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“Shakespeare: Infinitely Interpretable, Infinitely Interpreted.” Modern Adaptations of Shakespeare's Plays in Light of Contemporary Critical Theory

Master’s Thesis

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Prohlašuji, že jsem svou magisterskou práci na téma “Shakespeare: Infinitely Interpretable, Infinitely Interpreted.” Modern Adaptations of Shakespeare's Plays in Light of Contemporary Critical Theory“ vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne

……………………..

Patricie Kouřilová

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1 Introduction

During a lecture on Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* that took place in Olomouc on the 5th of October 2022, Martin Hilský, an English Professor at Charles University in Prague and Czech Republic's leading Shakespearian scholar, spoke on the potentially endless interpretability of Shakespeare's work. He said that the number of meanings one could attach to Shakespeare's work is so vast that it would have been impossible for Shakespeare to had anticipated or predicted them – and yet, they are there. For Hilský, this is due to the fact that we, as readers of Shakespeare, attach these meanings to his work regardless of whether they were the intended meanings or not.[1]

Margaret Atwood has a similar view. In her essay, "Shakespeare and Me: A Tempestuous Love Story," published in *Burning Questions*, she writes of William Shakespeare as an author who "is infinitely interpretable–and […] has indeed been infinitely interpreted."[2] However, Atwood finds the matter of Shakespeare's interpretability a little more complicated than Hilský. She says that, since there is so little known about what Shakespeare's true intentions in writing his plays were, virtually all of them are wide open to interpretation. In fact, "not only [do] we know very little if anything about what he really thought, felt, and believed, but the plays themselves are slippery as eels."[3] This could indicate that all that is generally believed or taught about the plays, their meaning and what their author's intentions were, is far from being the ultimate interpretation. Every reader of Shakespeare's work can, in fact, perceive the work differently and have a different interpretation of it, as there is always more than one meaning to it.

In and of itself, Atwood's essay is a "confession" of her admiration for Shakespeare, and a recollection of her relationship with the author's work. Atwood is, in fact, an author whose writing has been greatly influenced by Shakespeare's work and who has, along with Jeanette Winterson and several others, participated in Hogarth Press' Hogarth Shakespeare Project. The Project consisted of a number of contemporary

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[1] Martin Hilský, "Stíny Shylocka: Shakespearův Kupec benátský" (lecture, Univerzita Palackého Olomouc, Olomouc, 5 October 2022).

[2] Margaret Atwood, "Shakespeare and Me: A Tempestuous Love Story," in *Burning Questions* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2022), 293.

[3] Atwood, "Shakespeare and Me," 293.

adaptations written by fiction authors who were approached by Hogarth Press to adapt some of Shakespeare's plays into a more contemporary form.

While the Project's goal was to celebrate Shakespeare, the approach that the publishing house took to achieve it might, to some, seem rather peculiar. David Livingstone, in "Great Expectations: Adapting Shakespeare in Two Texts from the Hogarth Shakespeare Project," notes that "one gets the distinct impression that there is no actual concept underlying the project,"[4] despite its obvious ambition. Livingstone finds it strange that the authors were asked to keep close to the original texts, while also being asked to reinvent them. He says that "those works which try too hard to live up to the canonical status and reputation of the original often end up failing."[5] Therefore, it comes as no surprise that adaptations promising to preserve the identity of the original hardly ever meet the requirements and expectations that come with adapting someone like Shakespeare.

Nevertheless, it was Atwood's attitude towards Shakespeare, as well as her approach to classic literary texts in general, that helped shape the overall idea behind my thesis. With an author as "infinitely interpretable" as Shakespeare and work as "slippery as eels," I find taking yet another look at his plays intriguing. My intention is to show that, no matter which lens of critical literary theory is applied, Shakespeare's work is still just as eligible, relevant, and filled with meaning as it was when first published. I intend to do this by focusing on some of the contemporary adaptations of Shakespeare's work that approach the source material from different points of view, be it feminist or postcolonial theory. More specifically, I will be focusing on Margaret Atwood and Jeanette Winterson's adaptations of Shakespeare's plays *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*, *Hag-Seed* and *The Gap of Time*, respectively, as well as Angela Carter's adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Wise Children*. In my analysis of these texts, I will also present several contemporary literary theories connected to the novels analysed. Using these, I will then try to point out the most relevant aspects of the novels listed.

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[4] David Livingstone, "Great Expectations: Adapting Shakespeare in Two Texts from the Hogarth Shakespeare Project." (Olomouc), 3.

[5] Livingstone, "Great Expectations," 9.

The theoretical section of my thesis will be dealing with both the theory of adaptation in general and the Shakespearian theory of adaptation. In this section, I, for the most part, build on Julie Sanders' *Adaptation and Appropriation*, and Linda Hutcheon's *Theory of Adaptation*, among others. The analytical section of my thesis is, then, focused on the analysis of three original Shakespearian plays along with their adaptations.

2 Theory

2.1 Theory of adaptation

Adaptation is a concept that includes a substantial number of genres and is not strictly connected only to literature. Scholars of adaptation all have slightly different ideas of what adaptation is and what it entails, even though the ideas overlap. The idea of adapting pre-existing works of art dates back to the beginnings of literature itself. However, more coherent theories regarding the concept of adaptation can be found in the era of Formalism. T. S. Eliot, a representative of Formalism, writes in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" about reimagining works usually deemed traditional, or classical. His idea of living tradition is crucial for theory of adaptation. He says that

> The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new.[6]

According to Eliot, tradition is not a static concept, and it is not related to one era alone. It is precisely the practice of restoring the original text that guarantees tradition's endurance and its continuous accessibility to new generations of writers. Thus, new generations of writers are constantly extending tradition over new texts which allows tradition to complete the existing orders and create the new ones, as Eliot suggests.

Eliot also talks about that once an adaptation is written or produced, it is necessarily judged from several distinct perspectives. One perspective relates adaptation to the period it was produced in, i.e., the present; the other is concerned with the relationship of an adaptation to the original text, whether or not it honours the original in some way, stays close to it, or disregards it entirely. Eliot's view is that "[…] in a peculiar sense [the author of the adaptation] will be aware also that he must inevitably be judged by the standards of the past. I say judged, not amputated, by them; not judged to be as good as, or worse or better than, the dead; and certainly not judged by the

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[6] T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (American Studies at The University of Virginia) http://xroads.virginia.edu/~DRBR/eliot.html.

canons of dead critics."[7] Eliot's point of view suggests that there can be no adaptation without the author of the adaptation criticising, judging, and re-evaluating earlier works, before adapting them. Each author must go through the process of either reading the original, or getting to know the original, criticising it according to their values, and then deciding which aspect is worth revisiting and rewriting.

However, the tradition that Eliot considered to be a crucial aspect of adaptation is also one of its issues. In *Adaptation and Appropriation*, Julie Sanders builds in Eliot's concept of tradition, and explains issues connected to it:

> The central problem with any tradition is the ability to recognize not only those who constitute that tradition but those who are at various times excluded from it, or, at the very least consigned to its margins. Henry Louis Gates Jr has examined this phenomenon in relation to African American writing, a literary domain that in its desire to assert its own methodologies and ways of operating, nevertheless found a need to confront the white literary tradition within its pages; this is what Graham Allen has described as the 'struggle of black subjects to enter into Western literary culture.'[8]

Since the Anglo-American literary tradition was dominating the American literary space at the time African American literature began to emerge, the African American authors had to confront this tradition in order to make space for their own writing. In this sense, one could speak of early African American literature "adapting" itself in a way that would allow a foreign tradition to enter the literary space and to integrate into it. Therefore, it can be said that adaptation is not only an intra-traditional discipline, but an inter-traditional as well. That, instead of simply updating a single literary tradition, adaptation can be used to support other literary traditions as well.

In her book, *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon, a contemporary scholar who talks about adaptation and retelling, stresses that understanding adaptation solely in terms of literature and film is simply incorrect, even wrong,[9] despite film industry being heavily reliant on adaptations. As an example of the possibilities of adaptation, Hutcheon points out the Victorians, who "[…] had a habit of adapting just about everything—and in just about every possible direction; the stories of poems, novels,

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[7] Eliot, "Tradition and Individual Talent."

[8] Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*. (New York: Routledge, 2010), chap. 1, Kindle.

[9] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 12.

plays, operas, paintings, songs, dances, and tableaux vivants were constantly being adapted from one medium to another and then back again."[10] This statement also suggests that there is nothing new in literature and that genres, forms, stories and novels are merely adaptations of older texts. This holds true also when we take into consideration Ezra Pound's take on the modernist movement whose main motto was "Make it New!" And truly, one of the tasks of the modernist writers was to adapt literary texts from the past and interpret and reshape them into new form. Furthermore, in postmodernism, too, writers take inspiration from previous literary works. In fact, one of the main ideas of the postmodern movement is that there is simply nothing new to create, and that it is only possible to rearrange the old.

This ties in with Robert Weimann's account, according to which adaptation represents "the manifold ways in which texts feed of and create other text."[11] Here, the theory of adaptation goes back to the importance of pre-existing texts or works in general. In other words, there would be no way for new literature to be created if there was no previous one to take inspiration from. Modern culture of adaptation really seems to be fuelled by other texts.

Not only Julie Sanders, but also Deborah Cartmell presents a useful terminology regarding the theory of adaptation. Cartmell divides adaptation into three categories, "transposition, commentary and analogue."[12] Julie Sanders further builds on Cartmell's terminology, defining transposition as an adaptation that takes "a text from genre and deliver[s] it into a new modality and potentially to different or additional audiences."[13] Sanders basically marks transposition as the most common type of adaptation. However, there are a number of other aspects that come into play that can change and most importantly shape the adaptation in more complex terms, such as: "cultural, geographic or temporal terms."[14] While Sanders exemplifies this by mentioning Baz Luhrmann's 1996 film, *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, I would like to point out

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[10] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 12.

[11] Robert Weimann, "Appropriation and Modern History in Renaissance Prose Narrative," in *New Literary History 14*, (1983), 14.

[12] Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan, *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text* (London: Routledge. 1999), 24.

[13] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 1.

[14] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 1.

Gil Junger's 1999 film, *10 Things I Hate About You*, as an example of the very same process of adaptation. *10 Things I Hate About You* is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, in which temporal, cultural, and geographic factors differentiate the adaptation from the source text.

10 Things I Hate About You is set in the United States in the late 1990s and takes place at a high school, a teenage setting where the plot mainly revolves around interpersonal relationships. The film adaptation stars Heath Ledger as Patrick who, similarly to Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, is tasked with "conquering" Katherine, an independent female character and in the end, the two fall in love together.

Considering the temporal, geographical, and cultural aspects of both the source text and the adaptation, one can easily point out that moving the adaptation from 16th century Italy to 20th century America changes all of these. Furthermore, the geographical and cultural aspects are interconnected, in both the play and the movie. More specifically, by changing the geographical setting of the movie, the cultural setting is also changed, which brings the movie closer to contemporary audiences than the original play. This goes hand in hand with the point that Sanders makes, namely that the main point for transpositions is that they "bring the text closer to the audience's personal frame of reference, allowing always for variation between local contexts and audiences."[15] However, this is not to say that the film adaptation is universally relatable. Considering that *10 Things I Hate About You* takes place in an upper-middle class American society in the late 20th century, many contemporary viewers may not find the film relatable either, let alone realistic. I would still argue, however, that transposition is the most well-known type of adaptation, as well as the type of adaptation that I will be focusing on in my thesis.

Aside from the different methods and approaches to adaptation mentioned above, Sanders also mentions the pleasure principle connected to adaptation. She builds on the idea that "adaptation enables a prolonging or extension of pleasure connected to memory."[16] This is especially important to take into consideration since a great number of adaptations of literary classics "extends beyond the realms of the nineteenth century

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[15] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 1.

[16] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 1.

novel and into the domain of contemporary fiction."[17] This enables the classic novels, not only the ones from the 19th century, but novels from all centuries, to live on for many generations and to provide pleasure to generations of readers or audiences. In other words, original texts are sometimes adapted simply because audiences enjoy them and want to revisit the emotions connected to these texts in a more contemporary setting.

The pleasure principle is, according to Sanders, further connected to collective memory, as it is possible that certain aspects of a classical text will be known to audiences at large (e.g., a magic lamp, an age-old conflict between two families, etc.) but their specificities will not; in fact, audiences may often not be familiar with where these ideas came from, who originated them, and so on. The role of the adaption is, then, to take these well-known aspects and help the audience retrieve the memories and emotions tied to them. Or, as Sanders writes, it contributes to:

> [...] the very endurance and survival of the source text, alongside the various versions and interpretations that it stimulates or provokes, that enables the ongoing process of juxtaposed readings that are crucial to cultural operations of adaptation, and the ongoing experiences of pleasure for the reader or spectator in tracing the intertextual relationship.[18]

In this way, an adaptation can also be understood as a tool that preserves not only the source text, but also the feeling that the source text is supposed to create in the reader/spectator. As such, adaptation is also a necessary artistic device, able to further strengthen the bond between the original text and the adapted one, thereby anchoring the original in the consumer's mind. Therefore, the original has a better chance at survival after being adapted, than it would it if was left to its own devices.

As I already mentioned, adaptation of novels into visual media is likely the most accessible and recognized type of transposition or approximation. However, I would argue that, as more contemporary authors engage in rewritings, or reworkings, of original works, the fame and accessibility of adaptation within the framework of literature is on the rise. An ever-increasing number of contemporary authors take classic fairy tales and rewrite them to appeal to young, or young adult, readers. Arguably, the

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[17] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 1.

[18] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 1.

most well-known author to do this is Angela Carter. Ali Smith, in her introduction to the 2006 edition of Carter's *Wise Children*, quotes Carter's famous utterance regarding the perks of the theory of adaptation. Carter says: "I am all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the new wine makes the old bottles explode."[19] With Carter's quote in mind, one could come to understand adaptation as a practice that is necessary to break the bond of tradition, to redefine the old in a contemporary way. There are many different reasons for this kind of "breaking," such as shedding a light on contemporary social, family, or personal issues. In this sense, Carter's work is precisely the kind of wine to make an old bottle explode.

However, in relation to the concept of adaptation, the concept of appropriation must also be mentioned. This is where matters might get a little fuzzy, as even according to Sanders, the knowledge of appropriation is incorporated in the knowledge of adapting. Sanders, in fact, says that "practice and effects of adaptation and appropriation intersect and are interrelated."[20] The distinction that Sanders makes describes adaptation as the practice that "most often signals a relationship with an informing source text either through its title or through more embedded references."[21] Appropriation, on the other hand, is described as one that:

> [...] frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the informing text in to a wholly new cultural product and domain, often through the actions of interpolation and critique as much as through the movement from genre to others," and "may or may not involve a generic shift and it may certainly still require the kinds of 'readings alongside' or comparative approaches that juxtapose (at least) one text against another, which we have begun to delineate as a central to the reception of adaptations.22

The idea that can be drawn from these definitions when focusing solely on adapting (as opposed to appropriating a source text), is that the readers or viewers do not necessarily have to know the source material, per se. The success of an adaptation is not necessarily dependent on knowledge of the original; it surely might strengthen the experience and

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[19] Angela Carter, *Wise Children* (London: The Penguin Random House, 1992), vii.

[20] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 1.

[21] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 1.

[22] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 1.

can generally help the audiences and readers to understand the different choices that constitutes the whole work, but it is not a requirement.
A similar statement can be said about adaptations of one literary work to another, i.e., adaptations of novels into novels, novels into plays, plays into novels, etc. Ignoring – or simply not knowing – the source material does not take away from the reader's experience of the adapted work. On the other hand, when the adaptations are viewed or read with the source material in mind, the experience (as I already mentioned) might be heightened or deepened, due to the fact that "serious"[23] literary works usually include a large amount of characters' introspection and inner thought that are difficult – and, in some cases even impossible – to translate into the audio-visual media. Nevertheless, it is also due to this reason that, when approaching an adaptation with the source material in mind, the effect the adaptation has on the reader/viewer may be the opposite, that is, it may fall short of the reader's expectations.

In the article titled "Adaptation, Appropriation or What You Will," Christy Desmet and Sujata Iyengar comment on how many of those who research adaptation and appropriation begin by defining appropriation in the spirit of Jean Marsden, that is, by comparing appropriation to a theft, an abduction, i.e., that the authors of appropriations steal the original material out of a desire for ownership. From this point of view, appropriation is to be regarded as something stolen and shaped into something that its author can call her own.

As much as I think this understating of appropriation may, to some extent, sound reasonable, I find it far-fetched. Many times, the case for adaptation is that of preservation of a certain piece of literature and even though it probably does undergo a certain amount of appropriation, it is mostly in order for the piece to be understood by wider audiences. Desmet and Iyengar both argue for those definitions of appropriation that are connected to theft and abduction as "misguided" and they further state that "the notion of literary property is important to appropriation as a process, but not simple or monolithic. Neither are the patterns of encounter that here are described as 'abduction' and 'theft.'"[24]

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[23] That is, those works that are generally deemed "high literature."

[24] Christy Desmet and Sujata Iyengar, "Adaptation, Appropriation, or What You Will," *Shakespeare* 7 (University of Georgia, Athens 2015): 4.

In my understanding, Desmet and Iyengar find the categorization of appropriation as theft or abduction as being misleading. To consider every appropriated work as theft is, in my view, to grossly misunderstand the purpose of the appropriated work, or even the practice of appropriation and adaptation as such. Appropriation, as part of the process of adaptation, is of great complexity. One can even say that adaptation cannot survive without appropriation, and vice versa.

In a case of appropriating a text or a work, I understand that the knowledge of source material or the original text is crucial for the creator, since the appropriated version might sometimes hint on elements and ideas present in the original work that the authors want to magnify. Not having the "full picture," so to speak, of the original work might cause a great amount of confusion. Still, the matter is not as simple. A deep knowledge of previous works and texts, Sanders suggest, is not necessary for every adaptation. There are, however, certain adaptations (i.e., appropriations) where the knowledge is essential. Sanders points out that:

> […] myth[s], fairy tale[s] and folklore, which by their very nature seems to depend on this community of shared understanding and access, these forms and genres have cross-cultural, often cross-historical, readerships and audiences; they are stories and tales which appear across the boundaries of cultural difference, and which are handed down, albeit in transmuted and translated forms, through the generations.[25]

Considering that Shakespeare himself frequently used myths and legends as basis for his plays, it can be said that Shakespeare, too, was a writer of adaptations. Therefore, the scholars researching Shakespeare can focus not only on the plays themselves, but also on what the plays are based on, the original texts and tales that inspired Shakespeare. This, in my opinion, is what Margaret Atwood had in mind when she claimed that Shakespeare's plays are "slippery as eels."[26] She meant that analysing Shakespeare's plays on the surface level only is hardly sufficient, if one wants to understand them more closely.

However, it can also be said that, in the theory of adaptation, knowing the source material is only the tip of the iceberg. Aside from knowing which text the adaptation is

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[25] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 2.

[26] Atwood, "Shakespeare and Me," 293.

based on and who the author of the original is, an important aspect of the theory – and practice – of adaptation is knowing why adaptations are created in the first place. A great advantage in studying contemporary adaptations is that, often, the scholar can obtain this knowledge from the authors of the adaptations themselves, either by contacting them or from the introductions to their works. Unfortunately, one does not have this luxury with regard to Shakespeare. Nevertheless, as Margaret Atwood pointed out, by not knowing Shakespeare's intentions, one can adapt and analyse his plays repeatedly, each time from a new point of view, without exhausting the possibilities.

In her book, *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon touches on why anyone would even consider adapting literature. According to Hutcheon, who writes mainly about screen and stage adaptations of literary works, "when filmmakers and their scriptwriters adapt literary works, […] a profoundly moralistic rhetoric often greets their endeavours"[27] As such, the adaptation is often regarded by the audience as betraying the source material or being unfaithful to it. Yet, for Hutcheon, "the time has come to move away from this kind of negative view,"[28] as there is more to adapting than meets the eye. For Hutcheon, the reasons for adapting are varied. In her view, there are four main reasons as to why adapt a classical text, i.e., economic lures, legal constraints, cultural capital, and personal and political motives.[29]

The "economic lures" are the easiest to understand, as virtually anything will prove deserving of an adaptation if the original is economically successful. As an example of this, Hutcheon mentions the film adaptation of videogames and award-winning novels, which are all motivated by the initial monetary success of the source material. The "legal constraints," on the other hand, are more concerned with whether or not the adaptation is its own work, or whether it in any way plagiarises the work it is based on. According to Abbott (2005), the authors who come to be regarded as thieves rather than adapters are those who "steal what they want and leave out the rest."[30] As such, these authors may be subject to legal proceedings and threats, if they infringe on the original in some way.

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[27] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 85.

[28] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 86.

[29] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2006.

[30] Porter H. Abbot, T*he Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 105.

In my view, “cultural capital” is the main reason behind most contemporary adaptations. According to Hutcheon, the “one way to gain respectability or increase cultural capital is for an adaptation to be upwardly mobile.”[31] An “upwardly mobile” adaptation is one that, for instance, takes a classic work of literature (e.g., Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*), and transforms it into a highly contemporary version of itself (e.g, Margaret Atwood *Hag-Seed*). However, while Hutcheon, in regard to this, writes of cultural capital, I would argue that an especially important aspect of this type of adaptation is what I would call cultural update,[32] where an original text is taken and adapted not only to reflect contemporary issues and sentiments of the culture it was originally produced in, but is adapted in such a way that a foreign culture – one that is adapting the original text – will be able to understand the text’s original message, without degrading or criticizing it. In other words, cultural update might, in my estimation, be viewed as a practice where the original text is adapted into a more culturally specific one, but where the message of the original is still preserved.

Finally, concerning “personal and political motives” for adapting, Hutcheon says that “it is obvious that adapters must have their own personal reasons for deciding first to do an adaptation and then choosing which adapted work and what medium to do it in. They not only interpret that work but in so doing they also take a position on it.”[33] In my view, these are the most common reasons behind the decision-making process regarding adaptations. Different adapters are likely to have different ideas of what to do with the source and the target texts. While some adapters may wish to reintroduce a vision expressed by a previous generation of authors or to introduce a completely new way of looking at things, others may wish to shed light on certain issues of society at large. Others, still, may merely wish to shock, or impress. Thus, it can hardly be said that there even is such a thing as “the correct” approach to adaptation, since most authors will do whatever they please to achieve whatever result they wish to achieve.

As a brief segue, Hutcheon also points out that, in adapting literature into theatre and film, there is also the issue of establishing who exactly is the author of the adaptation, as theatre and film productions usually involve more than one person.

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[31] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 91.

[32] In Czech I would call this something like „kulturní aktualizace.”

[33] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 92.

Hutcheon writes that “the move to a performance or interactive mode entails a shift from a solo model of creation to a collaborative one.”[34] Understandably, in theatre, the number of people cooperating with one-another to create a coherent piece of art is a lot vaster than in writing a literary adaptation. In cases like these, Hutcheon argues, it might be difficult to say with certainty who the “main adapter” of the work is. She says:

> Live stage and radio plays, dance, musicals, operas—all are forms of repeated performances by groups of people, and when they are the site of adaptations from a prior work there is always contention over exactly who of the many artists involved should be called the actual adapter(s).[35]

While it may be true that Hutcheon writes mainly about adapting literature for visual media, i.e., screen and stage, I would argue that the practice of finding out who the “main adapter” is, is just as well suited for literature. In fact, in cases where a single book is composed of several stories, some (or all) of which are written by different authors and edited by either one of them or by an entirely different person, it may be difficult to pinpoint who exactly should be given the most credit for the work, and who should one consider as the “main adapter.” For Hutcheon, however, the answer is clear. In her view, “it is evident from both studio press releases and critical response that the director is ultimately held responsible for the overall vision and therefore for the adaptation *as adaptation*.”[36] And although Hutcheon is clearly referring to film, television, and stage adaptations of literary works, I believe that the same can be applied to literary adaptations of literary works, where the person most responsible for the work at large is the one who wrote it, in case there is just one author, or the one editing it, in case there are several.

Ultimately, I believe it can be said that adaptations come in all the different shapes and sizes, and with a vast number of different purposes. It would even seem that no text is too obscure or complex to warrant an adaptation. However, given Shakespeare’s generally accepted, long standing status as one of the greatest authors in history (and perhaps the greatest playwright), it is easy to see why his work is still being

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[34] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 80.

[35] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 80-81.

[36] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 85.

revisited today. Therefore, in the following chapter, I will focus on Shakespearian theory and the common approaches to adapting Shakespeare.

2.2 "Shakespearian Theory"[37] and Adaptations

In the first scene of the first act of Shakespeare's *Henry V*, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of Ely discuss the possibility of the King passing a bill that would result in the crown confiscating assets owned by the church, to enrich the country's treasury. The Archbishops, who oppose passing the bill, come up with a plan to turn the King's attention away from the bill and towards war with France. As diabolical as they are, the Archbishops still find time in their scheming to praise the King's intelligence and his way with words, by saying "that, when he speaks/the air, a charter'd libertine, is still/and the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears/to steal his sweet and honey'd sentences;/so that the art and practic part of life/must be the mistress to this theoric."[38]

In *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, Jonathan Gil Harris mentions this quote and pays specific attention to the word "theoric," which he then elaborates on. He analyses what precisely is "theoric" and what it could signify. According to Harris, "Shakespeare's theoric [is a term that] in many ways anticipates the diverse ensemble of critical methods that constitutes literary theory."[39] Based on this, it would seem that for Harris, Shakespeare is a possible predecessor of the modern concept of literary theory. Nevertheless, he also stresses that "theoric" and modern literary theory are not one and the same, despite sharing a number of similarities, such as their analytic stance towards language. According to Harris, the two concepts can be distinguished as follows:

> Theoric imposes meaning on the world; literary theory often questions meaning. Theoric is announced by metaphors of sexual and imperial domination; literary theory tends to be anti-patriarchal and anti-colonial. Yet both theoric and theory refer, in their root sense, to a mode of analytic thought about the nature of things.[40]

This is, in a nutshell, what Harris and other researchers call 'Shakespearian theory.' In Harris own words, this theory "is not just *about* Shakespeare but also derives its energy

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[37] Jonathan Gil Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

[38] Shakespeare, *Henry V* (Salt Lake City: Project Gutenberg), scene I.

[39] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 2.

[40] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 2.

from Shakespeare."[41] In fact, they say Shakespeare's writing is so advanced that it no longer represents only a literary art that is read and consumed for pleasure, but an analytic study of literary theory as well. Harris then further observes Shakespeare's the continuous influence that Shakespeare's oeuvre appears to have on literary theory. He describes how Shakespeare's material is so all encompassing that it can be subjected to analysis in virtually every contemporary literary theory:

> Contemporary literary theory is to a large extent distinguished by its understanding of language. Formalism, structuralism, and deconstruction see language not as a transparent window onto a pre-existing reality so much as a self-contained structure or web within which meaning is always provisional, ambiguous, and slippery. As a poet and playwright, Shakespeare's primary medium is language, and he too is especially attentive to its potential slipperiness.[42]

This "slipperiness" that Harris mentions is, in my view, the same as the one mentioned by Atwood. More specifically, they both speak of the virtually endless range of interpretations that Shakespeare's plays provide their readers. For Harris, however, this "slipperiness" is not only tied to the many interpretations of Shakespeare's plays available, but to the ambiguity of the language that Shakespeare used. For Harris, it is impossible to interpret Shakespeare's plays in one, ultimate way, considering the complexity and ambiguity of the language; he indicates that:

> […] if Shakespeare sees language as a complex structure in which every word punningly contains the trace of others, he also recognizes that the world he contentedly loses in his quibbles is not confined to language, and that there are other elusive structures beyond the realm of signification.[43]

Although it would be impossible for Shakespeare to know contemporary literary and critical theory, his use of language and of lexicon is certainly ahead of its time and might point at, at least, some sort of anticipation of what was to come. This "complex structure in which every word punningly contains the trace of others"[44] is a mirror

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[41] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 4.

[42] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 7.

[43] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 7.

[44] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 7.

image of Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist theory where, by using a word, the author gives a way to other potential meanings of it.

It is precisely in adaptations that these potential meanings of a literary work come to light. In fact, in *Adaptation and Appropriation*, Sanders dedicates an entire chapter to Shakespeare, focusing on how his plays are often adaptations and appropriations of older texts; for Sanders, reading Shakespeare's work is crucial for understanding and studying appropriation and adaptation, given that "Shakespeare's play most obviously, are highly labile, adaptive patchworks themselves."[45] It is due to this that Sanders calls Shakespeare "an adapter and imitator, an appropriator of myth, fairy tale, folklore, the historical chronicles of Holinshed, and the prose fiction and poetry of his day, as well as classical texts by Ovid and Plutarch." [46]

As I previously mentioned, the theory of adaptation is very clear on how adaptations can often be experienced and fully enjoyed even without a prior knowledge of the original. However, there are some adaptations for which this kind of a prior knowledge is not only useful, but necessary. In fact, "particular bodies of texts and source material, such as myth, fairy tale and folklore, which by their very nature seem to depend on […] communality of shared understating and access"[47] require the audience to, at least to an extent, be familiar with the texts that came before. What Sanders means by "communality of shared understanding and access" is that, to fully understand an adaptation of a myth, a folk tale, or a legend, the audience has to be aware of the original legend's existence prior to experiencing the adaptation, as well as what it is about. For instance, to fully experience *Troy*, the film adaptation of Homer's *Iliad*, the audience has to at least be aware of what the *Iliad* is, its characters and plot, etc.

Sanders also mentions adaptations that portray characters and topics that are not entirely culture specific, as they can be found across many different cultures in one form or another. For Sanders, such texts:

> […] have cross-cultural, often cross-historical, readership and audiences; they are stories and tales which appear cross the boundaries of cultural difference and which are handed down, albeit in transmuted and translated forms, through the generations. In this sense they

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[45] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 1.

[46] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, loc. 2.

[47] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 2.

participate in a very active way in shared community of knowledge, and they have therefore proved rich sources for adaptation and reworking.[48]

In general, mythologies and folk tales make use of concepts and images that appear universally throughout many different cultures. Concepts such as ghosts, gods, monsters and fairies appear indiscriminately throughout Greek, Norse, and even Slavic mythologies. Similarly, festivities such as Christmas and Halloween often have their equivalents in not only European, but Middle Eastern and Asian cultures as well. However, while the ideas behind these concepts and festivities may be universal, the specific form they take is not. Halloween, for example, is formally very different from the Spanish Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos), the Japanese Obon, or the Czech Památka zesnulých (Dušičky); in terms of meaning, however, they are similar. It is precisely these similarities in meaning that allow people from different cultures to recognize the underlying ideas behind these festivities, in spite of the formal differences.

According to Sanders, Shakespeare's popularity stems from this very principle. For her, Shakespeare's "oeuvre functions in a remarkably similar way to those communal, shared, transactional, transcultural and frequently transnational artforms of myth and fairy tale,"[49] in that his work often uses or presents concepts that can be found in in myths and legends. It is because of this that Shakespeare's work is accessible to people virtually all around the world. His descriptions of heroism, betrayal, love, etc. are deeply rooted in mythology and human experience both, which, generally, makes them appealing. Nevertheless, as appealing as Shakespeare's plays may be on the semantic level, their original, formal execution may often feel outdated, which is why he is often adapted. This also ties in with what I meant when I spoke of a "cultural update," i.e., that while Shakespeare's themes have stood the test of time, the mere reality of their having been written centuries ago suggests that their form might require revision.

There are, undoubtedly, countless other reasons as to why Shakespeare's work is continuously adapted. Even according to Sanders, Shakespeare's work is "a crucial touchstone for the scholarship of appropriation as a literary practice," and, by extension,

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[48] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 2.

[49] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 2.

adaptation. And just like Shakespeare's original work, the adaptations of Shakespeare come in various forms – "poetry, novels, films, animations, television advertisements and computer games have all engaged with Shakespeare as both global icon and author and through specific texts."[50] Furthermore, Sanders states that "the adaptation of Shakespeare invariably makes him 'fit' for new cultural contexts and political ideologies different from those of his own age."[51] This notion shows just how flexible Shakespeare's original work is, that the issues he dealt with in his plays can be lifted from their original setting, transformed, and used to reflect on contemporary society.

There is a multitude of contemporary movements, critical schools, and criticisms "such as feminism, postmodernism, structuralism, gay, lesbian and transgender theory, postcolonialism and now, increasingly, the new digital humanities, [that] have all had a profound effect on the modes and methodologies of adapting Shakespeare."[52] Contemporary readings of Shakespeare are likely to invoke all of the above; in fact, Shakespeare's work has a great deal to say about sexuality and gender, as it often deals with cross-dressing, homoeroticism, gender-fluidity, and more. One of the themes that feminism leans on, for instance, is Shakespeare's treatment of female characters, whose independence is often viewed as undesirable, if it is even there in the first place. The character of Katerina in *Taming of the Shrew*, for example, is an incredibly stereotypical portrayal of a woman who needs to be tamed by a man. In feminist theory, which will play a major part in the next section of my thesis, the very idea of a "tamed" woman can be seen as the result of an oppressive, patriarchal system which requires women to be bound, restricted, and forced into obedience. Similarly, Shakespeare's work is often studied from a postcolonial perspective, with the most often cited play being *The Tempest*, in which Caliban can be viewed as a "victim" of colonial expansion.

With respect to contemporary critical approaches, Sanders argues that "Shakespearean appropriation serves as a cultural barometer of changing tastes, issues and values stands," and expects "different plays to surface in their importance to adapters at different times."[53] Sanders is correct in her estimation, as there are, indeed, several contemporary novels that adapt Shakespeare's work, that mirror and reflect

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[50] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 2.

[51] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 2.

[52] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 2.

[53] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, chap. 2.

contemporary issues and values. In the following section, I will focus on three successful adaptations of Shakespeare's original texts, *Hag-Seed* by Margaret Atwood, which is an adaptation of *The Tempest* and deal with the postcolonial perspective, *The Gap of Time* by Jeanette Winterson, an adaptation of *The Winter's Tale*, dealing with queer theory, and *Wise Children* by Angela Carter, based on Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and notable for its feminist perspective. The novels I analyse in the analytical section of my thesis are in no way representative of the full scope of Shakespearian adaptation. They are, however, novels that I find appealing on a personal level, both because of their respective treatment of the subject matter and the authors who wrote them.

3 Practice

3.1 Post-Colonialist theory

In contrast to other theories discussed in this chapter, the post-colonial theory is not focused on inter- or intra-personal matters; rather, it could be viewed as focusing mostly on the relationship between specific cultures. The easiest way to understand post-colonialism is, perhaps, to regard it as a "proverbial" split between cultures (or societies), where one culture is the conqueror and the other is the conquered. Additionally, in *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*'s chapter on post-colonialism, Jonathan Gil Harris states that the term "'postcolonial theory' is, in fact, the umbrella term for a cluster of very different theoretical tendencies concerned with the history and aftermath of European colonialism and empire."[54] What Harris is saying here is that the post-colonialist theory does not only revolve around a single, unifying idea, but that it is composed of a number of ideas, most of which, however, have a common denominator – European colonialism.

Furthermore, like many other contemporary literary theories, the post-colonialist theory can be divided into several phases/waves. Harris distinguishes three waves of the post-colonialist theory, with the first one "respond[ing], in the decades after the Second World War, to the independence struggles of colonized nations in Africa and the West Indies," and seeking "to liberate 'authentic' native voices that had been suppressed by colonial European hegemony."[55] In my understanding, the first phase of the post-colonialist theory was concerned mainly with the representation of minorities, who came to the colonizer countries as a result of colonization, in the majority society and culture. Simultaneously, the first phase of post-colonialist theory also tried addressing the fact that, in many colonized countries – such as the Caribbean and West Africa – authors were prohibited from writing in their native language and, instead, had to write in the language of the colonizers. In this respect, Harris alludes to Frantz Fanon, a French-West Indian author and political philosopher, who "argued that the consciousness of colonized black subjects is not grounded in racial essence but in material conditions, including the European languages they are forced to learn. Decolonization therefore necessitates not only national independence but also

[54] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 193.

[55] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 193.

repudiation of the world view implicit in colonial tongues."[56] In my estimation, this aspect of post-colonialism to still be one of the most prominent ones, especially considering the struggle that minorities still face today with regard to equal rights and media representation.

The second phase of post-colonialist theory, according to Harris, already "entered into a dialogue with the ideas of poststructuralist thinkers. Here the quest for native authenticity was superseded by a concern with problems of representation – epistemological, linguistic, [and] political – as the ground of both colonial hegemony and resistance."[57] In spite of the post-structuralist involvement in this phase, it is clear that the second phase of post-colonialist theory is still faced with representation as its primary concern. When compared to the first phase, however, the representation in the second phase of post-colonialist theory is oriented more toward a formal representation of colonized cultures, rather than a struggle for independence or the liberation of creative voices. Here, the effort of the colonized minorities is driven mainly by their desire to be understood in terms of what it means to be a colonized culture in the post-colonial era.

Many ideas discussed by contemporary post-colonialist theory have their origin in the work of Edward Said, namely his seminal publication *Orientalism*. Said, who was one of the most important voices to come out of the second phase of post-colonialist theory, speaks of the Orient as being a "European invention [...] since antiquity," and "a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences."[58] However, the European view of the Orient that Said describes is vastly different from the American view, in which the Orient is comprised of China, Japan, and the Far East in general. The European view, on the other hand, sees the Orient as a place adjacent to Europe itself, i.e., what is known today as the Middle East and India.

Adjacency, nevertheless, is not the only aspect that contributes to the European view of the Orient. For Said, the Orient is "also a place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other."[59] This could mean that

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[56] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 193.

[57] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 193.

[58] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1977), 1.

[59] Said, *Orientalism*, 1.

while Europe did, in fact, act as the colonizer in India and the Middle East, it was, at the same time, being fuelled by the very culture it sought to suppress. As such, understanding Orientalism should also entail understanding and acknowledging the main aspect of the first phase of post-colonialist theory, namely the desire of the suppressed cultures to liberate their creative voices. Orientalism, in essence, is the European view and justification of colonized countries and colonization, respectively.

Furthermore, Said writes of the Orient as being "based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an Oriental world emerged, first according to general ideas about who or what was an Oriental, then according to a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections."[60] As a result of this, the Orient gained the status of the Other, i.e., of that which is illogical, savage, and uncivilized, especially when compared to the highly evolved, logical West. This view of the Orient persisted well into the 19th century, during which post-colonialist scholars still regarded the Orient as "separate," with "its eccentricity, its backwardness, its silent indifference, its feminine penetrability, its supine malleability;" this is why "every writer on the Orient, from Renan to Marx (ideologically speaking), or from the most rigorous scholars (Lace and Sacy) to the most powerful imaginations (Flaubert and Nerval), saw the Orient as a locale requiring Western attention, reconstruction, even redemption."[61] In other words, the European intelligentsia saw the Orient as a place in need of a "renaissance," new ideas, new technology, new evolution. In this respect, Said views Orientalism as a view that is:

> […] of a British and French cultural enterprise, a project whose dimensions take in such disparate realms as the imagination itself, the whole of India and the Levant, the Biblical texts and the Biblical lands, the spice trade, colonial armies and a long tradition of colonial administrators, a formidable scholarly corpus, innumerable Oriental 'experts' and 'hands,' an Oriental professorate, a complex array of 'Oriental' ideas (Oriental despotism, Oriental splendor, cruelty, sensuality), many Eastern sects, philosophies, and wisdoms domesticated for local European use–the list can be extended more or less indefinitely.[62]

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[60] Said, *Orientalism*, 8.

[61] Said, *Orientalism*, 206.

[62] Said, *Orientalism*, 4.

Nevertheless, while the view of the Orient as a backward and indifferent realm may no longer be valid in contemporary art and culture, its legacy can still be felt in academia. Said, in fact, recognizes that "even if it does not survive as it once did, Orientalism lives on academically through its doctrines and theses about the Orient and the Oriental."[63] It should also be said that Said's concept of Orientalism was greatly influenced by Michel Foucault's concept of power/knowledge, "by which he meant to indicate the myriad ways in which, in any age, structures of social power and governing epistemes reinforce and legitimate each other."[64] The power/knowledge relationship is at heart of Said's concept of Orientalism, in which the Occident is reinforced by the Orient's production, while the Orient is disadvantaged by the Occident.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" presents a view similar to Said's. The titular question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is posed several times throughout the paper, with Spivak concluding that, for the people to be empowered, the historiography of the subaltern people – and of colonized people in general – needs to be rethought. A large part of the paper is dedicated to subaltern women. Spivak gives the example of "contemporary hill women of Sirmur," where a woman is not considered "a 'true' subaltern, but a metropolitan middle-class girl," simply because she made an effort "to write or speak her body in the accents of accountable reason," which resulted in "her Speech Act [being] refused."[65] Using this example, Spivak summarizes the reality of the subaltern in that, rather than being unable to speak, they are prohibited to. Harris, in *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, refers to Spivak, summarizing her view by writing that "any attempt to advocate Indian subalterns by granting them collective speech (in whatever tongue) makes a logocentric assumption of shared cultural identity amongst heterogeneous peoples, which serves to reproduce their subordinate position."[66]

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[63] Said, *Orientalism*, 2.

[64] "Michel Foucault," Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/topic/continental-philosophy/French-Nietzscheanism#ref978074

[65] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *A Critique of the Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 27.

[66] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 194.

Finally, the third phase of post-colonialist theory and the most recently developed one, too, is defined by Harris as being "preoccupied with movement: specifically, the movement of subaltern subjects and objects across the borders of time and as well as space."[67] This "movement," however, is not of the literal character, only. Harris also mentions Sara Ahmed, a scholar of, among other subjects, feminist and queer theory, whose view of the subaltern movement includes their internal movement "to subjects, sexual partners, or to orient itself."[68]

Needless to say, Shakespeare's work does not explicitly deal in post-colonialist theory, as it would be impossible for Shakespeare to express such views during the time in which he wrote his plays. In fact, it might even be impossible to consider Shakespeare a representative of colonialism, as in his time, "England was […] not yet a global power, [although] it had already succumbed to fantasies and practices that anticipate its later imperialist adventures."[69] Still, many of Shakespeare's plays can be analysed from the post-colonialist point of view, as they do include hints of what would later become British colonialism, namely *Henry V., Titus Andronicus*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest.* In the following chapter, I first discuss *The Tempest* and its novelization by Margaret Atwood, *Hag-Seed*, before moving on to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Winter's Tale*.

[67] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 194.

[68] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 195.

[69] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 195.

3.2 Margaret Atwood's adaptation of *The Tempest – Hag-Seed*

Adaptation within an adaptation – that is what one could describe Margaret Atwood's adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, *Hag-Seed*, as. In fact, the very name of the novel itself, *Hag-Seed*, is a reference to Shakespeare's play, in that it is one of the many insults that the play's protagonist, Prospero, gives its villain, Caliban; it is a reference to Caliban's heritage, as his mother, Sycorax, is a witch, which then makes Caliban the "seed" of a hag. However, in Atwood's *Hag-Seed*, there is no witch, and no character even remotely resembling Caliban. Why, then, is the novel called *Hag-Seed*?

From the point of view of post-colonialist theory, Caliban, the "half African native inhabitant of the Island,"[70] is a member and a representative of a colonized country for which he is treated worse than the other characters. Caliban is thought, by Prospero, to be an outsider to civilized society. Edward Said, in *Orientalism*, views *The Tempest* as "using 'Orient' as a synonym for a homogenously exotic East, and in ways that help constitute a Europe defined in opposition to it."[71] Europe, in other words, is everything that the island on which Prospero, his daughter Miranda, and Caliban are forced to live together, is not. The island, unlike the civilised Europe, is desert and desolate. This notion, from Said's point of view, likens the island to the Orient – an uncivilized, desolate place which Caliban is the representative of – and Prospero to a representative of Europe. In this way, Prospero can be seen as a colonizer, as he claims the island for himself and views Caliban as his servant, someone inferior to him.

One would likely be hard pressed to find anyone for who being colonized is the ideal state of being, which is why, in both *Hag-Seed* and *The Tempest*, the "Orient" ultimately fights back against its colonizer. Even in countries that were colonized in the past, Said notes, there was "always some form of active resistance, and in the overwhelming majority of cases, the resistance finally won out."[72] And while, in *The Tempest*, this "active resistance" can be attributed to Caliban fighting Prospero in the end, in *Hag-Seed* it can be attributed to Felix's ultimate triumph over those who wronged him.

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[70] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 201.

[71] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 200.

[72] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 200.

In *Hag-Seed*, Prospero is replaced by the character Felix. Felix, a Shakespearian actor/director, is driven out of his own theatrical production of *The Tempest* by Tony, Felix's best friend, based on Shakespeare's Antonio, and disappears for 12 years. Even before he is driven out by Tony, Felix is already being tormented by visions of Miranda, his daughter, who died as a child. Upon his return, Felix takes up a teaching position in a nearby correctional facility, where he and the inmates put on their own productions of Shakespearian plays. His triumph over Tony comes when Felix, with the "help" of the inmates, is able to stage a successful production of *The Tempest*, which he forces Tony to watch. Hence, Felix's resistance in *Hag-Seed* is not an act of violence. However, while he may not be carrying swords or knives, he does return carrying a weapon. During one of his trips to the prison, he considers the fact that "it's the words that should concern [the prison guards], [...] that's the real danger, words don't show up on scanners."[73]

In *The Tempest*, Prospero and Caliban fight after they are unable to reach a common understanding. Caliban, having come to the realization that he had been used by Prospero, wishes to claim the island as his own, claiming that:

> This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
> Which thou takest from me. When thou camest first,
> Thou strokedst me and madest much of me, wouldst give me
> Water with berries in't, and teach me how
> To name the bigger light, and how the less,
> That burn by day and night: and then I loved thee
> And show'd thee all the qualities o' the isle,
> Cursed be I that did so! All the charms
> Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!
> For I am all the subjects that you have,
> Which first was mine own king: and here you sty me
> In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me the rest o' the island.[74]

This monologue could not only be viewed as Caliban's testimony of how he was forced into obedience by Prospero's foreign knowledge, but also from the post-colonialist

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[73] Margaret Atwood, *Hag-Seed* (London: Vintage, Penguin Random House, 2016), 75.

[74] William Shakespeare, *Bouře/The Tempest* (Praha: Romeo, 2005), 36.

perspective as Caliban's testimony of Prospero's colonization of the island. Prospero – who, in the post-colonialist view, is the embodiment of a European colonizer – is first referred to by Caliban as a patron of sorts, a missionary whose role on the island is to help and to educate. Later, however, Caliban learns of Prospero's true intent on the island, i.e., to claim the island for himself and seize back the power that was taken from him by Antonio. The way in which Prospero refers to Caliban throughout to play is, also, reminiscent of the colonizer-colonized dynamic, with Prospero referring to Caliban as:

> [...] most lying slave,
> Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have used thee,
> Filth as thou art, with human care, and lodged thee
> In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate
> The honour of my child.[75]

Finding out Prospero's true character, Caliban is no longer able to view him as the provider of knowledge he originally thought him to be. Their relationship, which is as much a relationship between two characters as it is between two cultures, is broken beyond repair. From the post-colonialist standpoint, then, one could view the division between Caliban and Prospero as symbolic of the division between the colonizer and the colonized, which, it would seem, is irreconcilable. Needless to say, however, this division is not rooted in biology, as neither Caliban nor Prospero are inherently bad. Rather, their conflict is the result of historical development, since Caliban is only able to oppose Prospero after freeing himself from Prospero's influence. In my view, Caliban's desire to be his own person can be seen as symbolic of the colonized nation's desire to determine its own value. Furthermore, according to Harris, it is only after "Caliban can recognize himself as an independent historical agent rather than an instrument of others' development, he will acquire a capacity for growth to which only Europeans had previously been entitled."[76]

It is this aspect of mutual understanding – or the lack thereof – that Atwood addresses extensively in *Hag-Seed*. However, unlike *The Tempest*, *Hag-Seed* does not

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[75] Shakespeare, *Bouře/The Tempest*, 36.

[76] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 202.

make the character of Caliban entirely explicit. While Felix is obviously a stand in for Shakespeare's Prospero and Tony a stand in for Antonio, deciphering who the stand in for Caliban is, is a little more difficult. In my view, however, there are two possible candidates for the role of Caliban in *Hag-Seed*: the group of inmates who Felix uses to get his revenge on Tony, and Felix himself. First, I would like to focus on the inmates.

Like Caliban in *The Tempest*, the inmates in Atwood's *Hag-Seed* represent a group of people who stand outside of what the main character may consider to be the "civilized world." The connection between Caliban and the inmates was also noticed by Sofía Muñoz-Valdivieso who, in "Shakespeare Our Contemporary in 2016: Margaret Atwood's Rewriting of The Tempest in Hag-Seed," saw "Caliban, the hag-seed of the title (or at least one of them), is disembodied and re-constituted as a multifarious collective, the group of inmates at the Fletcher Correctional Centre that Felix instructs in the works of Shakespeare. In this way, the monster/savage/subjugated slave of the original play is transformed into a repository of the very human foibles and failures of a Canadian prison, with a multicultural population of colourful names (Leggs, PPod, Bent Pencil, Wonderboy, 8handz) with personalities to match."[77]

However, while Prospero represents a fairly general notion of civilization in *The Tempest*, Felix represents a notion of civilization that is much more streamlined. In Felix's case, civilization is represented almost entirely through his knowledge of literature which, to the inmates, is the same kind of "unimaginable knowledge" as Prospero's knowledge of European culture is to Caliban. Furthermore, Caliban and the inmates share an important feature, in that they have not always been outsiders. In *The Tempest*, Caliban only becomes an outsider after Prospero's arrival, as until then, there is no one to label him as such. Prospero's arrival demotes Caliban from a sole inhabitant/ruler of the island to the role of a servant, one that he ultimately comes to resent. The inmates in Atwood's *Hag-Seed* share a similar fate, as they only became inmates after getting into conflict with the society (civilization) at large. And while, unlike Caliban, the inmates may have done so out of their own volition, the reasoning

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[77] Sofía Muñoz-Valdivieso, "Shakespeare Our Contemporary in 2016: Margaret Atwood's Rewriting of The Tempest in Hag-Seed," in *Yearbook of the Spanish and Portuguese Society for English Renaissance Studies*, (2017), 116.

holds true that, at some point in time at least, they were not inmates, and they were not outsiders.

Being an instrument of someone else's development is another feature shared by both Caliban and the inmates, as well as a crucial aspect of the post-colonialist theory. It is also an aspect that is handled quite straightforwardly in both *Hag-Seed* and *The Tempest*, as in both the novel and the play, the main character uses the "less knowledgeable" one to his advantage. Prospero, whose very name is symbolic of his character, prospers from Caliban's holding him in high regard, becoming the de facto ruler of the island and making Caliban his servant. Felix, on the other hand, prospers from the inmates' willingness to stage his plays with him. By actively using the inmates to assist him in his revenge against Tony, Felix and Atwood both stay true to the post-colonialist aspect of the play, according to which a colonizing nation uses the colonized one to further its own interest. Additionally, much like with Shakespeare's Prospero, Felix's main interest in *Hag-Seed* is revenge: "He's been chewing over his revenge for twelve years – it's been in the background, a constant undercurrent like an ache. [...] Suddenly revenge is so close he can actually taste it. It tastes like steak, rare."[78]

However, if one looks at the journey that Felix takes, between being driven out of the theatre company and using the inmates to stage *The Tempest* himself, it is difficult not to consider Felix to also, in a way, be a version of Caliban. In fact, if Shakespeare's Caliban is to be considered a representative of the Orient and, by extension, of the other, then Felix, during his 12 year long period of solitude, becomes exactly the same kind of the other as Caliban in *The Tempest*. Therefore, after being driven out of the theatre company, the once great Prospero is forced to become the outsider figure, Caliban. Of course, this transformation is only temporary; once Felix re-emerges, he once again turns into Prospero, using those less fortunate than him for his own, selfish gain.

While the post-colonialist theory is, in a very strict sense, concerned mainly with cultural and economic exploitation of smaller nations by large empires, I would argue that this aspect of colonialism can also happen and be showcased on a much smaller scale, i.e., the personal level. This, incidentally, is what Atwood does in *Hag-Seed*. In describing the inmates, for example, Atwood scarcely pays attention to what it was precisely that led to them being incarcerated. Yet, when she does allude to it, Atwood

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[78] Atwood, *Hag-Seed*, 72.

does so in a way that suggests that ideas, as well as trauma, can posses a person's mind and, so to speak, "colonize" it, to a degree where the person either cannot develop further, or only do so very slowly. Atwood mentions this in the following:

> Is it really helpful, Mr. Duke, to expose these damaged men – and let us tell you how very damaged they are, one way or another, many of them in childhood through abuse and neglect, and some of them would be better off in a mental institution or an asylum for recovering drug addicts, much more suitable for them than teaching them four-hundred-year-old words [...][79]

Atwood further appropriates the post-colonialist theme found in *The Tempest* by setting *Hag-Seed* in a correctional facility. In the original text, Prospero only becomes a prisoner after coming to Caliban's island and being unable to leave; Caliban, by extension, becomes a prisoner only after falling prey to Prospero's supremacy and being forced to serve him. Felix, however, is never a prisoner in the physical sense. While he does go away for 12 years, he is by no means bound to his solitude and can leave whenever he pleases. This, nevertheless, does not mean that Felix is not a prisoner, also. He is, in fact, a prisoner of his mind, and his behaviour throughout Atwood's *Hag-Seed* is motivated mainly by all that he cannot let go of emotionally. Atwood even elaborates on the colonialist nature of the setting through Felix, who, when talking to the inmates, likens prison to "any place or situation that you've been put in against your will, that you don't want to be in, and that you can't get out of."[80] Additionally, the relationship between Felix and the inmates further mirrors the relationship between Prospero and Caliban in that, much like Caliban, they have to follow Felix's direction precisely, if they want to take part in the play.

Like Prospero, Felix fulfils the role of the colonizer. However, while Prospero achieves his dominance over Caliban by verbally abusing him, Felix does so by "enchanting" the inmates, never quite dominating them but being able to persuade them to cooperate. In the original text, there is no such dynamic. Prospero's way of controlling not only Caliban, but Ariel as well, is rooted in violence, not cooperation. In spite of all this, however, it would seem that, by the end of the play, Prospero is able to achieve his goal. After using Ariel's magic to confine Antonio to the island, Prospero

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[79] Atwood, *Hag-Seed*, 79.

[80] Atwood, *Hag-Seed*, 122.

appears to be free to leave the island and return to Naples. However, his final monologue might tell a different story:

> Now my charms are all o'erthrown
> And what strength I have's mine own,
> Which is most faint: now, 'tis true,
> I must be here confined by you,
> Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
> Since I have my dukedom got
> And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
> In this bare island by your spell;
> But release me from my bands
> With the help of your good hands:
> Gentle breath of your my sails
> Must fill, or else my project fails,
> Which was to please. Now I want
> Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
> And my ending is despair,
> Unless I be relieved by prayer,
> Which pierces so that it assaults
> Mercy itself and frees all faults.
> As you from crimes would pardon'd be,
> Let your indulgence set me free.[81]

Prospero's final monologue hints at the possibility that the freedom he achieved may not be the freedom he wished for. Having got his revenge on Antonio, Prospero is free of the metaphorical prison he has been in since he was driven out of Naples – he is no longer obliged to plot his revenge and is free, alongside Miranda, to leave the island behind; or is he? In my view, the "you" in "now, 'tis true/I must be here confined by you/or sent to Naples. Let me not […] dwell/in this bare island by your spell," is not merely an instance of Prospero pleading for his freedom to return to Naples. It is, I would argue, also an instance of Shakespeare himself asking his audience to set him free, not from the island, but his role as a playwright.

[81] Shakespeare, *Bouře/The Tempest*, 136.

Since, in most of Shakespeare's comedies and fairy tales, there is a comic relief character who functions as a mirror for the audience, it does not sound out of place to me to wonder if such character could appear in *The Tempest* as well – i.e., not a comic relief character, but a character who acts as a mirror. However, in my view, the "mirror" character in *The Tempest* is not reflecting on the audience, but on the author himself. Shakespeare, who, I believe, in the final instance of the monologue is speaking through the character of Prospero, is addressing his audience both as means of saying farewell – *The Tempest* was, after all, Shakespeare's final play – and of reconciling with the audience the purpose of his work. Additionally, Shakespeare is addressing the audience from the position of a servant, that is, someone whose role it was to bring people joy. Therefore, from the point of view of the post-colonialist theory, one could view this passage as a meta commentary on the play itself, in which Shakespeare likens himself (as well as his work) to a colonized entity, while likening the audience to colonizers, having power over him. One could then view Prospero's pleas for freedom as coming not from the character, but from Shakespeare himself, as he realizes that he has nothing more to give. Nevertheless, due to how open-ended the monologue is, one can hardly make the argument that such interpretation is the correct, or the most valid one. After all, one of the most characteristic aspects of Shakespeare's work is that there are countless interpretations of his work. Furthermore, as long as these interpretations are supported by the original texts, it is all the more difficult to say which of them are valid and which are not.

Atwood's *Hag-Seed* treats the concept of revenge and letting go similarly to *The Tempest*. While there is no instance of turning the mirror on the author or the audience, Felix, too, is able to free himself from the prison of his mind. For Felix, the cathartic moment comes after he is finally able to stage *The Tempest*. Following the play's successful production, Felix is not only able to get revenge on Tony but, more importantly, come to terms with the death of his daughter, Miranda. Since Felix, unlike Prospero, is incapable of magic, Atwood cleverly conflates Ariel and Miranda into a single entity, one that fulfils the role of both Felix's daughter, and the supernatural force driving Felix's actions throughout the novel. Therefore, in letting go of Miranda's spirit, Felix achieves a feat similar to Shakespeare's Prospero, albeit in a different context.

Recontextualization, however, is one of the more crucial aspects of Atwood's text, and one that firmly grounds it in the realm of adaptation. One of the ways in which Atwood achieves recontextualization is by transposing the setting of Shakespeare's *The*

Tempest from an unspecified island to present-day Canada, which alone makes for a different reading. In spite of this, however, Atwood remains fairly faithful to the source material in *Hag-Seed*. In terms proposed by Sanders, I find it that Atwood's *Hag-Seed* is fitted primarily along the lines of appropriation, for to create such a complex and allusive adaptation of *The Tempest*, I believe Atwood must have been very closely acquainted with the source material, as well as much of the writing that was done on the play. Defining appropriation as "pivoting more on the author's goals" of what to do with the source text and "adaptations [as] more openly paying a tribute to it,"[82] Muñoz-Valdivieso, too, considers *Hag-Seed* to be an appropriation. From this, one could then categorize adaptation as an instance of reworking the original text without having to stay faithful to the original, and appropriation as a closer/close reworking of the source text.

Hag-Seed as a whole shares an analogous connection with Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Prospero's "prison" on the island is changed, by Atwood, to be an actual prison, and most of the characters represent a certain version of the original ones. This also hold true for most of the events that take place in the novel. However, one of the elements of the original play that Atwood changes outright is the element of magic. In *The Tempest*, magic acts as the true power behind the throne, as it governs over all of the characters and most events of the play. Furthermore, not only is Prospero using Ariel's magic to reach his goal, but is also his own, personal "magic," i.e., charisma and charm, which, after freeing Ariel, is the only magic he has left. In Muñoz-Valdivieso's view, "[*The Tempest]* hinges upon the belief in magic, a premise that goes against our contemporary understanding of how the world works."[83]

Nevertheless, since magic is not a property of the real world, Atwood changes it to a more commonplace element:

> Magic in Atwood's novel gets transferred to forms that contemporary readers can relate to, such as the impact and possibilities of audio-visual and digital media, the internet or the hallucinatory effects of recreational drugs—although a pervading sense remains that a key magic strand in the universe created by Atwood is the power of the theater, of performance

[82] Muñoz-Valdivieso, "Shakespeare Our Contemporary in 2016," 108.

[83] Muñoz-Valdivieso, "Shakespeare Our Contemporary in 2016," 112.

> and art to fashion alternate worlds and shape realities that have the potential to produce, like director Felix's plays in the novel, "the collective indrawn breath, the collective sigh.[84]

In this sense, it could be argued that magic is, in fact, real, and not merely a construct used in fantasy media. After all, Felix does seem to be fairly content with the idea that "it's the words that should concern," attributing to them a power that is comparable to magic. However, Atwood is likely aware of the difference between the kind of magic represented through art and language, and the kind of magic that conjures storms and binds people to a deserted island. Furthermore, defining what exactly may or may not be considered magic is a topic for another thesis, which is why, in this context, I am going to consider magic to simply be a literary device. Therefore, Atwood's choice to leave "proper" magic – as seen in *The Tempest* – out of *Hag-Seed* is appropriate, as it would not fit into the realistic story-world she created.

Structurally speaking, *Hag-Seed* and *The Tempest* are nearly identical. The ordering of the chapters mirrors the ordering of the acts in Shakespeare's original play, which is a point also brought up by Muñoz-Valdivieso, when she writes that:

> The five sections in Hag-Seed correspond to the conventional division of Shakespeare's plays into five acts and the novel adds a "Prologue" to the original play. It also includes an "Epilogue" which presents Felix, as Prospero in Shakespeare's text, after the performance of his play. The added prologue is really a recreation of 1.1: while Shakespeare begins with Prospero's foes fighting death by drowning in a tempest which is only Ariel's crafted illusion, the prologue in the novel is a prolepsis of chapter 34, entitled "Tempest," which shows the planned turmoil that sets in motion Felix's revenge.[85]

In this sense, Atwood's adaptation of *The Tempest* is a textbook example of appropriative adaptation. The author remains faithful to the original text, both in terms of how the adaptation is structured and how (most of) Shakespeare's original characters are represented. The changes that Atwood makes do not detract from the original play in any way; rather, the changes that Atwood makes help contemporise the play and make more palatable for modern audiences. This, however, should not come as a surprise, as Atwood, by her own admission, has long been a great admirer of Shakespeare's work.

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[84] Muñoz-Valdivieso, "Shakespeare Our Contemporary in 2016," 112.

[85] Muñoz-Valdivieso, "Shakespeare Our Contemporary in 2016," 116.

In fact, in much of her work besides *Hag-Seed*, such as *Cat's Eye* or *Stone Mattress*, Atwood cites Shakespeare as an inspiration, going as far as to name him her favourite author:

> Second, if you name a living author, the other living authors will be mad at you because it isn't them, but Shakespeare is dead. True, the other dead authors may be mad at you too, but even they probably won't cavil much about Shakespeare being your number one choice.[86]

The impact of *The Tempest*, reflected in the post-colonialist theory, was well recognised by Atwood. This, too, could be seen as a reason for why Atwood only diverged so little from the original text's themes, characters, structure, etc. With *Hag-Seed*, Atwood managed to create a wholly contemporary adaptation of the source text, complete with post-colonialist themes and a realistic rendering of magic. In spite of this, there are still many themes represented in Shakespeare's work beside *The Tempest* that Atwood does not touch on, such as homosexuality and feminism. There are, however, other authors adapting Shakespeare nowadays who do comment on these topics in their work: Jeanette Winterson and Angela Carter. Thus, in the following chapter of my thesis, I will first take a closer look at queer theory, before moving on with an analysis of Jeanette Winterson's adaptation of *The Winter's Tale*, *The Gap of Time*.

[86] Atwood, "Shakespeare and Me," 293.

3.3 Queer theory

It probably goes without saying that queer theory is, for the most part, interested in discussing sexuality and sexual identity as one of the many aspects of human essence. However, in addition to this personal/individual frame, contemporary queer theory has been becoming more and more socially oriented as well, with many queer theory scholars now taking social factors into consideration. In fact, in the first volume of Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, it is said that, before they were reduced to merely a private matter, sex and sexuality have long been openly discussed and accepted, practically without shame. Even that:

> […] at the beginning of the seventeenth century […] sexual practices had little need of secrecy; words were said without undue reticence, and things were done without too much concealment; one had a tolerant familiarity with the illicit, […] it was a time of direct gestures, shameless discourse, and open transgression, when anatomies were shown intermingled at will, and knowing children hung about amid the laughter of adults: it was a period when bodies 'made a display of themselves.'[87]

It would appear, then, that in the 17th century, sexuality was not yet considered an unspeakable taboo.

A major change for the worse took place in the 19th century, when Victorian bourgeoise began treating sex as a taboo; needless to say, this treatment had very little effect on the actual occurrence of sex, as it never disappeared or ceased to take place. On the other hand, it did result in sex becoming much more of a private matter, especially after – according to Foucault – "the conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction," upon which only "a single locus of sexuality was acknowledged in social space as well as at the heart of every household, but it was a utilitarian and fertile one: the parent's bedroom."[88] In this sense, it would appear that sex and sexuality in the 19th century became a property of the "holy matrimony," where the only socially acceptable way to have sex was between two people married to each other. Prostitution, although rampant during the Victorian era, was much less accepted than it was tolerated. Still, it represented one of the few ways in

[87] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: Volume 1: Introduction* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 3.

[88] Foucault, History of Sexuality, 3.

which sexuality could escape the bounds of domesticity, which is why "the 'other Victorians' seem to have surreptitiously transferred the pleasures that are unspoken into the order of things that are counted."[89]

This, among other developments regarding sex in the Victorian era, is what may have contributed to sex and sexuality receiving a negative connotation/reputation, as the only way to encounter it outside of one's home was in the frowned upon setting of a brothel. All subsequent discourse regarding sex was then similarly discouraged, namely because "modern puritanism [...] imposed its triple edict of taboo, nonexistence, and silence"[90] on anything even remotely connected to human sexuality. In spite of this, and with sex and sexuality being part of human nature, modern puritanism never quite succeeded in eradicating it from the face of the earth. Rather, Victorian suppression of anything sexual resulted in widespread frustration, and ultimately led to more and more people demanding sexual freedom.

In this respect, Foucault introduces the term "speaker's benefit" which, as I understand it, refers to a speaker's ability to, just by addressing the topic of sex and sexuality, start a dialogue regarding its perception and treatment outside of the marital setting. In Foucault's view, if sex is "condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of deliberate transgression," which is why the "person who holds forth such [...] places himself to a certain extend outside the reach of power; he upsets the established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom."[91] This anticipation, then, "explains the solemnity with which one speaks about sex nowadays."[92] It is here that one finds modern approaches to sex and sexuality reflected in Foucault's work.

It should come as no surprise that the emergence of sexual revolutions and heightened demands for sexual freedom have strong connection to both queer theory and feminism. Jonathan Harris, in *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, even argues that "queer theory derives in large part from gay and lesbian criticism, which was itself an offshoot of second-wave feminism."[93] The core thesis of feminism is, after all, rooted

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[89] Foucault, History of Sexuality, 4.

[90] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 4-5.

[91] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 6.

[92] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 6.

[93] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 124.

deeply in human rights activism, which also includes the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. It could also be said that the feminist inclusion of early LGBTQ+ activism helped the latter flourish, as the already established feminist movement was able to support and give room to the developing LGBTQ+ movement and, therefore, queer studies.

Bonnie Zimmerman, a feminist scholar of lesbian criticism and women studies[94] has, in fact, argued that lesbian criticism began its development at around the same time as feminist criticism did; according to Zimmerman, the efforts of lesbian criticism match almost perfectly with those of feminist criticism, in that they, too, attempted to "write and read from a different or 'other' perspective."[95] These efforts, then, can be easily linked to the feminist view of feminine reality since, as Zimmerman also points out, many prominent feminist authors were lesbians. For Zimmerman, the collective feminist effort of seeking a perspective that is different from that of the male-dominated majority is important namely due to its continuous exploration "of 'otherness,'" which "[suggests] dimensions previously ignored and yet necessary to understand fully the female condition and the creative work born from it."[96] Additionally, it also suggests that, apart from lesbianism and lesbian criticism, lesbian studies, too, were built on the basis of feminism.

It would seem, however, that one cannot write on lesbian criticism without also mentioning the concept of "heterosexism," which, in literary studies, refers to the practice of literary scholars to not only dismiss the female authors' lesbian orientation, but to also dismiss most of the writing that the authors contributed towards the subject of lesbianism. In Zimmerman's view, most – if not all – lesbian feminist critics believe "lesbianism [to be] a healthy lifestyle chosen by women in virtually all areas and all cultures, [striving] to eliminate the stigma historically attached to lesbianism." In this respect, Zimmerman believes that "one way to remove this stigma is to associate lesbianism with positive and desirable attributes, to divert women's attention away from

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[94] Libora Oates-Indruchová, Ženská literární tradice a hledání identit: *Antologie angloamerické feministické literární teorie*. (Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství, 2007), 76.

[95] Bonnie Zimmerman, "What Has Never Been: An Overview of Lesbian Feminist Literary Criticism," in *Feminist Studies* 7, (1981), 451.

[96] Zimmerman, "What Has Never Been," 451.

male values and toward an exclusively female communitas."[97] Not only is Zimmerman's approach important in shedding light on what is at the core of feminine issues, it also helps one understand femininity better; contrary to popular, male-dominant opinion, femininity has little to do with being weak, irrational, "dependant on males," and, generally, "the other."

Lesbianism, in fact, strives to popularise the view that female creativity should not be "defined only by [the] relation to a male world and male tradition," as well as to show "that powerful bonds between women are a crucial factor in women's lives, and that the sexual and emotional orientation profoundly affects [their] consciousness and thus [their] creativity."[98] The effects of lesbianism that Zimmerman mentions are a powerful tool for lesbian authors, scholars, and critics, guiding their writing process in a way that generates unique points of view, virtually inaccessible from the point of view of male literary tradition. In Zimmerman's view, "[exercising] this unique world view and [investigating] some of the problems, strengths, and future needs"[99] of lesbianism were what helped develop the lesbian feminist literary criticism.[100] One of the authors whom one could see as a prime example of this, due to her unconventional topics and takes regarding lesbianism and sexual relationships, is Jeanette Winterson, whose work, in my opinion, greatly enriches the lesbian feminist literary canon and whom I will discuss in more detail in the following section. Before moving on, however, let me spend a little more time discussing queer theory.

One of the most important concepts that queer theory attempts to resolve and shed light on is the concept of sexual fixity – a perception of sexuality as fixed, in contrast to sexual fluidity. A dangerous and problematic way of perceiving sexual identity, sexual fixity attempts to place a strict, concrete label on something that cannot easily be defined in strict and concrete terms; human sexuality, in fact, is extremely subjective, as every person is likely to have not only a different view of their own sexuality, but a different way of expressing it. This is also why queer theory scholars often pose question concerned with the nature of sexuality itself, as well as with how one sexuality differs from another. In "Sexualities," a paper published in *Literary*

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[97] Zimmerman, "What Has Never Been," 455.

[98] Zimmerman, "What Has Never Been," 452.

[99] Zimmerman, "What Has Never Been," 452.

[100] Zimmerman, "What Has Never Been," 452.

Theory and Criticism, edited by Patricia Waugh, Tony Purvis explores different sexualities across the sexuality spectrum, noticing that "perhaps more so now than in the recent past, theories of sex and sexualities, on the one hand, and sexual liberation manifestos and activist campaigns, on the other, demonstrate that there is no longer any pretence of unanimity over what sexualities actually are."[101] Additionally, Purvis mentions previous studies of sex and sexuality, including those penned by Foucault, and points out that many of them present one, essential problem: singularity of approach. Purvis notes that, in many modern human societies and cultures, there exist so many questions and issues regarding sexuality the addressing of which alone helps to ultimately "problematize and pluralize how these terms are perceived."[102] This, to avoid any misunderstanding, means that while it is problematic to for a person to view human sexuality as a set of fixed constructs, it is just as problematic for science and philosophy to categorize and regard it as such.

One of the authors to actively scrutinize the way in which terminology regarding sex and sexuality is perceived, is the American philosopher and queer theorist, Judith Butler. Butler criticizes Freudian psychoanalysis due to its treatment of the Oedipal complex as an innate biological feature, which – in Butler's view, at least – points toward an inherent heterosexual identity in all people, a hypothesis Butler rejects. Instead, in *Gender Trouble*, she argues that the Oedipal complex – along with its inherent taboo regarding incestual relations – is a societal construct, the role of which is not to "repress [any] primary dispositions, but effectively create the distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary' dispositions to describe and reproduce the distinction between a legitimate heterosexuality and an illegitimate homosexuality."[103] Butler, who herself was influenced by post-structuralism and Derridean deconstructionist movement, maintained that the taboo regarding incestual relations correlated more with the concept of social construction that it did with biology.

Freud's idea of the Oedipal complex entails the child first experiencing sexual feeling for a family member (in this case, the mother), before having to supress this

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[101] Tony Purvis, "Sexualities," in *Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Patricia Waugh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 781.

[102] Purvis, "Sexualities," 781.

[103] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Rutledge, 1990), 99.

feeling in order to successfully procreate. In Butler's view, however, it is this repression of a sexual desire for a family member that, at the same time, generates the repression of homosexuality, ultimately giving rise to "a taboo against homosexuality as well."[104] In fact, Butler's approach to – or, the disagreement with – Freudian psychoanalysis also attempts to explain sexuality prior to Freud's establishing the term "Oedipal complex;" She argues that experiencing sexual desire for a family member in early childhood would, necessarily, entail experiencing it for the mother and the father alike, not just one or the other. Butler, therefore, argues not for an inherent heterosexuality, but an inherent bisexuality in children, which arises as "the consequence of childrearing practices in which parents of both sexes are present and presently occupied with child care and in which the repudiation of femininity no longer serves as a precondition of gender identity for both men and women."[105]

Still, in spite of their differing approaches, both Freudian psychoanalysis and sexual historiography accept the fact that the taboo regarding incestuous relationships is of highly generative character. Butler, however, furthers the conversation by explaining the hierarchical position of bisexuality and homosexuality in contrast to heterosexuality. She argues that "within psychoanalysis, bisexuality and homosexuality are taken to be primary libidinal dispositions, and heterosexuality is the laborious construction based upon their gradual repression."[106] However, if one were to consider heterosexuality as the default human orientation and bisexuality and homosexuality as its conscious deviations, it would necessarily have to follow that the said deviations are as much a part of the norm as the norm itself. Or, in Butler's words:

> […] the bisexuality that is said to be 'outside' the Symbolic and that serves as the locus of subversion is, in fact, a construction within the terms of that constitutive discourse, the construction of an 'outside' that is nevertheless fully 'inside,' not a possibility beyond culture, but a concrete cultural possibility that is refused and redescribed as impossible."[107]

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[104] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 99.

[105] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 100.

[106] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 105.

[107] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 105.

This, however, is not to say that the only questions posed by queer theory are those that are interested in defining and generating sexual identities – quite the contrary, in fact. In today's world, the concept of human sexuality is an extremely subjective one, and almost impossible to pigeonhole. Purvis, for one, explains that "in queer theory, sexualities are conceptualized in terms of fluidity, contradiction, and indeterminacy; desire is bodily and embodied, but it is also linguistic and discursive; and sex is de-linked from gender such that sexuality is no longer understood within the framework of the heterosexual matrix."[108] This, too, makes sexuality (and the modern conception of it) an interesting lens through which to look at Shakespeare's work.

It is well known that Shakespeare's work is filled to the brim with unconventional tropes, with crossdressing and gender fluidity being but two of them. It is not at all uncommon for male Shakespearian characters to dress in women's clothes, and for female characters to disguise themselves as male. In fact, it is this ever-present gender fluidity that, among other unconventional aspects of Shakespeare's plays, betrays a certain queerness in the author's work, one often brought up by contemporary queer theory scholars who find in Shakespeare's work the author's "own version of sexual pedagogy."[109] Regarding Shakespeare's sonnets, for instance, the queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick points to the so-called "homosociality," which describes the relationships and bond between characters (predominately male), and what the position of the woman is in these relationships.

In *Between Men (English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire)*, Sedgwick focuses on the relationship between homosociality and homosexuality, stressing that the two are actually referring to different concepts. In Sedgwick's view, the term homosociality can be "applied to such activities as 'male bonding,' which may, in our society, be characterized by intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality."[110] And while the two are, in fact, different, there is an obvious connection between the terms, as homosociality does have its roots in homosexuality. Yet, while homosexuality indicates a romantic or sexual relationship between people of the same sex,

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[108] Purvis, "Sexualities," 805.

[109] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 126.

[110] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men (English Literature and Male Homosocial desire).* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2016), 25.

homosociality stands for a more fluid, ambiguous relation between men that may or may not include romance and sex.

For Sedgwick, "to draw the "homosocial" back to the orbit of "desire" of the potentially erotic […] is to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual – a continuum whose visibility, for men, in our society, is radically disrupted."[111] This notion, in my view, suggests that men who engage in homosocial relationships may alter their behaviour when in public, as they dread being labelled homosexuals. The dread they experience is, nevertheless, rooted in the male-oriented homophobic stereotype that "showing one's emotions is gay," and a sign of weakness. It is all the more powerful when considering the fact that homosexuality, in the western world, at least, has not always been socially accepted.

To further her claims, Sedgwick explains that the homosocial-homosexual continuum discussed in her work does not reflect biology or genetics. Sedgwick, in fact, is adamant about "not mean[ing] to discuss genital homosexual desire as 'at the root of' other forms of male homosociality – but rather [as] a strategy for making generalizations about, and marking historical differences in, the *structure* of men's relations with other men."[112] This is a crucial point to pay attention to, as non-homosexual bonds between men present a crucial aspect of the male identity, an aspect that is jeopardized by skewed societal perspectives. Fortunately, however, the concept of homosociality and queer theory at large try to address and resolve this problem, particularly since fighting against prejudice and stereotype is the core idea for both.

Nevertheless, the reason why Sedgwick spends so much time discussing "male-male" relationships in *Between Men* and only pays little attention to "female-female" relationships is that, in Sedgwick's view, relationships between women are subjected to much less misunderstanding, scrutiny, and hatred than their male counterparts; she writes that:

> […] the diacritical opposition between the "homosocial" and the "homosexual" seems to be much less thorough and dichotomous for women, in our society, than for men. At this particular historical moment, an intelligible continuum of aims, emotions, and valuations links lesbianism with the other forms of women's attention to women: the bond of mother

[111] Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 26.

[112] Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 26.

> and daughter, for instance, the bond of sister and sister, women's friendship, "networking," and the active struggles of feminism. The continuum is crisscrossed with deep discontinuities—with much homophobia, with conflicts of race and class—but its intelligibility seems now a matter of simple common sense.[113]

Sedgwick's concept of homosociality is, essentially, a mirror to René Girard's concept of complex image mimetic desire, which Girard, a French anthropologist and social scientist, saw as represented in "the erotic triangle, which features two rivals and shared love object."[114] Curiously enough, here the most crucial aspect is not the love triangle itself, but the rivals' bond within the triangle, which "can be just as intense, even more so, than that with the beloved."[115] Additionally, the concept of the love triangle can also be projected onto the story of Oedipus, the inspiration behind the Oedipal complex, where the son is fighting for the mother's affection with the father.

The love triangle can also be identified throughout all of Shakespeare's work. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, it is the de-facto theme of the entire play; in *The Winter's Tale* it is also present, albeit in somewhat different capacity. In spite of this, Jeanette Winterson – in her adaptation of *The Winter's Tale*, *The Gap of Time* – leans into this "love triangularity" of the play fully, producing a novel that utilizes several different aspects of queer theory, such as homosexuality, homosociality, and gender fluidity. In the following chapter, then, I aim to analyse Jeannette Winterson's *The Gap of Time* from the point of view of queer theory and find out how (and if at all) Winterson's contemporary, queer retelling of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* helped contemporize the play.

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[113] Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 26-27.

[114] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 126.

[115] Harris, *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, 126.

3.4 Jeanette Winterson's adaptation of *The Winter's Tale – The Gap of Time*

In *Between Men*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick demonstrated the concept of homosociality using Shakespeare's sonnets. This, however, does not mean that the concept of homosociality itself – or that any other concept, for that matter – can only be demonstrated using such a limited framework. I, for one, would argue that Sedgwick's insistence of "sticking with" the sonnets for her demonstration of homosociality is a little limited, considering that the vast majority of Shakespeare's catalogue gives one the opportunity to study virtually every humanities-related subject imaginable, no matter how niche. This, too, is true for queer theory. In *Hamlet*, for example, one could easily study the relationship between Hamlet and his mother as representative of the Oedipal complex; in *The Merchant of Venice*, the concept of cross-dressing can be explored. And, in *The Winter's Tale*, one can study the aforementioned concept of homosociality.

Jeanette Winterson, in her adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, *The Gap of Time*, approaches the original play mainly from the point of view of homosexuality, while also managing to incorporate several aspects of the broader queer theory into the mix. However, in my analysis of *The Gap of Time*, I intend to focus on a very specific aspect of queer theory, i.e., the aforementioned concept of homosociality. In fact, I believe that a substantial part of Winterson's novel can be analysed from a homosocial perspective rather easily, as a lot of its narrative is dedicated to following the relationship between Leo, Zeno, and Hermione Delannet, a.k.a. MiMi.

The love triangle between Leo, Zeno, and MiMi is interesting in how completely it corresponds to the desire continuum as proposed by Sedgwick. However, while the main focus of the novel is, undoubtedly, the homosexual relationship/desire between Leo and Zeno, I find it that an additional layer of homosociality can also be pointed out, particularly in how the closeted gay man, Leo, treats and perceives his wife, MiMi. This homosocial aspect of the three's relationship is not unique to Winterson's novel – in fact, it can also be found in the original play, be it in a more subtle, more subdued manner. In *The Winter's Tale*, the relationship between Leontes and Polixenes is never explicitly disclosed as being homosexual. Nevertheless, there are certain hints that Shakespeare allows his audience that indicate the two's bond to be more than friendly.

When, for example, Leontes tries to persuade Polixenes to stay in Sicily a while longer, Polixenes answers with the following:

> Press me not, beseech you, so.
> There is no tongue that moves, none, none i' the world,
> So soon as yours could win me. So it should now,
> Were there necessity in your request, although
> Do even drag me homeward. Which to hinder
> Were in your love a whip to me; my stay
> To you a charge and trouble. To save both,
> Farewell, our brother.[116]

Here, Shakespeare's use of the word "love" could indicate a twofold meaning, as on the one hand, the word "love" can refer to romantic love and on the other, the word "love" can simply refer to a close friendship. Nevertheless, since Shakespeare's use of language can by no means be regarded as haphazard – and considering the way the relationship between Leontes and Polixenes develops following the above interaction – I would argue that Shakespeare's use of the word "love" points not only to the two's brotherly connection, but also a possible love affair. In fact, the possibility of there being a love affair between Leontes and Polixenes grows after Hermione is able to persuade Polixenes to stay in Sicily, as in the wake of her persuasion, Leontes immediately begins to suspect Polixenes and Hermione of having an affair. His suspicion further arises after realizing that Polixenes, having been in Sicily for a period of nine months, could possibly be the father of Hermione's child.

> Thou want'st a rough pash and the shoots that I have,
> To be full like me.
> […] With what's unreal thou coactive art,
> And fellow'st nothing. Then 'tis very credent
> Thou mayst co-join with something; and thou dost,
> And that beyond commission, and I find it,
> And that to the infection of my brains
> And hardening of my brows.[117]

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[116] William Shakespeare, *Zimní pohádka/The Winter's Tale* (Praha: Romeo, 2017), 18.

[117] Shakespeare, *Zimní pohádka/The Winter's Tale*, 24.

It is very clear that Leontes, believing he has been made into a cuckold, is angry with both Hermione and Polixenes; what, in my view, is not very clear, is where does this fury come from. And while the primary instinct might be to blame Leontes' anger solely on his belief that his wife betrayed him with a man he had considered his brother, I would argue that another point of view is available. In my view – informed by Sedgwick's concept of homosociality – Leontes is not angry with Hermione and Polixenes for possibly having an affair, but for leaving him out of it.

In fact, if one were to look at the relationship between Leontes and Polixenes as one born out of mutual desire, then Leontes' angered reaction at the thought of Polixenes and Hermione having an affair could, logically, be attributed to him being jealous of Hermione having access to an aspect of the relationship with Polixenes that Leontes does not. This, of course, is only a matter of speculation. However, for a relationship that, by any measure, shows a great amount of homosociality, the homosexual aspect of the relationship is not entirely out of the question. Since few of Shakespeare's original texts can be tied to specific historical events, many claims regarding these texts can be made without necessarily sounding outlandish, or obscure, an observation that Sedgwick also makes, regarding:

> [...] the tradition of reading [the sonnets] plucked from history and, indeed, from factual grounding, there are all the notorious mysteries of whether they are sequence, when they were written, to whom and to how many people addressed, how autobiographical, how conventional, why published, etc., etc.[118]

Here, one could easily refer back to Margaret Atwood's comment on Shakespeare's works, which she regarded as being almost infinitely adaptable and always available for alternative endings. In this sense, applying the concept of homosociality to *The Winter's Tale* is just another alternative way of viewing/reading the play. And while Jeanette Winterson likely did not write her adaptation of *The Winter's Tale*, *The Gap of Time*, with the concept of homosociality in mind, it does strike one to find just how strong the novel's connection to the concept is.

In my view, both Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and Winterson's *The Gap of Time* illustrate the homosocial-homosexual continuum similarly. In *The Winter's Tale*,

[118] Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 57-58.

the conflict proper begins with the involvement of the female character, Queen Hermione, being the reason for Polixenes' prolonged stay in Sicily, and is then further amplified by Hermione's pregnancy and Leontes' paranoia. In *The Gap of Time*, the conflict, too, begins with Hermione (MiMi), whom Leo suspects of having an affair with Zeno, as, in his view, the two are curiously close. It is clear, then, that in both the original text and the adaptation, it is the female's role in the love/desire triangle that is the most crucial. In Sedgwick's analysis of Shakespeare's sonnets, the author recognizes that the sonnets do not exist in a vacuum, but are being "played out, economically, by the smallest number of characters – in this case four, the poet, a fair youth, a rival poet and a dark lady."[119]

This "dark lady," described by Sedgwick as an evil entity that brings darkness and despair, is, first and foremost, a temptress. Now, if one were to isolate the concept of the "dark lady," take it outside of the realm of the sonnets and apply it, for example, to *The Winter's Tale* (and its adaptation), I believe it would fit well with the character of Hermione (MiMi), as she does seem to fulfil the role of the temptress, being at the heart of Leontes/Leo and Polixenes/Zeno's conflict.

However, it would seem to me that, rather than being incentivized by Hermione/MiMi's actions, the conflict between Leontes/Leo and Polixenes/Zeno is incentivized by the mere presence of a female. In *The Winter's Tale*, for example, Hermione's presence leads Leontes to fabricate a story of adultery and cuckoldry, of which he is the victim. And, while it is true that, in *The Gap of Time*, Leo's mistrust of both Zeno and MiMi stems from his and Zeno's past sexual relationship, he *does* only begin to delude himself after noticing how strong the bond between Zeno and MiMi really is. Thus, in both *The Winter's Tale* and *The Gap of Time*, the real relationship acts as the cornerstone for an "invented [world]," in which the characters "could live"[120] without fear, shame, insecurities, or anyone else.

Investigating both the play and the novel from the homosocial perspective, one can make the claim that both Leo and Leontes create their imaginary worlds because "they [do not] want to be like the other boys," and "because they [are not] like the other

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[119] Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 58.

[120] Jeanette Winterson, *The Gap of Time* (London: Penguin Random House. 2015), 27.

boys."[121] This, unfortunately, is the reality for many closeted gay men who, while unable to fully admit to their sexuality in the real world, create runaway places in order to express themselves and form relationships. It is not entirely uncommon, however, for these fantasy relationships to deteriorate once they are taken out of the fantasy realm and into the real world, partially due to the oppression that same-sex relationships still face. Some closeted gay men may even try to suppress their homosexuality by forming a "fake" relationship with a woman, as means of "keeping appearances up."

This issue, I would argue, is precisely the one to be found in Winterson's novel. The intense, sexual relationship Leo and Zeno shared in college was, eventually, silenced, and Leo moved on to a new life with MiMi. This choice on Leo's part unwittingly put MiMi in the position of a decoy, a "make-believe" wife in Leo's alternative life whose role is just to reflect any possible suspicion regarding Leo's sexuality. Zeno, after his and Leo's relationship fell apart, also married a woman. However, by the time that the novel takes place, Zeno no longer lives with the woman and his relationship with their son, Zel, is beyond complicated. Still, Zeno's sexuality presents a much smaller problem for him than it does for Leo. His sexuality is put on full display in a videogame that Zeno is the creator of, The Gap of Time, an imaginary landscape where Zeno can express himself. The videogame's main selling point, according to the novel, is its unconventional approach to sex, sexuality, and the fluid choice of sexual partners:

> […] 'The Angels have two, four or six wings. Some of the wings have eye. Angels have two dicks.'
> 'Now you're talking,' said Leo. 'So all the Angels are male?'
> 'No. But they have a double dick.'
> 'So who do they fuck?'
> 'Whoever they can. It makes no difference; they are sterile. Angels are made, not born – like vampires, I guess.'[122]

Zeno's conception of sexuality, as presented through the videogame he is making, does not only have the power to challenge the societally restricted constructs of human

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[121] Winterson, *The Gap of Time*, 27.

[122] Winterson, *The Gap of Time*, 38.

sexuality – it is also capable of breaking the old-fashioned view of heteronormativity, be it in a shocking way. And while Zeno's Angels are likely never going to leave the confines of their virtual homeland, their inclusion in the novel alone is enough to challenge the established theories regarding human sexuality, and to show that some of these theories, such as Foucault's, for example, have their limits. The concept, for instance, of sexual identity stemming from social experience does not appear to have any bearing on the virtual/fantastical world, where one can identify as anything they please. This, interestingly enough, also directly supports the claims made by queer theory at large, which already view sexual identity as a societal construct, for, if the human mind is capable of creating a novel sexual identity for itself in a temporary virtual/fantastical setting, it can probably also do it in the real one.

Aside from the many homosocial and homosexual elements to be found in *The Gap of Time*, the novel also includes other aspects of queer theory that can be traced throughout, such as the aforementioned Foucauldian concept of sexual identity stemming from an individual's social experience. In *The Gap of Time*, this concept is mirrored – to an extent, at least – through Leo's character. Leo, who is a successful businessman, has a reputation that could come under scrutiny, were anyone to find out he truly is a homosexual. Therefore, Leo constantly puts on the guise of a heterosexual, for which he is criticized by Zeno, who, in opposition to Leo, refers to himself as at least being "normal, […] not gay pretending to be straight or straight pretending to be gay."[123] This, however, is something that Leo is incapable of, as for him, supressing his homosexual nature is a matter of protecting his position and, in turn, life.

Now, in "Shakespeare out contemporary in 2016," Sofía Muñoz-Valdivieso regards the use of a videogame as a storytelling device in *The Gap of Time* as similar to the use of magic in *Hag-Seed*. In her view, "Winterson's *The Gap of Time* resorts to video to capture some of the unreal atmosphere of a play in which, among other things, Time enters with an hourglass."[124] Through the device of the videogame, Winterson is able to manifest an alternative reality and use it to guide the events of the novel. In this way, each of the characters is allowed to, in a particular way, interact with the world as they would with the real one, were they given free reign over it. Winterson,

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[123] Winterson, *The Gap of Time*, 36.

[124] Muñoz-Valdivieso, "Shakespeare Our Contemporary in 2016," 112.

additionally, does this herself, by showing how flexible and modifiable the concept of reality truly is, especially when experienced through one's imagination.

Shakespeare, too, achieves a similar effect, albeit not with the use of a videogame. In *The Winter's Tale*, a similar alternative reality is formed when Leontes, who, after imprisoning his wife for (not) being unfaithful to him, is told by Paulina that Hermione had passed. It is only a ruse, however, as Hermione had merely gone catatonic, after which Paulina hid her in her home for sixteen years. By the end of the play, Hermione is disguised as a statue by Paulina and, after Leontes finally admits to all of his wrongdoings, she "magically" comes back to life:

> As now she might have done,
> So much to my good comfort, as it is
> Now piercing to my soul. O, thus she stood,
> Even with such life of majesty, warm life,
> As now it coldly stands, when first I woo'd her!
> I am ashamed. Does not the stone rebuke me
> For being more stone than it? O royal piece,
> There's magic in thy majesty, which has
> My evils conjured to remembrance and
> From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,
> Standing like stone with thee.
> […] 'Tis time; descend; be stone no more; approach;
> Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come,
> I'll fill your grave up. Stir, nay, come away,
> Bequeath to death your numbness, for from him
> Dear life redeems you. You perceive she stirs:
> Hermione coms down.
> Start not; her actions shall be holy as
> You hear my spell is lawful. (To Leontes) Do not shun her
> Until you see her die again; for then
> You kill her double. Nay, present your hand:
> When she was young you woo'd; now in age
> Is she become the suitor?[125]

[125] Shakespeare, *Zimní pohádka/The Winter's Tale*, 182, 186, 188.

Here, Shakespeare utilizes a similar illusion as Winterson does in *The Gap of Time*. Leontes, who for sixteen years had believed he caused his wife's death, was bound to an alternative reality and, upon Hermione's return "from the dead," he is once again allowed to enter real world. The difference is that, while Winterson's illusion is spatial, the illusion thought up by Shakespeare is optical, as Hermione is never really turned into a statue.

As an adaptation, then, *The Gap of Time* is also a parallel world to that of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. Winterson is closely observant of all the aspects of the original text and, similarly to Atwood's *Hag-Seed*, does not depart from the source material substantially. In fact, rather than changing particular aspects of the original's story, Winterson's – like Atwood's – adaptation mainly only recontextualizes the societal and cultural aspects of it, and emphasizes the possible homoerotic aspect of the original. As such, Winterson's novel is much closer to being an appropriation of the original text, i.e., an adaptation that deviates little from the source material, rather than an adaptation proper, a text that is merely inspired by the original while changing it substantially.

3.5 Feminist theory

Since its modern origin in the early 20th century, feminism and feminist theory have both undergone significant changes. What began with a group of women who, tired of patriarchal oppression, were attacking the establishment and trying to establish for themselves the right to vote, is now a world-renowned movement, advocating not only for the rights of women, but the rights of many other marginalized communities and groups. In fact, the multidisciplinary nature of feminism is already an established fact nowadays, propagated by many scholars of feminist theory. Wilfred Guerin, for example, in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, notes that feminism is "no longer […] presumed to have a single set of assumptions, and it is definitely no longer merely the 'ism' of white, educated, bourgeois, heterosexual Anglo-American women, as it once seemed to be."[126] However, while both feminism and the feminist theory *did* experience growth and modification since their 1910s conception, the same cannot be said for feminist literary criticism which, for a long time, had remained virtually uncodified.

In "Feminist Criticism in The Wilderness," Elaine Showalter states that, "until very recently, feminist criticism has not had a theoretical basis; it has been an empirical orphan in the theoretical storm."[127] Additionally, in Fiona Tolan's "Feminism," published in *Literary Theory and Criticism*, edited by Patricia Waugh, the author makes the claim that feminism only "began to address literary texts in the 1970s," also claiming that:

> […] feminism can no longer be accurately described as a theory–implying a single and coherent trajectory of thought. Rather, feminism should be understood as a discourse: a discussion of multiple related ideas. [This is the case because] when feminist discourse began to address literary texts in the 1970s, new questions arose about the nature of the woman writer and how she differed from her male counterpart, about what it meant to write as a woman and what it meant to read as a woman.[128]

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[126] Wilfred L Guerin, *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2005), 222.

[127] Elaine Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," in *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 8, no. 2, (1981), 180.

[128] Fiona Tolan, "Feminism," in *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. by Patricia Waugh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 588.

Showalter, who – much like Tolan – recognized that female writing and reading was different from male writing and reading, went on to note that both female reading and female writing should be treated as separate by feminist criticism. In fact, in "Feminine Criticism in The Wilderness," Showalter notes that, over time, "feminist criticism has gradually shifted its center from revisionary readings to a sustained investigation of literature by women."[129] In this respect, one could describe feminist criticism as having gradually shifted from being interested in analysing feminine reading of literature, to analysing female literature as such. This approach, in Showalter's view, is composed mainly of "subjects [such as] history, styles, themes, genres, and structures of writing by women; the psychodynamics of female creativity; the trajectory of the individual or collective female career; and the evolution and laws of female literary tradition."[130] And while this shift was, in many respects, a necessary one, it also posed an important problem regarding terminology, namely that none had been previously established. Thus, Showalter coined a new term to accommodate this gap: "gynocritics."

In Showalter's view, gynocritics differs from the feminist critique in that, "unlike the feminist critique, [it] offers many theoretical opportunities […] to see women's writing as [its] primary subject."[131] This, in turn, "forces [one] to make the leap to a new conceptual vantage point and to redefine the nature of the theoretical problem."[132] This "theoretical problem" that Showalter is referring to, is figuring out what exactly constitutes "women's writing;" what lies at the core of the discipline itself and why, if at all, is it necessary to treat it as a "distinct literary group."[133] In short, however, the importance of gynocritics lies in its recognition and representation of women, both artistic and political. And, while some scholars, like Jonathan Harris, already attribute this focus on representation to feminism, I would argue that gynocritics stresses the importance of female representation much more completely, to the point of it being the approach's most important feature.

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[129] Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," 184.

[130] Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," 184-185.

[131] Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," 185.

[132] Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," 185.

[133] Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," 185.

The reasons for this are far from arbitrary. One of them, the patriarchal tradition, which made it difficult (if not outright impossible) for female literature to be published as well as produced, led many great female authors to be forgotten. Dale Spender, in "Women and Literary History," published in *Mothers of the Novel*, notes that history itself was often unkind to female authors, as they were frequently forced out of it – a practice that, according to Spender, gradually crossed over into academia, as well. In fact, Spender notes that, during her years at university – which, she notes, she "had no reason to suspect" of being peculiarly biased or limited"[134] – she noticed that an entire literary canon of women, who were writing novels long before the comprehensive concept of a novel was even established, was missing. Spender was then able to discover a substantial amount of forgotten, 17th century texts, many of which were, demonstratively, penned by women, thereby refuting the myth that it was "men had created the novel and that there were no women novelists (or none of note) before Jane Austen."[135] In "Women and Literary History," she estimates the number of these texts to be:

> [...] about two thousand in all, by the end of the century. It is not possible to make definitive statements about how many of these two thousand novels were written by women, and how many by men. In quite a few cases, the sex of the author remains unknown – particularly because of the penchant for anonymous publications, a practice, it must be noted, which was more likely to temp (particularly modest) women rather than men. But even if the 'sex unknown' authors are subtracted from the list of novelists of the 1700s, the number of women novelists and theirs works which remain is little short of astonishing, given that we have been led to believe that women played no part in these productions.[136]

The appeal of anonymity and, later on, pseudonymity, is easy to understand, considering that, in the 17th century, a sizeable portion of female writing was either ignored or prohibited. As such, it is not entirely out of the realm of possibility to assume that many of the anonymous novels discovered by Spender were, in fact, written by women. Additionally, it is rather likely that many of these novels were written long before authors like Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, or Henry Fielding, began to be

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[134] Dale Spender, "Women and Literary History," in *Mothers of the Novel* (London: Pandora Press, 1986), 16.

[135] Spender, "Women and Literary History," 16.

[136] Spender, "Women and Literary History," 18.

regarded as the "fathers"[137] of the form. In Spender's view, many male literary scholars ignore female authors solely on the grounds of their writing's lack of quality, which, in their eyes, renders the writing undeserving of coverage. In other words, Spender says, "women writing does not count because it was written by women.[138]

And yet, it is exactly this thorough examination of female writing that, in my view, forms the basis of Showalter's gynocritics, as by thoroughly examining female writing, it gives the feminist discourse back the opportunities stolen from it. In "Dancing through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism," Annette Kolodny makes a similar claim, noting that both the rediscovered female representation and focus on female writing "promised a radical reshaping of [the] concepts of literary history and [...] a new chapter in understanding the development of women's literary tradition."[139] As such, it was through the radical revision of older writing, emphasizing a complex analysis of feminine discourse, through which the foundations of gynocritics were established.

The representation of women in literary discourse is more closely addressed in Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*. There, Butler talks mainly about the political representation of women, arguing that the two – i.e., literary and political representation – are, to an extent, contradictory to one-another. She notes that "politics and representation are controversial terms. On the one hand, representation serves as the operative term within a political process that seeks to extend visibility and legitimacy to women as political subjects; on the other hand, representation is the normative function of a language which is said either to reveal or to distort what is assumed to be true about the category of women."[140] Nevertheless, in spite of the said contradiction, the concept of representation as a whole sits at the very base of feminist theory. In Butler's view, representation is, in fact, especially "important[,] considering the pervasive cultural condition in which women's lives were either misinterpreted or not interpreted at all."[141]

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[137] Spender, "Women and Literary History," 19.

[138] Spender, "Women and Literary History," 19.

[139] Annette Kolodny, "Dancing through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism," in *Feminist Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, (1980), 2.

[140] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 2.

[141] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 2.

For Dale Spender, however, this misinterpretation (as well as the complete lack of female interpretation) is less of a cultural and more a historical issue, as "in the eighteenth century it was not known that women did not count. Quite the reverse. Charlotte Lenox, Mary Wollstonecraft, Fanny Burney, Elizabeth Inchbald, Mary Hays, Amelia Opie and Maria Edgeworth were not just 'actually' the majority, they were the *esteemed* majority."[142] What, in Spender's view, also proves that the condition Butler mentions is not "pervasive," is that the disappearance of the early prestige female authors used to experience was, indeed, a gradual process. And, although there may not be a single, unifying reason as to why this gradual decline in popularity befell female writers, one possible explanation could well be the growing presence of the patriarchy, which, with its focus on masculinity and power, rendered the once-popular femininity lacking, disadvantageous, and limited.

The growing presence of masculinity did not, however, bring an end to women writing. In fact, during the first wave of feminism – which Elaine Showalter calls the feminine wave – female authors began "imitat[ing] the dominant male tradition."[143] By relying on male pseudonyms and avoiding writing that was "subtle and elusive [in] nature,"[144] female authors began to emerge once more. Yet, it was their gradual need to specify and diverge from the dominant, male writing style that ultimately led to female writing being labelled as submissive and, in a way, even inferior to male writing. There were even some scholars of the psychoanalytic approach to literature who, in fact, described female writing as "lie[ing] in its troubled and even tormented relationship to female identity."[145] Additionally, they saw "the woman writer" as "experienc[ing] her own gender as 'painful obstacle or even debilitating inadequacy,'" with "[t]he nineteenth-century woman writer inscrib[ing] her own sickness, her madness, her anorexia, her agoraphobia, and her paralysis in the texts."[146] These scholars, in other words, only saw female writing as characterizable by illness, or madness, or both.

This concept of an inherent, feminine madness is addressed by Showalter in "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist

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[142] Spender, "Women and Literary History," 20.

[143] Guerin, *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, 224.

[144] Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," 186.

[145] Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," 194-195.

[146] Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," 194-195.

Criticism," where she focuses on one of Shakespeare's tragic female characters, i.e., *Hamlet*'s Ophelia. For Showalter, Ophelia's madness "is a product of female body and female nature, perhaps that nature's purest form."[147] What I believe Showalter is suggesting here is that, in male literary critique, madness and insufficiency are often viewed as by-products of the female body and of nature, ones that are manifested biologically, internally, and unavoidably, as opposed to male madness, which is external, cultural, and metaphysical.[148] As such, then, Ophelia and Hamlet's representations of femininity and masculinity are, respectively, two sides of the same coin, where Ophelia is all that Hamlet is not, and vice versa.

In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir expresses a similar view as Elaine Showalter does on women and femininity, with the exception of viewing male and female relationships as part of a spectrum. For de Beauvoir, "the relation of the two sexes is not quite like the that of two electrical poles, for *man* represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate the human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limited criteria, without reciprocity.[149] With this in mind, it is easy to see why the female style of writing was considered *having* to be avoided, as it was believed that madness, irrationality, and illness, were bound to seep into it. Due to this, women authors had to supress their unique voices and, instead, imitate male writing patterns, just so that they could have the opportunity of breaking into the literary canon.

The second wave of feminism, which is referred to as the feminist wave, focused less on the interpretation of female literature and more on other areas of life in which women demanded equality, such as education and the workplace. The third, female wave of feminism began where the second wave ended, with its main focus, once again, being equal rights for women; needless to say, the third wave of feminism continues to this day. It is also in this wave, however, that feminism goes through what, arguably, is its largest expansion yet – the redefinition of what it means to be a woman. Peprník, in *Směry literární interpretace XX. století*, elaborates on how Virginia Woolf's "A Room

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[147] Elaine Showalter, "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism," in *Shakespeare and the Questions of theory*, ed. by Geoffrey H. Hartman and Patricia Parker (New York: Routledge, 1985), 80.

[148] Showalter, "Representing Ophelia," 80.

[149] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (London: Vintage Books, 1989), 15.

of One's Own" and "Three Guineas," and Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, all expand on the concept of gender, and explain that a woman is not "female" by merely the will of nature. In fact, femininity is a property that is acquired through socialization. He also notes that Woolf herself "perceives both female and male roles as conventional and inappropriate," and that "she seeks the journey towards the synthetic version of androgyny."[150] De Beauvoir, too, sees femininity as a synthetic, societal construct, in that she regards "the female identity as something that was forced on women after everything else was disassembled by men."[151] With this in mind, one could easily make the claim that Woolf and de Beauvoir's comments regarding femininity were instrument in forming the late-20th century feminism and that they, also, helped lay the foundation of what, nowadays, is known as gender studies.

The third wave of feminism also helped influence feminist literary critique in which Shakespeare, interestingly enough, plays a major role. In *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories*, for example, Phyllis Rackin and Jean E. Howard observe that many of Shakespeare's historical plays are more concerned with male than with female characters. Admittedly, historical plays are, by definition, based on history, which did "not deal with private and domestic matters, but with public matters and affairs of state."[152] And since, in Shakespeare's time, most affairs of state were run predominately by men, it is not hard to understand why the plays in question focus on male characters as much as they do.

The affairs that *were* considered more feminine, on the other hand, were the domestic ones. This, however, does not mean that no female characters appear in Shakespeare's historical plays; they do, and – for Rackin and Howard – it is "important to examine how the roles assigned to women change,"[153] i.e., how society in general, and today's society specifically, views Shakespeare's female characters and their roles in Shakespeare's plays. Furthermore, such examination is necessary not only with Shakespeare's historical plays, but with all the other plays written by the author,

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[150] Michal Peprník, *Směry literární intepretace XX. století* (Olomouc, 2004), 215.

[151] Peprník, Směry literární interpretace XX. století, 215.

[152] Phyllis Rackin and Jean E. Howard, Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories (London: Rutledge, 2002), 20.

[153] Rackin, Howard, *Engendering a Nation,* 20.

including fairy tale plays. From the feminist perspective, then, what Rackin and Howard consider to be the most important is:

> […] is not primarily images of women they construct (which are relatively few and often sketchy), but rather the impact the plays have had on the way we imagine gender and sexual difference, institution of marriage, and the gulf between "public" and "private" life, these are part of the legacy affecting the lives of all women who inhabit the cultures these plays helped to shape.[154]

This change in perspective of women and their position in society is a crucial aspect of Shakespearian adaptations. In my view, one of the major aspects of feminist theory is observing and tracking the evolution of female position in society. More specifically, it looks at whether the position of women in society is changing or not, what exactly does the inequality between the sexes stem from, how is it possible for an oppressive system to supress female experience, etc. Elaine Showalter, in "Representing Ophelia," shows how the male image of women is problematic and puts not only female characters, but women in general, in a position where their worth is derived solely from whether men desire them or not. This, understandably, is an issue not only in literary criticism, but society and culture as such.

However, while many female Shakespearian characters have definitely been backgrounded by certain literary and academic movements, such as Lacanian psychoanalysis, Showalter notes that both feminism and the feminist theory offer a way for female characters (and women in general) to be foregrounded. This foregrounding, nevertheless, is not meant to glorify women; quite the contrary, in fact. Portraying an evil female character as good and angelic based solely on her gender would be un-feminist, particularly as feminism strives to portray women as they truly are. This, too, was pointed out by Margaret Atwood in her essay, "Am I a Bad Feminist?" published in *Burning Questions*:

> My fundamental position is that women are human beings, with full range of saintly and demonic behaviours this entails, including the criminal ones. They are not angels, incapable of wrongdoing. If they were, we wouldn't need a legal system for such accusations, since

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[154] Rackin, Howard, *Engendering a Nation,* 20-21.

> they all would be true. Nor do I believe that women are children, incapable of agency or of making moral decisions. If they were, we're back to the nineteenth century, and women should not own a property, have credit cards, have access to higher education, control their own reproduction, or vote.[155]

One female author whose work seems to adhere to this sentiment is Angela Carter. Her adaptations of classical fairy tales often use women as their protagonists and portray them in a realistic manner as both good and evil, both ignorant and cunning. Carter's heroines rarely wait for a prince to save them from a dire situation – instead, they either save themselves, or they die. Her adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Wise Children*, which I will be discussing more closely in the following chapter, portrays the female experience in its raw, authentic form.

[155] Margaret Atwood, "Am I a Bad Feminist?" 335.

3.6 Angela Carter's adaptation of *Midsummer Night's Dream – Wise Children*

British society before the Second World War was, still, largely family oriented, with the role of the woman being little more than a caretaker, one who would care for the children and the household, and not aspire to much. With the outbreak of the Second World War, however, this changed dramatically. While their husbands fought in Europe, women were forced into work, an arrangement that, unbeknownst to those in power, they were not entirely opposed to. In fact, they favoured being independent of their husbands and began to cling to their newly found lifestyle. Thus, in the 1950s and 60s, "the process of dismantling the traditional family unit, rooted in marriage and sustained by the husband's wage, and the domestic travails of the woman"[156] began to gain steam.

Additionally in the 1960s, the western world underwent a sexual revolution, through which issues such as female sexuality (and sexuality in general), unwanted pregnancies, planned parenthood, etc., began to be brought forth. Feminist authors such as Angela Carter, Fay Weldon, and Jeanette Winterson, also began to emerge and talk about the female experience without restraint and censorship, covering topics such as sex, sexuality, societal standing, personal struggles, and more. One of these authors, Angela Carter, is the prime example of a writer, who – having understood the full scope of possibilities afforded to her by the medium of literature – uses her words to start a dialogue with the culture she is a part of, and explain to it the intricate web of a woman's life.

The intricate web of life, as experienced by the main characters of Carter's *Wise Children*, is as labyrinthine and intricate as the lives of Shakespeare's characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which the novel is based on. However, rather than focusing on illusion and dreams the way Shakespeare's play does, Carter's main focus is on the female body, the female spirit, and, in fact, female sexuality. The novel's heroines, Dora and Nora Chance, are both old (shockingly so), daring, outspoken women and twins, able to voice many concerns of their own and of feminism. Furthermore, unlike many of the female characters in Carter's other major work, *The Bloody Chamber*, Dora and

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[156] Dominic Head, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Fiction, 1500-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 83.

Nora are not representative victims of patriarchal oppression; they do not seem to be oppressed and, if they are, they pay little attention to it. Instead, Dora and Nora are independent, open-minded women, who, in *Wise Children*, represent the full scope of the female experience, with both its conventional and unconventional aspects. Yet, their most important aspect – or feature, perhaps – is the non-judgemental shamelessness of Carter's voice that narrates and accompanies the twins' experiences throughout the novel.

Nevertheless, the most foregrounded aspect of *Wise Children* is, arguably, its unconventional description of the main characters' sexual fantasies and choices. Dora Chance, Nora's twin sister, is given a role similar to that of the narrator, through which she observes her surroundings and the people therein. During her observation, Dora offers detailed accounts of the people's – and hers – lives and experienced, often drifting over into vivid descriptions of their and her sexuality and illustrating, rather directly, Carter's own disdain for the notion of sex as taboo. Dora's descriptions remain shameless and non-judgemental, even when describing the sexual experiences of her very own sister, Nora:

> […] this time with the man who played the drums in the pit band and he was old enough to be her grandfather. She was particularly attracted to older men, in those days. Even if her diaphragm always stayed in its little box, the drummer took good care, always pulled out in time, and that went on for half a year, on and off, depending on the touring, although sometimes, when she stripped off, she'd be black and blue.[157]

Here, one can observe several different aspects of the female experience. The first one, and probably the most striking, too, is that Nora had likely experienced sexual abuse at the hands of her drummer acquaintance – as "sometimes, when she stripped off, she'd be black and blue" – a negative female experience that can easily be taken for an example of the oppressive patriarchal system that the sisters are forced to navigate. The second, more subtle aspect of the female experience described here, is female contraception, which Carter alludes to by mentioning Nora's diaphragm. By mentioning Nora's attitude toward the use of contraception, Carter is not only developing Nora's character – she is *also* starting a dialogue and spreading awareness about the aspects of

[157] Angela Carter, *Wise Children* (London: Vintage, 2005), 82.

femininity that many may not consider important; what Carter is showing here is that, fictional or not, women can and do, in fact, take the consequences of their actions into consideration when making a decision.

It also ties in, to an extent, with the question of pregnancy, which is yet another aspect of feminism addressed in *Wise Children*. While Nora may be apprehensive about her chosen method of contraception, her decision not to use it is not an arbitrary one. In fact, Carter mentions that Nora had experienced a miscarriage, which – although, at first, she did not know she was pregnant – left her scarred in retrospect. As such, one could theorize as to whether it was this experience that led to Nora thinking of herself as unable to have children, as well as to her sparse use of contraception.

In "Angela Carter 1940-1992," from *Curious Pursuits*, Margaret Atwood describes *Wise Children* as Carter's most vulgar work, with "her vocabulary [being] a mix of finely-tuned phrase, luscious adjectives, witty aphorism, and hearty, up-theirs vulgarity."[158] However, aside from being "hearty" and "up-theirs," the vulgarity that Carter chose in enriching Dora's character is, also, most unladylike. This stereotype of women as having to be composed and collected when in public is addressed rather satirically in *Wise Children*, particularly with Dora exclaiming "God forgive me, I'd been vulgar again, He'd already noted, with some distress, how vulgar I could be from time to time."[159] And, truly, straightforward speech has not always been an option for women in society, much less the norm. Dora herself is often faced with judgement for how she speaks. In a situation similar to when her sister's potential sexual abuse is disclosed, Dora's expression is being governed by her partner's idea of what it *should* be. As such, Dora's partner is also representative of the patriarchal oppression that disapproves of anything that a woman does, that is not "feminine" or "ladylike" enough. By having her partner give "[Dora] a pitying look"[160] at merely the utterance of an obscenity, Carter shows just how much the patriarchy despises honest female expression.

Interestingly enough, it is this aspect of the male-female dynamic that is also exemplified in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Helena, a young woman of

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[158] Margaret Atwood, "Angela Carter 1940-1992," in *Curious Pursuits* (London: Virago Press, 2005), 156.

[159] Carter, *Wise Children,* 121.

[160] Carter, *Wise Children,* 121.

Athens, is in love with Demetrius, a young man of Athens, who does not reciprocate her feelings. Despite his contempt for her, Helena still chooses to pursue Demetrius, which in and of itself is quite un-feminist:

> Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
> You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!
> Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex.
> We cannot fight for love as they men may do.
> We should be wooed and were not made to woo.
> I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell
> To die upon the hand I love so well.[161]

In the western world, there has long been substantial inequality between the sexes, especially in matters concerning courtship, love, and sex. While men were generally allowed to court their love interest rather indiscriminately, as the quote above suggests, women were not. In Shakespeare's time, especially, women were expected to let themselves be courted, not to actively pursue their love interest. As such, one could look at Shakespeare's writing of Helena as persistent and strong-minded in her pursuit of Demetrius to be indicative of the author's stance on the matter, i.e., that he does, in fact, view women as beings of agency, capable of choosing their partners themselves.

Carter's characters, too, are strong-minded, albeit in a different way. When reflecting on her partner giving her a pitying look upon swearing, Dora remarks that it was this judgemental approach of men towards women that, ultimately, changed her, made her into a more independent person. Later, when reflecting on how that very same partner of hers, Irish, implied that the sun was insincere when it shone upon women, Dora remarks:

> [...] that sunlight's insincerity perplexed me. Did he mean, the sunshine didn't really mean it? And, if so, what did *that* mean? Or, is it that if it saw somebody better than me to shine on, it would switch off me and shine on them instead? And yet it shone on everyone, whether they had a contract or not. The most democratic thing I'd ever seen, that California sunshine. And tell the truth, it changed me. It changed me for good and all. All manner of things conspired to change me, during those months in California, though from what to what I

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[161] William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Washington, DC: The Folger Shakespeare, 2015), 51, https://shakespeare.folger.edu/downloads/pdf/a-midsummer-nights-dream_PDF_FolgerShakespeare.pdf.

scarcely know, except, if you offered me a tango with the Prince of Wales today, I'd tell you where to stuff it.[162]

Dora's remarks here are relevant, as they address not only the question of female value, but the question of human value in general. Dora's assessment of her partner's emotional abuse points to the way in which patriarchy attempts to make women feel guilty, simply for being women. Irish's attitude towards Dora stems, in my view, from his attitude towards women in general, i.e., his belief that the feminine element is not as deserving of the same kind of appreciation as the masculine element is. Additionally, in trying to humiliate Dora, Irish also hopes to make Dora feel guilty and repent for her "mistake" of being crass with him. Needless to say, Irish's strategy fails spectacularly, as instead of being humiliated, Dora feels even more determined to rebel against the patriarchal oppression, becoming even more independent.

Not afraid of mentioning sex and sexuality frequently throughout her work, Carter often uses the notion of sex in order to undermine the construct of flawless male sexual prowess, and to point out that men, in fact, are just as flawed and human as women. By turning her attention to the unrelenting nature of biology and our being powerless to change it, Carter illustrates that men truly have no right to put themselves above anybody else, be it in a public or private setting:

[…] trussed up in Perry's cashmere overcoat and a fedora, disguised as a big-name director, and then he'd lay down some speakeasy-style boogie-woogie on Perry's white piano, Irish was a man of parts even if some of them didn't work too well.[163]

By pointing out Irish's erectile disfunction, Carter is able to subvert the image he has constructed for himself, and to uproot the concept of male pride as connected directly to their sexual prowess. Irish's erections, which are "difficult to procure and arduous to maintain,"[164] paradoxically attribute to his inflated sense of pride, along with the belief he is an incredible actor and a more valuable individual than anyone else. Through Dora, Carter then suggests it is through these immense achievements – being an incredible actor, being the alpha of the pack – that male pride is enhanced and tightened.

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[162] Carter, *Wise Children,* 121.

[163] Carter, *Wise Children,* 122.

[164] Carter, *Wise Children,* 124.

She, however, questions the integrity of this pride, posing that, in a male-dominated world, it is not all that difficult for men to achieve such achievements. Carter, through Dora, then goes on to paint the male pride as almost pathetic, precisely due to its fragility:

> After his day at the studio he'd drive home, unwind over a few drinks, then leaf through his own back numbers – a bestseller at twenty-two years old, a second novel that didn't live up to the promise at twenty-five, a stinker at twenty-eight, and then the one at thirty-two that didn't sell, which is the one they remember him by. That, and the Hollywood Elegies, which were yet to come and would be inspired by yours truly – this painted harlot over here, still indecently hale and hearty if by the world forgot on her seventy-fifth birthday while he's dead and gone and immortal.[165]

Irish trying to make himself look more educated, refined, ambitious, and career-driven in front of Dora could, in my view, be understood as indicative of the deep insecurity that many men may feel when face-to-face with a strong, independent woman. Dora, after all, is effortless in being all that Irish is desperately trying to be, which is precisely why, I believe, he is threatened by her. Dora's strength and outspokenness goes directly against what Irish requires a woman to be, i.e., a creature subservient to his masculine greatness; Dora, on the other hand, is repelled by Irish's pathos and wretchedness, being in no need of a man who keeps "insisting on forgiving [her] when there was nothing to forgive."[166]

Carter approaches sex and sexuality explicitly, without relying on euphemisms. This shameless approach to the topic of sex is, too, feminist in nature, as open conversations about sex and sexuality help battle the stigma attached to it and spread awareness regarding sexual health. The "sexual health" umbrella term is, understandably, concerned with more than just the physical health of an individual; it is concerned, also, with intra-personal sexual health, which includes how partners approach one-another, treat one-another, and, above all else, communicate with one-another. As such, sexual health is absolutely a feminist pursuit, as it strives to abolish the age-old view of women as nothing more than sexual objects, and to promote healthy relationship patterns.

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[165] Carter, *Wise Children,* 122-123.

[166] Carter, *Wise Children,* 123.

Furthermore, *Wise Children* also manages to address the question of female art, as criticized by the male tradition for being secondary, other. Dora and Nora are both women in the arts, as are many other female characters that appear in *Wise Children*. They are actresses who become successful in their craft through hard work and determination, which, as a character trait, may be directly inspired by how women, in Shakespeare's time, were prohibited from appearing in theatre and plays. Nevertheless, while the women in the novel do represent feminist values and pursuits, and rebel against the inequalities between the sexes, the patriarchy's presence in *Wise Children* is still strong. Exemplified through the presence of Melchior Hazard, Dora and Nora's biological father, the patriarchal aspect of *Wise Children* is on full display when, after years of neglect, Hazard decides he can finally accept Dora and Nora as his own.

Hazard had originally refused to accept Dora and Nora as his own because they were illegitimate – i.e., they were born by a woman to whom he was not married – a feat that filled both Dora and Nora with grief and anxiety that continued to plague them for decades. The anxiety that Dora and Nora feel is strong even when, on his hundredth birthday, Hazard suddenly decides to acknowledge them as legitimate, and it makes them enter a state of both shock and joy:

> Melchior smiled upon us, I had to put a hand out and steady myself on Nora's arm just the same time she put her hand out for my arm. He smiled and then he said: 'Friends,' in his voice like Hershey's Syrup, and although the old enchantment instantly overcame me, I quivered with anxiety: would he now continue, 'Romans, countrymen,' so tense with the significance of the moment that he cued himself into the other speech?[167]

Hazard's belief that he can simply change his attitude towards the women he has neglected for decades, without any repercussions, is, in my view, a prime example of how the patriarchy ultimately treats women as lesser. The "old enchantment" that overcomes Dora could, I believe, be viewed as referring to an underlying sense of oppression that, in spite of all that feminism has achieved, is still present not only in society, but in women, as they are conditioned to strive for male acceptance, regardless of how toxic the men in question may be. In this way, it is then possible to view Melchior Hazard as the embodiment of an ever-present sense of inequality in the women's lives, as well as a representative of society's prejudices towards women.

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[167] Carter, *Wise Children,* 131.

Nevertheless, Carter offers her readers a possible solution for patriarchy; in Carter's view, it is the endurance of feminism, and of women like Dora and Nora, that can, in time, diminish the power of patriarchal systems and empower women.

Additionally, the notion of a strong male/father figure being perceived as almost a god can, also, be found in the original text of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, particularly in Shakespeare's description of Hermia's father:

> What say you, Hermia? Be advised, fair maid.
> To you, your father should be as a god,
> One that composed your beauties, yea, and one
> To whom you are but as a form in wax
> By him imprinted, and within his power
> To leave the figure or disfigure it. [...][168]

It is clear that Hermia's father, Egeus, is a man of immense power whose will it is unwise to resist. Yet, Hermia has no desire to marry Demetrius; she is in love with and wishes to marry Lysander, which her father is vehemently against. So much does Egeus disagree with Hermia's choice of a husband that he, in fact, gives his daughter an ultimatum – either marry a nobleman, or suffer the consequences. Hermia, as a woman and a daughter, is her father's property, which means that he alone can decide her future and, as far as the law is concerned, Egeus "may dispose of her which shall be either to this gentleman/or to her death, according to our law immediately provided in that case."[169] Hence, while it manifests itself differently than in *Wise Children*, patriarchal oppression is fully present in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as well.

It is quite clear, I would assume, that *Wise Children* is not a direct adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, unlike *Hag-Seed* or *The Gap of Time* are of their respective sources. In fact, Carter's *Wise Children* is about as far removed from the original as it possibly can, while still maintaining a connection to it. However, while Carter's novel does not mirror the original text scene-for-scene, or even character-for-character, it does, nonetheless, observe the spirit of the original rather faithfully. The number of characters in *Wise Children* – composed mainly of Shakespearian actors in contemporary England – is just about as vast (and their relations just about as complex)

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[168] Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 10-11.

[169] Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 9.

as in the original text. Furthermore, a play is, also, being staged in *Wise Children*, and it is none other than *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Carter's inclusion of A Midsummer Night's Dream in the novel's text mirrors, to an extent, the events of the original. Nevertheless, while in the original text, the play is meant to take place on Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding, in *Wise Children*, it is colourfully illustrated as the peak opportunity for Melchior Hazard to shine his brightest.

One aspect of the original play that Carter's adaptation, unsurprisingly, recreates, is Lysander and Demetrius's love for Hermia. In *Wise Children*, both Dora and Nora are in love with Nora's boyfriend, Tony. Yet, in a very Carteresque manner, her love triangle painted much more liberally than Shakespeare's. In *Wise Children*, Dora asks Nora if she could "borrow" Tony, as he is the only one she loves, and she wants to lose her virginity to him. Nora, naturally, agrees, her reasoning being that, since her and Dora are identical twins one can only distinguish by the perfumes they use, Tony will not see a difference:

> I sat on the stairs outside and listened to them [Nora and her boyfriend having sex in their shared dressing room] and my mind began to change, until I came to a decision: by hook or by crook, I said to myself, come what may, the day that I am seventeenth, I'll do it on that horsehair sofa.
> Do *what* on the horsehair sofa?
> What do you think?
> [...] 'Nora...'
> 'Yes?'
> 'Give me your fella for a birthday present.'"
> [...] 'Get your own fella,' she said.
> [...] He's the only one I want, Nora.
> I'll do it once, I said. He's really stuck on you, Nora, he's crazy about you and he's never given me a second look.[170]

In "Writing a History of Difference: Jeanette Winterson's Sexing the Cherry and Angela Carter's Wise Children," Jeffrey Roessner summarizes Carter's trademark representation of sexual unconventionalities, by pointing out how different her and Winterson's approaches to sex and sexuality really are. For Roessner, Winterson is more inclined to write about same-sex relationships (both male and female) from the

[170] Carter, *Wise Children*, 83.

feminist point of view; Carter, on the other hand, "represents a shift toward a third wave of feminism that neither celebrates the desire to escape history altogether nor endorses counter-sexist vision in its challenge to restrictive gender stereotypes."[171] In my view, challenging gender and sexual stereotypes is the main point of *Wise Children*. In fact, I believe that both Carter and Winterson could be regarded as breaking the stereotypes that Shakespeare himself used in his plays.

The original text of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* does, also, contain a love triangle. Nevertheless, while the "main" love triangle in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is between Helena, Hermia, and Demetrius, there are other characters, too, whose presence in the play complicate the love triangle and ultimately transform it into a complicated, vicious circle of love and hate. One of these characters, quite notoriously, is Lysander. By the end of the play, the love triangle goes through several different permutations, with Hermia hating Demetrius, Helena loving Demetrius, Demetrius despising Helena and loving Hermia, and Hermia loving Lysander:

> Hermia: I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.
> Helena: O, that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!
> Hermia: I give him curses, ye he gives me love.
> Helena: O, that my prayers could such affection move!
> Hermia: The more I hate, the more he follows me.
> Helena: The more I love, the more he hateth me!
> Hermia: His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.
> Helena: None but your beauty. Would that fault were mine![172]

Similarly to how Demetrius does not care for Helena (at first, at least) in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, neither does Tony care for Dora in *Wise Children*. He does sleep with her, but only because he is unable to distinguish her from her twin sister, Nora. At the end of the day, however, Tony still marries Nora, while Dora is – so it would seem, at least – set to Genghis Khan, and Melchior Hazard, Dora and Nora's father, to marry Daisy Duck. This triple wedding in *Wise Children* is one of the novel's most obvious links to Shakespeare's original play wherein, at the end of the play, Lysander is married

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[171] Jeffrey Roessner, "Writing a History of Difference: Jeanette Winterson's 'Sexing the Cherry' and Angela Carter's 'Wise Children,'" in *College Literature*, vol. 29, no. 1, (2002), 112.

[172] Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 20-21.

to Hermia, Demetrius to Helena, and Titania to Oberon. And much like the final happy ending in the original play is achieved through Oberon's magic potion and Puck's incompetence with it, the wedding in *Wise Children* is also affected and saved by magic, be it magic of a different kind.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Lysander, who is originally in love with Hermia, falls in love with Helena after Puck, Oberon's servant, gives him a love potion that makes anyone who "ingests" it fall in love with the first person they see. The potion, which was originally intended for Titania and Demetrius, is mistakenly administered to Lysander when Puck *mistakes* him for Demetrius, resulting in a series of complicated twists and turns, with Lysander chasing after Helena, Hermia chasing after Lysander, and Demetrius chasing after Hermia. Everything ends well in the end, however, as the potion's second application has Demetrius fall in love with Helena, and Lysander with Hermia.

Yet, in contrast to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Angela Carter's *Wise Children* is no fairy tale. Hence, the use of "magic" is much less literal than it is in the original play, and much more practical instead. The wedding does proceed, although not in the way it was originally meant to. The original plan with the wedding in *Wise Children* was for Dora to marry Genghis Khan, which she refuses to do. In fact, rather than marrying Khan, Dora appeals to Khan's ex-wife Daisy and asks her to marry Khan again, in her stead. She agrees, and is then transformed – using the "magic" of plastic surgery – into Dora, becoming "a hand-made, custom-built replica, a wonder of the plastic surgeon's art, [...] her nose bobbed, her tits pruned, her bum elevated."[173]

While *Wise Children* is more a novel inspired by Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, rather than a faithful adaptation, the closeness between the source text and the adaptation is not as large as it may, at first, seem. Carter's text transposes the original setting of the play from Athens, Greece, to contemporary England and exchanges the company of noblemen and fairies for that of actors and sexually adventurous senior citizens. Regardless of this, Carter keeps many of the crucial plot points of original texts intact, providing revisions that, instead of changing the story entirely, help contemporise it. And while it is true that *Wise Children* lacks practically all of the fantastical and fairy tale elements present in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I

[173] Carter, *Wise Children*, 155.

do not find this to be of detriment to the overall message of the story. In fact, I believe that, by transposing the original text into a more contemporary setting, Carter manages to make its original message all the more relevant both socially and culturally.

4 Conclusion

Arguably more so than with any other author, one can view Shakespeare's work as the primary source for virtually any literary discussion. In fact, the general rule of thumb seems to be that, if one can think of a theme or a topic, it was likely already done by Shakespeare in some capacity. Friendship, love, hate, murder, patricide, colonization, homoerotic relationships, and more – they all have their place in the work of William Shakespeare. This, in part, is why the author's work is still as popular today as it were when first published centuries ago; the themes that Shakespeare incorporated into his work have a tendency to resonate with people across the world. It is also why, ironically, studying Shakespeare's work is much more difficult than it might seem at first glance. For, since Shakespeare's work can be approached from virtually any point of inquiry, it may be difficult for one to successfully delineate a sample of this work that does not cross into areas not related to the research at hand, or that only does so minimally.

For my research, I chose three modern novel adaptations of Shakespeare's plays and analysed them from the perspective of the theory of adaptation, as well as three different literary theories, i.e., post-colonialist theory, queer theory, and feminist theory. For this purpose, I chose Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed*, an adaptation of *The Tempest*, Jeanette Winterson's *The Gap of Time*, an adaptation of *The Winter's Tale*, and Angela Carter's *Wise Children*, an adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I chose to focus on adaptation for the same reason I give above, namely that, while Shakespeare's work is still popular and relevant, even in today's socio-cultural setting, I believe that there are certain aspects of his work that benefit from being updated, or from being presented in a different light. And, as I show in my thesis, adaptations do precisely that.

Throughout my research, I learned that, regardless of whether the adaptations in question follow the source material closely or not, they all succeed in recontextualizing and updating the original plays, at least to a certain extent. This, in itself, was an informative finding; however, the more important finding was that, while each of the novel updates the source material, they all do so differently. Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed*, for example, does so by making select element of *The Tempest* more literal; taking the proverbial "prison" of the Caliban's island and transforming it into an actual prison is one such case. Other elements of the original play are, on the other hand, made even more abstract. The element of magic is a good example. In *Hag-Seed*, Atwood

transforms *The Tempest*'s literal, be it fantastical, magic into metaphorical, artistic one, capable of enchanting people by grasping their mind and soul.

Regardless of these changes, Atwood's novel manages to remain as faithful to the source material as possible. And while Winterson's *The Gap of Time* does too, it chooses a slightly different approach to adapting the source material than *Hag-Seed* does. In fact, rather than trying to faithfully emulate the story and themes of *The Winter's Tale*, Winterson's novel goes the route of elaborating on and emphasizing an aspect of the original that may, from today's point of view, seem underdeveloped: the possible homosocial relationship between the two famous Shakespearian kings, Leontes and Polixenes. What, in my view, makes Winterson's approach all the more interesting is the fact that, as close as the two characters are at the beginning of the play, the hints that their relationship is anything other than friendly are, at best, few and far between. And yet, Winterson's queer rendering of the kings' relationship – portrayed, in *The Gap of Time*, through the relationship between Leo and Zeno – does not come across half as unbelievable or far-reaching as one may expect. In fact, I believe that Winterson's approach, as natural as it ultimately proves to be, exposes the potential for transfiguration and appropriation hidden in Shakespeare's work.

Finally, and somewhat extremely, the hidden potential of Shakespeare's work to remain endlessly adaptable and endlessly adapted is put on full display in Angela Carter's *Wise Children*. While being the least faithful to the source material, Carter's adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is, perhaps, also the most creative adaptation of Shakespeare's work to be analysed in my thesis. Rather than follow the events of the original play, *Wise Children* chooses to follow the play's spirit, eliminating near every aspect of the source material except for select number of essential, core scenes. As a result, Carter is able to transform *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from a fairy tale into a meditation on female sexuality and the oppressive tendencies of the patriarchy, without trying to idealize either. *Wise Children*'s heroines, Dora and Nora Chance, are extreme, unadulterated representations of womanhood – they swear, are promiscuous, open-minded, and loving. Their plight throughout the novel can, in my opinion, be seen as that of women trying to find their place in a world controlled by men and, as is often the case with feminist narratives, struggling to do so. It, also, is an over-the-top representation of what the feminist movement strives to achieve, not in the sense of extremity, but in the sense of female freedom.

5 Resumé

Tématem mé diplomové práce je pohled na moderní adaptace shakespearovských her a jejich analýza z hlediska teorie adaptace a tří dalších literárních teorií. Hlavním důvodem, proč jsem se rozhodla zkoumat právě koncept adaptace, je fenomén rozmachu knih a jiných uměleckých děl, jejichž autoři různými způsoby adaptují nebo jinak objevují díla předchozích tvůrců. Pro svou diplomovou práci jsem si vybrala *Sen noci svatojánské*, *Zimní pohádku* a *Bouři*, které byly adaptovány Angelou Carterovou, Jeanette Wintersonovou a Margaret Atwoodovou do *Moudrých dětí* (*Wise Children*), *Trhliny v čase* (*The Gap of Time*) a *Kusu temnoty* (*Hag-Seed*). Tyto knihy v praktické části analyzuji z hlediska teorie feminismu, queerové teorie a teorie postkolonialismu.

Cílem první kapitoly teoretické části mé práce bylo zjistit, co se za pojmem adaptace skrývá, jestli a případně do jaké míry se jedná o pouhé napodobování již existujících textů a děl, nebo jestli je koncept a užívání adaptace stěžejní pro zachování literatury jako takové a proč je v konečném závěru adaptace populární, případně důležitá.

Podrobnější zkoumání teorie adaptace v dané kapitole diplomové práce mi pomohlo zjistit, že existuje celá škála důvodů, které vedou k rozhodnutí napsat adaptaci. Jedním z nejdůležitějších důvodů pro tento druh tvorby je otázka přežití a zachování textů. Zde se dá diskutovat o klasických, stovky nebo i tisíce let starých dílech, která mají důležitou kulturní, sociální nebo osobní hodnotu. Může se ale samozřejmě také jednat o díla, která jsou recipována generacemi čtenářů, a to i přes kulturně-historické posuny, díky čemuž je míra adaptace také o hodně vyšší. Tato stěžejní díla světové literatury jsou tudíž díky adaptaci neustále zpřítomňována, což vede k tomu, že původní text zůstane v socio-kulturní paměti.

V rámci jevů zachování či přežití textu jsem se zaměřila na pojem „kulturní aktualizace“. Zde je důležité klást důraz na slovo aktualizace, neboť se jedná o neustálé obnovování určitého klasického textu pro každou novou generaci čtenářů. Díky zmíněnému postupu původní text nejen přežívá, ale snadněji se také dostává do povědomí novým čtenářům a mladším generacím, které mohou text díky novým verzím lépe pochopit, případně později je obnovit, adaptovat, aktualizovat.

Shakespearovy hry jsou jedním z takto konstantně adaptovaných či aktualizovaných her. Nové, adaptované, verze děl Williama Shakespeara se objevují každých několik let a vypadá to, že tyto literárně-kulturní trendy, jak Shakespeara

adaptovat, nebyly ještě ani zdaleka vyčerpány. Margaret Atwoodová, jak ji cituji i v úvodu své práce, v eseji z kolekce *Burning Questions* tvrdí, že díky celkové kompozici Shakespearových her a použití jazyka nelze určit jediný možný význam her, takovýto význam je téměř nezachytitelný a každá hra může být interpretována různými způsoby, které jsou takřka nekonečné. Také by se dalo říct, že problematika Shakespearových her je natolik aktuální a v mnoha ohledech otevřená, implicitních vyjádření, že ať je člověk pochopí jakkoli, nebo cokoliv v nich někdo uzná za významové, se dá uchopit a adaptovat.

Díky tomu, že Shakespearovy hry zachycují různé společenské i osobní problémy a záležitosti, se téměř všechna jeho práce stala předmětem zkoumání mnoha dalších literárních teorií. Z tohoto poté vznikl pojem „Shakespearian theory", v jehož rámci teoretici prohlašují, že by Shakespeare mohl být pomyslným předchůdcem moderní literární teorie. Zmíněné tvrzení samozřejmě může a nemusí být pravdivé, neboť Shakespearova éra se odehrávala dlouho před vznikem relativně ucelené literární teorie. To, že jeho celkové dílo vypadá jako něco, co by mohlo potenciálně předcházet literární teorii ještě před jejím vznikem se dá soudit převážně z hlediska analytiky jazyka.

Při zkoumání Williama Shakespeara je také velmi důležitý pojem apropriace. Apropriace zdrojového textu znamená, že cílový adaptovaný text byl psán s hlubší znalostí textu zdrojového, což neplatí pouze pro mnou sledované adaptace, ale rovněž pro samotné Shakespearovy hry, jelikož jsou adaptacemi a zároveň i apropriacemi dřívějších textů, které Shakespeare dobře znal.

V praktické části blíže přibližuji další literární teorie, jejichž metody následně používám při analýze vybraných textů. Jak jsem již zmínila, knihu Angely Carterové zkoumám z pohledu teorie feminismu. Angela Carterová je převážně známá svými krátkými příběhy, jež jsou netradičním převyprávěním klasických pohádek, kde ženské postavy nejsou ty, které potřebují zachránit. Ale když už zachránit potřebují, nikdy to není princ na bílém koni, kdo je zachrání. Dané převrácení typizace postav samo o sobě naznačuje, jak Carterová pohlíží nejen na osobní, ale i společenské vztahy mezi muži a ženami.

Podobně nezávislé, netradiční a neortodoxní postavy se objevují i v knize *Moudré děti*. A přesto, že se nakonec ukázalo, že kniha *Moudré děti* je Shakespearovým *Snem noci svatojánské* spíše jen volně inspirována, celková atmosféra si je s originálem velmi podobná. Carterová nicméně rozebírá bezpočet aspektů, jež jsou stěžejní pro

feministickou analýzu, a poukazuje na ně. Autorka dala svým hlavním ženským postavám opravdu neotřelý a zvučný hlas, kterým boří genderová tabu, odmítá fakt, že ženskost se rovná iracionalitě, neschopnosti, neměnnosti či slabosti. Zároveň ale poukazuje i na společensky stereotypní představu muže jako ikony či idola, kterému v konečném závěru podlehne i ta nejemancipovanější a nejvíce nezávislá ženská postava.

Další část praktické analýzy věnuji queerové teorii, kde rozebírám nejen to, jak jsou genderová studia a lesbianismus spojeny s feminismem, ale také některé aspekty queerové teorie, které jsou poté reflektovány a zkoumány v analýze vybraného primárního textu. Zde se věnuji knize *Trhlina v čase* Jeanette Wintersonové, přičemž je nejdůležitějším a také nejzajímavějším poznatkem to, jak pohled lesbické autorky obohacuje celý kánon nejen lesbické literatury, ale i lesbické feministické kritiky.

Zajímavé je i to, že se Wintersonová nevěnuje primárně homosexuálním vztahům mezi ženami, jak by autorčino zaměření a její osobní zkušenost mohly naznačovat (sama Wintersonová se totiž identifikuje jako lesbička), ale pojednává v *Trhlině v čase* rovněž o homosexuálním vztahu mezi dvě muži, a to z pohledu právě těchto mužů, a jen spíše okrajově i pohledu žen z okolí hlavních mužských postav. Tento aspekt primárně reflektuje teorii Bonnie Zimmermanové, která obhajuje a oslavuje lesbianismus a lesbickou kritiku, jež autorkám lesbicky či homosexuálně orientovaným textům garantuje unikátní pohled na věc. Tento určitý pohled dále dokáže uchopit a adaptovat zdrojový text nebo vytvořit originální text, který je u heteronormativní či heterosexuálně orientované literatury vzácný.

Poslední část v praktické analýze věnuji teorii post-kolonialismu a knize *Kus temnoty* Margaret Atwoodové. Kromě obecného úvodu do teorie post-kolonialismu, se hlavně věnuji několika vlnám post-kolonialismu, které se nejvíce orientují na autentizaci a pomyslné osvobození textů a literatury či umění z kolonizovaných zemí. Dále se má pozornost obrací na reprezentaci těchto kultur, které byly kolonialismem zatlačeny do ústraní, a na aspekt pohybu, kdy se tyto kulturní aspekty dostávají z pout dominantní, cizí, kultury a mohou se prezentovat i daleko za hranicemi vlastních zemí.

Kromě toho, že samotná teorie post-kolonialismu mluví převážně o fyzickém kolonizování zemí, lze se dané problematice věnovat také v rovině abstraktní. V tomto duchu se dané teorii věnuji i ve své práci, tedy, se zabývám probémem mentální kolonizace. Jinými slovy to, co se projevuje fyzicky v zemích, kde si kolonizátoři uzurpují místo v jiné kultuře, se může odehrávat i ve věcech mentálních či

nehmatatelných, v osvojování a změnách v kultuře a společnosti včetně změny způsobu myšlení u obyvatel zemí, které byly kolonizovány.

Tyto aspekty se velmi jasně odrážejí v knize Margaret Atwoodové, kde se cyklus kolonialismu a post-kolonialismu opakuje a reflektuje hned několika způsoby. Hlavní postava je prezentována jako kolonizátor, a to jak v originále, tj. v Shakespearově *Bouři*, tak v adaptaci Atwoodové. Shakespearův Prospero a Felix Margaret Atwoodové jednají se stejným úmyslem-pomstou, která je uvrhla do vyhnanství ze společnosti. Jak se v obou dílech nicméně ukazuje, kolonizátor se nenápadně, ale bez nejmenších pochybností stává sám kolonizovaným. Prospero se v závěrečném monologu *Bouře* vyznává z pocitů, které označují diváky za kolonizátory, bez kterých by, podobně jako Shakespearův Kalibán, jehož ostrov si Prospero osídlil a přivlastnil, nedokázal být tím stejným bavičem, autorem a umělcem, opět podobně jako Kalibán by bez Prospera byl jen divoch na pustém ostrově, zcela nedotknutý moderním myšlením a vzděláním. Jinými slovy se i ve hře Williama Shakespeara i v adaptaci Margaret Atwoodové stává Prospero Kalibánem a pomyslně i Kalibán Prosperem.

Na závěr bych ráda zmínila, že i přesto, že nejsou Shakespeare, teorie adaptace nebo literární teorie všeobecně nijak novými tématy, naopak ke všem už bylo řečeno mnoho, jsou to zároveň ta témata, která budou dle mého názoru vždy obsahovat něco nového a neprobádaného, a to právě z toho důvodu, že adaptace je aktivní proces, který není nikdy zcela ukončen. Kdyby byl, nebylo by zapotřebí obnovovat starší texty, vysvětlit nevysvětlené ani objasnit to, co už možná bylo vysvětleno, ale k čemuž bylo v průběhu let něco nového přidáno, co mohlo potenciálně změnit celý pohled na věc.

Shakespeare je právě takovým autorem, jehož díla budou vždy generovat nové poznatky, nové názory a nové interpretace. Díky této interpretační otevřenosti mohou nové literární, stejně tak společenské, objevy spatřit světlo světa. I proto je zde adaptace (společně s apropriací) tak důležitá, z čehož vyplývá, že je průběžné studium a analýza Shakespearových textů z hlediska všech moderních literárních teorií stěžejní. Z toho důvodu bych ráda svou diplomovou prací dala podnět k dalšímu hlubšímu výzkumu adaptací Shakespeara a jeho děl, které dozajista zrcadlí nejeden aspekt každé literární teorie bez ohledu na to, jak moc jsou tyto aspekty jednoznačné či nejednoznačné.

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7 Annotation

Author: Bc. Patricie Kouřilová

Title: "Shakespeare: Infinitely Interpretable, Infinitely Interpreted." Modern Adaptations of Shakespeare's Plays in Light of Contemporary Critical Theory

Faculty and department: Faculty of Arts, Department of English and American Studies

Supervisor: Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D

Number of pages: 97

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The focus of my thesis is the theory of adaptation and how it is manifested in three literary adaptations of William Shakespeare's plays *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Midsummer's Night Dream* and their corresponding contemporary adaptations written by Margaret Atwood, *Hag-Seed*, Jeanette Winterson, *The Gap of Time*, and Angela Carter, *Wise Children*. *Hag-Seed* manifests strong post-colonial aspects, *The Gap of Time* closely and openly discusses sexuality and queer elements, and *Wise Children* is one many representatives of feminism. I use these theories to further deepen my analysis.

Keywords

Adaptation, retellings, Shakespeare, drama, modern literature, feminist literature, Margaret Atwood, Jeanette Winterson, Angela Carter, Hag-Seed, The Tempest, The Gap of Time, The Winter's Tale, Wise Children, Midsummer's Night Dream

8 Anotace

Autor: Bc. Patricie Kouřilová

Název: „Shakespeare: nekonečně interpretovatelný, nekonečně interpretovaný.“ Moderní adaptace Shakespearových her v kontextu současné kritické literární teorie

Fakulta a katedra: Filozofická fakulta, Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

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Hlavním cílem mé magisterské práce je představení teorie adaptace literárních děl nejen všeobecně, ale převážně se zaměřením na moderní novelistické adaptace her Williama Shakespeara. Konkrétně se věnuji hrám *Bouře*, *Zimní pohádka* a *Sen noci svatojánské* a jejich adaptacím od Margaret Atwoodové, *Hag-Seed* (do češtiny přeloženo jako *Kus Temnoty*, Práh 2017), Jeanette Wintersonové, *The Gap of Time* (*Trhlina v čase*, Práh 2015) a Angely Carterové, *Wise Children* (*Moudré děti*, Dybbuk 2007).

Teorii adaptace, jíž se věnuji převážně v teoretické části mé práce, později v praktické části používám k analýze třech již zmíněných moderních adaptací. Vedle teorie adaptace se soustřeďuji na tři další literární teorie, z jejichž pohledu se dá na vybrané adaptace nahlížet; konkrétně se jedná o teorii post-kolonialismu, queerové teorie a feminismu.

Klíčová slova

Adaptace, Shakespeare, drama, moderní literatura, feministická literatura, post-kolonialismus, genderová studia, Margaret Atwood, Jeanette Winterson, Angela Carter, Hag-Seed, The Tempest, The Gap of Time, The Winter's Tale, Wise Children, Midsummer's Night Dream, Kus temnoty, Trhlina v čase, Moudré děti