechanism of the Mind. London: Jonathan Cape, 1969, ISBN 224617095. WARNOCK, Mary. Memory. London: Faber, 1987. ISBN 0571147836.

Section I

Chapter I: Marius D'Assigny. 1643-1717.

i) Biographical Context.

Marius D'Assigny's "The Art of Memory" was first published in 1697. The book ran to many editions including a German translation. I have worked from a 1699 English edition of the book which is held in the Heslop Room of the library of the University of Birmingham.

Between the years 1670 and 1709, D'Assigny published at least ten works, demonstrating a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible, classical culture and contemporary theological and political issues. Several of his publications are wholly religious. He translated a French protestant work by Charles Drelincourt, on the preparation for a Holy death, and published a similar work of his own.¹ D'Assigny also considered classical areas. He presented studies on the Ancient gods (including a British pagan pantheon), the city of Ancient Rome, and Egyptian hieroglyphics.² He also published three works on contemporary

¹ DRELINCOURT, Charles. D'ASSIGNY, Marius. trans. The Christians Defence against the fears of death, with reasonable directions how to prepare ourselves to die well. 21st Edition. London: J. Buckland, 1776.

D'ASSIGNY , Marius. The Assurance of The Faithful: Or, The Glorious Estate of the Saints of Heaven: And the certainty of their future Happiness, manifested by Reason and Scripture. London: Edward Mann, 1670.

² D'ASSIGNY, Marius. The poetical histories, being a complete collection of all the stories necessary for a perfect understanding of the Greek and Latin poets and other ancient authors: written originally by the Learned Jesuit P. Galtruchius. Now Englished and enriched with observations concerning the gods worshipped by our ancestors in this island, by the Phoenicians, and Syrians in Asia Unto which are added two treatises. One of the curiosities of old Rome, and of the difficult names relating to the affairs of that city. The other containing the

issues: a translation of a history of warfare; an attack on supporters of the Prince of Wales, as pretender to the throne; and a recommendation for infant baptism.¹ His "recent history" of the nobility of Flanders was first published in French in the Hague.² D'Assigny both participated in the furore of inter-denominational wrangling and wrote about the distant events of classical history. The writings of this widely educated man show a diversity of interests and experiences.

D'Assigny calls his "Art of Memory":

most remarkable hieroglyphics of Egypt. London: Moses Pitt, 1671.

¹ FONTINUS, Sextus J. D'ASSIGNY, Marius, trans. & ed. The stratagems of war; or A collection of the most celebrated practices and wise sayings of the great generals in former ages ... now Englished and enlarged with a new collection of the most note stratagems and brave exploits of famous modern generals. 1686.

D'ASSIGNY, Marius. Reasonable advice to the Protestant non-jurors: showing the absurdity and Danger of acknowledging the pretended Prince of Wales, for king of England: wherein their principal objections are answered, and diverse other worthy considerations are offered, to justify the government, and persuade them to a union in this juncture. London: J Nutt, 1702.

D'ASSIGNY, Marius. The mystery of Anabaptism unmasked; being full and satisfactory vindication of infant baptism in the Church of England, as to subjects and mode. In answer to fallacious arguments and pernicious errors of Mr. Morgan, Mr. Stennet, Mr. Keach, Mr. Hook, Mr. John Gale, and other principal leaders of the dipping-sect. Published again to give satisfaction to doubting Christians, to silence gain-savers, and return an answer to some of the late reflections on Mr. Well's History of Infant-baptism; to which is added, Discourses, I. Upon the Christian Sabbath, II. Original Sin, III. Forms of prayer and liturgy, IV. Sinfulness of schism, V. The danger of apostasy, VI. the history of the Anabaptists from their first appearance in foreign parts, and in England. London: Jonathan Robinson, 1709.

² D'ASSIGNY, Marius. The history of the earls and earldom of Flanders, from the first establishment of that sovereignty to the death of King Charles II of Spain. London: D. Brown, 1701.

"A treatise useful for all especially such as to speak in Public".¹

However, the book is mainly addressed to preachers, namely the Oxford and Cambridge students of divinity, offering to assist both in developing their oratory skill and their spiritual growth. For D'Assigny memory training is an essential feature of the Christian path towards salvation and that perfection which ensures the soul's reunion with the Godhead.

"We are to draw near by degrees, and labour to attain to those Endowments of the Mind that they may predispose and recommend our souls for the Heavenly State."²

D'Assigny believes effective mnemonic practices create;

"the most excellent ability for the improving of all your natural Perfection."³

Thus in part the art of memory helps perfect the soul.

D'Assigny's book covers a breadth of subjects. It is a spiritual, medical and rhetorical guide to the memory. The first two chapters urge all to refine their souls for Heaven, and identify memory as a gift which should be ordered to this end. The four central chapters offer advice on those habits of diet, exercise and sleep which aid the memory, including herbal potions and aromatic remedies for the infirmities which handicap the mind.

"Chapter 3. The Temper or Disposition of the Body best and worst for Memory, with the natural Causes and Reasons of both.

¹ D'ASSIGNY, Marius. The Art of Memory. London; Andrew Bell, 1699. Title page.

² Ibid, p 7.

³ Ibid. p v.

Chapter 4. Some General and Physical Observations and Prescriptions for the remedying strengthening, and restoring a Memory injured by the ill Temper of the Body, or the Predominating of one of the Four Qualities in the Brain."¹

Chapter five lists habits and activities which damage the memory, and chapter six provides medicinal means to repair and strengthen its workings. The closing chapters of the book provide the rules for the practice of memory, the helping of remembrance and finally describes what D'Assigny calls *the fantastic memory*.

In the following pages I summarise D'Assigny's recommendations for mnemonic practice in general, in order to provide a context for examining the specific use of "Artificial or Fantastical Memory or Remembrance".

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p xvi.

ii) "Rules to be observed for the Acts or Practice of Memory" and "Rules to be observed to help our Remembrance of things that we desire to preserve in Mind".¹

The "matter" (or subject) for memorising is the first concern. It must be open to rational consideration while being worthy of esteem and challenging to one's understanding. It must also suit the temperament of the practitioner's mind, as affinity with a matter is believed to deepen the impression which it makes upon the memory.² The matter must have a methodical organisation because that which enters the memory in an ordered fashion may be recalled with ease. To this end each part must relate to the proceeding and succeeding sections, creating a train of thought by a process of mutual dependency:

"Let there be a Method and convenient Order observed, and a Coherence in the discourse we design to deliver, for it will be far more easy to mind and remember things that have a mutual dependence upon one another, than such as are without Order or Method."³

D'Assigny goes on to consider the text as a written document. It should be clearly spaced with large characters heading each section, similar to the ornamentation found on manuscripts of illuminated texts. D'Assigny is interested in the graphic form because of his conviction that of all the senses it is sight which most affects the memory, and thus a text should

¹ D'Assigny, 1699. My summary amalgamates Chapters 7 & 8.

² Ibid, p 55.

³ Ibid, p 55-6.

be bold and exciting to the eye. He cites Cicero to support this view.

"Let everything we desire to remember be fairly written and distinctly, and divided into Periods with large Characters at the beginning, for by this means we shall the more readily imprint the Matter and Words in our minds, the more remarkable the writing appears to the eyes. This sense conveys ideas to the fancy better than any other; and what we have seen is not so soon forgotten, as what we have only heard. Therefore Cicero tells us in III De Oratore ,... that the Eyes of Understanding (and consequently of the Memory) are carried more easily to the things that are seen, than those that are heard".¹

D'Assigny explains that a text with a distinct appearance will encourage a "*local apprehension*" of the matter.

"Let there be a local Apprehension of our written Discourse well fixed in the Mind; and in the delivery of it let the Fancy proceed on, and the Imagination leisurely dictate the Matter, and the Words as they are couched in our Paper."²

D'Assigny appears to recommend what we now call "photographic memory", wherein a text can be recalled and read as if actually present.

Though D'Assigny believes the memory is part of the soul and firmly asserts the soul's pre-eminence over the body. He remains certain that flesh and spirit are interwoven in the individual, and that the individual's actions reveal the link between the processes of the body and soul.

"... by this near conjunction of the Soul and Body, it happens that the Habit of the Former are more or less perfect, and the Actions more or less excellent according to the good or vicious Disposition of the latter. So that an Impediment or a Weakness in the Organ may hinder the Soul from acting. But such impediments, if they proceeded not from a natural Deficiency in the principal Part, may in some cases be

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 56.

² Ibid, p 57.

removed by an assidual Labour, a resolute Industry, a long Usage, and the Blessing of the God of Nature."¹

Therefore though D'Assigny believes memory is a faculty of the Soul, its effective operation is dependant on physical health:

"In general it is a requisite for a good Memory, that the Body be in perfect health; for if either the whole be distempered, or any part be diseased, the Sufferings are communicated to every Member."²

For D'Assigny the mental faculties are not disembodied entities. They are the conscious operations of a physical body to which they remain closely bound. While the soul dwells in the mortal frame it can be observed and nurtured through the tangible form of our physiological health. For example, in order to achieve the necessary meditative clarity, each practitioner must discover the best time and season for memorising. To this end, fasting and a moderate diet are recommended, and the time proceeding, interrupting and succeeding sleep is considered the best for reception and retention of impressions and ideas, as the mind is then clear and sensitive. For D'Assigny, the memory is a "faculty" of the soul, and as the soul "discovers itself in the whole body". His mnemonic practice is therefore physiological as well as intellectual.³

The acquisition of text is described by d'Assigny as a two-fold practice of meditation, namely the memorising of the actual words and the contemplation of the *matter* of the text. Precise rote acquisition of the text is important, but ideas are remembered best when considered and understood by the reason.

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 15.

² Ibid. p 27.

³ Ibid, p 2.

"What we understand is our own; and cannot be forgotten. Reason is an excellent confirmation of Memory when it is concerned in this employment; for while our reasoning faculty continues we shall never forget what it has formerly approved of, as agreeing with its internal principles."¹

The practitioner must be able to understand the *matter* in order to form a simple *précis* which can be recalled in an instant, so that the orator is not lost if the actual wording is forgotten, but rather uses the text as a path through the *understood* matter. A thorough investigative research of the matter will also secure its place in the memory;

"And if we are to speak in Public, it will be a great advantage to Memory that we perfectly understand that Matter & Business in question; that we are fully acquainted with the Argument, Mystery or Theme that we treat of; that we have searched and studied all that may be alleged for or against it, and have continually a prospect of all that may be said upon the Subject."²

When memorising the text, D'Assigny says it must be read in peace and quiet with the whole body attentive and concentrating on the matter.

"When we first intend to recover a discourse, and get it into our Memories we ought to read it quietly with the greatest Attention and Intention of the Mind, setting aside all other Business which might encumber or interrupt us."

"Set aside all other occupations and Employments, and chiefly those troublesome Passions of the Mind that will not suffer us to Enjoy ourselves, as Anger, Wrath, Envy, Revenge, Lust, Covetousness, Alarms, Fears, etc, for when the Mind is totally taken up with such uneasy Guests, 'tis not possible to employ it about the Functions of Memory."³

D'Assigny commends the meditative calm of sedentary contemplation to concentrate "attention" and "intention". Every word must be

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 64.

² Ibid, p 64.

³ Ibid, p 59 & 69.

carefully considered. By memorising a section before reading further the memory securely acquires the matter. Repeatedly the text must be softly recited to the self, so that the tongue becomes accustomed to the words and they flow without deliberation.

"This repetition will be of great use both for the getting it more perfect, and for the more easy delivery; for when the Tongue is accustomed to the Expressions, it will more readily deliver them again."¹

Through repetition the text is digested and absorbed, allowing the matter to settle in the memory, and through becoming thoroughly familiar it can be most effectively presented.

"Ptolemy calls Meditation the Key of Truth."Truly without this action a discourse can never be well digested, but will come from us now, perhaps as a lesson from a school boy; neither can we be able without this to make it our own, nor to give that life and virtue to it that is needful to affect the minds of our auditors."²

D'Assigny suggests precise techniques to aid the recollection of a text. For example, new matters to be memorised may be compared to similar or opposite matters already familiar to the memory.

"For the better remembering of things we ought to compare them with those things with which we are familiar or best acquainted, and that have a resemblance with them either in Syllables, in Quantity, in Opine, Employment, etc. For this similitude will certainly imprint the thing or person so in our mind that if we do casually forget, we shall the more easily recover the lost idea that we have already in Memory, and that hath a resemblance and relation to that which is absent in some known Particular, will lead our Fancy to it again."

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 59.

² Ibid, p 60.

"We may imprint in our Minds, and fix things in Memory, by thinking upon their Contraries or Opposites; and we may by the same means remember things."¹

By establishing a link between an old and a new memory, through the recollection of the old memory the new matter may be recalled by a process of association. Memorising a matter in a vivid context is also suggested as an aid to recall.

" If we desire to remember any thing let us mind Circumstance belonging to it, which is most admirable, remarkable, or suitable to our Genius, Temper or Interest."²

To summarise, D'Assigny advises a diligent and painstaking memorising of a precise text, supported by a wider contemplation of the matter, and employing the associations and imaginings which are stimulated by the text as aids to its recollection.

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 68-69.

² Ibid. p 70.

iii) Marius D'Assigny and the Fantastic Memory.

D'Assigny ends his book with instruction on use of "the artificial or fantastical memory or remembrance".¹ The practice which he describes uses mnemonic images specifically created for a text. These devices are recalled in the mind's-eye while making an imaginary tour of a well known building which serves as the repository in which these images are placed. This process is the basis of Classical mnemonics, whose genesis lies in the Greek legend of Simonides, the poet who is said to have invented the art of memory.

At a banquet the poet Simonides chanted a lyric poem in honour of his host, but included a passage in praise of Castor and Pollux. The host said he would only pay Simonides half his fee, and that he must obtain the balance from the gods to whom he had devoted half the poem. Later, a message was brought to Simonides that two young men waiting outside wished to see him. He went out but could find no one. During his absence the roof of the banqueting hall collapsed crushing all present. The corpses were so mangled that relatives coming to take them away were unable to recognize them. However, Simonides remembered their places at the table and was therefore able to identify the dead. (The invisible callers, Castor and Pollux, had paid for their share in the poem by drawing Simonides away from the banquet just before the crash.)

Simonides' experiences at the fateful feast suggested to him the principles of the art of memory. He realised that orderly

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 71.

arrangement is essential for good memory, for it was through his recollection of the places at which the guests had been sitting that he was been able to identify the bodies.¹

"He inferred that persons desiring to train this faculty (of memory) must select places and form mental images of the things they wish to remember and store those images in the places, so that the order of the places will preserve the order of the things, and the images will denote the things themselves, and we shall employ the places and images respectively as a wax writing-tablet and the letters written on it. "²

D'Assigny explains that Simonides' mnemonic practice is most useful for remembering passages of events rather than a text. He also notes that it is not suited to all practitioners. However, D'Assigny provides a clear description of his *fantastic memory* which closely follows the legendary model for the classical mnemonic art;

"It is an imaginary disposition in our mind of sensible things, upon which when our Memory reflects by them it is admonished and assisted to remember more easily and distinctly things that are to be minded."³

Matters are memorised as composed images in the distinctly different rooms of a specific building. In this way ideas become remembered as if they were once objects of sense-perception.

To begin D'Assigny's process one must carefully visualise a large empty building which one frequents rarely. In the rooms one places the ideas for remembrance as unique images to serve as mnemonic devices:

¹ YATES, Francis The Art of Memory. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966. p 1.

² CICERO, Marcus Tullius. De Oratore. London: Heinemann, 1942. ISBN 0434993484. p 351-4.

³ D'Assigny, 1699, p 71.

"We must contrive such a remarkable fancy of that thing that we intend to put there as may not easily be forgotten, and such a fancy as may be remarkable for Folly, Simplicity, Wisdom or Wonder, etc."¹

In relation to the fantastic memory D'Assigny offers some specific rules which elaborate upon his general instructions for memorising. He says that texts must be read several times and the imagination acquainted with the matter before "we assign to them any kind of images."² The mnemonic devices must be "adaptations" of "figures as are known to us", made "more suitable to the things to be preserved in our Memory".³ The figure must also be unique to the matter to be recalled, and used to remember only one matter at a time. D'Assigny recommends using images of people and animals.

"Such figures are to be contrived to mind us of the things as may excite the passions of the Soul, and the Affections as Sorrow, Wrath, Wonder or Compassion, etc, thereby the soul is more concerned in keeping in mind the things and Ideas that we desire to preserve."⁴

D'Assigny suggests that the mnemonic figures must "have a natural relation to the places" in which they are set, "as a miller grinding in his mill" or "the fish in the water".⁵

"We are to make use of such figures as are proper only for the things, but also for the places where we lay them up for our remembrance, and such as have a natural relation to the places; as a miller grinding in his mill, the fish in

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 74.

² Ibid. p 75.

³ Ibid. p 75.

⁴ Ibid, p 75-76.

⁵ Ibid, p 76.

the water, birds flying in the air, wild beasts in a forest, etc."¹

Similarly, they must not be too "contemptible" or "too high" as to be outside "ordinary Reach, Capacity and Familiar acquaintance".² To these images, D'Assigny adds animation.

"Now to such figures we must assign a convenient Action or motion, for that makes a greater Impression than such as are still and quiet, and the Imagination is more readily moved by a moving Object than by one without life and Motion."³

D'Assigny's mnemonic devices are constructed from the images of daily perception. He seeks to compose effective mnemonic devices from familiar and easily recalled images, used for their unique and distinctive association to the matter for memorising.

Once one has placed the mnemonic devices in their places, this internal topography must be "often recalled", deepening the "impression" made by the matter in the mind.⁴ Again, D'Assigny recommends that this repetition be done at night. He closes this chapter on the fantastic memory (the last chapter of his book) with the assurance that when begun in youth the initially difficult labours and pains of the art of memory will be forgotten in later subsequent ease, as the effect of the art's old familiar processes renders us by degrees more perfect.

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 75-76.

² Ibid. p 76.

³ Ibid, p 75-76.

⁴ Ibid, p 77.

Chapter II: The Mnemonic Tradition.

Though the "Art of Memory" originated in the rhetorical tradition of Ancient Greece it reached the pinnacle of its development during the European Renaissance. Today only traces of the art remain as fragments of efficiency training and in the instinctive practices of "memory men" such as S. (the subject of Alexander Luriya's psychological research).¹

The Greeks considered memory the seat of all knowledge. Before the invention of the printing press the memorising of information upheld the oral tradition. Such remembering remained vital to all sectors of society until books became readily available through the invention of the printing press. From then on education and wisdom were not as dependant upon the mnemonic tradition.

Our earliest record of the art of memory is dated at 400 B.C. It is a section of a fragment of Greek text known as the "Dialexis", allegedly written by a Sophist teacher.

"A great and beautiful invention is the memory, always useful both for learning and for life.

This is the first thing: if you pay attention (direct your mind), the judgement will better perceive the things going through it (the mind).

Secondly, repeat again what you hear; for by often hearing and saying the same things, what you have learned comes compete into your memory.

Thirdly, what you hear, place on what you know. For example, Chrisyppus is to be remembered; we place it on gold and horse. Another example: we place glow-worm on fire and shine. So much for names.

¹ LURIYA, Alexander Romanovich. The Mind of a Mnemonist. A Little Book about a Vast Memory. London: Jonathan Cape, 1969. ISBN 224615688.

For things (do) thus: for courage (place it) on Mars and Achilles; for metal-working, on Vulcan; for cowardice, on Epeus."¹

With convincing evidence, Francis Yates claims that the art of memory lies at the heart of ancient scolasticism. She shows that Aristotle was familiar with the practice and refers to it in several works, most extensively in "De Anima" in the section "De Memoria and Reminscentia".

Yates traces the inspirational source for the mnemonic revival in medieval Europe to three works from the Ancient Classical world. The central text was the anonymous "Ad Herrenium" (86-82 B.C.). Until modern times it was accredited to Cicero. This text augmented his influential work "De Oratore" (55 B.C.). The third work was that of the Roman Quintillian who wrote during the first century.² These three texts communicated the Classical rhetorical mnemonic practice to the fathers of Christian learning.

Yates demonstrates that it was Albert Magnus and Thomas Aquinas who played the major part in assuring the continuance of the art and its development into a theological tool. Magnus' main contribution to mnemonics was the explanation of memory through the theory of the four humours, through which he concluded that the "melancholic" temperament best guaranteed an effective memory. Aquinas applied the art to divinity. He developed personifications of the virtues and vices called "corporeal

¹ In the original Greek the words for memorising are placed with rhyming words. This is lost in translation. Yates, 1966, p 29-31.

² Ibid. Chapter II.

similitudes".¹ These mnemonic images encouraged the mind to maintain the Christian path to salvation.

In Renaissance Europe there erupted a plethora of mnemonic techniques which each displayed remarkable intricacies. Yates' great breakthrough was the identification of the classical art at the core of these hybrid forms. Simonides' practice underpins the Memory Theatre of Giulio Camillo, Ramon Lull's ladders of wisdom, Giordano Bruno's talismanic "shadows" and "seals", and Robert Fludd's theatrical mnemonics.² The complexities of each unique practice require careful consideration, but it is fair to summarise these diverse works as attempts to encapsulate all knowledge in a single memorised system. Most significantly these varied mnemonic developments were intrinsically linked to the *Hermetic tradition*.

During the Renaissance the art of memory merged with separate the Hermetic tradition whose roots also lay in a collection of ancient writings. It was this coupling of the mnemonic art with the un-orthodox Hermetic tradition which encouraged its demise. During the upsurge of Puritanical protestantism in the seventeenth century the art of memory disappeared along with the Hermetic practices with which it had become synonymous.

The Hermetic tradition was based upon the writings of an ancient Egyptian philosopher/priest/king known as "Hermes Trismegistus". The writings are collected in two parts: "Pimander" "On the Power and Wisdom of God"; and "Asclepius" "On

¹ Yates, 1966, p 96.

² Ibid. See Chapter VII, VIII, IX & XI, & XV.

the Divine Will". The author was considered a contemporary of Moses, and the wisest of all prophets. The texts were dated by Isaac Casaubon in 1614 and are actually Gnostic works by a variety of authors writing in the early centuries **after** Christ. The sources for the works are Hebrew, Greco-Roman and possibly fragments of Christian writings.

In 1460 the writings of Hermes Trismegistus were brought from Greece to Florence. They were carried by a Macedonian monk, and given by Cosimo (of the Council of Florence) to Marsilio Ficino. Ficino's translation began a great magico-religious tradition which eventually spawned the seeds of scientific methods in the work of Ramon Lull and Perre de la Ramie (Peter Ramus).¹ The texts guided the Renaissance magi's quest for the single, divine truth behind all existence. The magi strove to unlock nature's secrets and transform their soul, through the mystico-scientific arts, such as alchemy, hieroglyphics and sorcery. Yates believes that it was through the maturation of Hermetic ideals that Sir Francis Bacon, Rene Descartes and Leibniz at different times developed the crusade for a rational and scientific advancement of knowledge.²

A text of great importance to the Magi was the "Picatrix". This Arabic work mentions Hermes Trismegistus frequently and it was well known to Ficino. A Latin version of the "Picatrix" circulated widely in Renaissance Europe. It advises on "sympathetic" and "astral magic", that is, the creation of magic talismans for attracting cosmic powers. It details

¹ Yates, 1966, Chapter XVII.

² Ibid, p 368.

personifications for the twelve signs of the zodiac and the three deacons of each house. In the "Picatrix" one can observe the intimate conjunction of the art of memory and the Hermetic tradition, but Yates only briefly examines this intersection which I believe challenges our understanding of the *image*.

One might describe the composition of a visual image from a variety of perspectives, observing its function as a talisman, a mnemonic device or a poetic symbol, but I suggest that such varied terminology essentially refers to the same phenomenon. The use of different terms shows the different intentions, criteria and beliefs influencing the creation and use of the image. For example, the Hermetic art of memory elaborated the mnemonic device to create talismans in the mind. Yates also suggests that the image is a form of Aquinas' "corporeal similitudes" which people Giotto's frescoes in the Arena Capella in Padua.¹ In her early research, Yates often tentatively proposes that the iconography of preacher, painter and poet may interconnect. She suggests that by uncovering the history of mnemonic principles we become privy to a secret history which has influenced the development of visual imagery, including the performing arts. This proposition is central to her later book "Theatre of the World", which I will go on to examine.

Beyond the changes in theological, artistic and scholastic beliefs, the mnemonic function of a visual image remains a consistent factor. For example, analysis of archetypal imagery has replaced magical superstition, and whereas the magi believed in "divine power" which entered certain forms, today such "power"

¹ Yates, 1966, p 92.

is perceived as a more human matter. However, from both perspectives it can be understood that an *effective* image must be a *memorable* image. Beneath the distinctions of cultural and historical terminology, explanations and applications, there remains the *significant form*, that is a perceivable "image" which brings to mind matters for consideration.

Chapter III: Theatre of the World.

In the following pages I summarise the central thesis of "Theatre of the World" by Frances Yates, published in 1966. I select those points of most relevance to a consideration of the connections between mnemonic tradition and theatrical presentation.¹

Yates' work considers The Globe as a Neo-classical, Hermetic construction. This idea derives from her study of Robert Fludd's "Ars Memoria" (1618-19) which is part of his Hermetic microcosm/macrocosm study, the "Utriusque Cosmi Historia".² In his mnemonic system, Fludd uses places on a theatre stage as the repositories or *loci* for his mnemonic devices. Yates believes that these illustrations may show theatres contemporary to The Globe, if not The Globe itself. She bases this belief upon the dates of Fludd's work and the identification of several notable features common to Fludd's illustrations and established theories about The Globe's design.

Yates argument commences with an analysis of the publications of John Dee (b.1527) who translated the architectural works of the Roman Vitruvius. Dee was a scientist and Hermetic Magus. Informed by her knowledge of the illustrations of seventeenth century theatres in Fludd's book, she observes in Dee's work influences which she believes led directly to the design of The Globe.

Dee was in search of Holy knowledge;

¹ YATES, Frances Amelia. Theatre of the World. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1969. ISBN 0 7102 1326 3.

² FLUDD, Robert. Utriusque Cosmi Historia. John Theodore De Bry, Oppenheim, Germany, 1618-1619. cited in Yates, 1966.

"proceeding and ascending (as it were) "gradatum", from things visible to consider things invisible; from things bodily to conceive things spiritual; from things transitory and momentary, to meditate on things permanent; by things mortal (visible and invisible) to have some perseverance of immortality."¹

Yates describes Dee as part of late Hermeticism, moving;

"both in more extremely occult directions, and in more precisely scientific directions."²

At the heart of Vitruvian architecture there is a duality of practical and mystical theory. It marries tangible objective, physical discoveries with conjectural speculation about magical possibilities. Dee's translations described to the English the ancient Classical fascination with human dimensions as the basis of a theory of Divine Proportion.

In 1576 Richard Burbage built The Theatre, London's first purpose-built playhouse. Yates believes that Burbage's Theatre, forerunner to The Globe, may have been influenced by Dee's architectural works. She explains that Dee's publications formed the basis of Fludd's ideas, who had an extensive influence on his contemporaries, among them Richard Burbage. Yates focuses attention on Fludd's theatrical background and his earnest study of music. Fludd was versed in the Vitruvian theory of music, which describes heavenly and earthly harmony as corresponding proportion in song and the spacing of the stars. This idea of celestial proportions and acoustics underpins the physical design of both neo-classical churches and theatres.

Yates proposes that Dee and Fludd's works are evidence of a Vitruvian-based knowledge which developed practical

¹ Yates, 1969, p 14.

² Ibid, p 17.

applications in Elizabethan/Jacobean England and can be most clearly observed in seventeenth century theatrical architecture. Drawing upon a variety of further proofs, Yates convincingly demonstrates that the neo-classical works of Dee and Fludd were well known in Shakespearean England. Thus one is led to her theses;

"The wooden public theatre of the Elizabethan and Jacobean age represents an adaptation of the ancient theatre within the sphere of influence of the Dee movement."¹

Yates is interested to consider the implications of The Globe's design for the performances upon its stage. The neo-classical influences she identifies in its architecture reveals a theatre built in accordance with Classical rules of acoustics and Divine proportion. She sees The Globe as a space designed expressly for the performer's benefit;

"The Shakespearean type of theatre was a predominantly aural theatre, suited to be the vehicle of a great poetic drama, to be a vast sounding box in which nothing interrupted the resonance of the words spoken on the stage from reaching every part of the theatre."²

Thus Yates presents the Globe as a renaissance version of a classical theatre;

"It preserved the most important aspects of the ancient theatre, its cosmic and therefore religious implications, its acoustic properties and emphasis on the voice, its enhancement of poetry and the spoken words as the main means of communication between actors and audience."³

¹ Yates, 1969, p 91.

² Ibid, p 124.

³ Yates, 1966, p 129.

Yates offers the reader a consideration of The Globe as a *significant space*. She describes a building which was part of the Renaissance exploration of the relations between the human individual and the cosmic forces as revealed in the tangible forms of physical and sonic proportion. However, Yates book does not fully pursue the implications of the theatrical performance in such a space. She tentatively implies that The Globe provided a religious setting for the performance of Shakespeare's dramas. Hesitantly, Yates wonders if the "cosmic allusions" and "liturgical elements" which people identify in Shakespeare's drama may be given more credence in the light of her theory about the Globes architectural significance.¹ In her "Theatre of the World" Yates implies something very striking; that together the architecture of The Globe and the dramatic action of Shakespeare's plays created a theatre which explored metaphysical ideas through performance, via the relations of Divine proportion. She comprehensively describes;

"A theatre, the plan of which expressed in simple geometrical symbolism the proportions of the cosmos and of man, the world music and human music, is surely one which would have been a worthy vehicle for the genius of Shakespeare. It is always in terms of music that he thinks of mans destiny in its cosmic setting. That the plan itself of his theatre might have been, in this profound sense musical, is surely an illuminating thought. For the first time we can begin to envisage a theatre strong enough to contain this vast Renaissance imagination."²

¹ Yates, 1966, p 189.

² Ibid, pp 134-135.

Chapter IV: Memory and Memoria.

When making an analysis of dramatic performance the memory is a central consideration, as it both provides the performer's personal memories which are essential for the understanding of a role, and preserves the constructed score of the performance. Memory itself is vital to personal identity. If it did not exist one would be trapped in each isolated moment and all experience would be perpetually new allowing nothing to be known. Without memory there could be no continuum to allow a perception of the self.

"The true self, that is, the self which is continuous throughout life, is revealed only at the moment of experiencing two fragments of time together, the present with the past."¹

However, the memory can be a barrier to one's participation in the present moment. Its creation of habitual patterns of attention can enslave one's perception to consolidating the past, replacing growth and development with the calcification of a fixed identity. One's gravitation to what is familiar and known can become a confinement in stale perceptions and stagnant experience. The performer requires an effective mnemonic practice which enriches experiences and perceptions, for the performer's creativity is dependant upon the ability to allow the development of new perspectives. Only a *challenging* performance can better our understanding of human experience.

D'Assigny defines memory thus;

"Divers Names and Descriptions are given to it, but all may be reduced to this one definition, That it is that Faculty of the Soul, appointed by our Wise

¹ WARNOCK, Mary. Memory. London: Faber, 1987. ISBN 0571147836. p 100.

Creator to receive, retain and preserve the several Ideas conveyed to it by the Inlets of the Understanding, whether intellectual or sensitive."¹

In his second chapter, he discusses the "motions" of the memory.

He first describes the initial process of memory;

"First the Motion of the Spirits, which convey the Species or Ideas from the thinking faculty to that of memory."²

The subsequent motion is the creation of a memory;

"Secondly the formation or Reception of these Ideas, and the fixing or imprinting of them in the Fancy."³

Finally, recurrence and reflection consolidates the memory;

"That Action by which the thinking Faculty reviews what is treasured up in Memory, which indeed is the very act of Memory."⁴

In order to help discuss mnemonic practices I would like to differentiate between the *memory* and *memoria*. Memory is the process which receives and processes one's experiences. The memory process creates *memoria*, which is the dimension of the individual's identity and behaviour which result from this creation of memories.

The latin word "*memoria*" denotes "the period covered by one's recollection".⁵ *Memoria* retains the places one has visited, events that have occurred and communications one has made. It is a record of one's mental and physical encounters and exchanges. *Memoria* also retains the happenings of internal reality: dreams,

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 16.

² Ibid, p 19.

³ Ibid. p 19.

⁴ Ibid. p 19.

⁵ Oxford Latin Dictionary.

imagination and bodily sensations. I will refer to all of this memory material as objects of sense-perception.

It is important to note that Memoria interweaves the intellectual and sensitive, the inner and the outer. A.A. Smirnov's research reached this conclusion;

"[The investigations] point to the indissoluble unity of two types of memory, to the unity of the sensory (that pertaining to objects, the graphic, the concrete) and the verbal-logical and abstract in memorization and reproduction."¹

R.D. Laing stridently rejects terminology which dissects the individual and removes the multiplicities of context from analysis of experience;

"The words of current technical vocabulary ... refer to falsely substantialized aspects of this isolated entity. Such words are: mind and body, psyche and soma, psychological and physical, personality, the self, the organism. All these terms are abstracta."²

Laing emphasises the individual as a being in a continuum of interaction between inner reality and outer reality. In the light of this perspective it is possible to consider the memory as a process of the mind with a physical dimension.

D'Assigny links the body and the memory. In his description of human physiology emotion and thoughts are connected to the body.

".. our wise Creator has appointed the several distinct parts where the Spirit is to move and act , to produce the differing Actions of life... The Heart is the Seat of Wisdom, the Lights are employed in Speaking, the Gaul moves us to Anger, the spleen

¹ SMIRNOV, A.A. Problems of Psychology. New York: Plenum Press, 1973. ISBN 720834045.

² LAING, R.D. The Divided Self. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965. b6509635. p 19.

induces to Laughter, and the Liver to an amorous temper."¹

The memory receives the Spirit ascending from the body;

"[When] the Passage is open and wide, by which the spirits ascend up to it with ease, and without any obstruction, such men are quick of Apprehension, and their Memory is the more happy, and more susceptible to the Ideas."²

D'Assigny places the memory at the centre of the;

"near conjunction of the Soul and Body."³

Though D'Assigny's ideas clearly reflect his lack of knowledge about the functioning of the brain, he raises an interesting point. Though the mind's consciousness is a process seated in the brain it pervades throughout the body and gives rise to physical sensation. The individual is a conscious mind and body, and the mind orders a self which cannot exist without the body. I suggest that memory is a process of the mind and body, and that this unity is important in the analysis of memory.

For many thinkers, the medium of the memory's retention has been difficult to discuss. Edward De Bono describes the memory thus;

"A memory is what is left behind when something happens and does not completely unhappen."⁴

In Memoria what has happened may happen again. However it is clear that never does anything actually enter our mind. Thus Saint Augustine says;

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 20-21.

² Ibid. p 21.

³ Ibid. p 15.

⁴ BONO, Edward De. The Mechanism of the Mind. London: Jonathan Cape, 1969, ISBN 224617095, p 41.

"The objects themselves do not enter, but the images of the perceived objects are available to the thought recalling them."¹

It can be argued that Memoria is not just pictorial and its traces of past happenings retain a multi-dimensional form.² Plato's first suggestion was that memory is like a wax tablet that receives imprints. Aristotle adopted and refined this model.

"...we must grasp in general and in connection with perception as a whole, that the sense is the recipient of the perceived forms without their matter, as the wax takes the sign from the ring without iron and gold - it takes, that is, the gold or bronze sign, but not as gold or bronze."³

However, the wax tablet lacks Memoria's mutability. In Memoria objects of sense-perception do not retain their original form, thus Plato abandoned the wax tablet in favour of an aviary, wherein memories are birds which fly freely in ever changing flocks. De Bono uses an array of models which combine to describe the memory thus; in the dark, a small pool of light moves across "a large piece of paper with writing on it." De Bono explains:

"How the pool of light comes to move across the paper of its own accord without there being any outside source of light or hand to guide it... How the words are not read but read themselves."⁴

Most importantly, De Bono's suggests that;

"the brain is a good computer simply because it is a bad memory."⁵

¹ AUGUSTINE, Saint. Confessions. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. ISBN 0192817795. Book 10 Verse 8.13. p 186.

² De Bono, 1969, p 41.

³ ARISTOTLE. Memory. London: Duckworth, 1972. ISBN 071560642. p 187.

⁴ De Bono, 1969, p 10.

⁵ Ibid. p 10.

It is the memory's selectivity of material and retention which is the basis of productive thought processes. The memory orders perception by guiding attention. The mind learns to select from perception, according to memories. De Bono gives an example. At a road junction;

"attention settles on the traffic lights as being the important thing so everything else is ignored."¹

De Bono asks;

"How many people who drive through that area every day know that on top of every light in Marylebone is a metal tongue of flame, of the variety used in depictions of souls in purgatory."²

Drivers notice the red light and not the metal flames because the memory encourages a "limited attention span" which selects the important elements from one's perception. Such limitation of attention is vital;

"Selection means preference and choice instead of total acceptance of all offered".³

The memory also allows continuity. Patterns of attention maintain the mind's focus and prevent confusion in floods of perception. However, the patterns of attention maintained by the memory can eclipse areas of perception. The memory focuses attention but it may also fixate it.

Repetition of an activity allows it to become increasingly independent of conscious guidance. For example, the traffic light demands attention and the driver learns to watch and respond to

¹ De Bono, 1969, p 92.

² Ibid. p 92.

³ Ibid. p 92.

its changing colours. Once this skill of attention and reaction is acquired it happens with increasing ease.

"Something that happens makes it easier for that thing to happen again."¹

De Bono provides a model for this process. Columns of children's building blocks are standing on a board. The board is tilted and the first columns to fall are made a brick taller. The process is repeated. The tall columns topple earlier and earlier. This makes it less and less likely that the smaller columns will ever fall.² De Bono's model describes the patterning of activity within the brain which is the memory's effect upon attention. The autonomy of the memory's processes is both the enemy and ally of creative performance.

The process of memory may develop an intricate or superficial perception of the object, according to the quality of attention which is applied. For example, one's perception of a traffic light may be fragmented into a selection of useful isolated features, whereas a loved-one's face might acquire ever greater complexity and detail. Every object of sense-perception must confront Memoria. Whether it is, or whether it is not a part of Memoria influences the perception process. Experience becomes dominated by what one might term *significant forms* - that is, those objects of sense-perception which have acquired increased significance through Memoria. Through a history of encounters an object acquires a specific personal "meaning", and therefore it is perceived differently by each individual. Wordsworth

¹ De Bono, 1969, p 44.

² Ibid. p 42.

experienced "never ending dreams" that "magically" influenced perception. Mary Warnock believes this is Memoria's effect;

"The "never ending dreams" are those extra images whose immediate stimulus was present sense-perception, but which came from memory, to enrich the present experience."²

The performer needs "metamnemonic" awareness - a working knowledge of the memory's strengths and weaknesses. De Bono describes the way in which the memory's processes are conditioned and patterned as a consequence of one's experiences. This process is beyond conscious control. Consequently a large proportion of one's perception, and the creation of Memoria, becomes increasingly patterned by the memory's guidance. With *metamnemonic awareness* the performer or orator can understand these patterns and allow them to maintain skills and proficiency in daily life and performance, without allowing them to become barriers to creativity.

I began this chapter by saying that the performer's creativity is dependant upon the ability to allow the development of new perspectives. I believe that this development is possible with metamnemonic awareness and a fundamental desire to grow. To reach new perspectives the performer's experience's must repeatedly challenge the habitual aspects of behaviour and perception which arise from the processes of the memory. The performer's progressive evolution can be achieved through a programme of personal research. Grotowski's "Mountain Project" (1975-78) stands as a remarkable example of such research action.

² Warnock, 1980, p 83.

This paratheatrical event took participants through vigorous activities in stimulating terrain;

"What it was hoped was happening to the participant was not an artificial recreation of innocent primitive experience, but a form of "de-conditioning" of the individual's response - to the environment , and to the other participants. To have a de-conditioned response means to react to something in a manner not conditioned by past experience or future conjecture - in other words to be fully in the present and fully spontaneous. This is the true meaning of "meeting with the forest as if for the first time"."¹

In a process of "de-conditioning" the performer's attention can be freed from habitual patterns and the individual is opened to new perceptions. This fresh experience can motivate unique performance action whose presentation may expand the audience's Memoria by questioning patterns of perception. Research that challenges the confines of Memoria is a central aspect of methodological performance practice.

By exploring the foundations of perception and Memoria a methodological performer gains access to creative *potential space*. Primarily this term describes the psychological territory of infant play, where the division between inner reality and outer reality is first comprehended. This learning process modifies the infant's sense of omnipotence to permit perception of objective reality. According to D. Winnicott dramatic art is a development of this process;

"The place where cultural experience is located is in the *potential space* between the individual and the environment (originally the object). The same can be

¹ KUMIEGA, Jennifer. The Theatre of Grotowski. London: Methuen, 1987. ISBN 0413580407 p 195.

said of playing. Cultural experience begins with creative living first manifest in play."¹

To summarise the memory and memoria create a model of inner and outer reality which allows self-consciousness and the acquisition of knowledge. The memory is the basis of human identity. The performer's research must constantly step beyond the limits of personal Memoria and the confines of expectation in order to re-examine;

"the potential space between the subjective object and the object objectively perceived."²

¹ WINNICOTT, D. Playing and Reality. London: Tavistock, 1971. ISBN 0422737402. p 118.

² Ibid, p 118.

Section II

Chapter V: The Links between "The Art of Memory" and the Art of Performance.

i) Physiological Process.

The principles underlying D'Assigny's art of memory are distinctly relevant to performance processes. He demonstrates an understanding of the physiological integrity of the individual. His belief in the soul declares that the memory and mind are not divorced from the body, and therefore physical health, emotional temperament and environmental circumstances are linked with memorising. The integration of the mental and physical self is the basis of D'Assigny's art and it is the foundation of much contemporary performance training.

From a physiological approach to the memory, there emerges the possibility of reflexive recollection. D'Assigny speaks of mnemonic practices which depend upon releasing rather than consciously retrieving what is learnt.

"And we find of experience that verses and other discourse that we have more often spoken, when once we begin to deliver them, they drop from us insensibly, and as a Man that is used to run all a career, or down a Hill, one cannot stop till we come to an end."¹

A dramatic performance seeks to achieve a fluent delivery of the text but with a presence of mind in the process of recollection that gives full regard to each word. Out of context, the above reference to "insensible" delivery seems to uphold an opposite ideal, but considering D'Assigny's mnemonic system as a whole he

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, pp 59-60.

clearly recommends undivided "attention" and undiluted "intention" at all times.

D'Assigny also gives advice about the substance of a matter for memorising. He recommends that the matter of an oration must challenge the orator, which is equally true of a performance. Similarly, a dramatic text might not possess an "everyday" logic, but it must have the "method" or "convenient order" which D'Assigny demands of a text. For example, Beckett's "Not I" is an unusual matter but it has an orderly composition.¹

D'Assigny discusses the mnemonic importance of "circumstances". In a drama the matter for consideration is presented as a scenario of circumstances and events. A playwright composes circumstances in order to assure that the work has an effect upon performer and audience, and that the events command full attention and are remembered. The performer's score is structured to generate action from the drama's series of circumstances.

D'Assigny's understanding of the term "circumstances" is hard to pinpoint. At times it refers to the actual context of an actual matter - that is, the "Time, place, Persons, Causes..." of "things of importance".² At other times it refers to an imaginary scenario created about an idea. However, considering the fantastic memory demonstrates D'Assigny's concern for circumstances (actual or imaginary) as an intrinsic element of memory and mnemonic practice.

¹ BECKETT, Samuel. The Complete Dramatic Works. London: Faber and Faber, 1990. ISBN 057114486.

² D'Assigny, 1699, p 69.

D'Assigny describes mnemonic skills based upon association within memory. I believe this is related to circumstance and memory. Confusingly, the word "association" has two meanings in memory processes.

"Memory is conceived to be a large and permanent collection of nodes, which become complexly and increasingly inter-associated and inter-related through learning."¹

This patterning is De Bono's "not completely unhappened" part of experience. Association is a neurological process which retains a perception in the memory. "Association" can also be used to refer to the contextual element of memory formation, whereas objects of sense-perception are transferred from short-term memory into long-term memory. This transfer brings extra information;

"Most new associative structures will include as a component the context in short term store."²

The context creates peculiar and indeterminate links in Memoria. Objects of sense-perception acquire particular connections in the mind which may have no rational basis.

The happenings of inner reality and the coincidence of recollection and perception may also impinge on the formation of memories. Similarity, opposition and coincidence cross-reference Memoria and perception in ever more complex patterns. D'Assigny shows a comprehension of contextual circumstances and the subsequent workings of association within the memory, and it is

¹ SEAMON, John. G. ed. Human Memory. Contemporary Readings. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980. ISBN 0195027388. p 25.

² Ibid. p 27.

this understanding which forms the central link between his fantastic memory and performance processes.

ii) Notational and Non-notational Emblems.

"Emblem reduceth conceits intellectual to images sensible, which strikes the memory more."

Francis Bacon.¹

I will consider how the mnemonic and dramatic processes show two differing understandings of the nature and value of the emblem. In the practise of D'Assigny's "fantastic memory" specially created images are "assigned" to the "things we design to remember"; that is, each mnemonic device is a codified form with a precise meaning. D'Assigny's mnemonic devices are extrinsic notations that aid recollection of the matter while remaining distinct from it. The matter is defined before the devices are created, and therefore the latter remain disposable. D'Assigny's mnemonic devices are a means to recall ideas that have been first formulated in words, and as such they serve as a "depository" for understandings which are tagged to the image.

In this respect D'Assigny's understanding of the significance of an emblematic form differs greatly from that which guides the creation of a dramatic performance. The dramatic action which is stimulated and informed by the playwright's textual imagery does not use a mnemonic device of D'Assigny's kind, as the image is not a notation for a separate work with an independent significance. By considering the emblematic sources and procedures which Shakespeare uses in "Macbeth", I shall consider the difference between the notational mnemonic device of D'Assigny and the poetic imagery of a text which is integrated within a dramatic performance.

¹ BACON, Francis. The Advancement of Learning. London: Dent, 1973. ISBN 046011716X. p 136.

In "Macbeth" Shakespeare draws on the tradition of the emblem , particularly as recorded in De Whitney's "A Choice of Emblemes" which was published in 1586.¹ This is a book of symbolic illustrations and explanations which De Whitney selected from earlier publications. The emblems are moral allegories which combine Classical and Biblical wisdom. The first emblem Shakespeare borrows is De Whitney's image of a snake coiled about the stem of a flowering strawberry plant.² Above it is the Latin motto reading

Latet angus in herba
(The snake is in the grass)

Beneath the image is an English text warning of false appearances and equivocation;

"With pleasing speech they promise, and protest, When
hateful hearts lie hid within their breast."³

Shakespeare refers to the emblem directly when Lady Macbeth says;

"Look like th' innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't."⁴

Throughout the play Shakespeare makes direct and oblique references to the snake emblem and its accompanying text.⁵

The second of De Whitney's emblems employed by Shakespeare is referred to by Macbeth;

"If charnel houses and our graves must send
Those that we bury, back, our monuments

¹ WHITNEY, George de Choice of Emblemes. A facsimile Reprint. London; Lovell Revve, 1866.

² Ibid, p 24.

³ Ibid, p 24.

⁴ SHAKESPEARE, William. MUIR, Kenneth, ed. Macbeth. London: Routledge, 1988. ISBN 0415026962 1.5 l 656.

⁵ Ibid, 5.8 l 18.

Shall be the maws of kites."¹

De Whitney's emblem shows two kites; a female looks on from the rocks while a male vomits a knotted snake which he had swallowed whole.² The explanation gives the kites' dialogue. The male cries;

"My bowels lo, alas do waste away."

The female replies;

"Why dost thou make thy moan,
This loss thou hast is nothing of thy own."

De Whitney explains the emblem via a proverb;

"what goods ill got, away as ill will go."

De Whitney's moral emblems, like D'Assigny's mnemonic devices, are a form of notation; they prompt the memory to recall a matter which is "tagged" to the image. Though Shakespeare alludes to this procedure through his textual references, one must note that the creation of a dramatic performance occurs on a different level to this notational process. Admittedly the textual imagery and the performer's action combine to create forms which are comparable with other emblematic compositions, however, the important difference is that in order to be effective, the dramatic action must have a significance in its own right. Its ability to convey meaning must rely upon no authority other than the audience's own Memoria, as guided by the careful composition of the performance.

One can summarise the essential agreements and differences between D'Assigny's mnemonics and the dramatic performance. The

¹ Macbeth, 3.4 l 70.

² Whitney, 1866, p 170.

former's art of memory culminates in placing ideas within the memory through adaptations of actual experiences. Like the drama it composes emblems from the familiar temporal/spatial experience of daily life. The cogitation of abstract information is translated into the recollection of tangible objects of sense-perception: places and images. The drama is a similar process, but the absence of "translation" is the important difference, since in the drama the image is integrated with the thought processes of the role. Abstract information in the art of memory is analogous to the concrete experience of the drama. I suggest that in the creation of a drama, the process of composition is the also the process of cogitation.

iii) A subjective and non-intellectual basis for selection of emblems.

The creation of dramatic emblems and the development of their meanings is dependent upon dominantly intuitive processes. The drama is a collaborative *imaginative* process instigated by the playwright and concluded by the audience. The emblems within a drama are created by engaging the unique resources of the individual imagination of both the audience and the performers. Gilbert Ryle believes that imagination is a highly valid mode of inquiry which opens new ground for thought.

"It is the innovation, inventing, exploring, adventuring, risk-taking if you like, creative, vanguard or scout patrol of thinking."¹

Ryle's suggestion permits a new perspective when considering the creation of significance in a dramatic composition. For example, one can understand the verbal metaphor as a means of perception, and not merely an ornament to meaning. Shakespeare's distinct writing frustrates habitual linguistic patterns and perceptual expectations, and revitalises the expressive and cognitive power of the word. Imagination such as this advances the percepts by which we encounter the world and thus it develops the concepts by which we live.

The performance is more profoundly *symbolic* than a notational emblem, because the significance of the forms within a drama is primarily dependant upon individual imagination. Suzanne Langer identifies the pioneering imaginative value of a symbol.

¹ RYLE, Gilbert. On Thinking. London, Basil Blackwell, 1979. ISBN 0631109412 p 63.

"The great cognitive value of symbols is that they may present ideas transcending the interpretant's past experience."¹

She goes on to suggest that the artist's ability is to "recognise" a form's potential significance and present it in a way which brings this potential to the attention of others. Shakespeare's text is created from forms of words and actions which excited his imagination and demonstrated a potential significance. In turn, this text excites the performer, and subsequently the audience is excited by this presentation. The chain is complete when the audience's response reaches the performer and the performer becomes fully aware of the significance of the moment's action. Throughout this chain of excitement, the process depends upon the individual's ability to experience a form's significance.

D'Assigny recommends the selection of mnemonic devices according to *subjective* criteria;

"Now the figures that we must there place, ought to provoke to Pity, Wonder, Laughter or Scorn, that it may make a deeper Impression in our Fancy."

"Such figures are to be contrived to mind us of the things as may excite the passions of the Soul, and the Affections as Sorrow, Wrath, wonder or compassion, etc, thereby the soul is more concern'd in keeping in mind the things and Ideas that we desire to preserve."²

Suzanne Langer suggests that the artist uses a similar process:

"He is an artist not so much because of his own feelings, as by virtue of his intuitive recognition of

¹ LANGER, Susanne K. Feeling and Form. A Theory of Art Developed from Philosophy in a New Key. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953. ISBN 0710017154. p 390.

² D'Assigny, 1699, p 74 & 76.

forms symbolic of feeling, and his tendency to project emotive knowledge with such objective forms."¹

This would suggest that the playwright, the performer and the mnemonist all create, select and organise emblems according to the deeply subjective criteria of the imagination. Indeed, the effectiveness of both mnemonic practice and dramatic composition is dependant upon this working principle. However, in D'Assigny's practice the emblem is tagged with a precise piece of information, and the mnemonic device is therefore a private emblem in the orator; that is, it solely operates within the inner reality of personal Memoria and need not adhere to any body of shared perceptions. Conversely, a drama must communicate with the inner reality of many people. This is accomplished in Western drama through the exploration and defining of the "local retention" of objects of sense-perception.² That is, it examines the memories and ideas which are intrinsically or associatively linked to those objects of sense-perception which are presented in the performance. This process must surpass the confines of personal significance, and though operating within the cultural climate, in Western theatre there are no precise codes and conventions upon which to rely.

Langer focuses upon the artist's ability to perceive the potential significance of a form (be it verbal, musical, or visual). When creating the performance score the performer must recognise the potential significance of actions which are stimulated by the text. This is very different from attempting

¹ Langer, 1953, p 32.

² For a full discussion of "local retention" see Chapter VII.

to illustrate the meaning of the drama through action. The action does not need to explain the drama, and the intellect may work as a guiding rather than contriving energy. A performance which is composed to demonstrate an intellectual understanding of a drama lacks the margin for exploration wherein illuminating discoveries can be made. A methodological approach to performance allows the performer's playing of the text and the action stimulated therein to be the basis of the performance. The performer's sincerity and ability to be present in the action may be damaged if one separates the performing of the drama from understanding the drama, and the performance is composed from a purely intellectual basis.

iv) The selective constitution of the emblem.

D'Assigny understands that habits acquired in our perception of the outer world influence the processes of the memory. Those mnemonic devices which are in concordance with such habits can be most effectively absorbed and remembered. Thus D'Assigny's fantastic memory imitates our daily spatial/temporal experience, as does the drama, which of all the arts most fully resembles the actual physical form of human experiences.

Following the habits and processes of perception the memory behaves *selectively*, for without filtering perception the mind could not contain or comprehend the immensity of experience. Accordingly D'Assigny's creation of mnemonic devices works with this habit. For example, an image of a fish in water can be an effective mnemonic device without being a perfect replica of an actual fish since it need only contain a selection of elements. I suggest that it is also through the working of these habits that Langer's artist "discovers" significant forms. For the mnemonist, the individual patterning of normal selectivity guides the creation of mnemonic devices. For the artist, this human capacity is at the core of the ability to recognise significant forms.

When preparing the score, the performer's selectivity is employed to identify in the text circumstances and action which create a performance that effectively realises the matter of the text. As in the case of D'Assigny's fish, the circumstances of the performance need not necessarily be a total and literal realisation of the drama's events. By selecting and realising the essential components of the drama, the performer's action arises

in circumstances focused upon precise matters. These circumstances subsequently generate action whose selective foundation ensures that the performer's action is focused. The conjunction of focused circumstances and action heightens the performance's potential to communicate with the audience, as when observing the drama the individual's selective habits are further guided by the presentation's organised form. The selective processes that focus the performer's work creates a temporal/spatial realisation of the text which guides the audience towards the perception of significant forms.

v) The ability of the dramatic text to define emblems.

The durability of "Macbeth" is a consequence of the inherent functioning of the significant forms in promoting the performer's processes. The form of the text specifically assists the creation and recollection of the scored dramatic role.¹ All that is needed to perceive the work lies within the work. Whereas D'Assigny's devices preserve a matter in code, Shakespeare's text generates many ideas though intrinsically functioning significant forms. The very absence of a dominant conventional code allows "Macbeth" to subsist in an effectively communicative form.

"Macbeth" must be properly described as an ever increasing class of performances, instigated by Shakespeare's text. Each performance is unique, and yet each is "Macbeth". In short, Shakespeare's text creates many dramas. Therefore, the dramatic text is a form with potential for significance, not a single significance.

"We must not ask ourselves whether [the drama] can define thought but whether it makes us think".²

The text of "Macbeth" is a form with specific images, but its significance is multiple, since the work's effect is personal and not general or uniform. The detailed image stimulates a response evoking reactions and associations within personal Memoria. The drama's ultimate significance is mediated in the audience's response.

¹ For a full discussion of the performer's score of actions see Chapter VI.

² ARTAUD, Antonin. Collected Works Vol 4. London: Clad, 1974. ISBN 0714506222 p 52.

The dramatic performance invests forms with developing significance through the performer's responses. In "Macbeth" the hand develops a central significance. This is done primarily through the focus of deeds and discourse on the hand and also the text's appeals to shared experience of hands in daily life with their inherent symbolism. (Shakespeare also uses Biblical allusions which had clear relevance to his audiences). It is important to note that the hand's significance is established within the drama, in the present moment of performance. It is not a conventional theatrical sign or a private device, it is a specific significant form of "Macbeth".

Shakespeare's dramatic text guides the audience to realise the significance of the dramatic action. Keir Elam contrasts this process with Oriental drama, which is an example of highly conventional theatre, in which codes define the form's significance.

"...the semantic units are so strictly predetermined that the denotation-connotation distinction virtually disappears: all meanings are primary and more or less explicit. In the West, ... significations of any particular element are less tightly constrained, and will even vary from spectator to spectator..."¹

The text adds implications to the performer's actions. It stimulates individual Memoria. Allusion is made to factors of remote time and space. The present action acquires specific local retention, and thus the performer's deeds accrue a particular dramatic significance. In this way Shakespeare's poetic imagery particularly invests the performance actions with metaphysical significance, through reference to the core of human experience.

¹ ELAM, Keir. The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama. London: Methuen, 1980. ISBN 0416720501. p 116.

"...Now over the one half-world
Nature seems dead."¹

Here Macbeth compares sleep and the night with death. It is an image that appeals to common experience. When one is about to drift from consciousness into sleep, many of us ask: "What is sleep ? Where am I going?". The poetic image in this quotation stimulates individual Memoria, by referring to a common human experience; that is, the loss and regaining of consciousness, sleep and waking. In sleep one can imagine that something of death is experienced.

The dramatic text has the ability to suggest experiences of sense-perception which inform one's perception of the actual present moment; that is, the textual imagery refers to objects and phenomena which are not actually present. One might say that the text creates a *virtual* presence. Though the text may refer to phenomena and objects which are remote from the outer reality of an actual moment, one cannot wholly say that they are absent. When a performance is successful, the perceptions arising from the inner experience stimulated by the text appear to be indistinguishable from perceptions of the actual stage action. Phenomena and objects which are remote from the actual moment are made present via the text in a virtuality, which is part present perception and part Memoria.

For example, in the quotation cited above, Macbeth refers to a location -"the one-half world" - and an event -"Nature seems dead". Clearly the area of the stage is less than half the world, and Nature's death is not an actual event. The text refers to

¹ Macbeth, 2.1 l 49-50.

broader experiences of reality and imagination which the audience may recall. Shakespeare's textual imagery invests the performer's actions with meaning by stimulating both the audience's and the performer's memory. Thus absent things are present during the performance via the engagement of Memoria. One can see that the drama is created from a compound of the performer's actual action and the text's virtual life.

vi) The necessary and accessible emblem.

To summarise, dramatic presentation demands that the forms created by the performer be made significant to the spectator;

"formulating a sort of invitation to the spectator, ideograms sounds and gestures which evoke associations in the psyche of the audience."¹

The score (like the text) must operate through the shared local retention of objects of sense-perception, or establish significance by investiture in the present moment of the performance of the work. For the performer the task is the embodiment of the drama, in order to allow the audience to experience it. Potential and interest are the watchwords of dramatic composition.

The drama requires forms with appropriate significance to serve as mnemonic devices to be shared. The playwright, like Langer's artist, must select forms in which he recognises potential significance - that is, objects of sense-perception which present thoughts and sensations that surpass the habitual patterns of daily experience. The playwright consequently structures the text from elements which promote understanding, and the playwright's meaning is in the drama's form.

The drama is not a notation of another matter, it is the matter itself. "Macbeth" is not a depository for understandings which exist without the work, which is the case with D'Assigny, and unlike D'Assigny's emblems the significance of the composition's forms are not detachable tags. Their significance is perceivable only in the specific sensible form itself. In

¹ GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. Towards a Poor Theatre. London: Methuen, 1975. ISBN 0413349101. pp 38-39.

other words the drama is symbolic not notational. The work's forms are selected for their expression of the unexpressed, not as an elaboration of knowledge by means of an entertaining code.

D'Assigny's practice enables the orator to convert the matter of an oration into evocative mnemonic devices which aid recollection and understanding of the text. I suggest that Shakespeare provides such mnemonic devices for the performer in the poetic images of his writing. Unlike D'Assigny's orator, the performer need not convert the text, but must enter the organised Memoria conveyed in the playwright's text. It is receptive process which must thus guide the realisation of a score of actions that will allow the audience to receive Shakespeare's propositions. Whereas the matter of an oration is converted into a poem of images through D'Assigny's practice, the Shakespeare offers his matter as a ready composed scheme for Memoria.

Chapter VI: Action.

"Tragedy, then, is an imitation of some action that is important, entire and of a proper magnitude - by language, embellished and rendered pleasurable, but by different parts - in the way, not of narration, but of action - effecting through pity and terror the correction and refinement of such passions."

Aristotle.¹

"An ordinary human action is a combination of intention and physical movement. But the combination is not a simple additive one. The movement is guided by the intention, which may not be, and often is not, distinguishable as a separate event from the movement guided."

Stuart Hampshire.²

In comparing D'Assigny's fantastic memory and dramatic performance I am particularly interested in the use of a virtual journey in a virtual space. D'Assigny notates his text as objects of imaginary sense-perception which are memorised in a spatial-temporal process, and I believe this relates closely to performance preparation which also uses a spatial-temporal mnemonic process to integrate the text with a sequence of physical actions. However, the point of divergence is the performer's use of *action*. I suggest that the crux of the performer's dramatic process is the uniting of physical actions with the metaphysical propositions conveyed by the text. Whereas action may aid an oration, it is not the basis for the delivery of the text which is essentially narrated. To be succinct, oration is a heightened form of speech, whereas dramatic

¹ ARISTOTLE. Poetics. London: Dent, 1934. II.I. p 14.

² HAMPSHIRE, Stuart. Thought and Action. London: Chatto & Windus, 1982. ISBN 0701126043.

performance is a process of action. Oration tells while performance shows.

It is important to note that this enquiry into the practical relevance of D'Assigny's mnemonic practice was informed by ideas in contemporary performance methodology, whose physiological basis places action at the core of dramatic performance. Action is of prime importance to the teachings of Meyerhold, Stanislavski, Brecht, and Grotowski. Working under such principles, the rehearsal exploration of text via action facilitates the exploration of the self in relation to the dramatic work. Through action the performer encounters the text with the totality of mind and body and the digestion of the text occurs. I suggest that the performer's mnemonic task is the recollection of a precise sequence of actions whose synthesis of intention and movement, that Hampshire describes above, enables the performer to articulate a dramatic role.

In this chapter I will describe the centrality of action in my understanding of methodological performance practice, and I will also begin to consider how this approach to creating a performance allows one to re-examine the matter of significance in form. The philosopher Clive Bell first used the term *significant form* in an attempt to describe the common factors in diverse artistic works;¹

"Only one answer seems possible - significant form. In each, lines and colours combine in a particular way, certain forms and relations to forms, stir our aesthetic emotions. These relations and combinations of lines and colours, these aesthetically moving forms, I call

¹ BELL, Clive Art. London; Chaton and Windus, 1914.

"Significant Form"; and "Significant Form" is one quality common to all works of visual art."¹

Suzanne Langer uses Bell's term as a means to also describe the meaningful quality of the performance arts. I suggest that a dramatic action is a significant form, but the interesting matter is the way in which a performer's actions become formally precise and potentially significant, while retaining the organic integrity of an individual's behaviour.

The performer's action must achieve great clarity and focus in order to guide the audience's attention to the significant form of the dramatic work overall. In rehearsal, the text, as it is an object of sense-perception both intellectual and sensitive, stimulates spontaneous energies. These must be developed into an organised score of actions which provide the performer with the means to clarify the thoughts and sensations stimulated by the text, and therefore to realise the effect of the performance upon the audience. Without a score a performer is wholly reliant upon rare sporadic bursts of inspiration, wherein the performer is blessed with complete physical integration and perspicacious artistic intuition. However, the score does not exclude inspiration, but rather it ensures a secure basis for performance from which inspiration may be less desperately sought, and thus more easily found.

The performer's score must acquire the spontaneous quality of daily action by engaging those processes of daily life which unite

¹ Langer, 1953, p 32.

intention and movement in order to achieve our needs. The performer must endeavour to create;

"An imitation of an action that is complete and entire."¹

In rehearsal, the performer must discover a comprehensible structure of action which realises the role's development. Initially, to make the role more comprehensible the text must become segmented. This helps to discover the thoughts and sensations which link the performer with the text. These isolated connections must then be joined to form a coherent progression of action - that is, the score. When successful, the performance becomes as natural and complete as ingenuous human actions.

Each action in the performer's score functions as a significant form. However, though these actions create the virtuality of the dramatic composition they also retain their actuality as the deed of a living performer. In dramatic performance there is a special relationship between the artist's material and the subsequent creation; the significant forms of the performer's actions are energetic forms which are alive. The performer is an entire human being, and it is this which creates the paradox of both the unique expressive possibilities and the labyrinthine difficulties which underpin the performer's artistry.

In order to create action that is "complete and entire", the score must be recollected in *reflexive* manner, for conscious recollection will remove the performer's attention from the present moment of the performance to the past moments of the rehearsals and

¹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, II.IV. p 17.

the score's inception. A performance based upon a conscious process of retrieval removes the performance from the "art of the present moment", to a demonstration of previous work.¹ In essence the performer must develop a score of actions whose motivation arises from an authentic origin each time it is performed.

In daily life, many actions arise spontaneously in order to satisfy our needs. Such non-deliberative impetus is vital to performance as it enables the performer to play effectively and with conviction. For example, each time one opens a familiar door and calls out "Hello!", it is not an imitation of the time one first did so. Each repetition of the performer's score must achieve a similar spontaneity of intention and movement, giving presence to each occasion of the action and not imitating an initial deed. As with the spontaneous actions of daily life the score must arise reflexively.

The performer requires an effective memory process which culminates in a reflexive score of action, so that the performance may move beyond conscious retrieval of words and movements. The conscious faculties of the performer must be sensitive and attentive to the stimulus of the present moment, in order to connect with the space and spectators, and perform the dramatic role in relation to the specifics of the moment. The successful performance depends upon the performers ability to "be present" with the momentary passage of the drama, allowing rehearsal

¹ BARRAULT, Jean-Louis. The Best and Worst of Professions. Lecture.

preparation to inform the playing through a process of reflexive recollection.

Though action is the basis of the performer's work it is not the goal, for the action must go on to create significant forms. To be specific, in the action of the score the performer tries to pursue and reveal the intentions and inner reality of the performance, making the audience privy to the motivation of the role. One might see action as a tangible aspect of the performer's *will* as it is apprehended from movement arising from the urge to satisfy a need. As action can be tangibly observed and organised to form the score, it is a means to discipline and explore the performer's experience of the dramatic role. Thus, the performer perfects the physical form of the score during rehearsal, in order to better reveal the inner score of will and need. The performer's objective is the revelation of internal processes in external action.

In rehearsal the performer looks for action which makes the drama clear. Ideally, the significant forms of the performance must arise organically from the score. In order to develop the potential significance of the actions the performer must carefully organise the motivation and physicality of the score. However, the precise form of the playing of the action cannot and should not be consciously controlled. In order to be "present" a performer's playing must allow spontaneity. Though the performer's preparations optimise the potential significance of the action, ultimately the

significance cannot be pre-meditated, and therefore it cannot be fixed.

The significance of the score develops from the action, and as the action arises from the performer's motivation, a failure to achieve suitably expressive forms is a failure to discover the correct root of intention. Unless the motivation of the action is distinct, the significance of the action cannot be articulate. Thus, the performer must be supremely attentive to the experience of the moment in order to maintain the connection between intention and action. The performer does not produce significant forms of action, but they arise as the result of a process of distinct motivation giving rise to action. Therefore, the score must not be seen as a scheme of actions developed to realise a series of selected significant forms which express the performer's understanding of the role. Rather, the score must always be action that arises from the experience and motivation of the actual moment of the performance. The performance cannot be "an action that is complete and entire" or "the art of the present moment", if the formality of the scored role supersedes the signals of present experience.

Finally, as the performer absorbs the experiences of the performances, the score must continue to develop accordingly. The performance is not a product completed in private rehearsal and then presented for view, but is a communicative act. It is an attempt to formulate an understanding of the experience of the dramatic role. The score is therefore a performer's proposition to

the audience, and as such it is always developing. The audience's response must produce an adjustment of the score in order to enhance its communicative effect. Through performing the score, the performer progressively acquires a *tacit knowledge* of how to achieve an effective performance. As Peter Brook suggests, the performer;

"takes into account all the little signs that indicate the audience's response."

The audience;

"..is a partner in unfolding the action."¹

I have established that through the interaction between the performer and the text, a score of action is developed which endeavours to reveal the performer's personal involvement with the role. The performer's mnemonic task is the precise recollection of this score without resort to conscious retrieval or imitation of past action. Further to this, having considered the fact that the performer is a living being and not an inert matter, the rehearsal process can be understood as the discovery and memorising of physiological impulses and motivating intentions which give rise to words and movement of the performance.² Most importantly, the score is malleable and continues to develop through the informative experience of performing the role.

¹ BROOK, Peter. The Shifting Point. Forty Years of Theatre Exploration - 1946-87. London: Methuen, 1989. ISBN 0413612805 p 111.

² Grotowski, 1975, p 16.

Chapter VII: Reflexive responses and local retention.

D'Assigny discusses a faculty of the memory which he calls *local retention*. He is dismissive of this mnemonic phenomenon as he believes it is synonymous with an animal-like mentality. However, I believe his discussion can help to describe reflexive processes of recollection.

D'Assigny believes that animals have only a basic memory, which allows at most;

"... a kind of Local Retention of the objects that are either grateful or hurtful to their Natures, so that the presence of those things cause them either to fly from, or run to them, having had a former sense of their good or evil Qualities."¹

D'Assigny explains that the human memory is more developed, enabling us to recall an object of sense-perception without its actual presence. The human memory can operate independently from present perception. One can consciously recall matters unrelated to the present moment.

"...the Soul of Man having more perfect and excellent Assistances, needs not the Representation of Things to remember the former Passages..."²

However, though it is true that the memory may work independently from present circumstances, this does not mean that objects of sense-perception do not evoke "brute" recollection within us. For D'Assigny the animal's local retention is a binary process of attraction or repulsion to objects of sense-perception which have naturally acquired a positive or negative "tag". In D'Assigny's fantastic memory objects of sense-perception are used in a more complex system of retention,

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 17.

² Ibid, p 17.

wherein information is placed with an image and the mnemonic device triggers its recollection by association. In daily life one experiences brute and complex local retention, through which many memories and much information is variously linked to objects of sense perception.

Local retention influences the development of the performer's score, as action can be triggered by an object of sense perception; for example, a red traffic light causes one to stop.¹ In such reflexive responses one can see that the memory can recall and execute actions;

"in response to a particular input configuration".²

This input may be from inner or outer reality, and importantly;

"The sequence is activated without the necessity of active control."³

It is also difficult to ignore a reflexive response and break the mnemonic process;

"An automatic process will be difficult to suppress or alter."⁴

One's interaction with a traffic light is an example of a simple conditioned reflex, as the action which the light provokes was once consciously learnt, and therefore one can understand this reflexive functioning. However, I suggest that there are subtle, reflexive responses which constantly occur, and that a variety of past experience and behaviour can be reflexively

¹ GRAYSON, John. Nerves, Brain and Man. London: Phoenix House, 1961 p 42.

² Seamon, 1980, p 25.

³ Ibid. p 25.

⁴ Ibid, p 25.

provoked by associated objects of sense-perception. In this way, the stimulus of any given moment can recall past times. This process is enhanced or suppressed according to the individual's temperament, occurring most clearly in those who are attuned to sensational experience.

Reflexive responses are an aspect of the "local retention" of an object of sense perception, and the experiments of Francis Galton and their analysis by Herbert Crovitz enables one to make a clear link between the natural process of local retention and the artificial process of fantastic memory.

Galton published his "Psychometric Experiments" in 1879 in "Brain".¹ He describes his experiment:

"I walked leisurely along Pall Mall, a distance of four hundred and fifty yards, during which time I scrutinised with attention every successive object that caught my eyes, and I allowed my attention to rest on it until one or two thoughts had arisen through direct association with the object."²

His discoveries surprised him;

"..there had been a great deal of repetition of thought. The actors on my mental stage were indeed numerous, but by no means as numerous as I had imagined. They now seemed to be something like the actors in theatres where large processions are presented, who march off one side of the stage, and going round by the back, come on again."³

Galton found patterns of thoughts arising from perceptions;

"This shows very much less variety in mental stock of ideas than I had expected, and makes us feel that the roadways of our minds are worn into very deep ruts. I conclude from the proved number of faint and barely

¹ CROVITZ, Herbert F. Galton's Walk. Methods for the Analysis of Thinking, Intelligence and Creativity. New York: Harper Row, 1970. ISBN 0060414324. p 23.

² Ibid. p 25.

³ Ibid. p 26.

conscious thoughts, and from the proved reiteration of them, that the mind is perpetually travelling over familiar ways without our memory retaining any impression of its excursions."¹

Crovitz suggests that Galton's associations are wholly the working of the memory, and he is able to connect Galton's discoveries with the phenomenon of the fantastic memory which D'Assigny describes;

"Galton, thus, described recurrence and only just missed formalising the mind as an oscillatory system and discovering a very practical use for a walk down Pall Mall. The use is well known to mnemonists. *One learns a map, then places images to be remembered along it.*"²

From Galton and Crovitz we learn that the circumstances of the present moment stimulates the memory. Therefore, the performer's interaction with the present is also an exploration of the past, as an exploration of Memoria is stimulated via the action and interaction of the moment. Whereas the mnemonist uses only the *principle* of association and sense-perception to contrive a system of mental notation to aid oration, the performer must explore the *actual* reflexive responses which connect the present and Memoria, and use these connections in developing the score of a dramatic role. In the drama actions and objects of sense perception are not notational devices, they are utilised for their ability to evoke actual experiences. The "art of the present moment" organises the relationship between volition and action by organising the local retention which pervades the circumstances of each moment.

¹ Crovitz, 1970, p 28.

² Ibid, p 36.

Section III.Chapter VIII: The significant form in dramatic composition.i) The text and action in the creation of dramatic emblems.

Certain of Shakespeare's images suggest actions which may feasibly be practically explored and experienced by the performer. Though such actions as murder and death clearly cannot be literally enacted, Shakespeare presents an array of images around such events which can be physically realised. I began my rehearsals with the objective of investigating such imagery.

"Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day."

I made myself blindfold.

"Thou sure and firm set earth, Here not my steps."

I tip-toed.

"Your face my thane is like a book."

I explored facial expressions.

"Hence horrible shadow, Unreal mockery hence."¹

I hid from my shadow.

In the way that mnemonic devices help the orator absorb the matter, these literal realisations of the textual images allowed me to begin to absorb the drama. Through this work with selected images I identified the major physical features, and corresponding metaphysical elements, which constitute the drama's central sources of imagery.

Initially my rehearsal process involved the selection of key images, and the quite literal performance of them. However, this approach proved limiting because it was based upon the

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act 3 Scene 2 line 47, 2.1 l. 56 & 3.4 l. 105-6.

premeditated selection of single images, which inhibited the possibility of discovering many others with which I might find a genuine relation, and it also isolated image from image, instead of investigating the relationship between a flow of images that a speech might contain.

Therefore, the formality of my initial approach gave way to a more responsive and flexible working process, based upon my exploration of the rehearsal space and my own physical abilities through a sequence of strenuous training motions. I allowed this training to become interrupted when circumstances elicited a creative response in reaction to a movement, an object or the text. With such a process, it is possible to be in space, waiting for moments of inspiration, but not waiting for a miracle from nowhere, waiting rather as the hunter that stalks game in the woods.

I discovered that literal enactment of the poetic imagery in Shakespeare's text was not useful for preparing my performance. The value of Shakespeare's image rich text is that it suggests the potential significance of the dramatic action, but it does not describe the actual deed itself. For example, Macbeth never actually wades in a river of blood though he says;

"I am in blood stepp'd so far, that should I wade no more,
returning were as tedious as go oe'r."

Enactment of poetic imagery is a valuable form of rehearsal preparation as it connects the performer to the text and helps embodiment of the role. However, in performance literal realisation of the imagery damages the text's ability to create a significance, as the physical forms become an imitation of the text. When the text's implications are enacted in this way, the

evocative tension between action and imagery is negated. The performance becomes an explanation of the text, not an exploration of the potential significance of the drama.

Subsequently I developed a more subtle relationship to the text; instead of imitating the text, my action became its partner, wherein the distinction between the two elements created a tension which implied significance, instead of defining the image. Literal manifestation of the image obliterated the tension between inner and shared reality (the subjective-objective perspective) which the imagery explores.

The *dramatic action* is the marriage of the playwright's text and the performer's action which occurs in the audience's perception. Therefore, if the action imitates the text the audience's perception of the drama is restricted. For example, Macbeth resolves the dilemma of executing or aborting the plan or murder Duncan with a vivid image;

"... I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on th'other."²

In a literal enactment of this passage, I might pull off a set of spurs, run towards my steed, leap for the saddle and entirely over-shoot, landing in a heap. If I did so, the audience would receive a definition of the text in a physical form, and they would not observe a dramatic action. Enactment may demonstrate the image, but it does not reveal its dramatic significance. The image cannot be free to enhance the action, if the action is attempting to become a physical representation of the image. In

² Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1.7 l. 25-28.

such a situation we lose Shakespeare's comment on the human action his drama surveys.

During the above passage in my performance, I stand facing a corner by a drum on a red cloth. As I try to conquer my fear, my eyes close and my voice crescendos, then falls away into a thin wail at the end of the passage. Here, the audience may see a dramatic action, perhaps Macbeth as a man who is physically transfixed by fear, while internally he tumbles from a high precipice. The audience may find many individual interpretations.

To summarise my discovery, the text's *effect* must inform the performer's action, but the performance is not an illustrated text, it is the partnership of text and action. The performer can not create a useful score from action which *imitates* the imagery formed by the words. The performer is better employed exploring the root potential of the words. The score cannot be sound and movement which decorates a text; instead the performer endeavours to find the action which the text motivates. The action must arise from the word, so that the performer's score reveals the implications within the energy and tensions of the text. A physical basis to rehearsal can free the performer from a tentative relationship to words that is dominated by intellectual analysis, and allow a more spontaneous corporeal relation to the material.

ii) The sjuzet and the evolution of the emblem.

D'Assigny's practice commences with imagined movement around the chambers of the mnemonic palace. The memorising begins;

"...when we have well settled and divided the several rooms and corners in our imagination, where we are to place the ideas for our remembrance..."³

Similarly, in the early work of rehearsal the performer explores the connections of scene to scene, and element to element. This establishes a panoramic understanding of the work as a particular territory of experience and consequently of Memoria which is stimulated by the text. This territory I would like to term a *sample of Memoria*, and I began my exploration of "Macbeth" from an impression of such a landscape of experience. The sample is delineated by the textual imagery and dramatic images which Shakespeare uses to define the matter of the drama.

I will consider the composite collection of these images in the form of a *tableau vivant*, which is my trace memory of the drama as captured in its imagery, and which provides a representation of the overall sample created by the drama. The *tableau vivant* contains six sets of imagery which I note in "Macbeth"; the tyrant, his chalice, his dagger, his frozen fright, the Queen and the Weird Sisters, and the supernatural surroundings.

The tragic form of "Macbeth" focuses dramatic events and our attention on the "hero" Macbeth. Shakespeare dresses him in the "borrowed robes" of monarchy, including the "fruitless crown", and the "barren sceptre".⁴ Macbeth's face is "like a book wherein

³ D'ASSigny, 1699, p 73.

⁴ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 1.3, l. 108, and 3.1 l. 60-61.

men may read strange matters".¹ His "rugged looks" reveal a troubled mind.² He holds a chalice in one hand and a dagger in the other.³ The "poisoned" chalice contains many liquids, including the wine which drugs Duncan's guards and provides Macbeth's Dutch courage.⁴ Later, Macbeth later abandons wine and instead he begs for medicine for his wife, his land and himself.⁵ The transformation of liquids is begun by Lady Macbeth, who allows her redundant breast milk to become gall and her blood to thicken.⁶

In Macbeth's second hand he holds his dagger far from his body, and he averts his eyes, saying;

"Let the eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,
Which the eye fears when it is done to see."⁷

However, the hand is out of control. It grows in menace and seems to pluck out his eyes.⁸ Macbeth strives to link the "very firstlings of the heart" with the "firstlings of the hand", but his disconnection from his hands and their deeds only grows.⁹

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 1.5 l. 62-3.

² Ibid, 3.2 l. 28.

³ Ibid, 2.1 l. 33 & 1.7 l. 11.

⁴ Ibid, 1.7 l. 65 & 2.2 l. 6.

⁵ Ibid, 5.3 l. 39-56.

⁶ Ibid, 1.5 l. 43-48.

⁷ Ibid, 1.5 l. 52.

⁸ Ibid, 2.2 l. 59.

⁹ Ibid, 4.2 l. 146-148.

Similarly, the eyes "are made the fool of other senses", and they can not recover their reliable faculties.¹

Dressed as a tyrant and bearing his regalia, Macbeth appears in my tableau frozen in an action, as he is endeavouring to continue on the course he began, but the "pauser, reason" halts him and debate makes him inert:

"words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives".²

Lady Macbeth urges him on, alternately bating and placating her husband. There is a strong correlation between the Queen and the Weird Sisters. She encourages Macbeth to perfect the skill of deceit, the gift of equivocation which is the very art of the Weird Sisters;

"Fair is foul and foul is fair".³

The King, Queen and Sisters are set in surroundings of turmoil which complete the tableau. "Macbeth" occurs in near darkness as the stars and the sun are hidden.⁴ In the "unruly night" the air is thick with filthy fog, like the "dunkest smoke of hell".⁵ Disturbed animals are afoot, and the howls, shrieks and "obscure bird clamour" mingle in the thundering "syllable of

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 2.1 l. 44.

² Ibid, 2.3 l. 109 & 2.2 l. 61.

³ Ibid, 1.2 l. 12.

⁴ Ibid, 1.4 l. 50 & 3.2 l. 46-7.

⁵ Ibid, 2.3 l. 54, 1.2 l. 12 & 1,5 l. 51.

dolour".¹ Strangest of all the trees and stones move and speak.² Death and sleep are confused in a demonic twilight.³

Shakespeare's drama does not impart to us scene by scene a conclusive emblem with a definitive meaning, and my tableau is a provisional attempt to present the way in which an actually array of thoughts and sensations group around the drama's key images. The tableau is a model for the particular *idees fixes* defined by recognizable sets of imagery which influenced my rehearsals and performance. In order to appreciate the meaning of the drama one must rely upon the richness of the individual's subjective perspective which the vivid poetry deliberately entices by animating thoughts and sensations around key images. What is more, within the drama the multiple perspectives communicated by each role's textual imagery never collude to provide a single objective version of events, let alone a singular meaning for the play. Shakespeare's drama describes an area of enquiry, but the meaning of the play is created through each individual's response.

It is impossible to perform "Macbeth" without becoming conscious of the physical forms which Shakespeare's text implicitly requires as the sets of images influence the performer's action. In "Macbeth", the text's imagery creates a particular symbolism of the body. For example, Lady Macbeth returns from Duncan's chamber:

¹ Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 2.1 l. 44, 2.2 l. 3 & 4.3 l. 8.

² *Ibid*, 3.4 l. 22.

³ *Ibid*, 3.4 l. 122 & 2.2 l. 8-9.

"My hands are of your colour."¹

Here the performer's and the audience's attention is focused on the hands, and this is repeatedly the case throughout the play. In performance, instead of being a simultaneous set of images, the text's many separate references to the hand becomes a process of transformations about the performer's hand in a sequence of actions which imply the development of a metaphysical proposition. It is only during a performance of the drama that the cumulative effect of these transformations of the hand can be fully perceived. It is the *sjuzet* that organises the stimulation *Memoria*. Therefore, importantly, the panoramic comprehension of the drama enables the performer to commence rehearsals and gives the freedom to explore the work, going to and fro, searching and researching for the patterns and relations of the drama. However, subsequently the linear progression that is the *sjuzet* must be respected in the endeavour to absorb the tableau into a sequence of transformations and developments.

It is through the *sjuzet* that the significant forms of the text and action generate the drama's meaning, and the whole effect of the drama is rooted in temporality. That is, the performance stimulates *Memoria* through a specific sequence. I suggest that an "understanding" of the drama occurs when the individual mind has acquired a pattern of connected thoughts and sensations, created by the performance of the text. The drama creates a tableau of *idees fixes*, but this tableau is established solely through the performance. The drama achieves its effect as a lasting impression in *Memoria*, through a sequence of momentary

¹ Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 2.1 l. 44.

stimulations that connect experiences. That is to say, the text evolves a distinct emblem in each individual spectator.

Chapter IX: The use of space to create significance.

i) The mnemonic palace and the structure of the drama.

It can be argued that a structure akin to the palace of D'Assigny's fantastic memory, as described below, lies within the network of thought and sensation that arises from the text of "Macbeth".

"Now some prescribe the Imagination of a fair regular Building, divided into many rooms and galleries, with differing colours and distinct pillars which the Party must fancy to stand before him, as so many repositories where he is to place the things and ideas which he designs to remember, ordering them according to several circumstances, and qualifications for the better assistance of Memory."¹

Let us begin by considering the rehearsal, in which the performer investigates the text of the role in order to establish a body of personal experience which will help to realise a performance, by both drawing upon memories and enquiring into new thoughts and sensations. The playwright's words, which suggest speech, deeds, events and locations, can thus engender a network of thoughts and sensations within the performer.

Through this process the structure of the drama becomes tangible within the performer's experience. Thus I suggest that for the performer the *idee fixe* of the drama gives rise to a series of recurring states of being, whose patterns of thought and sensation are understood as a series of *loci* (places) each with its own distinct quality. It is these *loci* which are revisited as the play's network of experience is established.

¹ D'Assigny , 1699, p 72. My emphasis.

The quality of experience gathered at a locus might be described as its *gestalt*.¹ Each locus has a particular gestalt. For example, the several debates between the Macbeth couple are clearly separate events which differ considerably in the context and matter of the discussion, but in performance the similarities of these situations (their *gestalten*) reveal them as a series of visits to a single locus - one that I term the *Interim*.²

A dramatic performance is a similar structure to D'Assigny's mnemonic palace in that both present the matter of a text as objects and places of sense-perception. However, there is an important difference, because in D'Assigny's practice the space, the palace, is an inconsequential setting for the essential images of the mnemonic devices which are the active and affective elements of the practice. In short, the mnemonic space is a passive receptacle for the images, upon whose recollection it must not intrude. D'Assigny uses the idea of walking in the palace, only to create a kind of internal pen and paper, and he has no interest in the actual physicality of the palace. The physicality of the mnemonic system is incidental to its use as a mental image.

By contrast, the methodological performer moves in defined constant relationship to the actual performance space. The performer's awareness of spatial relationships is the foundation of

¹ For a complete discussion of Gestalt theory I refer the reader to KATZ, David, Gestalt Psychology. Its Nature and Significance. London: Methuen, 1951. b5109849. See in particular p 92.

² This term used by Shakespeare to personify a pause in action. See Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1.3 l 155 & 2.3 l 109.

dramatic art. If the performer were to ignore the present space it would remove the "present moment" from the "art of the present moment".

Dramatic action requires the interaction of the performer with the space in order to create circumstances with focused significance. The gestalten observed in the performance space are derived from the performer's disciplining of excitement which creates rhythmically and physically articulate action that expresses particular experience.

A performer's actions effect changes in an audience. The performer's signals may elicit *sympathetic* responses (where in the audience perceives the performer's experience), or possibly even an *empathic* response (wherein the audience share the experience, in part, due to the profound affect of the signals). Such responses are kinaesthetic exchanges. The performer's action may also have a definite physical effect as well as communicating thought and sensation. For example, a deep cry can be tangibly felt as vibration passing along the floor, and frenetic action stirs the air, creating turbulence in the performance space. The performer's action generates energies which animate the performance space.

In a drama the performer's effect upon the audience is channelled by the text to create a virtual sequence of locations and events, in order to create a virtual journey exploring a network of experience. In practical details, the drama demands that the performer must respond sensitively to each moment in order to explore a flash of thought or sensation. If this process is clear

and engages the mind and body, the performer's experiences can be perceived by the audience, as the performer's momentary and personal inspiration expands and generates a gestalt which is tangible to the audience.

I have suggested that the *idees fixes* of a dramatic performance generate loci which the performer reveals in the gestalt which arises from the action. Further to this, it is possible to use the topographical form of D'Assigny's fantastic memory to reveal the manner in which the performer progresses through the drama. The following description of the *Castle of Dunsinane* presents the scenes of my performance (the loci of the drama) as chambers in a building, but this is not a spatial arrangement which was actually manifest in the topography of the staging. After establishing this model, I wish to consider the performer's passage from locus to locus.

The centrality of the *Sleepwalk* chamber, reflects its complexity, feeding all the other chambers.¹ "Macbeth"'s other influential locus is the *Weird* chamber where the three sisters prophesy and offer promises to Macbeth, while looking out over the landscape beyond the *Dunsinane*, for the *Weird* scenes express a supernatural wisdom which perceives all things.² Leading from this chamber is the only possible place of escape for Macbeth in the false promise of the witches' honesty, but the exit is sealed as

¹ Shakespeare , *Macbeth*, 5.1.

² *Ibid*, 1.1, 3.4 l. 41, 4.1 & 5.5 l. 34.

Shakespeare frustrates Macbeth at the brink of liberation.¹ He believes the woods will not move, but the vision of Banquo looms and he is cast back into the *Weird locus*.

A long gallery leads from the *Weird* chamber. This is the *Death Walk* whose name has a double meaning, referring to both the deeds of blood to which it leads Macbeth and his own death which is its eventual conclusion. The death walks of the play are: Macbeth's decision to murder , Act I Scene III - IV; the approach to Duncan's bed chamber, Act II Scene II; the plan to kill Banquo and Fleance, Act III Scene I; and finally the death of the Wife of the Thane of Fife. These scenes are all characterized by Macbeth's scanning of the situation and his locking onto the target towards which he moves inexorably. This chamber has a great mnemonic value for the performer, as when it is revisited, the performer clearly experiences its quality, for it is a dark, silent and dangerous locus.

The Macbeth couple repeatedly return to the *Interim* . This a lay-by into which the couple pull-up to debate the major incidents, convincing one another they must push on, before moving on along the route to which they are committed. It is an echo chamber reaching up to heaven and down to hell, where fears and conflict are aggravated and amplified by their debate.² It expresses the objectivity which exposes the damnation of obsession, shedding the light of reason over the various crimes.

¹ Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 4.1.

² *Ibid*, 1.5 l. 54 , 1.7, 2.2 & 3.2.

Set beneath ground level is the locus of *Invocations*, which is the power plant of the house. The *Invocations* generate the underlying solemnity of the dramatic roles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, and explains the events of the palace above.¹ Here personal power and influence are investigated.

There are *Ante Chambers* in the *Dunsinane*, loci of narrative recollection, such as the battle and the unruly night.² They supply material to other chambers, or serve as transitions, bridges from one locus to another.

The *Castle* creates a tragedy: an interlocking consideration of a complex dilemma and its outcome. Here the narrative is of the soul's subtle evolution, and many overt actions are described briefly in appendage to the major loci.

This topographical presentation of the drama is not an analytical construct. It is an attempt at capturing in a model, the network of experiences which the drama generates in the performer during the performance. It is a representation of the events I experience and attempt to express, and it shows how the performer, going beyond D'Assigny's mnemonist/rhetorician, is integrated with the memorised matter. Rather than observing images in imaginary space, I experience thought and sensation through organised action. The audience as observers of the action, are engaged in a primary kinaesthetic experience, rather than a visually imaginative experience. What is revealed by D'Assigny's

¹ Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1.5 l. 40-53 & 3.2 l. 45.

² *Ibid*, 1.2 l. 7-43 & 2.3 l. 53-62.

work on the fantastic memory is the susceptibility and capacity of the memory to recall and understand matters in terms of physical environments and events within them. Our identity is formed by experience in such circumstances and we are affected profoundly by tangible objects of sense-perception as they stimulate the development of the human personality. However, D'Assigny creates only a "phantom" experience of the text in which the imaginary images in inner reality support the effective recollection and communication of a matter to the audience. On the other hand, the dramatic text explicitly and implicitly instigates the realisation of a performance, which is tangible action through which the matter of the drama is discovered and communicated to the audience.

ii) Progressing through the mnemonic palace and the drama.

I now return to the question I raised earlier: how does the performer progress through the text and make the passage from scene to scene? I will develop my castle illustration. Each chamber within the castle has four walls, a floor and a ceiling, and is indeed a miniature form of the building's structure of which it is a part. Thus Aristotle's maxim that a drama has a beginning, middle and end, can be represented in the *Castle* model, becoming the *entrance, passage and exit* to each chamber and the castle overall. This progression occurs during each scene, and in the overall play. The performer must discover a motivation for each passage of dramatic action, and the means of concluding the journey around the scene's loci (an organised exploration of an *idee fixe*). What is more a scene's termination must become the interval from which emerges the initial motivation of the subsequent passage of action.

The momentary pauses in the drama as one scene ends and another commences can be considered the *doors* of the castle. If one considers the effect of movement from one locus (based about one *idee fixe*) to the next, it appears that there is a point of passage, where the performer is present but inactive in the mnemonic process. Between the drama's scenes I believe there is a moment of actuality as the moment of division reminds performer and audience that the performance is a framed event.

Stanislavski describes the dramatic role as one "whole unbroken line" which is made up of "individual acts" and "some necessary interruptions".¹

"An actor's attention is constantly passing from one object to another. It is that constant change of foci that constitutes the unbroken line."²

I suggest that the conclusion of each scene is a focus that dominates the performer's attention, as the performer must organise each passage in order to reach the exit. The scenic divisions are pivotal moments, where the concluding action adjoins the initiating motivation of the subsequent scene. In this change the performer is a like trapeze artist, turning momentarily in the air before grasping the next swing. It is at this point the performer must try not to force the memory, before the impulse initiates the next locus.

A *closed door* stands at the end of each passage. The shut door represents the distinct conclusion that ends a sequence of action and changes the gestalt. As the door is opened, the momentum of the performance (the accumulated excitement) propels the performer into the next scene with a characterising energy and impact (like the trapeze artist): the conclusion resolves one sequence, and gives resolve to commence the next.

¹ STANISLAVSKI, Constantin. HAPGOOD, Elizabeth Reynolds, trans. An Actor Prepares. London: Methuen, 1980. ISBN 0413461904 p 252- 60.

² Ibid, p 259.

To look in detail at the performer's passage, I will consider a pivotal dialogue in Act I Scene VII. Here Macbeth attempts to call off Duncan's murder and Lady Macbeth prevents him. This time Macbeth's entrance to the Interim is made in a proposition.

"If it were done , when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly."¹

This scene is motivated by Macbeth's trepidation as he analyses the possible repercussions of the King's murder. He compares perfect success and terrible failure. The piling terror breeds desperation which is dispelled by the decision not to act: the concluding action is retreat.

"We will proceed no further in this business.
He hath honoured me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon."²

Macbeth exits from the "terror" locus through retreat, and at the other side of the door is Lady Macbeth's entrance. She attacks his resignation;

"Was the hope drunk where in you dressed yourself?"³

The mnemonic priority in performance is discovering and memorising how to achieve the entrances, passages and exits, which allow the development of the drama from scene to scene, as a series of gestalten.

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 1.7 l. 1.

² Ibid, 1.7 l. 31-34.

³ Ibid, 1.7.

This effort of progression is absent in D'Assigny's practice of the fantastic memory. D'Assigny's rhetorician drifts through the palace unobstructed. It is an imaginary passage to encourage an uninterrupted fluent oration. For D'Assigny the route about the mnemonic palace is routine, and a progression based on easy familiarity is the basis of the system's effectiveness, like observing pictures in a gallery. D'Assigny's oration is an calm progression through the matter of a memorised text.

The performer's passage through the dramatic text is significant as the quality of the passage is the quality of action and consequently the form of signal issued to the audience. The doors of the Castle are closed, and it is necessary to navigate the room, find the door and open it to proceed in to the next section. That is, in order to perform the score the performer must discipline the actual present moment if he is to play the dramatic action. Therefore, dramatic performance involves confrontation with resistance in order to maintain the formal progression.

My model of progression through the castle exposes the essentially physical nature of a dramatic performance. In order that the performer has the *raison d'être* to perform, there must be a reservoir of energy, that is a source of the physical and psychological stamina which upholds the action. Training develops the raw flow of energy but this must be refined according to the form of the dramatic structure.

To summarise, the performer's passage through the drama is a refined form of physiological energy. This passage contains special

points - the doors - which are points of conclusive resolution which are simultaneously about to become initiating motivation. It is in this moment that the performer makes a fundamental "act of will", as the next scene will not commence unless the performer opens the door. This is a binary decision in the individual - to act or not to act - which instigates and maintains the dramatic performance. In order that the flow is scored and consistently focused the performance must have distinct punctuation - that is, points of arrival. In an extreme situation this may demand a moment when the performer stops the progression of the score, and recovers and refocuses energy before going on. It is in such momentary pauses that the actuality of the performance is exposed.

Understanding performance as a binary alternation of action and stillness enables the performer to confront the actuality of the dramatic performance. The flow of physiological energy can be tangibly experienced when its interruptions are observed. I suggest that the doors of the castle must be found closed, and then opened, as in this way the drama develops as a gradual progression. When a closed door is reached it is as if the subsequent scene is "forgotten" until it commences. The doors prevent the performer from anticipating the next event, and performing without attentive presence, as in order to make the progression through the drama with utmost clarity each chamber must be presented with total attention. Indeed, D'Assigny tells us that a well organised discourse leads the mind and there is no need for conscious anticipation of the next section.

"..for the things that precede will oblige us to think upon those that followed, and consequences of things will refresh in our Fancies that which went before . It becomes us therefore to read them in order with a Connexion and a mutual Dependence, and this order will direct our Memories..."¹

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 68.

iii) The performer's mnemonic use of actual space.

It is useful to describe the dramatic performance in terms of progression, as this provides a tangible description of what are actually the inner shifts of experience which comprise the performance and give rise to the gestalten. The progression of the performer is actually a series of different activations of the same performance space through inner developments in the performer's and audience. Shakespeare's Chorus in Henry V speaks of this process;

"Suppose within the girdle of these walls,
Are now confined two mighty monarchies."
"Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts..."¹

One can examine the virtuality (the gestalten) created by the dramatic action, but it is also possible to consider the performer's actual use of space to create this virtuality - that is, how the progression through the castle actually occurs in the performance space.

The performer organizes a score of action to find specific circumstances, in order to achieve the experience necessary to present the role. The performer's actions subsequently generate the gestalten, which allow the audience to believe that the performer's experience arises quite spontaneously.

For example, in Act II, Scene III, Lennox speaks;

"The night has been unruly,
Where we lay our chimneys were blown down,
And as they say, lamentings heard i'the air."²

¹ Shakespeare, Henry V, 1.1 l. 20-23.

² Shakespeare, Macbeth, 2.3 l. 53.

As I deliver this text, I make actions which lift the air, showing resistance of varying degrees. This physical form and text affects the audience's perception of the space. It suggests a windy night and portentous expectation.

The performer's action suggests a virtual space, and it can be examined according to these virtual criteria. However, as I have established, the performance is also actual action in a performance space. This might be called the *ritual* action of the piece - that is, the precise and exact use of the performance arena by the performer to present a significant sequence of affective actions.

The virtual world of the drama, the Castle, is dependant on this ritual action. The *Death Walk* is a gallery in the Castle created by a diagonal journey across the stage. The ritual of action in actual space involves the concrete relationship of the performer to the audience and the performance space. The performer manages the actual present moment, in order to present the text and action in an effective conjunction.

D'Assigny uses a limitless mnemonic space, which may embrace a whole city. He prepares this imaginary area so that is free to receive the fixed images of the mnemonic devices. By contrast, the performer operates in a limited space, within which the complete dramatic world must be presented. The relations between the performer, space and audience must be precisely managed. The significant possibilities of this conjunction is the primary material of performance. D'Assigny describes a mnemonic city:

" But if the way of Remembrance be beneficial; 'tis best when the places where we design to leave and commit our

ideas are more known and familiar to us. As for example, the town where we live, or the city that we are best acquainted with ; our Mind must as it were enter by the Gate, and proceed to the several streets and Quarters of the City, marking the public Places, Churches, Friends, Houses ,etc, by this means we may have an infinite number of places to commit our ideas."¹

The dramatic performance requires such a flexible and extensive sequence of loci. On the one stage distinct positions must be found by careful adjustment of the performer, audience and space relationship. These positions underpin the generation of the gestalten - they are the loci which are the foundation of each scene and they create actual, influential given circumstance for the performer. The performer must organise the performance space as D'Assigny prepares his building:

"...divided into many rooms and Galleries, with differing Colours and distinct pillars."²

Such loci on stage are found through posture, spatial position and action. The performer needs to go further than D'Assigny and place the loci in actual space. The mnemonics of performance is "knowing that" because of "doing this", that is, the understood matter of the dramatic role is recalled through a ritual of actions.

My performance of "Macbeth" is played in the round. As the proscenium limitation is removed, this permits more loci. My focus of attention finds stimuli and actions develop from the impulses of my responses to those stimuli. I perform in relation to the different influences of the space and this in turn affects the

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 73.

² Ibid, p 72.

signals the audience receives. They perceive my reaction to areas in the performance space. Through the text these differences acquire a dramatic significance.

The Death Walk (representing Macbeth's passage to major deeds) actually exists. This diagonal is established as the central axis of my performance action. The path begins from the point where instruments are set, and ends at the point to which a drum is carried - this movement of the drum early in the performance defines the path. The action of moving the drum and the corresponding text ("If chance will have me King, why, Chance may crown me without my stir") invests the end of this pathway with significance, subsequently increased by the conclusion of all major events and deeds at the same point.¹

This corner is neighboured by the point of decision. Again, the subsequent repetition of major decisive discussions at this position layers meaning upon that area of the stage, and allows it to accumulate significance.

Another point I mark in the space is the mile stone. This is the point where I make a motif action "Hold" (from the close of Lady Macbeth's invocation "Come you spirits".) This action signifies points of completion - the conclusion of the incantation, the murder and the revenge. When I make the Hold gesture after the murder, on this spot, I perceive and signify the half way mark. It is a milestone signifying the play's critical moment, the Aristotelian "peripeteia".

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 1.3 l. 44.

The performer organizes the physical loci of the stage space in order to locate the organic states or repositories which create the dramatic performance. Thus, the precise temporal/spatial organisation of action in the actual performance space allows the occurrence of the implied journey in the virtual space of the Castle of Dunsinane. The loci of the dramatic performance are the positions of the performer on the stage, as well as places and moments in the world of the drama. However, at root, the loci are the *idees fixes* which the drama networks. That is, the loci are actual moments of the performer's present experience which endeavour to realise the virtual experiences of the dramatic role. Both the performer's use of spatial/temporal models and D'Assigny's mnemonic palace are, as he says, a means to locate;

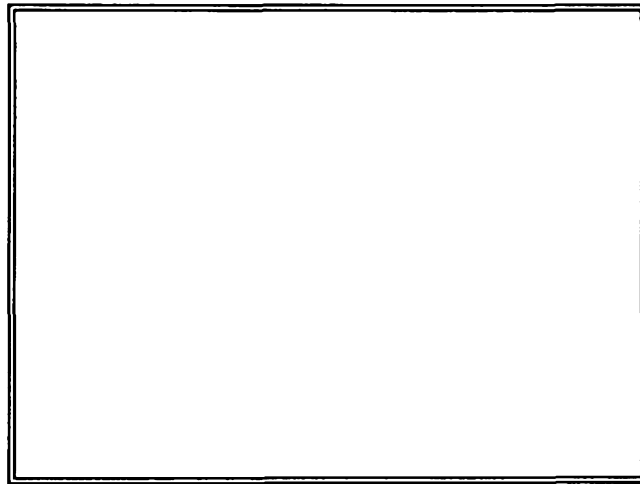
"... the several rooms and corners in our imagination ,
where we are to place ideas for our remembrance."¹

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 74.

Chapter X: The mnemonic mapping of a dramatic performance.

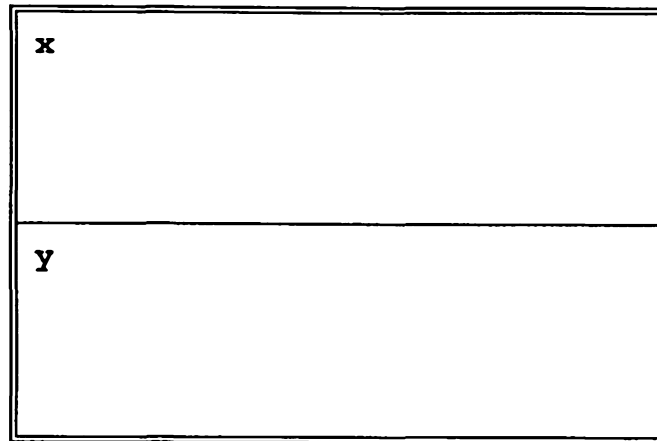
The effect of the dramatic performance upon the individual can be described by the use of a diagrammatic model. Shakespeare wrote a text called "Macbeth". A performance of "Macbeth" operates within the parameters of the words, roles and events provided by this text. The text is performed by a performer whose personality creates an individual performance of the text. It is one possible performance of the work. Here my performance will be represented as the square M.

M



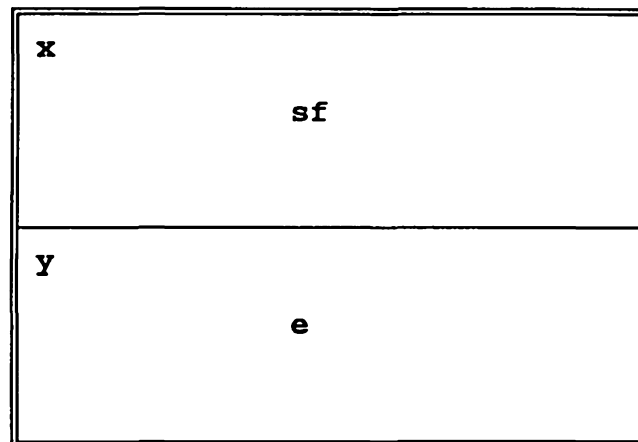
This domain can be divided into two territories. The upper section is the performance - objects of sense-perception in shared reality. x. The lower section is the personal version of the performance - the excitement of inner reality. y.

M



A word, action or object employed in the drama is a significant form ,sf. It produces a corresponding excitement in the individual, e. Therefore , the sf in y is e.

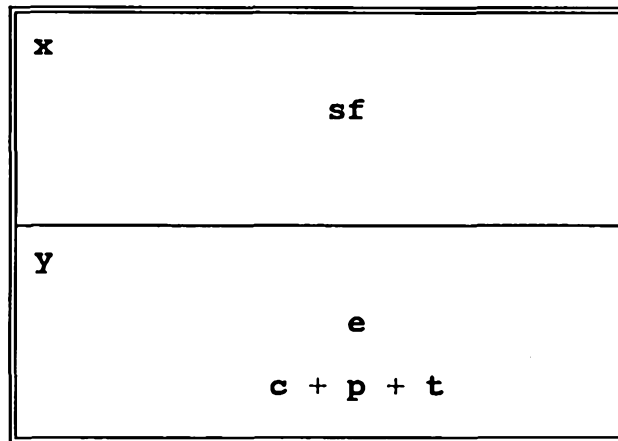
M



The excitement generated by each significant form might be described through three divisions of local retention (that is, the memories which are intrinsically or associatively linked to objects of sense-perception); the personal *local retention* of the form - p;

the shared, cultural local retention of the form - **c** ; and the specific "dramatic" local retention of the form i.e; the temporary shared local retention - **t**. Therefore, the individual's experience of the significant form involves three manners of excitement; **sf** -> **e = c + p + t**. (-> means "leads to".)

M



For example, a word is a significant form , **sf^w**, which causes excitement; i.e. **dagger**;

"Is this a **dagger** I see before me."¹

dagger = sf^w -> e = c + p + t.

c = shared, cultural local retention of dagger; i.e. blade, knife, weapon, aggression.

p = personal local retention of dagger; i.e danger, virility, New York

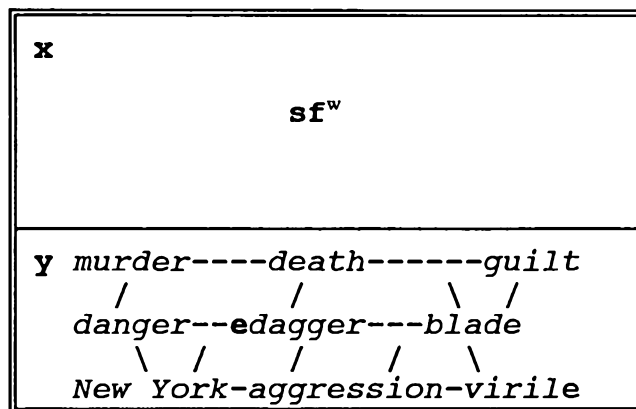
t = temporary local retention of dagger; i.e. murder, death, guilt.

The above is an example of my excitement created by **dagger** at

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 2.1. 1. 33.

one particular moment. However, fundamental features of the process of **sf** -> **e** can be observed. The local retention of **sf^w** might be defined as **c** + **p** + **t** , but the divisions clearly overlap, and inter-relate; i.e. weapon (**c**) -> murder (**t**), and aggression (**c**) -> danger (**p**). Therefore the excitement is an interactive set of sensations and thoughts, stimulated by the significant form, which forms a complex network of local retention;

M

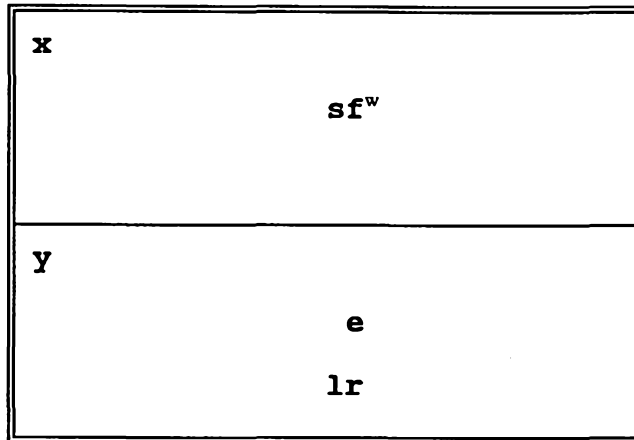


This example shows my pattern of thought and sensation - the network of local retention - about **dagger**, **sf^w**.

To summarise, the local retention of significant forms in a dramatic performance stimulate excitement in the individual. This excitement is a network of thoughts and sensation, which are varyingly intrinsic and idiosyncratically linked to the significant form. Also there is conceivably an aspect of local retention which is beyond conscious detection, the subconscious reflexes of the mind and body. Therefore, the excitement of significant form is a network of local retention (**lr**);

i.e. $sf^w \rightarrow e = (c + p + t + ?) = lr$

M



One can consider the excitement created by a whole sentence (sf^s);

"Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under't."¹
 This sentence contains five elements of excitement; 1 the "equivocation" of "look like" and "but be" (part of the duality throughout "Macbeth"); 2 innocent; 3 flower; 4 serpent; 5 the physical form of the text (rhythm, rhyme and grammar). Each element has a network of local retention.

Therefore $sf^s \rightarrow e = 1lr + 2lr + 3lr + 4lr + 5lr$. The networks of each element also interconnect;

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 1.5 l. 65-66.

An important feature is lacking from the model. The dramatic performance is a deliberately structured form. The dramatic moment is not an arbitrary presentation of exciting stimuli. The text and the action have focus. The playwright and the performer interest the audience though appeals to the potential significance of forms. The drama must *interest*. However, in order to present an "action that is complete and entire", the performance must direct the audiences attention. In each dramatic moment there is an array of stimuli $sf_1 \rightarrow sf_2$, but at the end of a performance certain significant forms have lodged in the mind.

? notes that Shakespeare mentions "blood" ? times in "Macbeth". Repetition is a fundamental means of focusing attention and forming memories. Shakespeare's work uses reiteration to great effect. for example, sleep and death become connected though a series of images.

SM1 "From your graves rise up and walk like sprites."

SM2 "Shake off this downy sleep , death's counterfeit."

SM3 "when in swinish sleep their drenched natures lie, as in a death."¹

If each quotation is the primary significant form in a moment of performance (leaving aside other channels of stimulation), one can see that the text creates consistent excitement. The reiteration of "death" and "sleep" (occasionally through synonyms) directs the individuals attention.

(! means the focus of attention.)

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 2.3 l. 78, 2.3 l. 75 & 1.7 l. 78.

clear when the textual imagery is focused on human physicality. For example Shakespeare focuses on the hand many times;

"...wash this filthy witness from your hand."

"...this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine"

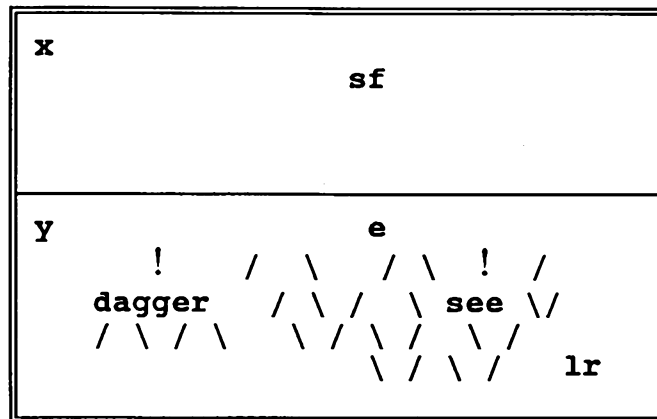
"The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand."¹

In my performance there are several actions which focus upon the hand; compulsive hand rubbing, a hand held high in the air, gesticulation to the audience.

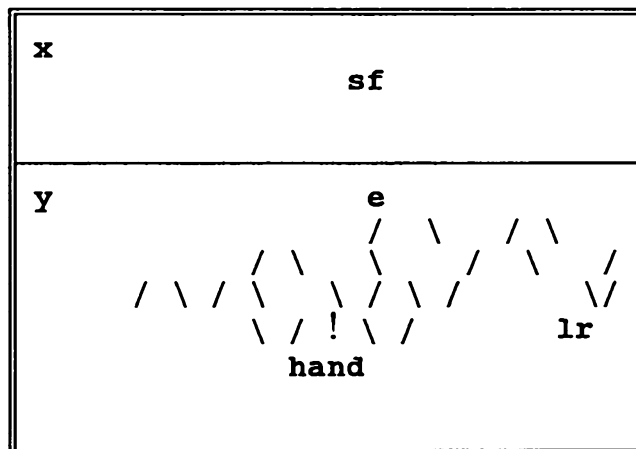
Through the structuring of significant forms the potential of each dramatic moment is focused. Attention is directed to particular elements of excitement. For example, in Macbeth's speech, "Is this a dagger..." , using panoramic knowledge of the work, one can notice the direction of attention to particular elements. This encourages a particular physical form in the playing. The diagrams show how the speech implies a gestural range to the performer. This focus has a mnemonic effect. The direction of attention also directs the formation and recollection of memories creating notable patterns of significance in the drama.

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 2.2 l. 46, 2.2 l. 60-1 & 4.2 l. 147.

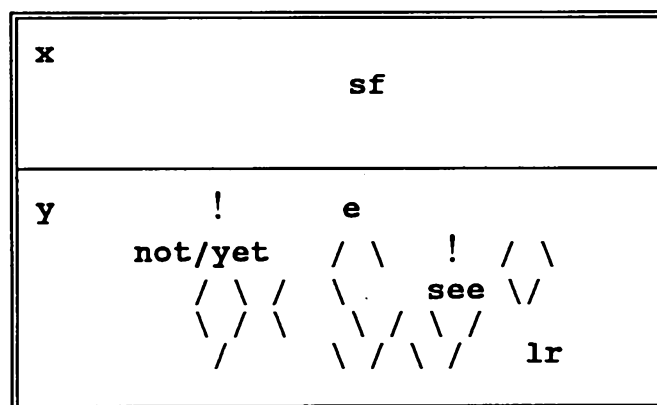
SM1 "Is this a dagger I see before me"



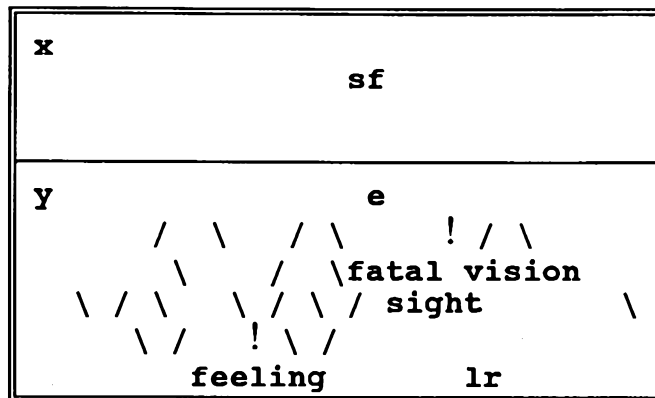
SM2 "The handle towards my hand."



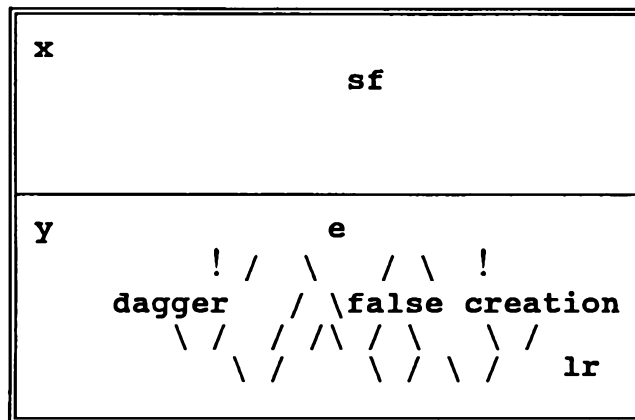
SM3 "I have thee not yet I see thee still"



SM4 "Art thou not fatal vision, sensible to feeling as to sight"



SM5 "Or art thou but a dagger of the mind, false creation "



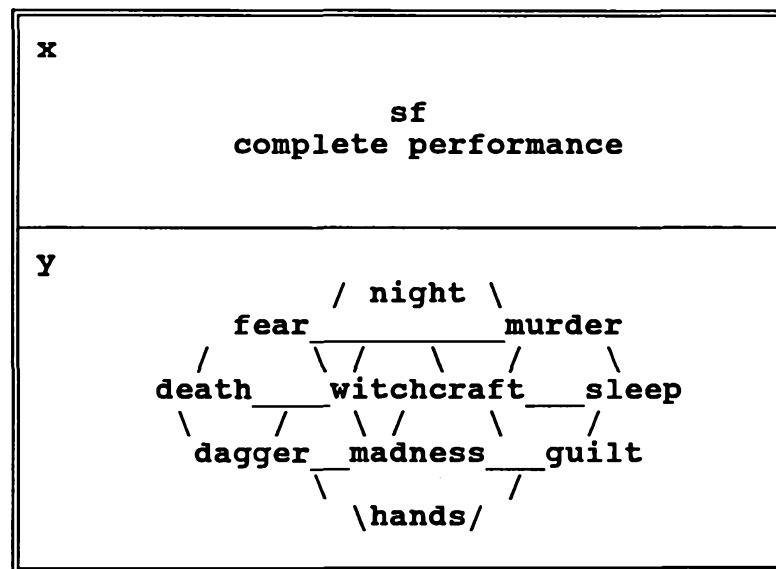
Focuses of attention arise organically from the text and organise the physical form of the performance. Consequently the performer's action emphasises the focus. The combined text and action guide the audience's attention in marked patterns.

Shakespeare's text repeatedly directs attention to particular elements of excitement. The structure of the drama is clearly a temporal progression, but this must be seen as a series of moments which affect the individual as layers of excitement. The drama repeatedly returns to the same particular elements. Each moment

presents an array of excitement, but attention is directed to particular significant forms.

By the conclusion of the drama, the audiences is deeply aware of a texture of experience. The organisation of excitement produces networks of local retention which repeatedly stimulate the same parts of Memoria. "Macbeth" might be represented as this basic network established in the individual.

performance end



To summarise, the dramatic work directs attention to particular matters. The text and action leads and organises the audience's attention. It uses repetition and focus to impress a pattern of connections in the performer's Memoria. It is this pattern which is the basis of rehearsal exploration. A panoramic understanding and experience of the work enables the performer to identify the pattern of the significant forms. A score can thus be consciously constructed to bring attention to the particular foci

of the playwrights text, while retaining the free interest and richness of potential significance which the work conveys. The rehearsal must establish the network of connection in order to focus the score, but the performance must employ rather than demonstrate the network, lest it be confined and consequently restrict the free response of the audience. The network must arise in each individual's awareness; it will differ person to person, but contain like features.

Every drama must to some degree employ mnemonic principles. In order to establish the matter of the work, the performance must be connected with the audiences' Memoria. The drama's ability to create significance is dependant upon its selected happenings "not completely unhappening". It is this continuation of events which De Bono describes as vital to organising experience, and that which Warnock calls the "never ending dreams" that enrich the present. The memory helps the exploration of propositions. The direction of attention is a central feature of the drama and D'Assigny's mnemonic practices.

"After we have thus gotten into our Memory a discourse in the beginning we must suppose it is not confirmed, and must therefore run it over by a frequent Meditation."¹

The playwright's text determines various significant forms which present a matter for the audience's consideration and make it available for performance and response. A chief process for effective presentation is repetition. I suggest that "Macbeth" presents a tightly focused matter primarily in the figures of

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 60.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, who encapsulate a state of human experience. The constant return to particular elements of sensation and thought builds a significant body/mind image: the hand and eye are disconnected; the face is a mask that slips; words disguise intention; sleep is a hellish damnation; the world is inverted.

Through reiteration of specific elements "Macbeth" builds a *tableau vivant*, the panoramic representation of the play. The kernel of the work is the product of multiple presentations of the central proposition - a state of experience described as "Macbeth". Particular significant forms repeatedly arise;

"sense-perception gives rise to memory."¹

The separate perspectives of propositions which the forms convey produce an *idea* or *universal*. The unified action in drama relates to unified experience in memory.

"repeated memories of the same thing give rise to experience, because the memories, though numerically many, constitute a single experience."²

¹ Aristotle. Posterior Analytics. London: Henieman, 1960. p 258.

² Ibid, p 259.

Chapter XI: Metaphysical Propositions in Physical Acts: the religious significance of the dramatic action in "Macbeth".

D'Assigny believes mnemonic practice "will smooth and polish the contours of your fancy".¹ It makes "learning more sound", and specifically;

"the Body of Divinity will become as familiar to you as your Pater Noster."²

For D'Assigny Memoria (including the fantastic memory) is a means to absorb and connect with the wisdom of Divinity. It seems that "Macbeth" is a work in which the performer fulfils a cultural mnemonic function. D'Assigny uses mnemonic figures to connect inner Memoria to Divinity whereas Shakespeare seems to use the performer in transitional space in order to connect shared Memoria to Divinity.

Looking at "Macbeth", one discovers that a performer's signals can embody Divine imagery. "Macbeth" is both a vibrant sujet and an extended symbolic figure. The work is both the tragedy of an individual, and a complex theological/philosophical proposition. The performer's action combines these two aspects and produces an animated symbolic composition - a ceremony of ideas. The dramatic action can be perceived from three perspectives which may co-exist simultaneously:

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p xii.

² Ibid, p xii.

- 1 The actual performative action - the performer's flesh and blood.
- 2 The virtual, dramatic action - Macbeth's tragedy.
- 3 The ceremonial action - wherein the action symbolically examines human mortality.

For example, the death of Duncan occurs on the three levels;

- 1 The performer in the role of Macduff speaks.
- 2 King Duncan is reported murdered.
- 3 "Most sacrilegious Murther hath broke ope'
The Lord's Anointed temple and stole thence
The life o' th' building."¹

This text is a reference to Corinthians;

"Ye are the temple of the Living God, as God hath said, "I will dwell in them and walk with them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people".²

The fracturing of the "temple" of the Lord has great *ceremonial* significance. It is the apex of Shakespeare's theological proposition woven into the spoken narrative text through a sequence of Biblical references. The playwright incorporates the faith and imagery of his society into his text. Consideration of this *ceremonial* structure shows how a performer's actions can be *signals* of personal experience and *symbols* of an "ideal" matter. Examining the religious connotations of "Macbeth" reveals a dramatic Christian ritual within the tragedy.

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 2.3 l 66.

² II Corinthians Chapter VI Verse XVI

The imagery of the "Macbeth" composition is dominated by darkness.¹ This is the darkness of Macbeth's soul. Initially Macbeth turns a blind eye to certain events.² Eventually he is truly blind with guilt and terror. The text repeatedly directs the attention to the eyes and hands which observe and execute the murder;

"What hands are here ? Ha ! They pluck out mine eyes.
Will all Great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine
Making the green one red."³

There is a parallel text in Matthew;

"And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that the whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."⁴

Macbeth's call for darkness ("Come seeling night") leads to a distrust of sight and his eyes ("Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses").⁵ Luke reveals the religious significance of the eye imagery;

"The light of the body is the eye, therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body is also full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body is full of darkness.

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 1.4 l. 50, 1.5 l. 50, 1.5. l. 60-1, 3.2 l. 46-7, & 5.5 l. 49.

² Ibid, 1.4 l. 52.

³ Ibid, 2.2 l. 50-62.

⁴ Matthew Chapter XVII Verse VIII-IX.

⁵ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 3.2 l. 46 & 2,1 l. 44.

Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness."¹

Shakespeare employs the Biblical imagery of sight and body as a symbol of morality and the soul. The eye is indeed a portal to an inner reality. Tangible human experience supports the symbolic terms.

On another occasion Macbeth becomes terrified of vengeance;

"Blood will have blood they say."²

The law of bloodshed is set out clearly in Genesis;

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man."³

Macbeth is afraid of the supernatural events which herald his doom;

"Stones have been known to move and trees to speak.
Augures and understood relation have
By maggot pies and choughs and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood."⁴

This vision of surreal persecution comes from Habbakuk. I quote the proceeding passage, beginning at verse V, for although Shakespeare only refers to one specific image, this reference reveals extensive parallels between "Macbeth" and Habbakuk's prophecy.

"Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not him ! How long ? and to him that ladeth himself with clay, shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee and awake that shall vex thee and thou shall be for

¹ Luke Chapter II Verse XXXIII to XXXIV.

² Shakespeare, Macbeth, 3.4 l. 121.

³ Genesis Chapter IX Verse VI.

⁴ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 4.2 l. 122-125.

When Lady Macbeth kills herself, the ceremonial aspect of "Macbeth" reaches a climax. Macbeth makes a pivotal speech;

" Out, out brief candle
Life's but a waking shadow; a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more ; it is a tale
Told by an idiot , full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."⁵

⁵ Ibid, 5.5 l. 23.

Here the image of the *candle* leads us to Job. The speech of Blidad the Shehite helps us to further review and clarify the "Damnation of Macbeth";

"Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle and his candle shall be put out with him. For it is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare. The snare is laid for him in the ground and trap for him in the way. Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet. His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle and it shall bring him to the king of terrors. It shall dwell in his tabernacle because it is one of his; brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitual. His roots shall be dried up beneath and above shall his branch be cut off. His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street. He shall be driven from the light into darkness, and chased out of the world. He shall neither have son or nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings. Those that come after him shall be astonished at his days, as they that were before him were afrighted. Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and thus is the place of him that knoweth not God."¹

Again "He" might be Macbeth. The candle of Macbeth's life is *put out* - he loses his wife and his "light". Careful as he trod along the death walk, his murders are uncovered and he is *trapped*. Macbeth stands in *terror* of the trees which move and the filthy skies above Dunsinane. He dies without a wife, a child or an heir - no *root* or *branch* and an empty *dwelling*. All his efforts are without gain and his *name* is worthless.² Macbeth concludes as in Job:

¹ Job Chapter XVIII Verse V - XXI.

² Shakespeare, Macbeth, 5.3 l. 24-28.

"Our dayes upon earth are but a shadow."¹

Shakespeare's Biblical references in "Macbeth" are to be expected in an era wherein study and literature were centrally concerned with Divinity. The Judaeo-Christian law which was the foundation of Elizabethan morality, dictates Macbeth's downfall. Shakespeare partially uses the Biblical references to heighten the text through the inter-textual relationship with the scriptures. However, the Job I and Habbakuk II texts both have a very particular relevance which do not seem a co-incidental or incidental phenomena. The references demonstrate that Shakespeare's allusions are more significant than formal ornament or conditioned religious conformism.

When "Macbeth" is considered in relation to the Job and Habbakuk texts one discovers a work which has a distinct theological dimension. Macbeth's tragedy is the story of the man who covers the light of his soul and denies his duty to the God who dwells within and without him. Thus severed from the Divine illumination of the soul (which is the blessed human state). Macbeth descends into the lonely darkness of the soul. Under the curse of Biblical decrees, he perishes and leaves no trace.

A Biblical ordinance is conveyed in the dramatic action of "Macbeth". The *ceremonial* presentation of Shakespeare's theological proposition is achieved through symbolism of the human body, actions and the environment; the bloody hand, the darkened eye, the supernatural walking trees, speaking stones and syllable of dolour.

¹ Job Chapter VIII Verse IX.

Shakespeare's textual imagery demonstrates the same characteristics as the Biblical passages to which he refers. Shakespeare's text involves the performer's body and mind in the *idea* of the work. The metaphysical is described and explored in terms of the physical. The perpetual night (psychic darkness) into which Macbeth falls, might be understood as many things; madness, evil, soulless mortality. This discussion of "Macbeth"'s Biblical parallels does not restrict significance of the Shakespeare's imagery. What is important is the interplay of the religious symbols and dramatic action - the philosophical and the physiological. Through Shakespeare's text a connection is made, which gives the performer's actions profound connotations. The performer's *signals*, born of the impulses of actual experience, become *ritual* enactment and exploration of religious belief; when the individual's eye is described as the portal to the soul - the performer's very physiognomy is given significance.

Chapter XII: "A poor player": transitional space and shared significance.

" Out, out brief candle,
Life's but a walking shadow , a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing."¹

In the above passage performance becomes a metaphor for Macbeth's tragedy. In particular, I would like to focus upon the performer's problem's of significance, to which Shakespeare refers at the end of the speech. He draws attention to the way in which performance involves showing the self, as the performer is both the raw material and the artist of the performance. Whereas D'Assigny's mnemonic devices are mental imagery, the devices of performance are compositions of the self which make events of the performer's inner reality tangible in outer reality. The demands of performance reveal to us that an individual's life is a constant mediation between inner reality and shared reality, as in the performer's attempts to communicate this incessant dialogue clearly surfaces.

D. Winnicott's work on "Play and Reality" examines the interface between self and environment. He compares adult "creative" activity with childhood play , which he describes as exploration of shared objective reality in order to assess its relation to inner, subjective experience, which is an autonomous reality. The child uses the safe relationship with a nurturing parent to explore the illusion of omnipotence via play.

"This intermediate area of experience , unchallenged
in respect of its belonging to inner or external

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 5.5 l. 23.

(shared) reality, constitutes the greater part of the infant's experience, and throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living, and to creative scientific work."¹

Theatrical performance is a species of such play. The theatre provides a transitional space, a playground where inner reality and shared reality intermingle. In the theatre one can explore this exchange with the world, and remould the relationship between the self and the environment. The performance creates a transitional space shared by the playwright, performer and audience, in which a form of exchange occurs which debates experience, using and confronting established beliefs and cultural conventions. Shared reality is re-defined by the events of inner reality, and operating under deeply subjective criteria the playwright, performer and audience all look for what is *felt* to be true. The dramatic performance offers propositions exploring human experience, and their success is dependant upon acceptance by the audience.

"I wanted to point to something outside myself and say that it was true and in doing so make it true."²

I suggest that memory develops a complex of personal symbolism which influences perception. The origin of these symbols may be described as archetypal, cultural or personal. However, these definitions belie the personal significance which is the root of all symbols. A symbol like all other objects of

¹ Winnicott, 1971, p 16.

² From the performance "Can't Take Jonny to the Funeral" by Goat Island, (Chicago) performed at the Arnolfini Centre, Bristol 14.6.91.

sense-perception is personalised by its place in the specific encounters and usage of the individual's history.

The performer's playing must achieve a shared significance. Whereas D'Assigny creates a mnemonic palace only for himself it need not have significance for any other individual. In contrast, the dramatic performance must have a significance for both performer and audience. The dramatic performance may strike us as *true* when the performer's sensitivity and discipline raises questions of experience which we recognise. The performer succeeds in telling a tale when the performance conveys the impression of an individual's experience. The vibrancy of this experience arouses the audience's empathic involvement with the performer's dialogue of inner and shared reality in the dramatic action.

Chapter XIII: Conclusion: A mnemonic consideration of dramatic performance at the Globe.

I have established that there are clear parallels between the principles of D'Assigny's mnemonic practice and the methodology of contemporary performance. I believe that the fields of mnemonics and theatre converge very interestingly in Yates' analysis of The Globe, to which I will now return.

Yates' outlook proposes a Hermetic theatre which employs the mnemonic tradition of loci and images. She considers her discoveries in terms of visual mnemonics and the spectacle of performance. However, I believe that the conjunction of the mnemonic, Hermetic and performance disciplines offers another insight. In The Globe one might perceive an arena for a form of public meditation, wherein the drama, following central mnemonic principles and a Hermetic perspective, may explore matters through mindful action.

Yates' interest compiles evidence for the architectural form of a neo-classical Globe. She uses Robert Fludd's stage diagrams in order to understand the "image" in Renaissance English creative thought, but more importantly through Fludd we are able to consider the active image of the performer. The evidence which Yates has uncovered may help us to envisage the dramatic action within The Globe and the way in which the building enables it to acquire specific significance.

Fludd tells us about the stage space and the action upon it. By the illustration of his mnemonic "theatre" in his "Ars Memoria", Fludd places these words:

"I call that a Theatre, in which all actions of words, of sentences, of parts of speech or subjects, are demonstrated as in a public theatre, where comedies and tragedies are acted. "¹

His example of a mnemonic device uses the dramatic character of the Medea acting out five words on stage. Considering Fludd's complete text, Yates deduced that Fludd expounds a mnemonic system which operates similarly to "dumb charades"². He directly relates mnemonic figures with the dramatic action of theatrical performance of comedies and tragedies.

We can see several points of similarity between D'Assigny's advice about mnemonic figures and advice for performers. Fludd's figures fulfil the "active" and "exciting" aspects which D'Assigny wholly recommends in a mnemonic figure;

"Now to such figures we must assign a convenient Action or Motion, for that makes a greater Impression than such as are still and quiet, and the Imagination is more readily moved by a moving Object than by one without life and motion."³

"Such figures are to be contrived to mind us of the things as may excite the passions of the soul, and the affections as sorrow, Wrath, Wonder or Compassion, etc, thereby the soul is more concerned in keeping in mind the things and Ideas that we desire to preserve."⁴

Whereas D'Assigny converts words into active images, Fludd more precisely uses the actions of words, stressing much as Hamlet:

¹ Yates, 1969, p 143.

² Ibid, p 145.

³ D'Assigny, 1699, p 76.

⁴ Ibid, p 76.

"suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'er step not the modesty of nature."¹

But again this can be compared with d'Assigny's advice to mnemonists;

"Again those figures must not be too mean or contemptible nor too high above our ordinary Reach capacity and Familiar acquaintance."²

One can see a common principle among these rules and examples of effective dramatic and mnemonic images - that is, the adapting of the processes of everyday experience and perception to the creation of significant forms. For example, Hamlet advises the players to "use all gently" so the performance will appear natural, as the recall of the text will then also be bound within the ease of naturally integrated action.³ Paramount in this overall approach is the use of familiar objects of sense-perception in a new, unique ways.

"We must know how to adapt such figures as are more suitable to the things to be perceived in our memory."⁴

The suiting of image and word, is a question of precision and originality for mnemonist and performer: technical craft and creative composition is common to both uses of imagery. The aim is effective communication in easily perceivable forms. However, in Hamlet Shakespeare speaks of integrity in performance, and the way this is reflected in the suitable performance form. D'Assigny

¹ Shakespeare, Hamlet, 3.2 l. 20-22.

² D'Assigny, 1699, p 76.

³ Shakespeare, Hamlet, 3.2 l. 103.

⁴ D'Assigny, 1699, p 75.

requires effective figures, but no integral link between words and action.

D'Assigny's practice "impresses" ideas in the mind via images; Yates demonstrates that Fludd linked this process to the stage. Catherine de Medici consciously worked talismanic practices in order to influence affairs. Accepting Yates' claim that Shakespeare's plays occur in a symbolically significant space, the rich imagery might reveal talismanic purposes; for example the image of "Bellonna's Bridegroom" (Mars) operates upon a distinct area of Memoria, (one's internal cosmography).

In Hermetic magic an image was a Divine "magnet" for celestial powers. For the modern mind the image is simply a constructed by the human mind from perception. Though composed from a network of linked facets of shared reality, the image does not reveal the existence of a concrete object or phenomenon which the image describes. Returning to the example, the image of "Bellonna's Bridegroom" includes the colour red, blades, brash masculinity, the Ram, the fourth planet, Aries, fire, etc. These facets integrate references to the warrior and virility. However, this selection is made by human perception, not cosmic nature. The *relations* which the Magi revered are networks of perception. The *understood relations* reflect patterns and connections in Memoria, not in an objective cosmos.

Working from this understanding (which is in accordance D'Assigny's non-Hermetic practice), one can understand that talismanic images work directly upon the self, as agents of impression and "tools" to map networks of associated experience, and to lodge ideas in the *Memoria*.

When D'Assigny travels around the mnemonic palace and views the mnemonic devices the memory is *affected* by the images;

"By them it is admonished and assisted to remember more easily and distinctly things that are to be minded."¹

When the audience observes a successful performance a similar event of "remembering" occurs. The difference lies in the authorial source of the mnemonic journey: it is the playwright and performer who select the "matter" and "devices" which the audience views. The audience is led to specific territories of *Memoria*, and the dramatic action defines and marks these places for later rediscovery and contemplation.

An audience does not choose the loci and devices which are encountered. The audience is *passive* in this respect. The performer and the playwright locate and select the sequence of sites in *Memoria* which are visited. Performance reveals clearly that the spectator of a work of art experiences a kind of *mystery tour*. (This phenomenon diminishes with subsequent viewing of the work).

When one is lost in a strange place, one's perception alters. Attention is sharpened and everything becomes vividly unfamiliar. It is such a journey into the unknown which creates an *effective* drama. It extends experience and develops perceptions, by leading the audience into new territories of *Memoria*. The mnemonic devices and loci - the dramatic action - *affect* the audience, and offer new self-knowledge, by striking out into new areas of *Memoria*. It is the performer's job to locate new perspectives, and lead the audience towards them. The

¹ D'Assigny, 1699, p 71.

performer penetrates his individual Memoria to enable the audience to do the same.

The audience's *trust* of the performer is essential. Through this identification the audience may find an empathic experience of the drama - providing also that the dramatic actions have affective, potential significance. Through empathic involvement, the audience members feel they *know* how the performer *feels*; but actually the audience members *know* how they themselves *feel*. The audience perceive the drama as occurring to the performer, but it is only when the dramatic events affects themselves (in some degree) that the drama is *understood* and becomes fully perceived.

Yates' description of the Globe offers a unique performance space due to the specific symbolism of the space itself. She suggest that an Elizabethan/Jacobean audience which knew the significance of The Globe's neo-classical, Vitruvian design would have perceived Shakespeare's dramatic action in a special way. The performance space would enhance the reception of the work, allowing a more effective identification with the performer and a clear empathic experience of the drama, occurring as it does in a significant space, which contributes symbolic conventions to the performances. A symbolic convention makes Shakespeare at The Globe, less of a *mystery tour*, and more of *mystery play*.

"Life's but a walking shadow."¹

Macbeth speaks beneath the "heavens" of the penthouse, beneath the stars, beneath the ideal forms above the penthouse, as man is a shadow beneath the ideal forms above the material planes.

¹ Shakespeare, Macbeth, 5.3 l. 24.

Macbeth is a "shadow" in terms of the architectural significance of the space, and as a Renaissance human in the earthly world. He is in shadow, mortal man, beneath the painted heavens under the penthouse. The references to the stars and hell are compatible with the theatre's *actual* space. The Globe's architectural representation of the "microcosm/macrocosm" would allow an audience to view "Macbeth" as a drama involving *understood relations*.

Significant use of space and action is the basis of dramatic communication. The performer explores inner and shared reality through the "imagery" of action. Via the organisation of objects of sense-perception the performer develops the intersection of individual into collective imagination and the inner reality of the audience. This allows the audience to realise the matter of a drama as experienced through the performer's participation in the work. In this process, when the performance of the work remains constant (when the text and score are maintained), a *ritual* begins to emerge. The Globe that Yates describes is a *ritual space*. It has a fixed significance that underpins the various acts made there. As in a church, the services vary, but the symbolic significance of the altar, the sanctuary and the font remain intact. The *ceremonies* are enacted in relation to a these symbolic points, contained in the very structure of the space. Repeated comparison of the theatre and the temple is made in Yates' work. She demonstrates the architectural similarities, and suggests a tentative comparison of the functions of such buildings.

It is clear that the cultural context (a faith of beliefs), affects a performance. When material is processed into significant imagery for an individual, the product need only be significant for the producer. This is the art of memory. When material is processed into active imagery for an audience, the performance must be significant for the audience. This is the art of theatre which is most effective when it contacts the central elements of collective imagination. By performing in a space which has a specific significance (such as the Globe), a drama occurs in relation to a foundation of common belief. A symbolically significant space provides the performer with a series of loci which have understood relations. The actions at these loci acquire a ritual significance.

One might conceive that Yates Globe helps us to perceive the theatre and dramatic performance, as a place and action for the consideration of propositions. In a performance one can observe the principles that organise D'Assigny's mnemonic practices, wherein the objects of ordinary sense-perception are used as significant forms.

However, one can also perceive the stage as a *transitional space*, which allows a species of play. The dramatic performance gives a tangible form to the playwright's propositions, but it goes beyond the notational imagery of the fantastic memory. It is possible to see the dramatic performance as an exploration of *local retention* and the *Memoria* which guides daily life.

The playwright offers a text which directs the attention of the performer and the audience. Through action the performer becomes integrated with the area of enquiry which the text

defines. The playwright's propositions initiate a collective process, which is founded in the *tacit knowledge* of *doing* the play.

"...but yet it is not of necessity that cogitations be expressed by the medium of words. For whatsoever is capable of sufficient differences, and those perceptible by the sense, is in nature competent to express cogitations."

Francis Bacon.

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