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LITERATURE, LINGUISTICS & CRITICISM | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Prosperous teaching and the thing of darkness: Raising a *Tempest* in the classroom

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Abstract: This essay uses Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as a way of conceptualising modern institutional education. The over-systematisation of formal education which characterises professional teaching and learning in the twenty-first century is designated "SysEd." The flaws in SysEd are discussed and a less structured space of educational experience, named "ardenspace," is described in theoretical and practical terms. The idea of an institutional counterpublic is deployed to take account of the student audience being evoked by teaching that resists SysEd. The characters and plot of *The Tempest* are used to embody this argument.

Subjects: Shakespeare; Pedagogy; Education

Keywords: education; pedagogy; Shakespeare; *The Tempest*; ardenspace; SysEd; counterpublic; edge of chaos; complexity theory; band of perceived relevance

1. Perception and pedagogy in *The Tempest*

The Tempest is a play of perceptions. It foregrounds the complexity and unruliness of subjective perception. Many of the play's fictive realities are not present in a simple, objective sense that would allow them to be interacted with unproblematically by characters or by the theatre audience. Rather, their ontological status is presented as ambiguous and the act of perceiving them is overtly problematised on stage. Two examples will readily show this.

The classic example is the storm at sea with which the play opens (Shakespeare, 2013, 1.1.1–1.1.68). Miranda, Prospero, Ariel, the sailors and courtiers aboard the ship, and the theatre

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This essay offers a timely critique of over-systematised institutional education and provides theoretical and practical avenues for understanding and critiquing it.

The aim of this essay is to consider *The Tempest* through the lens of modern educational systems and also to reverse the view to see how the play might inform our understanding of these systems. Once this bilateral conversation is established, the idea of an institutional "counterpublic" will be introduced and its aptness discussed in respect to the challenge of eliciting novelty and change within authoritarian curricular structures. The key problem driving this discussion is: what constitutes prosperous teaching and how might teachers conceptualise themselves and their students as stakeholders in this process. Fittingly, for a topic as elusive and complex as education, this essay concludes not with empirical claims, but the telling of a myth.

audience watching the play, are all witnesses to the event and each is differently implicated and impacted. A number of these witnesses—particularly the theatre audience and Miranda—experience a changing perception of the shipwreck as subsequent narrative accounts, especially from Prospero (2013, 1.2.13–1.2.15, 1.2.25–1.2.33) and Ariel (2013, 1.2.195–1.2.237), complicate and revise the initial presentation of the event. A second example is the character Ariel. Ariel is a shapeshifter who is perceived variously throughout the play by all the characters and the theatre-goers (2013, 1.2.197–1.2.206, 1.2.302–1.2.305, 1.2.388–1.2.396, 2.1.298–2.1.323, 3.2.40–3.2.79, 3.3.52SD, 4.1.167). The reader's and audience's general sense of the storm and Ariel may be that each possesses a stable essence and yet this impression is severely tested by the play's emphasis on the varied subjective perceptions of individuals and groups.

While much of what is witnessed in *The Tempest* is orchestrated by Prospero for particular purposes, he is not able to control the full variety of subjective perception arising in response to his actions. In other words, he does not demonstrate absolute control over the world of the play. He does not know the other characters inside out, nor does he control them utterly as a puppeteer might. He is capable of being surprised or resisted by them. He forgets the plot against his life (2013, 4.1.139–4.1.141), misjudges Caliban's responses (2013, 1.2.345–1.2.349), is unaware of the location of others (4.1.170), is surprised by Miranda's memories of her past (2013, 1.2.40–1.2.52) and learns from Ariel's commentary on Gonzalo's weeping (2013, 5.1.11–5.1.20). Nonetheless, he exercises as much control as he possibly can because he wants to change the way others think and behave. His methods are largely a matter of coercion by force, threats of violence, subtle enticement, manipulation and entrapment. These depend on his high intelligence, magical powers and detailed forward planning which come together to produce success via the essential agency of his servant Ariel.

Prospero is not casual about his aims. He is determined to achieve specific ends within the three- to four-hour period of the afternoon on the island. By sundown his primary achievements may be: the happy and politically strategic betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda; the securing of the King of Naples as a firm ally; the honourable reclamation of his Duchy and establishment of a personal retirement plan; and revenge against his brother and Sebastian in such a manner as excludes them from power in the present and contains their power into the future. Achievement of these goals demonstrates his mastery over family, allies and enemies. Put another way, if poor politics in Milan landed him on the island, masterful politics on the island will return him to Milan.

Prospero rules the island and its inhabitants whether they are long-term denizens (Miranda, Ariel, Caliban) or recent arrivals (the Neapolitan courtiers and mariners). In the process of subjugating, Prospero educates. He seems proud of his ability to display and transfer knowledge. As one might expect from a magus, he rates himself highly in a cosmic knowledge hierarchy and interacts with others from a position of intellectual authority. His style of teaching includes delivery of expository narratives and imposition of experiential scenarios, both as forms of control.

In the case of the former, it is as if he explicitly tells his auditors, "this is the way things are, take note!" In the case of the latter, he astonishes his subjects with immersive experiences that implicitly demand, "you figure it out, if you can!" The most obvious example of expository narrative is Prospero's long account, delivered to Miranda, of their ejection from Milan (2013, 1.2.22–1.2.184). In pedagogical terms, this type of communication resembles a transmission model of education in which someone who knows a subject well presents an explanation of it that is received relatively passively by a listener who learns by studious attendance. The speaker has a right to demand "Dost thou attend me?" and the listener should reply "most heedfully" (2013, 1.2.78): it is apt that this pedagogical formula may be expressed in a single, metrical line. This is a closed system of robust equilibrium.

Prospero's alternative approach is suggestive of what educationalists call problem- or project-based teaching and learning because it is oriented towards enabling varying degrees of independent knowledge acquisition. This approach depends on immersing the student in a multidimensional

experience centred on a problem, theme or event in order to facilitate exploration and discovery. In Prospero's case, the spectacular and mysterious, indeed supernatural, nature of the enigmas he presents means he achieves a high degree of engagement from his target audiences who find these experiences disturbing, baffling and provocative. Some enigmas come with an amount of narrative exposition to guide interpretation such as Ariel's withering condemnation of the courtiers while in the form of a harpy (2013, 3.3.52SD). Other enigmas, such as the chess game, have no more than minimal, obliquely related dialogue to illuminate them (2013, 5.1.171SD–5.1.177SD).

Although Prospero controls these educational lectures and immersive scenarios he is not and cannot be master of every ramification and subjective response they provoke. He rules the island and is at liberty to impose on its inhabitants subjugative-educative experiences, but he does not, and seemingly cannot, fully govern the inhabitants as learners. Despite this limit on control, the island is a hotbed of learning. Prospero overtly casts himself as tutor ("thy schoolmaster") to his daughter (2013, 1.2.171–1.2.174), and she (or he, if one follows an emended text) confesses to a failed attempt to school Caliban who has his own views on education (2013, 1.2.352–1.2.366). In fact, *The Tempest* is replete with scenes of explicit and implicit education involving all the characters. It is little wonder, then, that scholars have interpreted the play through various pedagogical lenses (Lindsay, 2016, pp. 397–423; Shin, 2008, pp. 373–393).

2. SysEd and ardenspace

Having suggested briefly an approach to *The Tempest* via the interrelations of perception, education and subjugation, I turn now to modern educational theory. In this section, I describe three pedagogical concepts—"SysEd," "ardenspace" and "exile"—that are under development within the Better Strangers project.¹ This will establish a context for consideration of the idea of an educational counterpublic in the subsequent section. After that, in the final section of the essay, I return to *The Tempest* to see what traction these ideas might have in Shakespeare's play and consequently what the play might say to twenty-first-century institutional pedagogy.

SysEd is my term for modern, professionalised education, which is to say, the system of formal education and best practice as one finds it nowadays in institutions such as schools and universities. SysEd has affinities with educationalist Gert Biesta's parodically combative term "learnification" (Biesta, 2010, pp. 15–19, 2014, pp. 59–76, 124–127). Yet, rather than highlighting, as Biesta's term does, the unbalanced reconstruction of education around fetishised concepts of learning within an inappropriately scientific model, my term is intended more broadly as shorthand for the entire problem of neoliberal, institutionalised education. Needless to say (I hope), SysEd, as with "learnification," is intended as "a deliberately ugly term" (2010, p. 18).

I use SysEd generally to indicate the state, processes and truths of modern, professionalised education which positions educators and students in an interlocking network of systems that deliver standardisation, measurement and compliance. SysEd implies the educational sector's actualisation of larger neoliberal impulses that promote economies of competitive productivity and responsabilisation.² The professionalisation of institutional education via incorporation of systemic processes can and does lead to some major improvements in teaching and learning, yet SysEd refers to the current overdevelopment of this impulse in harmony with the economic rationalist ethos of neoliberalism. In short, SysEd is not a neutral term, but rather a pejorative one indicating that system unduly, perversely and tyrannically comes before, and thus leads, shapes and commands education.

The existence of SysEd causes the production of "ardenspaces." This term, initially developed through a pedagogical reading of court and exile Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (Semler, 2013, pp. 42–50), indicates temporary spaces of experimental teaching and learning established outside the constraints of SysEd in order to deliver educators and students more fertile educational experiences. SysEd may be thought of as a highly regulated court in which the courtiers (that is, primarily teachers, but also other inhabitants of the system including students) sometimes feel a need to flee into

temporary exile in order to be rejuvenated by participation in less systematised (that is, more humane, content rich and non-curricular) forms of thought and encouragement, before returning to court with newly and differently acquired knowledge and energy.

Ultimately, this is about humans and their systems. The over-evolution of educational systems, especially in the direction of teacher-proofing the sector, can leave teachers feeling that their professional agency and expertise are starved and undervalued. High-stakes testing systems, overly structured curricula and relentless compliance processes have particularly emphatic impacts on the way teachers teach and students learn. SysEd can generate an often severe clash of teacher judgement and system judgement on professional matters and may deplete a teacher's intrinsic motivation to work well by forcibly applying extrinsic, systemic levers to compel him or her to work well. SysEd can crush substantive engagement by burdensome application of extrinsic drivers that change the definition of "working well" and undermine morale, quality and retention.³

It takes an enormous flow of energy for humans to work against systemic forces. Ardenspaces are gathering points where resistant energy may be marshalled, "working well" may be retuned in a less systemic key and intrinsic motivation may be revitalised. These benefits gained in voluntary exile might then be carried back into SysEd as humanising impulses capable of inflecting positively the development, reshaping or dismantling of systems.

One would not want to define the structure or aims of ardenspace too closely because that would be a form of systematisation that is essentially at odds with the notion of ardenspace. Systematisation to some degree is unavoidable, even in the notion of ardenspace, because nothing is structureless. However, ardenspace makes it a principle to repress its own systematisation as much as possible or to build its structure a certain way in order to facilitate freer thinking and the emergence of the unpredictable. Ardenspace sits on the boundary of structure and non-structure, at the very point that complex systems are most fertile and likely to produce novel insights and new paradigms. Complexity theorists call this position the "edge of chaos."⁴

Here are two examples of ardenspaces. The first is "Shakeserendipity," a gamified approach to exploring Shakespeare's plays that was developed by the Better Strangers team in 2015 and features on the Shakespeare Reloaded website (<http://shakespearereloaded.edu.au/>). Shakeserendipity aims to put players, who may be students in a classroom or teachers in a professional learning context, into contact with an array of open-access resources relating to a specific play. Players cannot pick the resources they want. Rather, they select playing cards of which only the backs are visible. Once a card is selected it flips to reveal a resource which might be a scholarly article on some aspect of the play, or a video of a performance or adaptation, or an image set, or something else. Then, perhaps outside formal class time, players engage with the resource on its own terms and in relation to the play before returning to a class context where specific resources and responses to them are shared so that disparate ideas may be brought into novel conversation with each other. The game values serendipitous discovery of ideas, rejects the concept of intended learning outcomes, and works equally well for teacher professional development workshops or classroom teaching of high school students. The benefits for players are significant because neither curriculum constraints nor the long tentacles of SysEd limit the movement of personal discovery. Shakeserendipity imposes minimal structure on the actual process of learning and is flexible enough for teachers to utilise in myriad ways.

A different sort of ardenspace is the "Joker Card" assessment task I trialled in a literature module for third-year students at university. The module requires students to attempt three assessment tasks which are all ostensibly analytical essays. However, students must play a Joker Card on one of these tasks and this allows them to deliver a radically creative response to whichever assessment task they select. Students are urged to draw on their diverse skills and interests which may be well beyond the ambit of their tertiary studies and the study of literature more particularly. Unlike their regular essays in the module, Joker Card responses do not need to answer the set question for the

assessment task they pick; instead, they need only engage with the primary text(s) set for analysis in that task. The usual, fine-grained grading criteria that apply to essays in the module remains valid, but is backgrounded somewhat behind a far simpler rubric: “originality delivering insight via creativity.” The nub of the challenge is to achieve analytical traction on the primary text(s) via a creative approach that may manifest in any genre except an essay. I have received such things as an autobiographical graphic novel, a model of an early modern theatre accompanied by analysis of lines of sight, a photo essay reconceptualising the primary text in present-day Sydney, and an illustrated children’s book. All of these delivered unique insights into the primary texts with which they engaged.

I received the most extraordinary Joker Card response to date in 2016. After class one day a student approached me and said, “The Joker Card can be anything except an essay, right?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“I’m a circus performer,” she said.

I’m glad I was sitting down for that one because I immediately imagined her on a unicycle juggling firesticks. It turned out her speciality was aerial silk acts. Can you imagine a response to Marlowe’s play *Doctor Faustus* delivered as an aerial silks circus performance representing the story arc of Mephistopheles? Thought not. Neither could I till I witnessed it at the university rock-climbing centre where the student trains. It was accompanied by a programme incorporating photographs and text explaining how each move and pose expressed Mephistophelean story and character. I could spend many pages describing how this Joker Card response showed “originality delivering insight via creativity”—and I would have to mention the visceral shocks it put through me, perhaps analogous to the shocks Marlowe’s play sent through his sixteenth-century audiences, as a spectator of intensely charged theatre.

Students often game the system in which they are entangled and this is easily done in SysEd because it is legally structured and does not depend on good will or intrinsic motivation so much as compliance behaviour. The Joker Card was intended to manage the gaming instinct caused by SysEd by overtly inviting gaming; put another way, it was like legalising marijuana. The three assessment tasks were differently weighted, so if a student felt she was especially creative she could apply the Joker Card to the assessment task of highest value to give herself maximum chance of scoring well in the module overall. If she preferred analytical essays, she could apply the Joker Card to the assessment task of least weighting to minimise her losses and play to her strengths in conventional essay writing. The majority of the module’s assessment for any one student remained grounded in the analytical essay thus preserving core disciplinary skills and methods, but the Joker Card enabled a significant opening up of the possibilities for adventuresome learning and stretching of the discipline in innovative directions that the teacher could not predict or control. My student circus performer not only knew her spectacular trade well, but cannily gamed institutional education by terrorising her teacher with death-defying drops and rolls metres above the ground, superbly reinterpreting Mephistopheles and Marlovian frisson, and doing so for the assessment task worth the most marks.

Shakeserendipity and the Joker Card operate on the edge of chaos where they foster unpredicted, personal and collaborative insights that have their best chance to arise in spaces of fertile disequilibrium. The teacher responses we have had to Shakeserendipity and the student’s response to her Joker Card task indicate that these opportunities to inhabit ardenspace not only enrich subject area knowledge in new and unpredicted ways, but also, and no less importantly, mightily boost engagement and morale.

SysEd cannot embrace the edge of chaos very well because, as with any over-evolved system, it cannot allow more than a modicum of disequilibrium. SysEd relentlessly creates subsystems to neutralise anomalies in order to maintain predictability, standardisation and equilibrium. These objectives are considered markers of professionalism. SysEd does not like grey areas because they seem unregulated and thus unprofessional. Yet, any excited exile returning from ardenspace will categorically declare that one may be may simultaneously on the edge of chaos, professional and pulsatingly alive. They know this experientially. It is knowledge won by effort and personally lived. It is knowledge that is almost impossible to shed.

Here is where SysEd goes wrong. It presumes it is able to know, control and manage the complexity of reality. Yet, as Biesta so confrontingly puts it: “the power to teach is the very thing that is not in the possession of the teacher” (Biesta, 2014, p. 56). The truth is, reality is too complex to own in this way and thus anomalies continually arise in SysEd that need micromanaging via new subsystems. This process is at one level absurd because SysEd is effectively causing what are known as “revenge effects” and then neutralising them in a process of systemic absorption that endlessly recurs. Revenge effects are outcomes caused by any system that contradict its defining intent (Tenner, 1996/1997, pp. 8–11). All of this could be summed up in Biesta’s words:

[T]eachers can never fully control the “impact” of their activities on their students. In this regard ... the educational “project” always needs to engage with its own impossibility and thus needs to proceed with a sense of irony, that is, with a sense of disbelief in itself, a sense of powerlessness or weakness [C]laiming a position of transcendence runs the risk of turning educational authority into educational authoritarianism, which would block the very education one aims to bring about. (Biesta, 2014, pp. 56–57)

The fundamental problem is that SysEd is at war with the complex nature of reality, rather than being in conversation with it. As mature systems proceed through time towards over-evolved states they have decreasing tolerance for torque and depend increasingly on exercising maximal control over that which is considered to lie within their purview.

Ardenspaces are conceptually positioned between system and asystem: they acknowledge both and overtly seek the benefits to be gained from being in (at times wild) conversation with messy reality. Ardenspaces value disequilibrium and the unpredicted. All educators and students in institutional education are system creatures in the sense of being subject to the power of SysEd. Some of these system creatures feel a personal and professional need to become voluntary exiles who temporarily flee the system and enter ardenspace—that is, if they can.

Ardenspace reveals two complex principles:

- (1) Systems are not in straightforward, managerial relation to reality despite regularly claiming and aiming to be so;
- (2) Teaching is not in straightforward, managerial relation to learning, despite regularly claiming and aiming to be so.

Any system creature or exile who acknowledges these two principles—that systems are not what they claim to be, and that teaching is not what SysEd presents it as—should consider the ramifications because to do so is to move towards what I will tentatively call “prosperous teaching.”

3. Prosperous teaching and the spectral public

SysEd aims to produce prosperous teaching and learning. It routinely takes credit for what it presents as demonstrable instances of success. It presumes a high capacity to control reality and a strong, causal relation between teaching and learning. It emphasises the value of the connectedness of systems: for example, teacher training is linked to continuing professional learning requirements which are integrated with curriculum models that emphasise required targets in key

performance areas and student learning is measured by standardised testing that is used to ascertain teacher effectiveness and this determination has a bearing on teacher pay scales. This interlocking, legal structure wields significant power over students and teachers by determining what they can and cannot do and should and should not do. It parcels out rewards and punishments that command compliance. SysEd is a prosperous—that is, flourishing—system and it declares that the public deserves no less.

I argue the converse. A prosperous system, defined in the terms just used, is an over-evolved system that runs the risk of producing revenge effects that get in the way of genuinely prosperous teaching and learning. Despite this, SysEd markets itself to the public as good government's gift to humankind. Furthermore, as primary, secondary and tertiary students process through SysEd they gradually become the system creatures it desires and ultimately find it very difficult to imagine alternative modes of studenthood, let alone alternative modes of learning. By senior high and junior university level these system creatures are demanding forms of education they have been trained to depend on and will ferociously resist alternative approaches should innovative teachers or academics attempt to foist such things on them.

When I refuse to perform routinely as a system creature in my role as educator in the university classroom and instead critique SysEd by facilitating ardenspaces for students to inhabit, to whom am I appealing? If as an educator within SysEd my normal mode is to speak to my preformed, institutionally confined public of obedient system-creature students, to whom do I speak when I go off-piste? I look at my class and am faced with a choice. I can progress the class in a routine manner that educationalists call procedural (which does not mean necessarily poor teaching), or I can pull some crazy stunt designed to speak to something different within the system creatures facing me. To take the latter path would be to presume there is an alternative audience, an inapparent audience spectrally present within the apparent audience. In other words, I would be assuming there are potential exiles among the system creatures in the room and I would be setting myself the task of bringing them into being as a visible community. If the regularly obedient class is my educational public, admittedly an institutionally shaped and delimited public, the reactive community I seek within them might be deemed a form of institutional counterpublic.⁵

There are many ways to provoke the emergence of such a counterpublic. The actualisation of ardenspaces such as Shakeserendipity or the Joker Card is one way. Ardenspaces are not unrelated to a less structured approach within the classroom that I refer to as “breaking the band of perceived relevance.” The “band of perceived relevance” refers to the internalised, subject-specific protocols that govern normally acceptable discourse in class within any discipline. Obedient system creatures, be they students or teachers, remain within the band of perceived relevance in what they say, think and do in class or in a course of study. They are good system creatures functioning in obedience to SysEd and furthering its ends by their compliant teaching and learning. When an educator breaks the band of perceived relevance by overtly driving the classroom discourse in a direction contrary to that which is tacitly and explicitly considered relevant it puts a strain on the social situation, yet it has the virtue of highlighting the limits of thought imposed by the band and opens the possibility of fresh discoveries beyond it.

When educators thoughtfully break the band by forcing classroom discourse down some seemingly irrelevant path against SysEd's smooth disciplinary flows in order to provoke meta-learning and the emergence of unpredicted ideas, they will not meet with universal approval. Some students will hop on board for the mind-expanding ride while others, perhaps the majority, will resist (a few of them strenuously) because their system-creature eyes can see no value in such departures from normalcy.⁶

When I begin as teacher to perform in class outside the band of perceived relevance, putting uncomfortable pressure on all system creatures in the room myself included, I am imagining an audience exists to receive and embrace what I do. This audience is imagined by me to reside within the system

creatures before me in class, yet hidden by their well-tailored clothing of ossified habits and truths of SysEd. I am addressing this spectral public when I describe the Joker Card assignment or advertise Shakeserendipity or enact other participatory critiques of SysEd. I anticipate an institutional counterpublic of system creatures prepared to entertain desires for (at least temporary) exile from SysEd.

In theorising publics and counterpublics, Michael Warner asks: “What would a public be if no one were addressing it?” (Warner, 2002, p. 50). In the example presented in this essay, an institutional counterpublic of exiles exists in a spectral state within system creatures (be they teachers or students) in SysEd. If unrallied, one might imagine this remaining as untapped potential as mere inklings of discontentment or critique felt by teachers and students within SysEd, but not cohering as a sense of belonging to a shared position. Thus I designate this institutional counterpublic of exiles “spectral” for three reasons:

- (1) *I imagine it potentially to exist.* I do not see the exiles clearly existing. What I see clearly is system creatures generally performing procedural behaviour maintained by SysEd, be they teachers or students. I intuit the exiles’ potential existence based on indirect indices of their presence or based on my past experience.
- (2) *It is not sensed as a public by its members until it is addressed.* Once its future members feel addressed and respond with their attention in an individual and collective sense it comes forth readily as an institutional counterpublic within the larger cohort of system creatures.
- (3) *Were I not to address it, it would remain spectral and not actualised as an institutional counterpublic.* If system behaviour remains uncontested procedural education within the band of perceived relevance will continue smoothly to dominate that which occurs in the formal educational space.⁷

I am not saying that teaching and learning do not occur within SysEd. I am saying that SysEd does more, less and other than it claims. I am also contesting its relentless, implicit and explicit claims to be the rightful owner of prosperous teaching.

4. The angel and the monster

I return now to *The Tempest* to revisit the ideas about perception, education and subjugation with which I began. However, I will tell the same story differently, as a myth about SysEd which I will call, “The Angel and the Monster.” In the first section of this essay I told the story in the analytical voice of SysEd; now I tell it in the freer voice of ardenspace.

There was an angel called Ariel. Ariel was a system creature who passed from one system to another. The former system is called Sycorax and the latter Prospero. This myth is told from Prospero’s perspective and so Ariel’s agony in the pine is perceived and represented as caused by enslavement to an inferior system from which Ariel is rescued by the superior power and morality of the current system. The former system does not even deserve to be considered a system. It is mere, bestial witchery with no redeeming basis in modern science. The current system, aptly named from the Italian, “prospero,” is in every way fortunate and flourishing.

Ariel is Prospero’s most obedient system creature and thus also represents the process of actualisation of SysEd. This duality is true to varying degrees of all obedient system creatures because SysEd’s dutiful teachers and students perpetuate and thus embody SysEd. Ariel is the perfect archetype of creature and process in a uniquely hypostatic union.

Ariel as actualisation of the goal-directed efficiency protocols of SysEd, is invisible to all and coercive of all via rewards and threats. Ariel is thus something and nothing. Ariel cannot be engaged with by system creatures in any way that implies a meeting of equals. Ariel exemplifies the managerial operationality and powerful surveillance and audit protocols of Prospero as professional system. As authoritarian system process, Ariel is effectively everywhere surrounding creatures in the system

and channelling their behaviour via system constraints. Ariel personates constructive alignment because Ariel is the achievement of Prospero's irresistible will directed to specific ends.

Ariel as a system creature serving Prospero is effectively enslaved within the band of perceived relevance and system protocols until required tasks are appropriately completed. Ultimate release constitutes freedom, but it only comes at the end of dutiful service. To resist Prospero, as Ariel discovers via rare tests of his authority, is to discover how rigid and intimidating the system can be. The efficiency of process in achievement of intended outcomes is the paramount objective for Prospero as SysEd. Ariel is simultaneously a good student and effective system process as relentless obedience and lyrical song testify.

Enter Caliban the monster. Caliban is simultaneously a poor student and an obstruction to system efficiency as relentless disobedience and curses testify. Ariel is complicit in maintaining the double lie on which SysEd depends: reality is straightforwardly manageable by systems and learning is straightforwardly manageable by teaching. Caliban gives the lie to this lie: reality is not straightforwardly manageable by systems and learning is not straightforwardly manageable by teaching. Ariel's mission is the system's mission, but Caliban's mission is his own and does not appear successful or coherent to SysEd.

SysEd teaches Caliban language and he learns to curse (1.2.364–1.2.365). SysEd invites him in and he violates it from within (1.2.346–1.2.349). In the innermost core of SysEd's classroom, which is to say, in Prospero's cell, Caliban shamelessly ruptures the band of perceived relevance. Caliban fantasises a paradise of personal desires actualised, an obliteration of SysEd by ardenspace in the form of chaotic self-expression (1.2.350–1.2.352).

SysEd rejects him, yet confesses it needs him to survive (1.2.311–1.2.314). The ongoing, banished presence of Caliban with all his sturdy reality, inherent beauty and defiance of systems, represents the spectral presence that Prospero cannot transform, ignore or expunge. If Ariel is SysEd actualised, Caliban is learning in fact. The former is inextricably intertwined with its parent system Prospero, while the latter is essentially severed from its parent system Sycorax.

It is a quantum leap indeed for Prospero, at this myth's astonishing conclusion, to acknowledge Caliban (5.1.275–5.1.276)—not as a student he failed to teach properly, but as the raw actuality of learning. Gone is Ariel who stood for the intimately self-reflecting rollout of SysEd because the required duties are completed. In Ariel's place Caliban is installed (“Go, sirrah, to my cell”; 5.1.292) as an eternal rupture in the band of perceived relevance. Caliban represents learning as a thing of darkness that cannot be understood and his invited presence makes Prospero's cell—outrageously, impossibly, if only momentarily—an ardenspace.

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Notes

1. Better Strangers is the current phase (2011–2016) of the research collaboration between the University of Sydney and Barker College that began as Shakespeare Reloaded

(see the website

<http://shakespearereloaded.edu.au/>).

2. The best introduction to neoliberalism and education is Ward (2012). See also Ball (2012), Di Leo (2013), and Roberts and Peters (2008).
3. The fields of motivation and engagement are too large to address adequately here, but three works on which I rely are: Nystrand and Gamoran (1991), Bloome, Puro, and Theodorou (1989), and Ryan and Deci (2000).
4. The literature on complexity theory and on complexity theory and education is immense. Some key works that offer specific insight into the interaction of order and chaos are: Prigogine and Stengers (1984), Stacey (1992), Waldrop (1992), Doll, Jayne Fleener, Trueit, and St. Julien (2005/2008), and Mason (2008).
5. I use the modifier “institutional” to indicate my awareness that my use of public and counterpublic in this essay is idiosyncratic and possibly even contra normal definitions of publics that emphasise essential non-institutionalism.

6. For an example of breaking the band (see Semler, 2013, pp. 89–104).
7. Although Warner states that publics lack “any institutional being” (Warner, 2002, p. 61), I rely heavily on his excellent discussion for my understanding of publics and counterpublics.

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