

Updating Shakespeare's Heroines for Modern Audiences:
Feminist Criticism and Womanhood in *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed*

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Abstract

In October 2015 the Hogarth Shakespeare project was launched by the publisher Penguin Random House. The series seeks to retell Shakespeare's classic plays; so far five of the eight commissioned books have been published. Among the published works are: *The Gap of Time* by Jeanette Winterson, a retelling of *The Winter's Tale*; *Vinegar Girl* by Anne Tyler, a retelling of *The Taming of the Shrew*; and last but not least, *Hag-Seed* by Margaret Atwood, a retelling of *The Tempest*. This thesis aims to examine in what ways these three texts build a significant representation of womanhood that can be considered feminist, if at all. After examining feminist criticism aimed at the source texts, the representation of women in Shakespeare's original plays will be compared and contrasted to the representation of women in the selected Hogarth Shakespeare Series novels. The representation of women will be constructed through three modes of feminist criticism outlined by Carol Thomas Neely. The representation of women in the Hogarth Shakespeare Series novels are then compared and contrasted to one another. Of the three selected texts, only *Vinegar Girl* establishes a feminist representation of its female characters.

Keywords

Margaret Atwood, Anne Tyler, Jeanette Winterson, Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Gap of Time*, *Hag-Seed*, *Vinegar Girl*, Adaptation, Intertextuality, Feminist Criticism

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Introduction

It is no surprise that the publisher Penguin Random House seeks to reinterpret Shakespeare for a new generation. Shakespeare is the “grand monument” English literature, and modern day adaptations have enjoyed success repeatedly; satire and homages alike (think of films such as *Gnomeo and Juliet*, *10 Things I Hate About You*) are as popular as ‘pure’ adaptations (think of the first cycle of *The Hollow Crown*) (Callaghan, *Feminist Companion 2*). Shakespeare’s works have been adapted since the mid-1600s and Shakespeare’s works are often adaptations themselves (Draudt 289-291). In her book *Modern Shakespeare Offshoots*, Ruby Cohn notes the following:

Rewriting of Shakespeare is known by an array of names— abridgments, adaptations, additions, alterations, ameliorations, amplifications, augmentations, conversions, distortions, emendations, interpolations, metamorphoses, modifications, mutilations, revisions, transformations, versions. In contrast, I use a looser and more neutral word, "offshoot," but I should like to indicate how far the shoots grow from the Shakespearean stem. (3)

Penguin Random House is the newest in line to adapt Shakespeare; to grow offshoots from the Shakespearean stem. With their Hogarth Shakespeare project, they “[see] Shakespeare’s works retold by acclaimed and bestselling novelists of today” (Hogarth Shakespeare, about). Right now there are eight books in the lineup, five of which have been published. In 2015 *The Gap of Time* (a retelling of *The Winter’s Tale*) was published, written by Jeanette Winterson; in 2016, *Shylock is my Name* (*The Merchant of Venice*), *Vinegar Girl* (*The Taming of the Shrew*), and *Hag-Seed* (*The Tempest*) were published, written by Howard Jacobson, Anne Tyler and Margaret Atwood respectively. *New Boy* (*Othello*) by Tracy Chevalier and *Dunbar* (*King Lear* and *Othello*) by Edward St. Aubyn were released in 2017, and in 2018 and 2021 Jo Nesbø and Gillian Flynn are slated to retell Macbeth and Hamlet.

In the lineup of authors that Penguin Random House has commissioned, five of the eight authors are women. Among those five are Jeanette Winterson, Margaret Atwood, and Anne Tyler. Jeanette Winterson is well known as a feminist, Margaret Atwood has been studied

extensively in feminist literature circles, and Anne Tyler is also noted for her strong female characters despite the fact that “feminism, like other external forces, seems to have passed Tyler's fictional worlds by” (Tyler interview by Allardice, par. 32).

Jeanette Winterson is an English author best known for her first novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, which won the Whitbread Prize for a First Novel in 1985. Other awards she had received include the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize, the E.M. Forster Award, and twice she received the Lambda literary Award in the categories Lesbian Fiction and Lesbian Memoir or Biography. In 2006 she was made an officer of the Order of the British Empire (*Jeanette Winterson*, about). In 2015, she was commissioned to rewrite a Shakespeare play for the Hogarth Shakespeare Series; as a foundling, she identified most with *The Winter's Tale* and that is the play she adapted (Winterson interview by Clark, par. 11).

Anne Tyler, on the other hand, is an American author; she has written novels, short stories, children's literature and is also a literary critic. The best known of her novels are *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*, *The Accidental Tourist*, and *Breathing Lessons*; all three were finalists for the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and *Breathing Lessons* won the prize in 1989. Other awards she has won include the Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize, the Ambassador Book Award, and the National Book Critics Circle award. Tyler's subject has been the everyday lives of middle-class Americans, and usually sets her novels in Baltimore; *Vinegar Girl* is not exception to this (interview with Allardice par. 2, 6). Where Winterson decided to adapt a play she connected with, Tyler decided on adapting a play she disliked and which she felt needed to change (Tyler interview by Charles, par 1, 7).

The last of the three authors is Margaret Atwood, a Canadian author. She's written poetry, novels, children's books, essays and a graphic novel (*Margaret Atwood*, biography). She is a literary critic and environmental activist and has invented the LongPen technology. Like Tyler and Winterson, she has her share of awards: she has won the Man Booker Prize for *The Blind Assassin* in 2000 and was shortlisted another four times, she has won the Arthur C. Clarke Award, and the Prince of Asturias Award for Literature. She has been a finalist for the Governor General's Award ten times, winning it twice, for *The Circle Game* and for *The Handmaid's Tale* in 1966 and 1985 respectively. She was also a founding trustee of the Griffin Poetry Prize and a founder of the Writer's Trust of Canada (*Margaret Atwood*, awards and recognitions).

Over the last 40 years, Winterson, Tyler, and Atwood have become well known authors.

Winterson's novels often focus on themes of gender and identity; *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is best known for its themes on gender, identity and sexuality, but is certainly not the only novel of Winterson's to deal with these issues. Anne Tyler perhaps deals with these themes more subtly; her novels largely explore the world of marriage and family – the everyday boredom and conflicts that arise within a family and marriage. Margaret Atwood is perhaps best known for tackling issues of gender and identity (among many other themes); indeed, *The Edible Woman*, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Robber Bride* in particular have been noted as feminist works, the first noted specifically as a “proto-feminist” work by Nischik (19). Atwood herself is not always as quick to label her work feminist, but these novels' themes take on much of the same themes that feminism engages with.

These authors have all, to varying degrees, been placed within a literary context that recognizes them for their approach to gender and identity, even when they engage with other themes. This context – the exploration of gender and identity – for all three authors is interesting in light of the Hogarth Shakespeare Series. Shakespeare has been extensively studied through feminist critique. Indeed, many Shakespeare adaptations have been created specifically in order to engage with gender differently than Shakespeare does, often to solve some of the issues of representation that have been noted in his work (Beckwith 242, Karaman 29). In the introduction to *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*, Dymphna Callaghan candidly makes the observation which many feminist critiques of Shakespeare operate under:

If the object of feminist inquiry is “women” of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, then Shakespeare, undoubtedly the grand monument of literary studies, would seem to offer only a very oblique bearing on the subject. (2)

Callaghan notes the absence of women here. Karaman, in a similar vein, notes that women are often missing in Shakespeare's plays and his characters' genealogy, and that when women are present in his work, they are placed in subservient roles to men in an obvious patriarchal setting (Karaman 29).

The Hogarth Shakespeare series seeks to retell Shakespeare ‘for a new generation’ – what would such changes entail? Considering Shakespeare's representation of women comes from a time of overtly patriarchal norms and values that have changed drastically since, it would not be too strange of an assumption to think authors such as Winterson, Tyler, and Atwood, would

engage with Shakespeare's representation of women, considering the thematic focus of their work. Has Shakespeare's portrayal of his female characters been changed by these authors in their work?

This thesis aims to analyze and critique *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed* through a feminist lens. In her article "Feminist Modes of Shakespearean Criticism," Carol Thomas Neely makes an astute observation: "although I have great difficulty in defining feminist criticism, I know that it does exist because I recognize it when I see it" (3). She goes on to note that feminist critics do not have a "ready-made method, ideology, subject, or style" (5). Defining a category as broad as "feminist criticism" is near impossible when the term feminism itself can encompass many different perspectives, theories, and conclusions. Neely argues that, within feminist criticism of Shakespeare specifically, she has observed three modes: compensatory critics, justificatory criticism, and transformational criticism (5). These are the three modes of criticism this thesis will follow in analyzing and critiquing the above mentioned texts. The first mode, compensatory criticism, describes an approach to texts focused on the representation of women. It seeks to restore complexity to female characters that has otherwise been minimized or stereotyped in traditional criticism (6). In *The Taming of the Shrew*, for example, Kate's shrewdness is recontextualized as "a mark of intelligence and independence and a necessary defense against her situation" rather than being understood as a flaw (6). The second mode, justificatory criticism, understands the portrayal of women in Shakespeare's works as results of socio-cultural norms and values of the time. It aims to place characters within the context of patriarchy, to understand their roles in relation to patriarchal imperatives and structures. The third mode, transformational criticism, does not recontextualize women as more powerful than they are traditionally understood as, nor does it "passively examine the oppressive patriarchal structures" in order to justify a (weak) representation of women (9). Transformational criticism does not examine "what women do or what is done to them, but what meaning these actions have and how this meaning is related to gender" (9). Transformational criticism seeks to "interrogate" the relations between a character's actions, how these are represented, and what extradiegetic context may underlie that representation. If a woman is portrayed as a fragile victim, it is relatively simple to say that it is not feminist, or that the 'fragile victim' is a stereotypical role (white) women are often relegated to because of socio-cultural expectations. It is much more difficult to unpack the nuances of a character's portrayal and how it fits within the larger narrative, and what

factors might have contributed to that portrayal. As Neely notes, the third mode is not a “synthesis of or transcendence of the first two” (5). The three modes instead parallel the three-stage models of feminist history that Joan Kefly and Gerda Lerner introduced (6). By approaching the primary texts through the lens of all three modes of feminist criticism, the aim is to have a complete ‘set’ of nuanced criticism which examines the novels from multiple perspectives and comprises of similar subject matter and mode as the criticism that unpacked Shakespeare’s original works, allowing for easier parallels between the criticism aimed at Shakespeare’s works and its adaptations. In this way, it will be possible to unpack in which ways exactly the authors have changed their adaptations from the original. In order to build a proper understanding of gender, patriarchy, and the interaction between those two, this thesis will primarily be making use of Judith Butler. Through this framework and the aforementioned modes, the themes of gender and identity in *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed* will be analyzed. The questions this thesis will answer are the following: the Hogarth Shakespeare series seeks to retell Shakespeare ‘for a new generation’ – do the authors represent women differently in these texts from the original? In short, the primary research question this thesis operates under is the following: in what ways have the selected texts built a significant representation of gender that can be considered feminist, if at all?

What exactly entails a ‘feminist’ representation of gender is variable and debated within feminist criticism. This thesis will define a feminist representation as following: a feminist representation of a female character is one in which the female character functions independently from men in the narrative on an intradiegetic level. What will be understood under this intradiegetic level is the following: a female character’s symbolic and thematic role within a narrative, and their actions within the narrative. How a symbolic and thematic role is understood, and whether certain ‘actions’ are considered as separate from men or not, is of course dependent on the reading of a text; the analysis of these roles and narrative actions is based on both intradiegetic analysis as well as extradiegetic context. As was made clear earlier, the justificatory and transformational modes of criticism take extradiegetic context into account in their analyses of female characters, whereas compensatory criticism does not. Examples of relevant extradiegetic contexts for Shakespearean feminist analysis and criticism would be e.g. the context of boy-actresses, contemporary shrew-taming narratives, or Renaissance norms and values surrounding the education of women. Contexts such as these will be discussed in depth for the

plays in which they are especially relevant; the role of the boy-actress, for example, plays a potential role in an analysis of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Renaissance education is an important context to consider when analyzing the character of Miranda in *The Tempest*.

Through close reading the texts *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed* will be analyzed. This thesis will compare and contrast my own analysis of these texts to feminist criticism of their source texts, in the three modes of feminist criticism. Through this comparison, the difference in representation between the source text and its adaptation will be made clear, and from there in representation of gender in *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed* will be considered. The first chapter will delineate the thesis' framework, method, and underlying theories thereof. It will expound on Neely's feminist modes of criticism, the thesis' understanding of gender and gender relations will be discussed, and the context of adaptation studies will briefly be touched upon. It will also contextualize Shakespeare's heroines in their time; the gendered norms and values under which these plays operated, such as the presence of boy-actresses, will be briefly touched upon. As was clarified earlier, most extradiegetic contexts will be considered in their relevant plays and novels. The second, third, and fourth chapters will apply these theories and the framework to *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed* respectively. Every chapter will analyze not only its own Hogarth text but its source text, through feminist criticism by scholars such as Neely, Beckwith, Eggert, Karaman, and many others. Lastly, the conclusion will compare and contrast the novels and their individual representations of gender with each other. In which ways have the selected texts built a significant representation of gender that can be considered feminist, if at all? In what ways do their representations of women differ? How do their representations of women compare to Shakespeare's original heroines?

Chapter 1: Framework and Methodology

This thesis will be employing the three modes of feminist criticism outlined by Carol Thomas Neely in her article “Feminist Modes of Shakespearean Criticism” as its primary framework in order to analyze *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *The Hag-Seed*. The theories that will substantiate these three modes will consist primarily of Judith Butler’s understanding of gender – namely her performativity theory. This chapter will consist of two parts: firstly the context of the source material will be outlined before delving briefly into the context of adaptation studies, and secondly the chapter will expound on the three aforementioned modes of feminist criticism and it will define and explain Butler’s theory. Before this framework can be properly applied to adaptations of Shakespeare’s work, the construction of gender during his time (to the degree that we can understand and recreate that understanding of gender) must be considered.

Contextualizing Shakespeare’s heroines in his original works is the first aim of this chapter.

It is difficult to contextualize Shakespeare’s heroines in the ‘gendered’ context of 16th and early 17th-century England. We only have some survived writings to analyze, and these texts are of course subject to their author’s personal opinions – and these different authors often contradict one another. It is difficult to gain true understanding and properly nuance such a subject. Barker points out studies by a number of theorists, such as Breitenberg, Smith and Orgel, that have “stressed the anxieties that circulated around masculinity in the period” in order to nuance the concept of gender at the time (469). Smith writes that “masculinity [was not located] in the possession of distinctive sexual organs (man’s equipment was imagined to be an extruded version of women’s) but in behavior” (Smith qtd. in Barker 469). A man could always fail to behave appropriately, and so the threat of effeminacy was ever-present (469). However, applying this kind of theory to 16th-century English society cannot give an accurate and nuanced view of gender during Shakespeare’s time. This does not mean Shakespeare did not operate within a context where gender, especially with regards to his heroines, is complicated. The source texts still have their own gender issues. In the time Shakespeare’s plays were originally performed, women were not actors. It was not until the early 1660’s that female performers were regularly featured on the English public stage (Beckwith 246; Barker 462; Draudt 289). Women’s parts were exclusively played by male actors, and Shakespeare evidently wrote these parts knowing this; Hill writes that Shakespeare “penned his plays ‘with the capacities and limitations of his boy

actors ... firmly in mind” (Hill qtd. in Barker 467). In fact, Hill goes so far as to claim that “the relative two-dimensionality of his female tragic characters is ‘a direct response to the working conditions of his theater’ (Hill qtd. in Barker 467). In other words, Hill argues that the representation of women in Shakespeare’s work is the direct result of a society that refused female actors a place on the stage. Instead, what Barker calls ‘boy-actresses’ were slotted to play the roles of women. Boy-actresses were, as the name might imply, young adolescent boys between the age of 10 and 22 years (Barker 462). The existence of the boy-actress raises some questions with regards to the context of gender during Shakespeare’s time, at the very least on the level of performance. Critics vary greatly in their opinion on the boy-actress; some would argue that such a performer inherently crosses the conventional lines of gender and sexual identity. “Others,” writes Barker, “see him as at best a mere theatrical convention and at worst the embodiment of the patriarchy’s exclusion of women from social visibility and agency” (461). The ‘boy-actress’ in this sense is a polarizing concept; he can simultaneously subvert gender roles and perpetuate them. The concept of replacing the boy actress by allowing women to play women’s parts seems to have been equally polarizing in England at the time; Thomas Coryate visited Venice in the early 1600’s and was impressed by Italian women performing on stage, but his contemporary countryman George Sandys disagreed and wrote, in 1610, that women were not capable of performing their ‘own’ gender effectively (Barker 462). This subject was a matter of some debate at the time. However, the status of the boy-actress was at the time also questioned. Due to religious values and norms, the boy-actress was associated with sexual transgression due to Bible verses stating that men should not dress as women (463). Associating the performance of young boys with this sexual transgression linked it to cross-dressing and sexual promiscuity off stage (464). As Barker points out,

Early modern representations of the boy-actress can be ambiguous and even ontradicitory. Certain questions recur: the level of the boy-actress’ craft, his sexual allure or lack thereof, the extent to which habituation to the ‘Lady’s part’ may compromise his ability to play the masculine role on the stage or in life (466)

In other words, the reality of gender on and off stage is difficult to pinpoint. As mentioned already, the information about the topic is contradictory and subjective. To return briefly to Smith’s argument that gender in Shakespeare’s time was created by behavior and not genitalia,

Orgel argues that the boy-actress “holds the mirror up to nature – or more precisely, to culture in ‘a world in which masculinity was always in question’” (Orgel qtd. in Barker 469). In other words, while the boy-actress was the symptom of a society that fundamentally did not value women and excluded them from opportunities such as performing, the boy-actress simultaneously embodied anxieties surrounding masculinity. Its existence functions as a tool to deny women, but it also, to some degree, subverted the typical constructions of gender that scholars attribute to this time period. Interestingly enough, the boy-actress as a concept became the “poster child” for Judith Butler’s argument that gender identity is “performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” – a concept that will be discussed in depth later in this chapter (Barker 471; Butler qtd. in Barker 471). Dymphna Callaghan makes a similar argument – while Orgel argues that the boy-actress is to some degree subversive of gender roles or expectations, she reminds him that “gender categories were neither reversible nor sufficiently flexible to allow women on the stage” (Callaghan qtd. in Barker 471). So while the boy-actress subverted some concept of masculinity (or at the very least embodied in some way anxieties surrounding the masculine gender), it did not offer any “especially liberating possibilities for feminism in a theatrical situation where the male body of the cross-dressed boy-actress repeatedly and ritually enacts the displacement, exclusion, and discipline of its female counterpart” (Callaghan qtd. in Barker 471). David Mann also understands the boy-actress to be “fundamentally masculine” and not as something that ‘queers’ gender – Shakespeare’s heroines are “the artificial products of an all-male theatre” (Mann qtd. in Barker 472). Understanding the boy-actress as ambiguously gendered means we engage in contemporary debates about gender and sexuality (473). To somehow argue that Shakespeare (or his contemporaries) would have preferred to write for “‘real’ women” is what Barker calls a “glib assumption” (Barker 475). The evidence that has been unearthed so far seems to suggest otherwise. While Shakespeare certainly wrote his female characters with the knowledge that women would not play them (at the time), he did not write them as ‘male parts,’ nor did he intend for these parts to be subversive or transgressive in the context of the boy-actress.

This background and understanding of Shakespeare’s female heroines is important in the context of its adaptations; after all, it is common for women to play women’s parts in Shakespearean plays nowadays, and when rewriting Shakespeare, authors (such as Winterson, Atwood, and Tyler) do not have to contend with the same issues surrounding gender and how

(and why) they portray their female characters. Shakespeare wrote in a gendered society as much as authors do now – and while the nuanced reality of societal gender norms cannot be fully or accurately described, the context of the boy-actress complicates Shakespeare’s heroines as characters to be performed by men. In adapting Shakespeare’s texts, Winterston, Atwood, and Tyler are not writing plays to be performed, and they are not writing women to be performed by men – they are writing literature to be read, and in this sense are operating outside of the source texts’ limitations with regards to gender – perhaps one can argue they do not simply ‘operate outside’ of the limitations placed on Shakespeare’s heroines in his time, but have removed those limitations altogether. With regards to this change of cultural limitations, Linda Hutcheon notes the following in *A Theory of Adaptation*:

An adaptation, like the work it adapts, is always framed in a context – a time and a place, a society and a culture; it does not exist in a vacuum. Fashions, not to mention value systems, are context-dependent. (142)

In this sense, the context of the boy-actress is key to engaging with the issue of gender not only in Shakespeare’s texts, but also in adaptations thereof. Neither the original work nor the adaptation exists in a vacuum. Before this chapter introduces Butler and expounds on her theories, or further expounds on the modes of feminist criticism, I would like to briefly touch upon *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed*’s statuses as adaptations. Adaptation studies proper is not the focus of this thesis, but the primary texts are still adaptations, and this context remains important for the feminist analysis and critique this thesis aims to supply. The primary texts’ representation and confrontation of gender will always be influenced by the source texts to some degree, as they must remain adaptations and not become work separate from what they intend to adapt. Hutcheon describes an adaptation as the following:

- An acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works
- A creative *and* an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging
- An extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work (8)

Hutcheon repeatedly places emphasis on the fact that an adaptation is not simply a ‘copy’. In fact, she argues that “adaptation is repetition *without* reproduction [emphasis added]” (7). She emphasizes an adaptation not only as a finished product to be consumed, but as a process in

which we learn something about how people “tell, show, or interact with stories” not just from the perspective of a consumer but from the perspective of a producer – the adapter (22). The original text is a “reservoir of instructions, diegetic, narrative, and [axiology] that the adapter can use or ignore [...] the adapter is an interpreter before becoming a creator” (84). In other words, the focus, themes, characters or even narrative can be changed to some degree to fit the new work’s needs – as long as the work still meets the requirements of what an adaptation is, the three descriptions Hutcheon posits in *A Theory of Adaptation*. As a process, adapting a story “[filters] it, in a sense, through one’s own sensibility, interests and talents” (18). Adaptations cannot ‘stray’ so far from Hutcheon’s definition of an adaptation, lest they become their own source work – and in the case of the Hogarth Shakespeare series, the act of adapting Shakespeare is central to the project’s ethos. The adaptations are not copies of Shakespeare – they do not simply ‘modernize’ the vocabulary, for example – but are separate products to consume which implies their own axiology as much as the source text implies its own. Fleming, writing specifically about Shakespeare in her article “The Ladies’ Shakespeare” concurs – she argues that women have always “‘reread,’ ‘rewritten,’ ‘refigured,’ ‘re-visioned’ or ‘decentered’” Shakespeare – that is, to criticize the poet from a woman’s point of view” (Fleming 22). Shakespeare has been adapted over and over again specifically by and for women. While perhaps not intentionally, Winterson, Atwood, and Tyler are only the latest in the line of not only Shakespeare adaptations, but Shakespeare adaptations by women. Adaptations are by no means a new phenomenon (Draudt 289). The adaptation of Shakespeare specifically first happened after the closing of theatres in 1642 (Draudt 289). However, adapters of Shakespeare follow in an interesting legacy in that Shakespeare himself was an adapter – the greatest example is of course *Hamlet*, which is effectively an adaptation of Thomas Kyd’s *Ur-Hamlet* (Draudt 290). However, it is not the only example. Hibbard goes as far as to argue that “Shakespeare’s genius was his ability to take an old-fashioned drama and utterly transform it” (Hibbard qtd. in Draudt 290). Shakespeare seems to have adapted other works quite commonly. And indeed, we know that *Henry IV*, Parts 1 and 2, and *Henry V*, can be considered adaptations of the anonymous chronicle “The Famous Victories of Henry V” (c. 1586) (Draudt 290-291). *King John* is an adaptation of another chronicle, “The Troublesome Reign of King John” (1591) (Draudt 291). Shakespeare also “adapted and complicated” Plautus’ *Menaechmi* to create “The Comedy of Errors” (Draudt 291). *The Winter’s Tale* is based on Robert Greene’s pastoral romance *Pandosto*. Draudt concludes the following:

The practice of rewriting or transforming earlier works that was extensively exercised by Shakespeare and his contemporaries is probably as old as drama itself, and there is nothing to object to it in principle. (304)

Adaptations “actualize or concretize ideas,” they “amplify and extrapolate,” they “critique or show their respect” (Hutcheon 3). They are all, to some degree, homages to their source texts. These adaptations are “as old as drama itself,” as Draudt writes, and Shakespeare himself also practiced adaptation. The context of both the work that is being adapted and the adaptation itself is incredibly important and that we must not fall into the trap of thinking these things exist within a vacuum. Shakespeare has been adapted many a time – often, as Fleming notes, specifically by women in order to center women (and women’s readings) in the plays of a man that has accrued so much cultural capital (22). As noted in the introduction of this thesis, Callaghan noted that Shakespeare “[offers] only a very oblique bearing on the subject [of women]” (*A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare 2*). Winterson, Atwood, and Tyler’s works must be understood as adaptations within these contexts; the modern context (versus Shakespeare’s time), the legacy of adaptations both of and by Shakespeare, and the context of women interacting with Shakespeare, looking for some kind of representation or understanding in the works of England’s best known poet and playwright.

In order to understand gender and build a framework with which we can analyze the representations of gender put forth in *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed*, Judith Butler’s performativity theory will be used. It was first introduced in her works *Gender Trouble* (first published in 1990) and later again in *Bodies that Matter* (1993). Performativity theory defines gender as a “stylized repetition of acts through time” – the emphasis is placed of gender as a state of action, of ‘doing’ rather than a state of being (*An Essay in Phenomenology* 520). With regards to ‘being’ a woman, Butler writes the following:

If one “is” a woman, that is surely not all one is; the term fails to be exhaustive, not because a pregendered “person” transcends the specific paraphernalia of its gender, but because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to

separate out “gender” from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained. (*Gender Trouble* 35)

‘Being’ a woman, for Butler, is an impossibility because what constitutes ‘being’ a woman is not only different from context to context (such as cultural or historical contexts), it is also impossible to separate gender from other facets of identity (35). She also argues that gender cannot be linked to sex – sex itself is a gendered construct, considering sexes are not as “unproblematically binary in their morphology and constitution” as the gender binary implies (38). Instead she takes her cue from Simone de Beauvoir, who suggests in *The Second Sex* that “one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one” (Beauvoir qtd. in *Gender Trouble* 39). She asks the question “to what extent is ‘identity’ a normative ideal rather than a descriptive feature of experience?” (47). Gender is an active experience – one ‘does’ gender, but one ‘is’ not gender. Gender is not an identity one is born into but one that someone experiences – gender is something that one is raised into, by enacting the aforementioned “stylized repetition of acts” (*An Essay in Phenomenology* 520). These ‘acts’ Butler refers to encompasses not just the literal physical acts in a person’s day to day, such as a woman doing housework or rearing and raising children, and a man doing physical labor and taking financial charge of a household. These acts also include “the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self” – in other words, body language also constitutes these acts (*Gender Trouble* 164). What is also included in these ‘acts’ are cultural norms and values, such as a woman’s nature being nurturing and subordinate, or a man’s nature to be sexual and assertive. These ‘acts’ are thus not purely physical; Connell neatly encapsulates it when she writes that “gender is a social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do, it is not social practice reduced to the body” (71). These ‘acts’ are what society has deemed what roles what gender should enact – and the repetition of these acts over the course of time has created the illusion within contemporary society that gender is a natural born phenomenon (*An Essay in Phenomenology* 520, 530). Society knows no truths other than what has been historically constituted – and if it seems as though gender has been constituted *naturally* rather than *culturally*, this is the assumption with which society will not only move forward, but further integrate into what gender ‘is’ (520, 530). Gender is in this sense quite literally a role, both in action and in being, that must be fulfilled. *How* this role ‘should’ be fulfilled is, as noted earlier, culturally and historically dependent. This performance of gender has become a societal feedback

loop – gender roles have been established, and in performing these roles they strengthen themselves. In doing so, the created norms become more and more difficult to break away from as time passes, even when conforming to these norms can cause an individual great stress. Opting out of these gendered norms and values is seen as a threat, and often “punishes” the individual (531).

With performativity theory as our primary methodology for textual analysis of *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl* and *Hag-Seed*, as discussed in the first chapter, the framework to which we will be applying it are the three modes of feminist criticism as described by Neely in her article “Feminist Modes of Shakespearean Criticism.” Feminist criticism seems hard to pin down – Neely herself notes that “although [she has] great difficulty in defining feminist criticism, [she knows] that it does exist because I recognize it when I see it” (3). She argues that feminist critics do not have a “ready-made method, ideology, subject, or style” (5). Butler herself notes something similar when she writes that “the presumed universality and unity of the subject of feminism is effectively undermined by the constraints of the representational discourse in which it functions” (*Gender Trouble* 36). As stated above, gender is contextual. Defining a category as broad as “feminist criticism” is near impossible when the term feminism itself can encompass many different perspectives, theories, and conclusion. There is a “pattern of difference” with regards to gender in different settings, such as race and class (Connell 36). With regards to ‘doing’ feminist criticism, Butler argues that “in the case of feminism, politics is ostensibly shaped to express the interest, and the perspectives, of ‘women’” (*Gender Trouble* 152). Feminist criticism must first and foremost address these same interests and perspectives. Beckwith argues that “feminist criticism needs to explore questions and problems as they arise” (249). She continues on to say feminist criticism needs to “[resist] the temptation to generality” in order to do “real conceptual work” – feminist criticism should “explore the concepts we need and use when and as we use them, rather than in advance and for all eventualities” (249). Feminist criticism needs to be current in order to be relative, and should primarily deal with contemporary questions of gender in order to do “real” work (249). Despite the many perspectives, theories, and conclusions, feminism should aim for that conceptual work. For Beckwith, “feminism [...] begins when women begin to describe their experiences and come to find that such a description requires change of themselves and change of the world” (253). Feminists find that the world does not properly substantiate their experiences, especially in media where women often do not find

themselves at all, or not represented in ways they feel as true or honest. Women should be placed centrally in the conversation of feminist criticism.

In her article, Carol Thomas Neely argues that she has observed three modes of feminist criticism with regards to Shakespeare specifically; compensatory criticism, justificatory criticism, and transformational criticism. The first mode of criticism, compensatory criticism, seeks to place women central in readings of texts, even if women are not central to the narrative at all. It seeks to ‘compensate’ the lack of (significant or positive) representation by restoring complexity to female characters that have otherwise been minimized or stereotyped in traditional criticism (Feminist Modes of Shakespearean Criticism 6). As Callaghan writes in her Introduction to *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*, women and their experiences are “heavily mediated by male representation and the constraints of literary convention [in Shakespeare’s plays]” (2). Because they are so heavily mediated, their presence must be compensated for by recontextualizing their characteristics and presence in the plays. For example, a woman whose qualities are positioned as negative are recontextualized within a new context in order to mark them as more positive. In *The Taming of the Shrew* (the example Neely employs) Kate is described as ‘shrewd’ – but one can recontextualize a word with such negative connotations as “a mark of intelligence and independence and a necessary defense against her situation” (Feminist Modes of Shakespearean Criticism 6). Another example she uses is *Hamlet*, where “Ophelia’s madness is viewed not as charming or passive, but revelatory” (6). Rather than understanding qualities that female characters have as negative simply because the narrative portrays it as such, those flaws can be turned around as more positive representation as feminist critics “[seek] more positive role models” (6). This “compensatory history” can also be described as “the study of “women worthies,” achievers, by male standards, in a male world” (6). However, in engaging with such compensatory criticism, the heroines “tend to be viewed in a partial vacuum, isolated from the rest of the play [...] and the culture in which that canon is rooted” (6-7). In other words, while such critique may have its merits, it also has its pit falls – it fails to account for *why* the women in these plays were written as they were, and why these qualities were attributed to the negative rather than the positive (7). Feminist critics may “overcompensate” and “attribute inappropriately or too enthusiastically to women characters qualities traditionally admired in men” (7). Such a critique fails to account for the context in which Shakespeare was written; to touch upon Hutcheon again, the written texts do not exist in a vacuum, and whether one seeks to

adapt or critique a text, “fashions, not to mention value systems, are context-dependent” (142).

The second mode, which Neely argues is generated by the pitfalls of the first, is justificatory criticism. Justificatory criticism seeks to understand these context-dependent value systems – rather than ‘change’ how we read the portrayal of women in Shakespeare’s works, this mode of criticism seeks to read the text and its heroines as results of the socio-cultural norms and values of the time. Rather than compensate a heroine’s traits, it justifies them by placing their role in relation to patriarchal imperatives and structures. It “accounts” for the limitations of women in Shakespeare’s plays:

The Justificatory mode [...] explores the place of all women – heroines, and especially victims – in the male-defined and male-dominated world of the plays, showing how their roles are circumscribed by political, economic, familial, and psychological structures [...] Such criticism explores themes, political structures, and historical background as they interact with character; it traces beyond the confines of particular plays and dominance-subordination relations of rules and subjects, husbands and wives, father and daughters. (Feminist Modes of Shakespearean Criticism 8)

This mode of criticism usually finds that all women are “defined or controlled by patriarchal imperatives” (8). Women in Shakespeare’s plays are explained through their roles and the expectations they navigate, rather than ignored, defended, or recontextualized. Neely notes that this mode of criticism also has its downfall – justificatory criticism “has difficulty assessing patriarchy’s varied quality and weight from play to play without falsely rigidifying it” (9). In other words, this mode of critique may become too unbalanced and lack nuance over time. And as it only describes the ways in which female characters are positioned within Shakespeare’s plays, critics that employ this mode disagree whether Shakespeare “defends patriarchal structures, attacks them, or merely represents them” (9). It is descriptive of female characters’ role as structured by patriarchy, but does not engage with it further.

The third mode of criticism is transformational criticism. Transformational criticism is introduced by Neely in the following way:

The third mode does not take powerful women as the point of entry into the text as compensatory critics do, nor does it examine the oppressive patriarchal structures as justificatory critics do, but instead it examines their interactions. (9)

Transformational criticism does not simply seek to understand “what women do or what is done to them, but what meaning these actions have and how this meaning is related to gender” (9). In this mode critics seek to “interrogate” the relations between “male idealization of and degradation of women as victims” (9). This mode looks the relationships between a character’s actions, why they do them, and how it is represented, all from a gendered perspective. Neely notes that the third mode is not a “synthesis of or transcendence of the first two” (5). The three modes of criticism parallel the three-stage models of feminist history that Joan Kefly and Gerda Lerner propounded, namely the study of women achievers “by male standards, in a male world,” the study of women’s “contribution to and oppression by patriarchal society,” and lastly the “history of “the social relations of the sexes” also described as “the study of the relative position of men and women in historical periods” (6). These modes are not “incompatible in theory or practice” (5). In fact, Neely argues that all of these modes are important and must not “wither away,” although their pitfalls must be recognized (6).

Although these modes have their pitfalls, as Neely notes, they “will not and should not wither away” (6). All three modes have value and should continue to be used and applied. Her first point is that her three distinctions are an abstract model, and in practice feminist criticism does not always have such sharp distinctions (5-6). However, as written above, the three modes also correspond with the models of feminist history; in other words, they are roughly correlated to the three ‘waves’ of feminism. As time went on, feminism as an ideology and movement has grown, changed, and splintered. New iterations and perspectives are grown on previous feminist perspectives; but this does not mean that previous feminist perspectives have lost value. This is true for the three modes of criticism also. They are built from each other, and each was useful in its own frame of context, and that value is not lost to the march of time. By using all three modes of criticism, this thesis builds its analysis on basis of all the ‘steps’ taken; it creates a criticism that encompasses all the nuances that the three different modes offer. Justificatory criticism evolved from a perceived lack of nuance in the compensatory mode. Likewise, the transformational mode evolved from a perceived lack of nuance in the justificatory mode, but over time they have become separate and engage with very different perspectives on texts. The transformational mode of criticism does not ‘contain’ the other modes as such. This thesis, on the other hand, aims to contain all modes of criticism so that all perspectives are given equal nuance. As will become clear from the chapters in which the primary texts are analyzed, the modes of

criticism neatly segue into each other as the reading of the texts are nuanced and initial readings are counter-argued.

By approaching *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed* through all three modes of criticism, this thesis will have a set of criticism where the pitfalls of one mode will be further examined in another. The textual analysis will be nuanced in all three perspectives and be nuanced *by* the multiple perspectives. In this way, the criticism aimed at the adaptations of Shakespeare's work will mirror the way in which Shakespeare's original works have been unpacked, studied and critiqued by feminist scholars. The aim of being able to parallel the three modes of criticism I will apply to the primary texts to the criticism already aimed towards Shakespeare, is to see in which ways the adaptations have changed from the originals with regards to their representation, discussion and relation to gender. Whether or not these adaptations have been truly 'translated' for a modern audience will become clear.

The methodology of this thesis will be the three modes of feminist criticism as outlined; the framework which will inform the methodology is primarily Butler's understanding of gender, and these two things will be combined in order to analyze the primary texts through close-reading, with a focus on their themes of gender and identity. The Hogarth Shakespeare series seeks to retell Shakespeare 'for a new generation' – the adaptations will be informed by the context of this 'new generation' in the same way that the original Shakespeare plays were informed by the context that 'that generation.' Do the authors represent women differently from the original texts, or do they 'spin' the heroine's representation into a more positive one (not unlike compensatory critics may do in their criticism)? As Hutcheon writes, an adaptation does not have to 'follow the rules' of its original and can change enough while still maintaining its status as an adaptation (Hutcheon 84). "Fidelity criticism" (that English adaptations need to recreate the original text as much as possible) is no longer 'in style' and instead adaptations are 'allowed' their own interpretations and changes should the interpreter feel it does the work justice (6). What changes have been made, with regards to gender and identity and the relations thereof between the various characters, in *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed*? As presented in the introduction, the research question this thesis aims to answer is: in what ways have the selected texts built a significant representation of gender that can be considered feminist, if at all? By analyzing these texts critically through the three modes of feminist criticism, what can be understood about how these novels represent gender, and how do we qualify this representation,

especially in the context of the primary texts being rewritten Shakespeare plays (in which the representation of gender is informed by a very different context)?

Chapter 2: *The Gap of Time*

The Gap of Time by Jeanette Winterson became the first book in the Hogarth Shakespeare series when it was published in 2015, and is a rewriting of the ‘problem play’ *The Winter’s Tale*. As Sarah Crown notes in her review of the novel for *The Guardian*, Winterson being the first to publish in the series puts her in an interesting position – “while those who come after will be judged at least in part against each other, for Winterson, at this point, it’s her words against Shakespeare’s” (Crown par. 1). Despite the unavoidable direct comparisons between Shakespeare’s *A Winter’s Tale* and Winterson’s “cover version” (as she calls it), the novel was well received. Crown herself argues that the novel is “stylishly done” and “compelling, entertaining and elegant” (Interview with Jeanette Winterson; Crown par. 5, par.7). *The New York Times*’ review by Dean Bakopoulos calls it a “shining delight of a novel” (par. 2). He even argues that Winterson has, in at least one instance, improved on *The Winter’s Tale* when he says: “Winterson invents a back story of a deeply buried sexual relationship between [Leontes and Polixenes], which makes Leo’s overblown rage and irrational envy at the outset even more credible than it is in the original” (par. 4). Other reviews, such as those found in *The Independent*, *The Financial Times*, or *The Observer* repeat similar sentiments.

I will be comparing feminist critique of *The Winter’s Tale* with my own analysis of *The Gap of Time*. The feminist critique will be contextualized within the 3 modes of criticism as outlined by Neely. This chapter will be employing texts by Paul Joseph Zajac, Carol Thomas Neely, Sarah Beckwith, Adanur Evrum Doğan and Katherine Eggert. Zajac analyzes *The Gap of Time* as an adaptation in its themes of intimacy. Neely, in her articles “Women and Issue in *The Winter’s Tale*” and “*The Winter’s Tale*: The Triumph of Speech,” analyzes Perdita and Hermione in the compensatory mode of criticism. Beckwith examines Hermione and Perdita in the same vein. Doğan examines *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Gap of Time* as adaptations, specifically with regards to the representation of trauma. Eggert’s *Showing Like a Queen* functions closer to both the justificatory and transformational modes of criticism, and will provide a contrasting analysis of Perdita and Hermione as compared to Beckwith and Neely. By comparing the feminist critique of Shakespeare’s source text to the narrative of Winterson’s adaptation, the degree of change in narrative – and how this impacts the feminist criticism thereof – becomes clear. The two can then

be properly compared with regard to their representation of women and gender, and that comparison will lead to a conclusion on the degree of difference between the texts. To what degree has Winterson ‘updated’ the source material for a modern audience, with regards to its representation of women?

Not many reviewers took notice of a potentially gendered reading of the text, despite the fact that *The Winter’s Tale* is known for feminist discourse centered mainly on Hermione. Only Bakopoulos notes anything to do with gender when he argues that “a subtle cultural critique of hypermasculinity, and the attendant violence fueled by money (specifically the loss thereof), ripples meaningfully beneath the novel’s surface” (par. 4). This observation has more to do with the characters of Xeno and Leo than any of the women. Winterson herself does briefly discuss women in Shakespeare in an interview with Alex Clark:

You know, Shakespeare’s women tend to end up with men who are really not suitable at all. I think one of the ways that Shakespeare deals with the feminine is to show how dreadful lots of the men around them are. And yes, it’s a terrible choice, but it’s also a very modern situation, isn’t it? Very often, women do choose terrible men, and we all look and we all think, “Why did you do that?” I think Shakespeare is good at showing that in this strange, non-judgmental way, so that we do have to make our own minds up. Also, when there are absent feminines in Shakespeare, that’s usually a situation which is going to be richly problematic. Once an essential part of the female influence is removed, then what happens? And, of course, no matter how you barricade your daughter in, she is the symbol of new life, and the forward generation is going to escape. I think that on a symbolic level that’s what Shakespeare is saying: you cannot barricade somebody in, because they’re going to get out, and then what’s going to happen is far worse than if you’d introduced them to a few nice guys in polite society. (Winterson interview)

Here, Winterson calls absent women a “richly problematic” situation, yet unlike Callaghan she does not worry about “representation in general” (Callaghan qtd. in Beckwith 245). Instead, Winterson places more importance on the story of an individual – such as individual women choosing “terrible” men, or an individual daughter being “barricaded in” by a father. However, when she says “I think one of the ways that Shakespeare deals with the feminine is to show how dreadful lots of the men around them are,” she asserts a sentiment that closely mirrors Neely’s

justificatory mode of criticism (Winterson interview).

The Winter's Tale begins with Polixenes, King of Bohemia, visiting his childhood friend, Leontes, King of Sicilia. After nine months, he wants to return home to his kingdom and his son. Leontes desperately tries to convince Polixenes to stay longer, but after failing sends his pregnant wife Hermione to convince him to return. After three short speeches, she is successful. Upon returning with Polixenes, however, Leontes goes mad and suspects that Hermione had an affair with him and that the child is a result of the affair. He orders Polixenes to be poisoned, but he is instead warned and he flees to Bohemia. In a rage, Leontes publically accuses his wife of infidelity and declares the pregnancy illegitimate. He throws her in prison, where his wife births a girl. Paulina, a loyal friend and maid of Hermione, takes the baby to the king in hopes that he will be calmed by her; instead, he orders the child to be abandoned by a noble. Hermione is publically humiliated in a trial before the king as she asserts her innocence. The Oracle concurs; Leontes, however, refuses to believe it. His son dies shortly after of a wasting sickness as a result of the accusations against his mother, and Hermione faints; she is carried away by Paulina, who reports her death to Leontes. Leontes, now heartbroken, vows to atone for the loss of his son, wife, and abandoned daughter. Meanwhile, the daughter, named Perdita by Hermione in a dream, is abandoned on the coast of Bohemia – he leaves her with a bundle containing gold and trinkets to suggest her noble blood. Perdita is found by a shepherd and his son, Clown. After sixteen years, Polixenes reveals that his son, Florizel, has fallen in love with a shepherd girl. He disguises himself to attend the sheep-shearing feast where Florizel and Perdita will be betrothed. Once they are betrothed, Polixenes tears off his disguise and orders his son never to see Perdita again, threatening her and the old shepherd that found her with torture and death. Perdita, Florizel, the shepherd and his son flee to Sicilia. In Sicilia, Leontes is still in mourning. Once Perdita and Florizel arrive, Florizel pretends to be on a diplomatic mission for his father until his cover is blown when Polixenes himself arrives in Sicilia. Once the kings meet and reconcile, Perdita's birth is revealed. Leontes, overjoyed to be reunited with his daughter, begs Polixenes for forgiveness. They visit a statue of Hermione which has recently been finished, and the statue shows signs of vitality and becomes Hermione, resurrected or restored to life. The play ends with Perdita and Florizel engaged.

In *The Gap of Time* Leontes is now Leo, a hedge fund manager instead of a king. Polixenes becomes Xeno. Queen Hermione becomes MiMi, the French chanteuse, and Paulina

becomes Pauline. While Perdita retains her name, Xeno's son is now simply Zel. The Shepherd and his son Clown are now Shep and Clo. Where *The Winter's Tale* starts with a setup scene and is chronological, *The Gap of Time* starts with Shep and his son Clo finding Perdita in a baby hatch and deciding to keep her, before jumping backwards through time to Leo and Xeno's childhood friendship. Leo begins suspecting that his wife MiMi is having an affair with Xeno, and that her pregnancy is the result of this. He begins spying on her, until in a fit of rage he attempts to murder Xeno and he violently rapes MiMi. The brutal rape induces labor, but Leo refuses to acknowledge the child as his even after a DNA test proving otherwise, and pays his gardener to take her to Xeno. The gardener is followed by men, and he suspects they want to rob him of the bundle of money that Perdita was given, so he puts her in a baby hatch, where Shep and Clo eventually find her. The narrative jumps forward to the start of Perdita's story, when she is turning 18. Raised by Shep and Clo, Perdita invites her boyfriend Zel to Shep's birthday party. Xeno also goes to the party and begins asking questions about her past; Perdita becomes worried Xeno is her father, and that Zel is her brother. Once she confronts Xeno, she learns of her history and parentage. Perdita and Zel go to London, to meet Leo. Once realizing who Perdita is, Leo begins setting up a charity concert in order to atone. Perdita and her girl group would be singing at the concert; Pauline, MiMi's friend and Leo's assistant, informs MiMi, who has become a recluse, that her daughter is alive and she arranges to sing at the concert as well.

The Gap of Time only has three female characters of note: MiMi, her daughter Perdita, and Leo's assistant Pauline. Of these three women, Perdita is the only one with her own narrative perspective. When we first meet her, she is just a baby in a baby hatch, and only half-way through the novel does her perspective begin. We are introduced to her as she cares for her brother Clo; she is the one to get him out of bed in the morning, urges him to buy their father a birthday present, and is making his breakfast. Later on we learn that she, like her mother, became a musician; Shep taught her how to play piano, and he taught her the song 'Perdita,' the sheet music for which was left with her in the baby hatch. Perdita is dating Zel at the time, although they are both unaware of each other's parentage. Through Zel she meets Xeno, his father, who recognizes MiMi's necklace that Perdita is wearing, which was also left in the baby hatch. While at first Perdita thinks Xeno is her father, he explains that Leo is actually her father; this, however, happens 'offstage.' Perdita and Zel go to London, where the discussion of Perdita's history happens once again outside of the narrative. In fact, very little happens in Perdita's narrative;

much of it is a continuation of events explicitly left offstage. The only moment of note is at Shep's birthday party. At the party, the guests take a compatibility quiz entitled "The Experimental Generation of Interpersonal Closeness" which according to Holly means "how to fall in love without really trying. You ask each other a set of questions and then you get married" (Winterson 158). Zajac notes that, as the characters take this quiz, there is a "significant narrative maneuver" (Zajac 11). Instead of the narrative that the reader has become accustomed to, the only thing that remains is transcribed dialogue. There is no access to the character's interiorities, or even their body language. Perdita and Zel are the ones to "shake off" the narrative device – while the quiz seems to commodify human intimacy and "reduce [it] to a template," here Perdita challenges the notion and instead creates a meaningful connection with Zel (11). In the context of true human connection and intimacy, Perdita plays a central role. Although this role is mainly symbolic, it is no less important. *The Winter's Tale* and *The Gap of Time* are primarily about "the struggle to attain and maintain intimacy" (Zajac 1). This touches upon the same thing Bakopoulos notices when he speaks of hyper-masculinity and the struggle for men to connect to others. Both Leo and Xeno (and to some degree, Shep and Zel) struggle with intimacy. Leo and Xeno, as boyhood lovers, seem to struggle with internalized homophobia and are no longer as close as they once were when Xeno breaks his leg in a biking accident that is Leo's fault. Before then, the two boys bond over their difficult relationships with their fathers and their absent mothers. Leo and Xeno both avoid intimacy in their relationships; Xeno stopped seeing his son when Zel turned 8, and his relationship with Zel's mother was purely an "arrangement;" he was gay but he wanted a son (Winterson 170). Leo, on the other hand, has always struggled with intimacy with MiMi. When he first asks to marry her, she disagrees, and he only gets her to agree through an intermediary. He sends Xeno to France with a list of yes-or-no questions in order to propose to MiMi for him. She recognizes Leo's struggles with intimacy; she even says "Leo is possessive but he is afraid of being close to anyone" (Winterson 59). Leo himself is also aware of his issues:

Men need groups and gangs and sports and clubs and institutions and women because men know that there is only nothingness and self-doubt. Women were always trying to make a connection, build a relationship. As though one human being could know another. (Winterson 33).

It is in this context – the struggle for intimacy and human connection – that Perdita becomes important, as a symbolic solution to a larger problem, rather than an individual person in a narrative. Perdita's first act as a character is to “mend [Shep's] heart” after the death of his wife (193). Shep struggles with his family and his own life after the death of his wife, but he gains new purpose in raising Perdita, who becomes the new family member and closes the gap between father and son. After this, she mends Zel's heart – his relationship with his father is tense, as he feels Xeno abandoned him. When Xeno and Zel are face to face after Xeno finally recognizes who Perdita is (through her mother's necklace), it is Perdita that encourages intimacy once more: “Xeno leaned on the edge of the desk. ‘Zel, if I could change it...’ / ‘It's not in the past,’ said Perdita. ‘You can't change what you did. You can change what you do.’” (Winterson 211). After this discussion Xeno begins mending his relationship with Zel, although the readers do not get to see the fruits of their labor. The last character Perdita ‘mends’ is Leo. When he learns of his daughter and is reunited with her, he almost immediately cancels a project which was to remove a public space and replace it with a condominium for the rich, already showing more kindness and care for the community around him. However, he and MiMi reunite as a direct result of Perdita. He sees her perform during a charity performance:

A woman is standing like a statue in the light. She's wearing a simple black dress and red lipstick, her heavy hair cut short. / She doesn't move. Then she does. / ‘This song is for my daughter. It's called “Perdita”.’

Leo stood up, went into the aisle. From somewhere in the theatre Xeno came and stood beside him. He put his arm round Leo. Leo was crying now, long tears of rain./ That which is lost is found. (Winterson 284).

On a literal level, Perdita is the one to set in motion the series of events that leads Leo to not only heal, but see MiMi again. Leo sets up a charity concert for the community after he meets Perdita again, mainly for her girl group The Separations. But at the event, without his knowledge, MiMi also performs. It is unclear who got her to perform; most likely Pauline, who remained in contact with MiMi after the divorce. Either way, the entire setup happens offstage. We do know Perdita is the one who set the events into motion. On a symbolic level, the return of Leo and MiMi's daughter begins the process of healing for them both, and in that vein their reunion. Perdita's influence has a similar effect on Shep, and Xeno and Zel's relationship. Although most of the

'big' events in Perdita's narrative happen *outside* of her narrative, as a character her agency set these events into motion and allowed a previous, hurt, generation to begin the process of healing their struggles with intimacy. In the context of compensatory criticism, Perdita is a woman who builds bridges and helps her father and Xeno with their struggles surrounding emotion and intimacy. This holds true in *The Winter's Tale* as well, where Neely describes Perdita as "important not only as a character and a symbol, but also for the response which she generates, for the healthy relationships in which she participates" (Neely *Women and Issue* 188).

MiMi's role is somewhat more interesting, especially as her presence in the narrative is starkly different from the source text. In *The Winter's Tale*, much of feminist criticism surrounding Hermione is what Neely would consider compensatory criticism. In *The Winter's Tale*, Hermione is publically accused of her affair with Polixenes and is reported dead shortly thereafter. Only when Leontes is truly remorseful does a statue come to life, revealing Hermione to have been alive all along. As the statue comes alive, Hermione shares a powerful speech directed at Perdita – and Neely argues that "Hermione is not fully and humanly alive, however, until she uses language" and that "speech is the means by which Hermione's life is restored and the mark of this restoration" (Neely *The Triumph of Speech* 335, 337). Hermione's refusal to be silent is what makes her strong – she is present, and her presence is key. Despite her death, Hermione remains a "powerful presence" in *The Winter's Tale*, and her resurrection and speech is one of the most famous moments in *The Winter's Tale* (Neely *Women and Issue* 186; Zajac 12). Beckwith argues that the speech is central to gender and the plot: "the play has outrageously, audaciously, staked everything on the response to Hermione's liveness" (252). She argues that *The Winter's Tale* is a "deeply feminist work" because it "paid loving attention to Hermione" (256). Hermione's resurrection or rejuvenation is one of the ways in which *The Winter's Tale* arguably redeems its portrayal of women, according to scholars such as Beckwith and Neely. Neely argues that *The Winter's Tale* "concludes with an extended acknowledgement of women's power and centrality" *because* of Hermione's "rejuvenation" and that women "deserve this conclusion, preserving themselves and educating men to 'see the issue'" (*Women and Issue* 182). In other words, the fact that Hermione has endured and survived through her strength, and her forgiveness is a tool that educates men about their mistakes (Beckwith 252). I explain all of this feminist discourse surrounding Hermione in the source text because all of this is absent in Winterson's adaptation. Where Perdita effectively plays the same role in arguably the same way,

MiMi's role has changed completely. We are introduced to MiMi when she is pregnant, just as in the source text, which immediately paints her as a sexual woman – a role that makes her powerful in the context of Leo's male insecurity (Eggert 162). Rather than be publically accused of infidelity, Leo spies on MiMi by placing a hidden webcam in their bedroom and he vividly imagines her having sex with Xeno and Pauline, but in reality the two are only present because she appears to feel unwell. Shortly afterwards, the heavily pregnant MiMi is brutally raped by Leo, and as a result enters labor and is brought to the hospital. Her public exposure is turned into a private assault (Zajac 9). After this (and the kidnapping of Perdita) MiMi and Leo divorce, and MiMi retreats to what Doğan describes as a “phantom existence” (475). She stops performing music and stops releasing new music completely, and becomes a “static” character, and in this way could be described as a statue (475). Doğan observes the following:

Winterson does not provide MiMi with a miraculous resurrection that would revoke the idea of forgiveness as Hermoine's symbolic coming back to life on stage entails in *The Winter's Tale*. Despite the wrinkles proving the passage of time, MiMi is regenerated from her phantom existence as Perdita is found. (475)

In other words, MiMi does not rejuvenate because of Leo's remorse, but because of what Perdita represents: a change in not just the characters in *The Gap of Time*, but on a symbolic level the elevation of intimacy and connection; the kind of true understanding between people that Leo explicitly doubts. However, although her rejuvenation has been given a new context, MiMi's is given no opportunity to speak; she can only be silent. Hermione is given a central role in feminist criticism because she resurrects from her statue-form and breaks the silence of her absence; MiMi is given no opportunity to speak and be present in this way. Zajac observes the following:

Winterson stages the reemergence of MiMi only to turn our attention away from the narrative action and toward her own role as author and adaptor. Rather than dwelling on one of the most famous moments in her Shakespearean source, she almost immediately interjects her interpretation of the play and motivations for writing the novel. (12)

MiMi does not get an opportunity to speak or truly 'become alive' again. Instead, Winterson interjects her own perspective on Shakespeare and the process of writing the novel as an end to her tale. During her perspective, Winterson says the following about Hermione: “[she] does the

thing most difficult to do to right a wrong situation: nothing” (Winterson 289). And that is what Winterson allows MiMi to do: also nothing. For Winterson, MiMi is a strong character because she did nothing, whereas scholar such as Neely and Beckwith argue that Hermione is a strong character because she does *something*, namely speak, through which she embodies forgiveness and survival in an unbearably difficult situation and is the reason that “happy endings may endure” (Eggert 168). But rather than take on the educational role that Neely describes for Hermione, it is Winterson herself, rather than the character of MiMi, that examines the novel and its themes. Winterson writes that there are three possible endings to a story – revenge, tragedy and forgiveness, and that forgiveness is the only route to happiness, because it is the only true route to a future that is not “[mortgaged]” by the past (Winterson 285). The past should not be repeated in the future, and Winterson touches upon the generational aspect of *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Gap of Time* when she says “Shakespeare walks away from the play, as we do, leaving it to the kids to get it right next time. As Ezra Pound said, ‘Make it new.’” (Winterson 286). While Perdita’s role as a positive role model, in the context of compensatory feminist criticism, remains effectively the same in both *The Gap of Time* as well as its source text, MiMi is positioned as a positive role model because of the difference in her rejuvenation. In *The Winter’s Tale*, Hermione forgives through action (namely her speech), and in *The Gap of Time* MiMi displays strength because, as Winterson argues, she does the most difficult thing: inaction. She refuses to entertain the situation at all, and thus refuses to legitimize it.

The last character to discuss, Pauline, is significantly less complex with regards to a compensatory critique. Despite being relatively side-lined in the narrative, Pauline is most like a “women [worthy]” or achiever (Neely *Three Modes of Feminist Criticism* 6). As a character, she is not described in complex terms. When Leo bemoans that he cannot control Pauline, Xeno says the following: “Why would you want to control her? She’s great for the business and she’s great for you. You need someone who stands up to you.” (Winterson 35). Pauline is good at her job, community-oriented (she is the reason Leo’s company is charitable at all, let alone to the degree that it is), and is described by Leo as “a much better educated, much better qualified, and much better person than [he is]” (Winterson 34). She remains in contact with MiMi, and is implied to have helped MiMi heal her emotional wounds. She is also the one who tries to help ‘educate’ Leo. In the context of compensatory criticism, Pauline is relatively simple to place as a positive role model. In this sense, she does not need to be ‘recontextualized’ as is common in

compensatory criticism.

However, as has been discussed, the justificatory mode of criticism resulted from compensatory criticism's shortcomings. Compensatory criticism seeks a positive representation in the female characters the narrative offers, but often ignores *why* the representation is lacking in favor of celebrating the female characters. The way in which these female characters have been positioned in the narrative is, at first glance, significantly less positive. Perdita functions exclusively as a symbol, MiMi is victimized in a brutal private rape scene, and only Pauline is left relatively intact as a human being, but is rarely relevant in the narrative to any of the characters. As mentioned above during the discussion of compensatory criticism of Hermione, Neely argues that women function as educative tools for men (Neely *Women and Issue* 182). Perdita educates through the response that she generates the example she sets with her own relationship (188). MiMi's educational role is performed through her refusal to legitimize Leo's reaction through, in *The Gap of Time*, inaction. She educates through survival. As Beckwith points out: "For it is not how Hermione has survived that is important but that she has. Her recovery depends on the renunciation of epistemology as our mode of access to others" (252). This is true in *The Gap of Time* as well: MiMi rejects what Leo thinks he knows, refuses to legitimize his way of navigating intimacy, and in doing so forces Leo to (with the help of Perdita's presence in the narrative) confront his own mistakes and truly change as a character. Even Pauline functions on the level of educating men: Pauline is the one who advises Leo towards change, the one who is responsible for his charity and growing compassion, and arguably offstage has educated Leo enough for the 'final lesson' that MiMi and Perdita bring with them. Neely describes the women as "the 'cure' for the 'thoughts' that 'thick' [Leo and Xeno's] 'blood'" (*Women and Issue* 182). At first glance, women placed exclusively in 'educational' roles to be consumed by men is decidedly not as "deeply feminist" as Beckwith argues *The Winter's Tale* is (256). Neely argues otherwise:

though the play begins without mention of women, it concludes with an extended acknowledgement of their power and centrality [...] They are witty where the men are solemn, they are at ease with sex where the men are uneasy about it, and they take for granted change and separation (*Women and Issue in The Winter's Tale* 182).

The central role of women is attributed to the power they possess through their knowledge and comfort with intimacy. Although they function in educational roles, they can only operate in that role at all because of the power assigned to them within the narrative. They hold the key to moving forward; to a future unmarred by the same issues of masculinity and intimacy and Leo and Xeno struggle with. Although they have the educational role of changing men, avoiding the hypermasculinity and the hegemonic masculinity that Xeno and Leo are embodying allows for a happier future between Perdita and Zel, and although that happy ending is not explored, it is promised.

Eggert, however, disagrees with Neely and Beckwith's arguments that the educational role of the female characters counts as positive representation. According to Eggert, the entire story is dependent on the death of Hermione/MiMi (a metaphorical death in *The Gap of Time*) – and this is inherently problematic. She makes the following observation:

The Winter's Tale does not promote a kind of masculine theatricality to supplant the feminine. Nonetheless, on the level of plot such supplantation certainly takes place, not only in this play but in all of Shakespeare's last plays, which feature a remarkable parade of fathers redeemed, reprieved, restored to crowns and families. And as Adelman points out, that redemption and restoration is achieved at the cost of women's authority being either remade as chaste [...] or altogether demonized. [...] (Eggert 166-167)

In other words, the redemption of Leo as a father and a husband comes at the cost of women, who are either demonized for their apparent failures or remade in a subordinate position to men. Eggert argues that Hermione's return to life does not subvert the idea of a subservient wife, but instead "restores his sense of patriarchal order" (133). Hermione was dismissed by Leontes in a madness sparked by her pregnancy, which is a manifestation of her sexuality. Her sexuality is a threat the Leontes' lineage and progeny, and thus a threat to his masculinity. Hermione was also returned to life in a form where this danger is no longer present (Eggert 162, 163). This is also true in *The Gap of Time*; MiMi is pregnant when the reader first meets her, and her sexuality is indeed a threat to Leo, as evidenced by the passage where he spies on her through a webcam and vividly imagines the depraved sex she, Xeno and Pauline were supposedly having. It is fitting that his punishment for her is then sexual in nature also, rather than the public accusations in the source text. Likewise, Paulina is Hermione's most vocal mourner, but her "remarkable feminine

dramaturgy” is “deposed” in favor of King Leontes’ “capacity to order tale-telling and narrative renewal” (18). In other words, Paulina’s powerful speeches are like Hermione’s replaced by and recontextualized in patriarchal systems of power. Eggert argues that this place of women in the narrative – as legitimizations of patriarchal power and subordinate to the men in the sense that they sacrifice themselves for the sake of men; their life and their agency – is at least partially the result of Elizabethan anxiety about female power, and partially because it allows the author to restructure a literary movement (Eggert 2, 168). This becomes clear from the following passage taken from *Showing Like a Queen*:

The same kinds of multiple reformations that queenship introduces in political theory and practice can also take shape in literature [...] Elizabethan and post-Elizabethan writers seize upon the specter of female monarchy not because it warps the circumstances of their literary moment, but also because such warping – changing accustomed patterns of thought as it does – might become an occasion for an author to restructure that literary moment.” (Eggert 6) My contention is that the topic of queenship does not provoke only authorial anxiety; rather, the writers that I consider in this book turn the political "problem" of queenship, either current or remembered, to their advantage by reconstituting it in terms of new poetic and dramatic genres. [...] Why write about the queen? Because that is, figuratively, where the money is.” (Eggert 7)

The anxiety surrounding female power changed the circumstances of the socio-political landscape, and in dealing with this in their work, authors like Shakespeare could likewise change the circumstances of the literary movement at the time. It is where they stand to gain the most cultural and symbolic capital. Despite Eggert’s criticism of the representation of women in *The Winter’s Tale*, she is quick to point out that Shakespeare was not “eager” to completely remove femininity in *The Winter’s Tale*, as in *Pandosto* (165). Rather than Perdita’s death, Shakespeare confronts us with a happy ending, where Perdita and Florizal are separated from the tragedy between Hermione and Leo and are given a better future.

Under justificatory criticism, the status of women in their patriarchal context is not entirely clear as scholars are divided on the subject. However, as Eggert’s critique continues, in the context of *The Gap of Time* this leads to a transformational criticism. Eggert argues that part of Hermione’s restoration of the patriarchal order is that she becomes a “purely private creature”

(165). Her presence is no longer public or efficient at court (as she was the one sent to return Polixenes) but instead, at the end of the novel, she is taken from this public context and instead turned private and inwards, subordinate to Leontes' dominance despite the speech, because she no longer poses a (sexual) threat to Leontes (165). However, in *The Gap of Time*, it is the opposite. In the context of Neely and Beckwith's argument, and perhaps even Winterson's own commentary, MiMi's silence breaks the link she had to power. However, according to Eggert, MiMi does not *need* to speak. It is not her silence, or lack thereof, that is feminist or unfeminist. Rather, it is Hermione becoming a private creature, subordinate to the public nature of the King, which problematizes the representation of Hermione as a heroine or female character. In *The Gap of Time*, MiMi does not speak, but steps out of the role of private creature and into the role of public woman once again, by literally stepping out onto the stage. She sheds the punishment she was given – in *The Gap of Time*'s context, this punishment was *also* private rather than public – and takes power by once more stepping into the literal stage light. Her in-narrative silence is contrasted, in this way, to the change in plot that grants agency in this sense. As Beckwith notes, “Leontes’ attitude towards Hermione is bound up with a broader, culturally sanctioned discrediting of women’s voices” (251). Leontes silences Hermione in a public setting, and although Beckwith argues that Hermione’s speech means Leontes now no longer discredits women’s voices, this speech is in a private setting. In *the Gap of Time*, Leo silences MiMi in a private setting. During her rape, he is not only discrediting her voice, he is viewing her as something he has ownership of, and is threatened by the prospect that Xeno owns her instead; in fact, he explicitly reinforces that he equates loving a woman with ownership (Zajac 5). He repeatedly asks her to “say [she’s] mine” and consistently compares his ownership of her body to Xeno’s ownership (Winterson 82). In stepping out into public to perform, MiMi reconstructs and honors not only her own voice but her own agency, through moving from the private sphere into a public sphere. However, *The Gap of Time* does problematize this scene when MiMi’s punishment is so explicit, but her recovery is not addressed in the narrative at all, and simply put under the context of forgiveness in Winterson’s ending commentary.

In Pauline’s case, she is the only one where both her representation of agency and her representation through the eyes of male-dominance are in the narrative proper, despite MiMi and Perdita having larger presences. Pauline is introduced in the following passage:

Men in Leo's position had personal assistants who could moonlight as supermodels in their celery and cottage cheese lunch breaks. Leo had Pauline. When she had started working at his ex-bank she'd been thirty, fluent in three languages with a degree in economics, and MBA, and she had just passed her accountancy exams for fun. She was a much better educated, much better qualified, and much better person than Leo, but she was never going to cut it as a trader. Detail was her strength – she could rip through two hundred pages of due diligence in an hour and give him a list of bullet points to fire at the other side. She'd saved him from the worst of a few deals more than a few times. [...] When he had started up on his own he had asked her to come and work for him. Leo did the deals. Pauline did the detail. After fifteen years of knowing Leo and the fact that fifteen years had moved her from a sleek thirty to a formidable forty-five, she ran things the way she wanted them to be run and said whatever she wanted to say. Thanks to Pauline, Sicilia was compliant, transparent, charitable and, if not exactly ethical, they had standards. Leo was OK with that. (Winterson 34)

In this passage, Pauline is described as competent, strong, well-educated, intelligent, and exclusively in a positive manner. However, during Leo's madness, even Pauline is described in Leo's interiority in terms of ownership, much like how he views his wife. He forgets that his wife earns her own money, and he forgets that Pauline was a partner at his company (Winterson 51). Instead, he thinks the following:

Pauline was a lesbian! That explained it! She couldn't get a man so she had to pimp women. She was a drunk, ugly lesbian. Well, OK, Pauline doesn't drink. Call me a liar over a bottle of whisky. She is a sober, ugly lesbian./ IT'S A THREESOME! [...] Was Pauline a Top? All Leo knew about lesbian sex came from porn sites but he was pretty sure there had to be a Top and a Bottom. [...] Pauline was getting out an eight-inch purple silicone dildo with a harness. [...] VIBRATOR THE SIZE OF A SUBMARINE YOU SEX-SHOP SLAG [...] JEWISH MARXIST (Winterson 52-53).

In this passage, Leo is imagining an explicit sex scene as he spies on his wife via webcam, but in reality none of this is happening. Nothing sexual was taking place at all, and instead of a dildo Pauline took out a pencil case to do a crossword puzzle. Much like in *The Winter's Tale*, Leo tries to reduce Pauline to “the comically unattractive role of shrew;” she is an “ugly lesbian” and

“can’t get a man” (Neely *Women and Issue* 186; Winterson 52). However, Pauline transcends that role. This passage can be contrasted against other passages, such as the first example. This is not the case for MiMi. MiMi’s healing, and the return of her agency that would be marked by her speech, are not in *The Gap of Time*. Even the positive passages about MiMi before Leo’s madness are not common – in fact, Leo knows so little about his wife that he has to resort to reading her Wikipedia page because he does not feel he “knows” her – and his desire to “really know” his wife is closely tied his concept of his ownership over her (Zajac 5). For the character of MiMi, most narrative developments are offstage. This is also true for Perdita; much of her story happens between breaks in the narrative, rather than in the narrative itself. She functions primarily as a symbol; even her relationship with Zel is shallow and barely explored. Most of these moments take place in the gap between the time described in the narrative, rather than *The Gap of Time* itself.

The role of women in *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Gap of Time* is not consistently defined as positive or negative. Scholars such as Neely and Beckwith have argued for a feminist reading of *The Winter’s Tale* and much of their arguments can be related to its adaptation as well; other scholars, such as Eggert and Doğan are less inclined to take such a position. Others yet, such as Zajac, make a gendered reading but ultimately have no conclusion in terms of feminist criticism, and focus on a broader theme (in Zajac’s case, the central theme of intimacy and human connection in *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Gap of Time*). Indeed; can a ‘feminist conclusion’ ever be reached? Feminist discourse and criticism depends on the interplay of opinions and dialogue; the arguments are what grant feminist criticism merit, not the conclusions (Neely *Feminist Modes of Shakespearean Criticism* 5; Beckwith 257). At first glance, the women in *The Gap of Time* are positive representations, but their thematic and symbolic place in the narrative complicates the issue. However, it feels as though Winterson has barely ‘built’ a representation of women in her work at all. Gender, through the lens of performativity theory, is barely applicable at all to *The Gap of Time*; as will be discussed in the next chapter, this is not the case at all for *Vinegar Girl*, where gender and womanhood stand central. Instead, it feels as though Winterson has merely represented a story in which the characters function almost exclusively in symbolic and thematic ways; their value is inherent in their place in the narrative, rather than in their characteristics. Winterson interjecting herself into her own ending further provides confirmation for this argument; intimacy and forgiveness, the act of moving forward and ‘making it new’ are placed

centrally in her story, and the representation of women in this context does not seem to be important. Rather, Winterson is significantly more interested in the representation of men – men are consistently represented as characters that struggle with intimacy and interpersonal relationships, and that seek to mediate their relationships. Leo mediates his relationship with MiMi through Xeno. In general, Leo mediates his relationships with women through porn. Xeno mediates his relationships through alcohol and videogames. Even Shep, before taking care of Perdita, seeks to mediate his relationships through the death of his wife. Only the men of the new generation, such as Clo and Zel, are not struggling with intimacy and forming relationships; they are the ones not struggling with the hypermasculinity that Xeno and Leo embody, and Perdita is the reason for that. Women as narrative tools to heal the hegemonic nature of masculinity does not present a good opportunity for representation, but in this role the characters of MiMi, Perdita and Pauline function in complex enough ways that feminist discourse is not unanimous. In the context of the Hogarth Shakespeare Series, they wanted to translate Shakespeare for a new audience, but despite the modern coat, *The Gap of Time*'s women fall into the same function as they did in *The Winter's Tale*. Perdita functions primarily as a symbol, rather than a person. MiMi, despite her central role as marking the beginning and ending of the intimacy issues central to the plot, has her last speech supplanted by Winterson's own 'last speech.' Pauline functions in the educative role that Neely describes. The function or role of these women was not 'updated' as the setting and names were, or even as Leo's motivations were. Instead, they fall into a position where women must sacrifice themselves – their own personhood, agency, or presence (both in the narrative and metanarrative) – in order to tell a story primarily about men (Eggert 166-168).

Chapter 3: *Vinegar Girl*

Vinegar Girl (2016) by Anne Tyler is the third publication in the Hogarth Shakespeare series. It is a rewriting of *The Taming of the Shrew*, a controversial play described as “nettlesome” by Ron Charles in an interview with Tyler (Tyler, interview par. 5). Unlike *The Gap of Time*, which was generally well-received, *Vinegar Girl*'s reviews are mixed. Viv Groskop, in a review for *The Guardian*, considers it a waste of Tyler's talents. She is not overtly negative in her opinion about the book, but she does point out the following:

Instead of a tribute, it just feels like tying the hands of an author who's perfectly capable of creating her own world and really doesn't need to borrow someone else's. No, not even Shakespeare's. Verdict? Fun, accomplished, readable, enjoyable. But Anne Tyler originals do all this and so much more. (par. 7)

Although she attributes positive qualities to the book at the end, the start of her review is markedly more negative. When she compares the novel to Tyler's original work, she concludes it does not live up to those same standards. Groskop does note that Tyler's modernization of the plot works well. Elizabeth Lowry, also in a review for *The Guardian* is more positive; she describes *Vinegar Girl* as a “sparky, intelligent spin on Shakespeare's controversial classic” (par. 9). James Walton in *The Telegraph* reviews the book as “a bit of a mess” (par 10). He argues that, while Tyler is capable of creating “incidental pleasures” it is odd that they are in what he calls an “odd literary exercise” (par 8). He ends his review with the following note:

If you wanted to be generous – in the spirit of Tyler – you could argue that *Vinegar Girl*, despite its lack of taming, shrewishness or any underlying cruelty, does end up a faithful reflection of Shakespeare's play, simply because it's a bit of a mess itself. Somehow, though, I don't think that was the idea.

In other words, Tyler's rewriting of Shakespeare is not considered to be very successful. Jane Smiley is more unanimously positive in her review for *The New York Times*. She argues that Tyler modernizes the story “brilliantly” and concludes that “Shakespeare [...] would be pleased” (par 2, par 6). Despite *The Taming of the Shrew*'s plot being distinctly gendered in nature, no

review touches on a gendered reading; only Lowry comments on it being a “pre-feminist fable” and calls Petruchio a “problematic male character” but stops short of comparing Petruchio’s overt abuse of Kate to any of Pyotr’s actions (par. 3).

Like in chapter 2, I will be comparing feminist critique of *The Taming of the Shrew* with my own reading of *Vinegar Girl* in the three modes of criticism as outlined by Neely. Specifically, we will be primarily looking at articles by Carol Thomas Neely, Sandra Clark, Margaret Maurer, Juliet Dusingberre, Richard Madelaine and Hatice Karaman. Clark examines the nature of shrew-taming narratives within a gendered context, where these narratives were constructed around concepts of diseased behavior and curative adjustments thereof. This context will be situated in Neely and Maurer’s compensatory readings of *The Shrew*. Through the lens of justificatory criticism, Dusingberre and Madelaine critique *The Shrew* through analysis of its meta-narrative in the context of boy-actresses. Lastly, Karaman’s perspective on women and motherhood will be considered as the modes of criticism progress towards transformational criticism. By comparing feminist critique of *The Shrew* with the analysis of *Vinegar Girl*, the degree to which *Vinegar Girl* has changed from its source becomes clear. The two can be compared with regard to their representation of women and gender, and a conclusion can be made to what degree *Vinegar Girl* ‘updated’ its source material for a modern audience, as is the Hogarth Shakespeare series’ goal.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Katherina, the eldest daughter of Lord Baptista Minola, stands in the way of suitors marrying her younger sister, as Bianca may not marry until Katherina herself is wed. Petruchio is recruited by the suitors to marry Katherina; she agrees to marry him when she feels he is the only man willing to counter her quick remarks. However, once married, Petruchio forces Katherina to his home against her will and begins ‘taming’ her through abuse – he refuses her food and clothing and forces her to agree with him at all times. A good-natured quarrel breaks out in the final scene of the play as Petruchio, Hortensio and Lucentio argue who has the most obedient wife. They send their servants to call for their wives, and whoever comes most obediently will win the wager for their husband. Katherina is the only one who comes, and forces the other two wives into the room to give a speech on why wives should always obey their husbands. The play ends with the men marveling at how well Katherina has been ‘tamed.’ This is the main plot of *The Shrew*, barring a small side narrative about Bianca, who ignores her many suitors in favor for her tutor Lucentio and elopes with him without her father’s permission.

In *Vinegar Girl*, Kate Battista is the caretaker of her younger sister Bunny and widowed father Louis in Baltimore. Her father is a biologist at Johns Hopkins and is working on a complex project for which the funding is slowly running dry. Kate was expelled from university after rudely correcting her professor's explanation of photosynthesis, and ends up working as a pre-school teacher's assistant. She takes care of the domestic duties; cleaning, dinner, taxes, and the laundry is all up to her, next to her 'domestic' duties as a pre-school teacher, which mirror her duties at home. She cleans up after her students, feeds them, and must generally take on a caring feminine role. Her father is consistently portrayed as too scatter-brained to take care of himself, and Bunny is portrayed (at first) as a shallow young teenager. Petruchio becomes Pyotr, a brilliant foreign research assistant for Louis' project whose VISA is expiring soon. Rather than seeking to 'tame' Kate, Louis instead tries to convince her to marry Pyotr so that he may get a Green Card and continue working on the project. Pyotr ends up endearing himself to Kate, and Kate ends up agreeing to marry him because it allows her the freedom of escaping her monotonous life where she is placed in the unwilling parental role to her family, because her father has not stepped up to the task since her mother's death. The novel ends with an epilogue from the point of view of Kate and Pyotr's son, where it is insinuated that Pyotr and Kate are happy together, and Kate has a successful career in biology after she went back to university.

The two primary female characters in both *The Shrew* and *Vinegar Girl* are Kate and Bunny. While Kate has some coworkers that are women, they have no real role in the narrative and are not explored as characters. In *The Shrew*, Katherina is attributed many negative qualities. Within the context of the play, as well as the historical context of 'shrews,' "shrewishness is seen as something to be tamed, as the title of the play would imply. In her article "Shrews, Marriage and Murder," Clark finds that shrewishness is constructed and categorized very specifically across a range of plays and ballads that deal with the theme, such as *The Taming of the Shrew*. She observes the following:

Shrewishness is here constructed as a pathological condition requiring medical intervention to effect a cure [...] [It] is a social problem and even sometimes a disease, analogous to lunacy [...] Shrewishness is a public issue, threatening to what Purkiss calls 'the public masculine identity', and the shrewish wife is to be controlled by public shame and exposure in the public arena (38)

Here, Clark touches upon a concept familiar to feminist scholars of English literature, and not just in the context of Elizabethan shrewishness. When Clark compares the ‘disease’ of shrewishness to lunacy, immediately a link is made with the concept of madness in Victorian literature, which also functions as a gendered concept. Clark makes the following conclusion, wherein *The Taming of the Shrew* is specifically used as an example to make her underlying point:

Wives who transgress social boundaries by their disorderly speech require public shame and humiliation. The masculine authority of the shamed man must be restored. There exists a spectrum of such punishments in comic modes, through ducking, the wearing of the scold’s bridle, the skimmington ride, to blood-letting and the kind of brain-washing to which Petruchio subjects Katherine. The results are curative. But when public shaming is unavailable, and private violence results, the lethal powers of the woman’s tongue turn on herself. It is as if the strong tradition of misogynistic joking about husbands taking pleasure in the deaths of their wives enables the (male) authors of ballads and pamphlets where marital violence ends in death to evade facing up to the inequality between cause and effect. A dead wife is better than one who cannot be domesticated. (44)

Shrewishness is almost an ‘illness’ that women suffer from, precisely so that it can be construed as a behavior that can be ‘cured.’ ‘Unruly’ or disobedient wives were, as Clark argues, a public issue that threatened masculinity, and by extension men. In construing it as an illness, its ‘spread’ can be understood in a similar vein, and its ‘cure’ can be positioned as a positive social interaction rather than the abuse we see in texts such as *The Shrew* (38, 42). With this in mind, it becomes clear that Katherine represents a negative figure until her ‘taming,’ which changes her into a success story of curative shrew taming. But as mentioned in the explanation of compensatory criticism, Neely employs Kate as a typical example of that compensatory mode of criticism. In the source text, Katherine is understood by the audience in the context that Clark posits; a *negative* context. However, in modern (and feminist) readings of the text, Kate’s ‘shrewd’ nature is recontextualized. Rather than understanding Kate as a disease to be cured, she becomes a woman suppressed and abused by Petruchio. Her unruly disobedience towards men is recontextualized as independence *from* men, and her witty shrewd speech is read as intelligent and not threatening at all. These traits previously associated with negative qualities in the source text are now understood as positive qualities; as “intelligence and independence and a necessary

defense against her situation” (Feminist Modes of Shakespearean Criticism 6). Indeed; Katherina’s last speech on the obedience of wives to their husbands is decidedly ‘unfeminist’ and subservient to Petruchio in the extreme, but in compensatory criticism even this speech has been interpreted in a positive light. Rather than consider that Katherina has been ‘tamed’, compensatory critics argue that she has “learned how to ‘play the game’ [...]” so that she can manipulate her husband and society to, effectively, let her be” (Stanton 51). At first glance, if Katherina is placed in the above context, her sister Bianca would be placed in the opposite. Bianca is characterized as sweet, quiet, and obedient. In fact, she is construed as such an opposite to her sister that when she disobeys her father and marries her tutor rather than the suitor Lord Baptista selected, her father does not even punish her. In her article, Maurer makes the following observation: “When she asks her father’s pardon in 5.1 for marrying without his consent, he is so certain of her obedience that he does not understand her” (108). Bianca has placed herself in a position where her obedience was so reliable that, when she did disobey her father, her disobedience could not be construed as shrewishness. Bianca’s single act of disobedience does not become likened to a disease or a state of mind that needs to be ‘cured.’ Her new role as obedient wife is acceptable; indeed, this status is a requirement for a non-shrew woman. Her actions are not placed in a light where they need to be cured because her disobedience puts her in the role of subservient wife nonetheless. In other words, her act of disobedience does not threaten the men around her, or public masculinity, because she immediately becomes an obedient wife. This is not true for Kate, whose disobedience came at a time where, as an unmarried woman, her actions represented a ‘disease’ for the people around her. Maurer also argues that Bianca’s disobedience is acceptable in light of Kate’s disobedience; Bianca is ‘the silent woman’ of the play, but “her silence is not absolute [...], but relative, compared to the noisy resistance of her shrewish sister” (Maurer 101). If Kate’s qualities have ‘flipped’ from negative to positive, one could reasonably assume that Bianca’s qualities have ‘flipped’ also in compensatory readings of *The Shrew*. However, this is not the case. In compensatory criticism, Kate becomes a ‘woman-worthy’ as Neely says; her qualities are put in a positive light. This does not mean that Bianca’s qualities become negative, or are criticized instead of Kate’s. Rather than read into Bianca’s silence and obedience, Bianca’s *disobedience* is placed central in readings of her character. Her act of disobeying her father’s marriage plans as one, and her failure to meet Lucentio’s wager requirements as second. Maurer argues that, while *The Shrew* is built on the contrast between the

shrewish Katherina and the obedient Bianca, this contrast “belies a fundamental similarity in their disposition to resist what men would impose on them” (106). Katherina refuses to entertain the notion of marriage or a husband, and Petruchio overcomes this resistance through “taking her direct refusal for consent,” and then he begins ‘training’ or taming her (106). However, Bianca is open to several suitors, but her consent cannot be ‘turned’ around as Katherina’s was. Bianca remains silent on her consent, and her many suitors must construct an imaginary answer because of her silence. When Bianca *does* consent to marriage, it is a secret marriage and it occurs hastily, whereas Katherina’s marriage was public and slow (106). Maurer makes the following observation about Bianca’s silence on marital consent: “hers is a resistance that men have difficulty overcoming because they do not detect it” (106). In other words, Bianca remains silent, and her marriage is ‘silent’ because of its secrecy and speed, and her resistance becomes equally quiet. It cannot be detected, unlike Katherina’s loud refusals. Like her sister, Bianca’s actions are understood in the same light as Kate’s: as a “necessary defense against her situation” (Neely *Feminist Modes of Shakespearean Criticism* 6). In *Vinegar Girl*, however, both Kate and Bunny/Bianca have slightly different roles when read through the compensatory mode of criticism. Kate’s behavior is no longer present in a context of disease, or lunacy, or threatening towards men. Instead it is socially critiqued on a less violent level. Her female coworkers, her boss, and her aunt are all asking her when she will finally marry someone. Her sister Bunny makes fun of Kate for not dating boys. But Kate’s behavior is a positive quality as far as the men in her life are concerned. Her father is the primary (and only real, next to Pyotr) man, in Kate’s life and she takes care of him completely. Because she is rude, no one bothers her father. The fact that she is outspoken and takes charge means her father can focus on his research without having to worry about his youngest daughter; the child-rearing is left completely to Kate. The fact that Kate is independent means her father does not have to do his taxes (she does them for him) and that Kate is also a breadwinner, which is important since the funding for his project dwindles as his university loses trust in his research. Pyotr is actually very fond of Kate being “rude-spoken,” which reminds him of the women in his home country (Tyler 7). In short, the context that creates negative associations with the qualities of a shrew has all but disappeared, and been replaced with a more subtle mindset mainly focused around Kate’s “happiness” than her disease. A woman needs a husband to be happy, as so many of her coworkers seem to imply. Kate’s “shrew” behavior, which was toned down considerably as Tyler herself notes in her

interview with Ron Charles, bothers herself and Bunny more than anyone around her (par. 6). Kate is troubled by her own behavior because she harbors resentment towards her father; the fact that Kate is naturally independent means that it is hard to step down from her duties, because otherwise the household would fall to shambles. Kate also seems to have some insecurity or hidden desire for marriage or a relationship. On the one hand, Kate cannot relate to her female colleagues and their fascination with their only male co-worker. On the other hand, Kate seems to be tired of the running commentary on her life; she admits that it is more annoying than harmful, but she becomes insecure and scared of being considered a failure by her peers, especially in the context that she was expelled from university and never quite moved forward from that mistake. Bunny's context has also considerably changed from her Bianca-counterpart. Unlike Bianca, Bunny is not silent or quiet. Bunny is described as a typical teenager, an overtly feminine girl; presumably to lay a link between the feminine Bianca and Bunny herself. She is often described as wearing thin and revealing clothing, speaking in a specific way when she is around boys, and generally trying to impress men. Instead of having access to many suitors that her father approves of, neither Kate nor their father approves of Bunny dating at all, which seems to make the prospect more interesting. However, despite the description of typical feminine performativity to the extreme, Bunny is not the "silent sister" that Maurer describes (101). Instead, Bunny is quite outspoken much like Kate. She has a better understanding of manipulating the people around her, and has developed a 'popular' reputation at school, but is nonetheless very outspoken against Kate, their father, Pyotr, and their extended family after the wedding ceremony. She consistently disobeys her father by inviting boys over when she is home alone, she lies to him about her 'tutors,' and she helps her boyfriend Edward Mintz (a stand-in for Lucentio) steal mice from her father's lab. In other words, the "sibling-rivalry" that is present in *The Shrew* is arguably much more overt in *Vinegar Girl* (Madelaine 76). Madelaine argues that, in *The Shrew*, "Kate's seniority is manifested in 'masculine' ways that serve not merely to upstage Bianca but to keep her in thrall," and this is arguably even more the case in *Vinegar Girl* (77). Kate is rude in a masculine way; Bianca is rude in a feminine way – but both are rude, and this means their sibling rivalry functions differently. At first, Bunny is ecstatic that Kate finally agrees to marry Pyotr for his Green Card, hoping that Kate will 'tone down' her behavior (which Bunny calls the behavior of "una bitcha") (Tyler 40). However, by the end of the novel, Bunny feels very differently. In

the following segment is Bunny's speech to Kate, and Kate's speech in turn (the adaptation of Katherina's famous speech on subservient wives):

“Naturally, you would think Pyoder can do no wrong. It's like you've turned into some kind of zombie. ‘Yes, Pyoder; no, Pyoder,’ following him around all moony. ‘Whatever you say, Pyoder; I'll do anything you like, Pyoder; certainly I'll marry you, Pyoder, even if all you're after is any old U.S. citizen,’ you tell him. Then you show up super-late for your own wedding reception and the two of you are not even dressed, looking all mussed and rumpled like you've spent the afternoon making out. It's disgusting, is what it is.

You'll never see *me* backing down like that when *I* have a husband.”

Kate stood up and set her napkin aside. “Fine [...] Treat your husband any way you like,” she said, “but I pity him, whoever he is. It's *hard* being a man. Have you ever thought about that? Anything that's bothering them, men think they have to hide it. They think they should seem in charge, in control; they don't dare show their true feelings. No matter if they're hurting or desperate or stricken with grief; if they're heartsick or they're something – ‘Oh, I'm okay,’ they said. ‘Everything's just fine.’ They're a whole lot less free than women are, when you think about it. Women have been studying people's feelings since they were toddlers; they've been perfecting their radar – their intuition or their empathy or their interpersonal watchamacallit. They know how things work underneath, while men have been stuck with the sports competitions and the wars and the fame and success. It's like men and women are in two different countries! I'm not ‘backing down,’ as you call it; I'm letting him into my country. I'm giving him space in a place where we can both be ourselves. Lord have mercy, Bunny, cut us some *slack!*”
(Tyler 255-256)

Rather than failing her husband's wager and having Katherina create the conflict at the end of *The Shrew*, in *Vinegar Girl* Bunny is the one who creates the conflict at the end of the novel. She becomes frustrated with Pyotr and her father's experiments, some of which are on mice, as she became vegan after dating Edward Mintz. Kate's retort does not focus on the role of wives at all, but instead focuses on hegemonic and toxic masculinity, and her desire to help Pyotr overcome these problems in the same way she has overcome her insecurities. In *Vinegar Girl*, Pyotr does not abuse Kate at all; in fact, he barely even bothers her. It is her father that keeps asking Kate to

marry Pyotr for the Green Card. Although Kate is annoyed at the situation, she decides to agree with the plan when she ends up liking Pyotr, and at first especially uses him to further her own means: independence from her father, the other primary man in her life. Both Bunny and Kate can be, albeit in a different context, read as positive characters in the mode of compensatory criticism.

In the context of justificatory criticism, there is a very different angle to approach *The Shrew* from. As I mentioned in the first chapter, part of the nuance surrounding Shakespeare's heroines is that the characters were acted by boy-actresses. This context is relevant especially to *The Taming of the Shrew*. In *The Shrew*, the narrative is the taming of a shrewish, disobedient woman and turning her into an obedient and subservient wife, thereby restoring patriarchal order. The meta-narrative, however, is about teaching *boy-actresses* how to act (Dusinberre 68; Madelaine 70). In her article, Dusinberre tackles this meta-narrative context in great detail. She argues that this meta-narrative is one of the reasons why *The Shrew* has lived on beyond other shrew-taming tales. She makes the following argument:

One of the reasons why *The Shrew*, with its apparently time-bound folk-origin conservative dogmas about women, has not simply died a quiet death like all the other Elizabethan plays in the taming genre, is that it releases into the auditorium an energy created through a dialectic of opposed wills, command versus obedience, and power versus powerlessness, which is polarized in the utterance of the boy actor playing the woman. (79).

In other words, on a narrative level, the conflict is between men and women, but the meta-narrative is about power dynamics in general. However, in this situation the power dynamic would not be gendered, at first glance. Dusinberre argues that is not necessarily entirely true:

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, the apprentice has virtually the last word. As the stage heroine mouths obedience, the apprentice eyes his female audience, both the querulous wives on the stage and the women in the audience. Did the women in the audience register the exhilaration of the apprentice actor seizing his chance to be master, to realize stage power even if the price of it was a recognition of the submission to which he and they would have to return once the play was over? [...] The boy actor invites women in

the audience to participate not in what he says, but in the theatrical power which orchestrates the act of speaking. (80, 81).

As explained in chapter 1 and argued by Barker, the boy-actress is often linked with sexual-transgression and to some degree challenges the power of masculine dominance; while this challenge does not allow for any liberating feminist discourse or movement at the time, the boy-actress subverts and threatens male power. As was concluded in chapter 1, Shakespeare did not specifically write his heroines as ‘parts for men,’ but *The Taming of the Shrew* is argued to be the exception to the rule; by DusiBerre, but also by Madelaine and others. DusiBerre and Madelaine argue that Katherina’s shrew-behavior was not only situated in the social context of shrewishness as Clark argues, but also in the meta-context of teaching apprentices in the acting company. Madelaine in fact argues that “*The Taming of the Shrew* will be read as a document that may shed light on issues of theatrical apprentice-training in Shakespeare’s day” (70). In the justificatory mode of criticism, this is relevant information. It falls well under the category of context-dependent value systems and the exploration of justifying why, exactly, Shakespeare’s heroines were narratively placed as they were. As was concluded in the first chapter, I would argue that this meta-context of apprentice-training, and apprentice ‘seizing’ his change at taking charge, this subversion of typical masculinity does not open any doors to women, feminism, or Shakespeare’s heroines from the point of an intradiegetic analysis. I would still firmly place Katherina’s position in the narrative as the result of Elizabethan values and misogyny that are discussed in depth above, as described by Clark. However, what remains interesting is that this apprentice-training narrative is, of course, not present in Tyler’s adaptation. It would be impossible. However, one could argue that *Vinegar Girl* maintains a certain educational role for Kate’s character. As in the last chapter, and as per Neely’s hypothesis, at this point the justificatory mode of criticism begins adopting other focuses into its discourse and turns, effectively, into transformational criticism.

If we return to Kate’s last speech, she focuses on hegemonic and toxic masculinity in her speech; in other words, the short-comings of men in a male-dominated society. As R.W. Connell argues, hegemonic masculinity (and toxic masculinity) are the result of patriarchy; of other men (Connell 79). While hegemonic masculinity is problematic for men, it is primarily problematic for women; hegemonic masculinity serves to legitimize and uphold “the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (77). Can Kate’s last speech then be interpreted as a

confirmation of the woman's subservient role, just as compensatory criticism would argue her last speech does the opposite? Although Kate primarily focuses on how 'hard' it is to be a man, she also goes into the roles of women and describes along lines similar (albeit less educated) to Judith Butler's performativity theory. Gender is performed; from birth, assigned, and then upheld through repetitive acts such as the ones Kate describes in her speech. She also touches upon the staggering difference in ability to experience human connection and intimacy between men and women, when she argues that it is as though men and women are different "countries" – which plays on an interesting potential connection between *Vinegar Girl* and *The Gap of Time*.

However, this speech on the difference between men and women, albeit very generous towards and focused on men, does not place Kate in a subservient role. In fact, the entire speech firmly places Kate and Pyotr on equal ground. Instead of Pyotr forcing his will on Kate, Kate 'allows' Pyotr into her space so that they may benefit from each other; the underlying context for Kate's speech is firmly entrenched in Pyotr's Green Card wishes and Kate's wishes for independence from her father (which is touched upon by Kate saying that she is "allowing Pyotr into her country" – a word play). In the transformational mode of criticism, there is one more facet of Kate and Bunny's relationship that is relevant: the role of their absent mother. Shakespeare is well-known for creating powerful father figures but often burying mother figures; as Karaman puts it, there is a "missing maternal genealogy in Shakespeare" (Karaman 39). In *The Shrew*, there is also a missing representation of a mother. Karaman concludes that a woman must be desubjectified, paternalised, or killed if they are to be tolerated within the narrative; these options are linked respectively to Katherina, and then lady Capulet and Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* (45). In the narrative of *The Shrew*, there is no mother; instead, Katherina is placed in the central female role, and she is "perplexing and threatening to the patriarchal order" (Karaman 44). As a result, Petruchio seeks to desubjectify Katherina through abuse. In *Vinegar Girl* also lacks a mother figure, as she died a year after Bunny's birth. However, despite the physical absence of their mother, Kate and Bunny are consistently reminded of her presence. Kate carries with her the burden that her birth led to her mother's depression; she feels guilty for having, in her eyes, ruined her mother's happiness; she remembers exclusively a somber motherhood, and begins associating femininity and negativity to each other as a result. Bunny is strikingly similar to their mother in looks and behavior, however, and is consistently told this by family members and her father to the chagrin of Kate. However, as the narrative moves forward, Kate slowly becomes

more comfortable with the idea of Pyotr and the independence he represents; she begins enjoying his company and eventually agrees to marry him. As this character development continues, she learns from her father that her mother was not nearly as depressed or somber as Kate remembers. In fact, her mother was a very active presence in her life in a positive way; they had mother-daughter shopping days, cooked dinner together, etc. and were very close. After this realization, Kate becomes more comfortable around Bunny – but also seems to find some peace within herself. It is interesting that, within *The Shrew* narrative, the absent mother is absent thematically as well (unlike *The Winter's Tale*). However, in *Vinegar Girl*, this absence is both the road-block and solution to much of Kate's inner struggles. In Shakespeare, there is an "absence of mothers in Shakespeare and the lack of representations of female subjects" that is directly the result of "patriarchy founded on the oppression of women," as Karaman puts it (45). This leaves no room for mothers in Shakespeare's work, but Tyler returns the mother figure to an important, albeit not central, role in her adaptation of the narrative. Kate and Bunny's mother is a 'missing link' for the both of them in how they perform femininity, and when that empty space is filled in after an honest discussion with their father, it 'sets right' a lot of the insecurities Kate deals with early in the narrative. Kate is not abused or 'tamed' by Pyotr, and instead finds emotional security in a mother figure rather than a dominant husband.

Whereas the role of women in *The Winter's Tale* and *The Gap of Time* was somewhat inconsistent in their attributes, it seems that *Vinegar Girl*, despite its misogynist source text, represents women in a mainly positive light. Although Katherina's character can only be construed as positive outside of the context she was created in, and thus in compensatory criticism, that is to be expected considering the play's themes and narrative. Bianca, on the other hand, despite her smaller role was afforded more nuances to her disobedience and her character, which at first glance may appear shallow or overly submissive. Kate and Bunny are both updated as characters to fit a more modern definition of womanhood, where outspoken women are not necessarily 'diseased' and are even considered positive in some contexts. Instead, the consideration of a 'diseased shrew' is changed into the passive-aggressive interactions we see from Kate's coworkers, where they expect her to marry and do not think a woman will be happy outside of a nuclear family. However, even within the narrative proper this heteronormative viewpoint is somewhat contested. It is not completely subverted; the happy ending that is afforded to Pyotr and Kate is introduced to us from the perspective of their young son, after all.

However, while it is not subversive, Tyler does seek to nuance the ending. Kate does not become the happy, pregnant stay-at-home mother to her dominant scientist husband. Instead, it is revealed Kate will be going to a ceremony for the Plant Ecology Award that she will receive from the Botanical Federation; a prestigious prize. She returned to college, which means Pyotr was indeed the promise of freedom Kate thought he represented. Kate remains as rude and outspoken to Pyotr as she was through-out the rest of the narrative; she was not ‘tamed’ by Pyotr. Instead, Pyotr is genuinely appreciative of Kate’s harsher personality, instead of simply faking this interest in order to ‘tame’ it out of her, as his counterpart Petruchio does. Kate’s behavior is unchanged; it is her interiority where the character development takes place. It seems Tyler put much thought into her adaptation; as she says in the interview with Ron Charles, she hated *The Taming of the Shrew* because of its misogyny and, in her opinion, exaggeration of women (par. 1, 7). She briefly goes into women and gendered behavior in the following segment of the interview:

Tyler realized what fun the character could be when she was writing a scene in which Kate gets scolded by her boss. “There’s a line where I wrote, ‘Kate had nothing to say so she said nothing.’ And I thought that is so breathtakingly refreshing because women, particularly, are raised to believe that if there’s a silence, you should smooth it over and fill it with babble. First apologize and say, ‘I think. . . .’ ” (par. 10)

Tyler seems very aware of the issues of womanhood and gender. The narrative for *The Taming of the Shrew* was changed considerably, especially with comparison to *The Gap of Time*. Tyler did not simply update the setting; she changed characters’ behaviors and motivations. In a series where Penguin-Randomhouse wants to see Shakespeare rewritten and modernized for a new audience, Tyler most certainly meets the criteria. Tyler has created a significant representation of gender built on the behaviors, circumstances and repetitive acts that constitute gender according to Butler (although not explicitly) and plays with her female characters to create a setting where both the outspoken, harsh, “una bitcha” Kate and the more amenable Bunny are portrayed as capable of many different modes of womanhood, as described in the chapter. Unlike Shakespeare, where the representation of women is often lacking both in presence and in quality, Tyler took these characters and removed them from their original context, allowing for a more nuanced and liberating representation of womanhood.

Chapter 4: *Hag-Seed*

Hag-Seed (2016) is the fourth publication in the Hogarth Shakespeare series. Margaret Atwood retells the comedy *The Tempest*, and is the most different adaptation, compared to its source text, of the three analyzed texts. The reception for the novel was mostly positive. Viv Groskop for *The Guardian* was more positive about *Hag-Seed* than she had been about *Vinegar Girl*; she finds the novel “a magical eulogy to Shakespeare” that would be equally interesting for audiences that know *The Tempest* intimately as those that do not (par. 3). Corinna Lothar, for *The Washington Post*, argued that “Margaret Atwood is a master [...] her re-creation would make Shakespeare proud.” (par. 16). However, *The New York Times* reviewer Emily Mandel felt differently. She argues the decision to stage *The Tempest* within *Hag-Seed* to be a “failure of the imagination on Atwood’s part” and felt that the plot was “clunky” (par. 11, 12). Despite these critiques, she admits in her conclusion that the novel can be equally “eerie and enchanting” when it confronts Felix’s relationship with his daughter (par. 16).

In *The Tempest*, the Duke of Milan Prospero was deposed of this throne by his brother Antonio. He had been stranded for twelve years on an island with his daughter, Miranda, ever since. Prospero possesses magical power and is served by the spirit Ariel, whom he had saved from the witch Sycorax, who had been dead by the time he shipwrecked on the island. Her son, Caliban, had continued to live on the island and was originally adopted and raised by Prospero. Caliban taught Prospero how to survive on the island, and in turn he was taught language and religion. However, after he attempts to rape Miranda, he is enslaved by Prospero instead. Prospero foresees that Antonio is on a nearby ship, and raises a storm that causes the passengers to believe they are shipwrecked and marooned. Besides Antonio, the other passengers are King Alonso of Naples (who had helped depose Prospero), his brother Sebastian, his son Ferdinand, and his counselor Gonzalo. Prospero separates the shipwreck survivors into several groups through his spells, and Alonso and Ferdinand are separated and believe each other to be dead. From here three plot lines manifest themselves: Caliban attempts to raise a coup against Prospero, but they fail; Prospero conspires to have Miranda and Ferdinand fall in love, so that his lineage consolidates power in Naples; and lastly, Antonio and Sebastian plan to kill Alonso and Gonzalo so that Sebastian can become king. Their plan is thwarted by Ariel at Prospero’s command. After this, Prospero betroths Miranda to Ferdinand and asks Ariel to bring other spirits and create a masque to entertain them. However, upon remembering the threat on his life, Prospero sets a trap

for Caliban and his helpers, who are chased offstage by goblins. In the conclusion, Prospero decides to forgive his enemies and Ariel creates weather proper for sailing, so that the ship may return to Naples where Ferdinand and Miranda will be married, while Prospero stays on the island in punishment. Prospero promises to break his magical staff, destroy his magic tome, and in the epilogue he asks the audience to set him free from his island prison with their applause.

Where *The Gap of Time* and *Vinegar Girl* simply ‘updated’ the story to a modern time, but left most of the plot intact, *Hag-Seed* departs considerably from *The Tempest*. In *Hag-Seed*, Felix is the artistic director of a theatre festival. His daughter Miranda died when she was three in a car accident. His wife died shortly after giving birth to her. In homage to his daughter, he wants to perform *The Tempest*, with himself in the role of Prospero. However, before he can stage his play he is removed from his position after his assistant, Tony, took over the position in order to advance in his political career. He rents a rundown shack in the Canadian country side and thinks of only two things: he wants to stage his *Tempest*, and he wants revenge. He begins hallucinating and ‘seeing’ Miranda who ages alongside him through-out the years. He is to some degree aware of Miranda being a hallucination, but engages with her as if she is real nonetheless. After nine years, he takes a job teaching literature at Fletcher Country Correctional Institute. He puts on Shakespeare plays with the prisoners. In the fourth year, his job allows him his chance at revenge. Tony, now a Minister, would be attending a performance at the prison alongside another Minister, Sal O’Nally. Felix decides to stage *The Tempest* with the prisoners of Fletcher, and asks Anne-Marie, the actress for Miranda he had initially hired all those years ago, to join him. As Tony, Sal and Freddie watch the recording of the play, Felix has Tony drugged. The inmates separate Tony and Sal from Freddie, and have Sal believe his son is dead, under the guise of ‘interactive theatre.’ As the two are separated, Freddie joins in on the interactive theatre aspect of the show, and he and Anne-Marie begin a relationship. Felix records Tony’s drugged state for blackmail, so that he does not end the literature program at the prison, as he intended to do. He also wants his job as artistic director back. After making his enemies suffer, Felix forgives them and puts Freddie in charge of staging plays as his assistant-director. At the end of the novel, he ‘frees’ Miranda from ‘life’ as a hallucination.

Of the three novels this thesis examines, *Hag-Seed* is the most difficult to analyze. *The Tempest* is not absent of gendered readings, but compared to *The Winter’s Tale* and especially *The Taming of the Shrew* it is less suited for a feminist critique. A larger focus seems to be placed

on postcolonial readings of Caliban. The feminist criticism that does engage with *The Tempest* is often focused more on the absent mothers of the play (Slights 361). However, even criticism that does examine Miranda is difficult to consider in the context of *Hag-Seed*, as Miranda is not alive in the adaptation. Miranda as a character is present only as a hallucination, and will be analyzed in that context. I will be looking at feminist critique aimed at *The Tempest* and contrast it to my own reading of *Hag-Seed*, in line with Neely's three modes of criticism. The articles employed will primarily be by Jessica Slights, Hiewon Shin, John Kunat, and Hatice Karaman, whose reading of *The Shrew* was considered in the previous chapter. Slights argues in the compensatory mode and seeks to recontextualize Miranda within a framework of agency rather than male ownership. In the justificatory mode of criticism, Shin contextualizes Miranda's education as progressive and subversive of typical Renaissance values. As we move to transformational criticism, Kunat examines Miranda's relationship with male power through the lens of Caliban's attempted rape and her subsequent relationship with Ferdinand. And lastly, Karaman emphasizes the absence of mother figures. By comparing the feminist critique of *The Tempest* with the analysis of *Hag-Seed*, the difference in their representation of women is made clear. The degree to which *Hag-Seed* has 'updated' its source material for modern audiences, with regards to its representation of women, can be determined from there.

In *The Tempest*, the only female character is Miranda. In *Hag-Seed*, Miranda is 'split' into two separate characters. Felix's daughter, Miranda, is the obvious counterpart; she shares a name and is the daughter of Felix, who is in the role of Prospero. However, we also have the character of Anne-Marie, who Felix hired to play the character of Miranda. This chapter will focus on these two characters.

Slights argues for an interpretation of *The Tempest*'s Miranda that is distinct from 'traditional' interpretations. She argues her reading "[provides] an antidote both to a nineteenth-century tradition that understood Miranda merely as a trope for a feminized conception of nature, and to a more recent materialist tradition that conceives of her merely as an unwitting object of exchange in a matrix of colonial and nuptial economies" (359). Miranda is typically understood as the "archetype of pliant womanliness" that is typically silent, obedient, and chaste (360, 361). However, rather than consider Miranda as a "dehumanized cipher" who is understood only in the context of Prospero's needs, Slights argues for a reading of Miranda wherein her actions are the result of her own agency and not as an extension of her father's will (371). Slights acknowledges

that Miranda functions in a world dominated by men, which places limitations on her possible choices, but argues that the source of her choices is the result of Miranda's spatial environment more than the result of Prospero's upbringing (375). Rather than understand Miranda in the context of an object, Miranda is associated with nature; with the wild island, the storms, and the spirits the island harbors. Nature is capable of destruction, as *The Tempest* shows us often, and Slight argues that this destructive force of nature is linked to the destructiveness of "misguided social pressures on women" (361). Miranda grew up on an untamed island, and it is because she is isolated from civilized society that she is capable of independence and love (361). When she offers to help Ferdinand with manual labor, for example, she is not aware that she is behaving inappropriately according to social conduct. Here Miranda's "collaborative model of social interaction" is seen as an argument for a reading where Miranda is more independent from the men around her (364). She is also characterized by Slight as an assertive woman, who subtly challenges Prospero's rule over the island (367-358). Slight concludes that Miranda should be understood as a character that "gains a sense of moral agency not by seeking complete autonomy, but instead by recognizing the importance of her domestic ties" (375-376). In other words, Miranda's agency is derived from her domestic duties and her willingness to engage patriarchal power on her own terms. Ultimately, this reading attempts to recontextualize Miranda's 'pliant' womanliness in the context of her own agency through an intradiegetic reading. In *Hag-Seed*, Miranda cannot be ascribed any agency through even an intradiegetic reading. Miranda is a hallucination of Felix's, and therefore inherently operates on a level he has complete control over. When he first begins hallucinating her presence, Felix notes the following:

She didn't dress as warmly as she ought to have done, but nothing happened as a consequence: no colds, no flu. In fact, she was never ill, unlike himself. When he was sick she tiptoed around him anxiously; but he never had to worry about her, because what harm could possibly come to her? She was beyond harm. She never asked him how they came to be there together, living in the shanty, apart from everyone else. He never told her. It would have been a shock to her, to learn that she did not exist. Or not in the usual way. (Atwood 46-47)

Here, Felix is aware that he is hallucinating but engages with his hallucination nonetheless. Although Felix frets over her as though she was a real child, which displays his disconnect from

reality, he is distinctly aware that he ultimately has complete control over his hallucination, and that Miranda was as such “beyond harm.” In this same vein, Miranda cannot exhibit free will or subtly challenge her father’s control. As a hallucination, any choices Miranda would make that do displease Felix would have been created by Felix himself. The character of Anne-Marie functions on a somewhat different level. Anne-Marie is the actress Felix hires both times he wants to stage *The Tempest*, to play Miranda. Although the two are not described to have a father-daughter relationship, Felix did intend for Anne-Marie to play a character that would ‘resurrect’ Miranda. Felix wanted “Miranda [in *The Tempest*] [to] become the daughter who had not been lost; who’d been a protecting cherub, cheering her exiled father [...]” and “through [Anne-Marie], his Miranda would come back to life” (Atwood 15, 16). On the one hand, Anne-Marie is Felix’s employee, and as such she must follow his stage directions when she acts Miranda. On the other hand, Anne-Marie could terminate her employment whenever she wishes. Anne-Marie only listens to Felix because she chooses to do so, which is Slight’s argument for her reading of Miranda in the source text. Anne-Marie also subtly challenges Felix’s authority as director. After the play has been staged, as part of the literary education program at the prison, the actors must write a report on the life of the characters after the play. Anne-Marie is not an inmate, and as such does not have to complete this assignment, but opts to do so anyway. She argues for a reading of Miranda where she was trained in self-defense and magic by Prospero. She argues Miranda was very muscular and tom-boyish, as she would have grown up climbing mountains on the island. When she agrees to marry Ferdinand and leave the ship, Anne-Marie comes up with an after-play story wherein Sebastian, Caliban and Antonio try to rape Miranda on the ship on the way to Naples. Ferdinand tries to stop them, but is losing the fight, and Miranda breaks Sebastian’s wrist, dislocates Caliban’s arms, and calls upon the power of the Goddesses Iris, Ceres and Juno to “[shrivel them] up like raisins” (257). For Anne-Marie, Miranda is not a pliable or obedient woman, but a physically strong woman; stronger than her male fiancé. Felix is, on one hand, impressed. Anne-Marie herself was a black belt and acts out her report with back flips, dancing, and ballet’s archer pose; in other words, she acts out her report through difficult physical actions (Atwood 256). Despite being impressed, however, Felix imagines his Miranda to be physically weak, obedient, and ultimately pliable; he projects these values on both his hallucination as well as the character Miranda in the play. In fact, the reason Felix hired Anne-Marie to play Miranda in the first place is because she is described as thin, child-like, and

waiflike (Atwood 16). These qualities belie some of her less feminine qualities: when Felix hires her for a second time, it becomes apparent that Anne-Marie exhibits more ‘masculine’ qualities that Felix notes, such as her blunt attitude and excessive swearing (Atwood 96-97). Anne-Marie rejects Felix’s projections on Miranda in her report of Miranda’s life away from her father, Prospero. There is another facet of Anne-Marie’s character: because she is not actually Felix’s daughter, her relationship with Freddie, Ferdinand’s counterpart, is not in his favor. The element of power that Prospero gains through betrothing Miranda to Ferdinand is lost in the adaptation; Felix gains nothing from Anne-Marie and Freddie’s relationship. The patriarchal power that hangs over Miranda’s decisions is absent in Anne-Marie’s character. Another absent factor of *The Tempest* is Caliban, who has no direct counterpart in *Hag-Seed*. Shin, whom we will primarily be discussing in light of the justificatory mode of criticism, argues that Caliban’s attempted rape signifies an attempt to gain ownership over the island via ownership over Miranda (376). By populating the island with his offspring, through Miranda, he threatens Prospero’s power over the island (376). Miranda, as a hallucination, suffers no threat of rape. Anne-Marie is warned about the inmates potentially acting inappropriately and sexually towards her, but this ultimately does not happen. While the actor that plays Ferdinand does develop a crush on her, Anne-Marie is not assaulted or threatened with assault. The plot element of Caliban and his attempted rape is completely absent, as is the power-struggle it implies. In the transformational mode of criticism, Caliban’s attempted rape of Miranda will be discussed in more depth.

In the justificatory mode of criticism, Shin focuses on Prospero’s education of Miranda. Shin argues that it was rare for women to be educated at all during the Renaissance. Prospero teaches Miranda chess, which humanists disapproved of as chess was associated with courtship, “romantic love,” and intellectual training unsuited for women (387). She compares Miranda’s education by Prospero to the “ideal women’s education” as was advocated by texts such as Salter’s *Mirror of Modestie* and Vives’ *Instruction of a Christen Woman*, which aimed to educate women at an ‘appropriate’ level (388). Miranda is isolated from other women, including her mother, which deviates from the ideals Salter and Vives put forth. In this sense, Miranda’s education is understood through a gendered lens: “Prospero has taught his daughter what a young Renaissance woman was not supposed to be taught” (382). Shin continues her argument for Miranda’s ‘feminist’ education through the example of her marriage proposal to Ferdinand. Miranda takes the aggressive and traditionally male role of proposing marriage to a candidate,

and does not wait for Ferdinand to take the lead in this matter. Prospero is not troubled by Miranda exhibiting these “masculine” qualities (386). This is in line with Prospero assigning domestic duties such as housework not to Miranda but to Caliban. Understanding Miranda’s education as subversive is quite interesting, as Miranda is typically understood as a “prototype of that unlikely invention of Puritan conduct book authors” (Slights 361). Shakespeare’s female characters were often upheld as role models for women; for example, Higginbotham notes that “Shakespeare played a crucial role in the education of Victorian girls for whom Shakespeare’s female characters were held up as models of ideal womanhood” (195). It is interesting that characters like Miranda are held up as educational models for young girls, so that they were raised to be obedient, when Miranda’s own education was evidently unorthodox and progressive for its time – compared to other Renaissance girls, Miranda would seem “rather modern, more assertive, and less feminine” (Shin 389). In *Hag-Seed*, the reader knows little of Anne-Marie’s education. The narrative informs us that she had been a former child gymnast who had won Silver in the North American championships, and took up professional dancing after Felix’s original staging of *The Tempest* fell through. Felix does imagine he would home school his daughter, however. What he actually teaches Miranda is unclear; the closest we get is the following passage:

“Be good till I come back,” [Felix] tells [Miranda]. She smiles wanly: what else can she be but good? “You can do some embroidery.” She frowns at that: he’s stereotyping. “Sorry,” he says. “Okay. Some higher math.” That gets a laugh out of her, at any rate. (Atwood 62)

From this passage, it becomes clear that Felix does project some stereotypical feminine expectations onto Miranda. In later passages he also notes that she should be painting her nails, owning pink ear buds, and wearing “mini-skirts and those tall boots girls these days seem so fond of” (Atwood 109). He wants a ‘typical’ upbringing for his daughter, and can only imagine this upbringing in stereotypes. Earlier on he notes that Miranda “remains simple, she remains innocent” (Atwood 62). In another passage, he notes that despite his failure as a parent, he has “been able to teach [Miranda] a lot of things that most girls her age would never have a chance of learning,” but what these “things” entail is not clear (Atwood 110). What does become clear is that Felix regularly plays chess with his hallucinatory daughter, whom he imagines is a chess

prodigy. He teaches her complicated plays and very quickly, even as a young child, Miranda beats him at chess easily. However, chess is no longer associated with the inappropriate romance it was associated with in the Renaissance. Although it is still typically considered a masculine sport, any subversion that Miranda's chess plays could symbolize is lost in the context of her death. As a hallucination, Miranda's skill at chess is always contextualized within the power and ability of her father, and never within the context of her own agency and independence. Felix is distinctly aware that Miranda lacks independence, when he notes the following: "[Miranda] won't stray far from the house, he knows that. She can't stray far. Something constrains her" (Atwood 62). Passages like this are littered through-out the novel.

The same problem present in the compensatory mode of criticism has reared its head in the justificatory mode of criticism: Miranda in *Hag-Seed* lacks any power of self-determination, not just in the context of an extradiegetic analysis but on an intradiegetic level. Any performance of womanhood, or deviation thereof, always takes place within Felix's interiority and not on a level of narrative reality. This continues to be true as the analysis segues into transformational criticism of *The Tempest* and Kunat's article. Only when we examine Karaman's article, which emphasizes the absence of mothers in *The Tempest*'s narrative, can Miranda's lack of agency be contextualized properly.

Where Slights emphasized Miranda's agency in spite of patriarchal power, and Shin placed Miranda's education within the context of Renaissance norms and values, Kunat examines Miranda's agency in the context of patriarchal power. He argues that, despite Miranda's more 'masculine' qualities being taught and encouraged by Prospero, as we saw in Shin's article, her actions are the primary result of gendered trauma. Miranda has suffered "the most brutal form of male power by Caliban" – namely the attempted rape (Kunat 310). Caliban's aggression is continuously permeated by this "language of rape and violation" and Caliban continually emphasizes that he cannot depose Prospero without taking Miranda for himself (310). However, this male aggression and emphasis on sexual violence is not only present in Caliban. Kunat argues that Ferdinand's character can be understood in this context as well:

When Prospero warns him to preserve Miranda's virginity before the wedding, Ferdinand assures his prospective father-in-law that even if he encountered her in the "murkiest den" or "most opportune place" (4.1.25–26), he would not violate her chastity. At the mere mention of Miranda's virginity, as Stephen Orgel rightly observes, Ferdinand engages in

“submerged fantasies of rape,” exhibiting signs of sexual excitement at the thought of taking his bride by force rather than waiting for their marriage. (Kunat 310).

Kunat draws attention to the Renaissance view of rape, which was not focused around concepts such as “will” and “consent” (310). Rape was understood as an assault upon patriarchal authority; it was a “property crime against a household” rather than a sexual crime against a woman (310). In other words, raping Miranda was more about usurping power from Prospero than it was about committing a crime against her as a person; this is supported by Caliban’s motivations for attempting to rape Miranda. In this sense, there is a parallel between Caliban and Ferdinand, as Ferdinand also seeks to possess Miranda sexually. Kunat argues that “the difference is that Caliban’s attempt is not welcomed by Miranda, while she appears quite interested in a union with Ferdinand” (312-313). Caliban attempts to “acquire” Miranda through physical force, but Ferdinand attempts to own her through legal union (313). Caliban’s desire to usurp Prospero, through taking ownership of Miranda, is firmly placed within an unacceptable context. Ferdinand, however, offers Prospero the opportunity to regain power through his lineage, and is placed in an acceptable context. Kunat argues that the scene in which Ferdinand and Miranda play chess is central in this reading. As Shin has pointed out, Miranda’s knowledge and skill at chess was uncommon and even progressive at the time – and it is in the arena of her subversive competence that she first sacrifices herself for Ferdinand. He is losing the chess match against Miranda, and cheats in order to win. Kunat makes the following observation about the chess game:

Miranda can become equal to Ferdinand only to the extent to which she is rendered as absolutely distinct from him. Like the philosophical fiction of natural man, Miranda becomes what precedes the political and what must be annihilated for it to come into being; her assumption of difference is that which gives birth to civil man but also that which must be expelled for this creature to maintain its existence as an integral being./The natural state’s annihilation, giving birth to the political and reducing the feminine to a subject position, creates the social sphere as a substitute formation for what has been destroyed. This sphere is a complement to that in which civil man reigns supreme, dissipating the tension generated by his exercise of sovereign power. In the social sphere Miranda will be given precedence; it is her domain and its tasks are vital to the proper

functioning of the political. Nonetheless, these tasks require that the social be different absolutely from the political, even though the two are represented as mutually constitutive. The social is like the powerful queen on the chessboard, carefully protecting the impotent king, although it is only the king who matters. The queen may be sacrificed to save the king, but the king must be maintained at all costs, or the game is lost. When Miranda allows Ferdinand to cheat, she has already arrived at a point where ultimately it is the male position—kingship and the hegemony of the political—that matters. (320)

As Shin made clear, chess was a men's game. In sacrificing herself and allowing Ferdinand to win the chess match through cheating, Miranda has already recognized the patriarchal social order and taken her position in it (320). Kunat argues that Prospero prepared her to take on this role (321). Caliban's attempt at owning Miranda through rape was construed as an unacceptable act, but Ferdinand's attempt to own Miranda is construed as acceptable, and even encouraged by Prospero. Caliban, as the son of a witch and an uncivilized man, was not allowed access to Miranda by Prospero – this is the unacceptable act, not the male violence itself. When Ferdinand falls in love with Miranda, the process of male ownership over Miranda must be repeated, but through legal union rather than physical force (323). Kunat concludes that the essence of the acts between Caliban and Miranda and Ferdinand and Miranda, find parallels in their function as male ownership over women, and that the primary difference is in whether they are construed as acceptable or not based on Prospero's opinion, and his patriarchal ownership over Miranda (323, 324). These acts must be repeated by Ferdinand so that "they can be resolved in a different ideological register, transforming the assault into a more appropriate form of male aggression sanctioned by the discourse of love" (324). In other words, despite Ferdinand seeking the same outcome as Caliban, his methods must be sanctioned as acceptable so that this male power becomes acceptable to Miranda, as prior to this Miranda did not legitimize male power (as evidenced by behavior presented earlier on in this chapter such as her proposal). As stated above, there is no equivalent to Caliban. The attempted rape was not present, and Anne-Marie and Freddie beginning a relationship cannot be understood under the context of patriarchal power, because unlike *The Tempest*, where Prospero is the patriarch, Felix does not position himself as such in his relationship with Anne-Marie. He also gains nothing, political power or otherwise, because of their relationship. Atwood has done away completely with this part of the narrative, and thus with the problematic elements of Kunat's reading of the narrative. However, by making

Miranda a hallucination of Felix's, there is another element to feminist criticism of *The Tempest* that should be examined.

The previous chapter also briefly engaged with Karaman's article on the absence of mothers in Shakespeare's plays. As I argued then, Karaman argues that women in Shakespeare's plays must either be desubjectified, paternalised, or killed if they are to be tolerated within the narrative (45). In *The Shrew*, Katherina and Bianca are separated from any maternal figure; this is true for *The Tempest* as well. Miranda is motherless and has no link to a maternal figure; in fact, her mother is barely mentioned at all. Prospero mentions his wife only once, and only to reinforce his own role as a father (Karaman 41). Unlike Slights, who argues for Miranda's agency, Karaman argues that Miranda's life is governed and defined by Prospero's will (41). Like Katherina, Miranda is de-subjectified; she is forced to accept male power and ownership over her. Katherina was 'tamed' by Petruchio, and Miranda is made to accept Ferdinand's ownership and dominance, as Kunat argued. Karaman argues that "the rupture from maternal genealogy provides space for paternal domination" (46). In other words, it is the absence of mothers that allows Prospero access to the power that he has over Miranda. For this reason, Caliban's mother is demonized in the play; despite being a powerful witch, Sycorax must be absent and stripped of her power so that Prospero can take it instead. As was argued in the last chapter, this absence of mothers and the few representations of female subjects in Shakespeare's work is the direct result of patriarchy (Karaman 45). It is in this context that *Hag-Seed*'s Miranda functions as a character. Much like in the source text, Felix does not mention his wife at all except to underline his own fatherhood. Miranda is not just "ruptured from maternity" in *Hag-Seed*; Miranda 'lives' exclusively in Felix's interiority. Like Miranda in the source text, Miranda in *Hag-Seed* must be desubjectified in order to function within the narrative and context of male power. And it is, in this sense, a very literal power. In his grief, Felix does not allow Miranda true 'freedom' – this becomes clear throughout the novel, but is especially emphasized in the very last lines of the novel:

[Felix] picks up the silver-framed photo of Miranda, laughing happily on her swing. There she is, three years old, lost in the past. But not so, for she's also here, watching him as he prepares to leave the full poor cell where's she's been trapped with him. Already she's fading, losing substance: he can barely sense her. She's asking him a question. Is he compelling her to accompany him on the rest of his journey? / What has he been thinking

– keeping her tethered to him all this time? Forcing her to do his bidding? How selfish he has been! Yes, he loves her: his dear one, his only child. But he knows what she truly wants, and what he owes her./ “To the elements be free,” he says to her. And finally, she is. (Atwood 283).

The novel ends with that last powerful sentence: “And finally, she is [free]” (283). This passage highlights that Felix has ultimate power over his hallucinatory daughter, and that she has been desubjectified by him. The passage is rife with vocabulary tied to freedom and imprisonment; Felix admits he has “trapped” Miranda, who asks if she is being “compelled” to continue existing. Other words used are “tether” and “force” and lastly “free.” Atwood places Miranda in a very different context of male ownership than Shakespeare does. In *The Tempest*, Miranda is positioned as an owned object, or property, which is also how her relationship to men is construed, as Kunat and Karaman argue. In *Hag-Seed*, Miranda’s soul is owned by Felix, but her incorporeal inexistence means she does not quite occupy to place of object or property. Instead, she takes on a similar place to the mothers in *The Tempest*: that of an absent woman, present only through recollection. Unlike Sycorax, however, Miranda is not demonized. She is idealized; put on a pedestal by her father, who imagines her to be a highly intelligent, perfectly behaved child. However, this idealization leads to the same dehumanization that the demonization would have led to: Miranda is not granted the full range of agency and personhood. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Felix has specific expectations for how his daughter would grow up, namely he has stereotypical feminine expectations. However, as Anne-Marie confronts Felix with a different interpretation of *The Tempest*’s Miranda, the expectations he projects onto his hallucination come into question. He recognizes that he must set Miranda “free,” and his last action within the narrative is granting his daughter this freedom. He does not grant her freedom just from his power, but from his expectations. He lets go of the wishes he had for his daughter, were she alive. Rather than place Miranda on a pedestal, she is freed to just be that three year old in the photo frame; she is free from not just Felix’s individual power, but from the patriarchal social order and its expectations of her. She is, in this sense, granted personhood in the acceptance of her death.

In *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Vinegar Girl*, the very premise of the texts is gendered. For *The Winter’s Tale*, *The Gap of Time*, *The Tempest* and *Hag-Seed*, feminist criticism and readings focused on gender do not engage with the centralized themes in the texts, but instead with elements on the periphery. Like *The Winter’s Tale*, *The Tempest* has less consistent feminist

criticism than *The Shrew*. In the compensatory mode of criticism, Slights contextualizes Miranda's actions as her own, rather than as the actions of an obedient woman. The latter understanding of Miranda, however, is supported by Kunat and Karaman on both an extra- as well as an intradiegetic level. Shin does place Miranda's education within a progressive context through the study of Renaissance norms and values. However, despite contemporary women considering Miranda less feminine and more assertive, as Shin notes, Miranda is nonetheless considered an obedient role model for women, as Slights herself indicates. Ultimately, it appears that Miranda functions within a similar context as the absent mothers: as a tool to be used, in whatever way, to secure patriarchal power. As Kunat argues, her acceptance of Ferdinand's foul play in the chess match is the first indication that Miranda accepts this role rather than fight against it, as Katherina in *The Shrew* does. In *Hag-Seed*, however, the lone female character of Miranda is split in two: Miranda the illusion and Anne-Marie the actress. Anne-Marie, despite taking similar 'plot' steps as Miranda does in *The Tempest* (such as subtly challenge Prospero/Felix, and beginning a relationship with Ferdinand/Freddie), these 'steps' do not function within the same gendered context as they do in the source text. Anne-Marie's relationship with Freddie is also not planned or even encouraged by Felix, and he has nothing to gain from it in the way of male power. Anne-Marie is not Felix's daughter, but his employee, and is given a fair amount of freedom in her own interpretation of the character of Miranda. In fact, it is Anne-Marie's rejection of Felix's interpretation that ultimately leads to Felix setting his daughter 'free.' Although we only see Anne-Marie through Felix's perspective, it becomes clear that Anne-Marie is not in reality the obedient, pliant and feminine woman Felix wanted her to be for the play. In this sense, *Hag-Seed* allows the character of *The Tempest*'s Miranda to experience freedom through an adaptation of her role wherein she does not function as a tool or property. However, Miranda's other adaptation of her role is more complex. Miranda the illusion is explicitly powerless; a tool for Felix to avoid guilt, accountability, and grief towards his daughter. Despite her phantom separation from reality, Miranda functions as a tool that keeps Felix grounded enough to enact his revenge proper. In this role, Miranda is tied completely to male power. However, her counterpart Anne-Marie ultimately forces Felix to understand his hallucination and set her free. In this sense, Margaret Atwood explores both the compensatory criticism aimed at *The Tempest*'s Miranda as well as the justificatory and transformational modes of criticism. By splitting the character of Miranda into two adaptation characters, Atwood

explores the agency Slights reads in Miranda through Anne-Marie, and engages with Miranda's role or function in a patriarchal social order by placing her within the context of literal control as an illusion of Felix. It is almost as if Atwood sought to explicate these two separate contexts for Miranda. The 'updated' womanhood in *Hag-Seed* from its original is twofold. On one hand, Miranda is now explicitly and exclusively controlled by her father, but this is portrayed in a negative light. Anne-Marie is granted more freedom. On the other hand, Anne-Marie is a character is only understood through Felix's perspective and no character but Felix is explored or developed at all, as *The New York Times* review also observes (Mandel par. 14). Like Anne-Marie, Miranda's illusionary existence is given no attention outside of Felix's needs. Everything is ultimately still contextualized within Felix's needs, in the same way that *The Tempest* ultimately contextualizes everything within the context of Prospero's needs. This patriarchal power, or desire, stands central in the narrative and *Hag-Seed* does not subvert this or engage with it in distinctly different ways, despite its very different representation(s) of Miranda. Much like *The Gap of Time*, the narrative ultimately has its women function as peripheral elements to the centrality of male power, even if that masculinity is ultimately critiqued in its ending.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I sought to compare and contrast the representation of women in three Shakespeare plays to their contemporary Hogarth rewritings. As was made clear in the introduction and the first chapter, The Hogarth Shakespeare series wants to ‘update,’ ‘modernize’ or ‘translate’ Shakespeare’s plays for a new audience. *The Winter’s Tale*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Tempest*’s representation of women were examined on the basis of Neely’s three modes of feminist criticism, namely the compensatory, justificatory and transformational modes. By employing close reading, the source texts’ criticism and context was compared and contrasted to my interpretation of their Hogarth counterparts.

Modern adaptations are no longer bound by the pure “fidelity criticism” that the first chapter described. The reception of a text, and indeed its adaptation, is influenced by the context and values of its time. One of the examples this thesis employs that demonstrates this is through the character of Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew*. When *The Shrew* was first written and performed, it was done in a cultural context of shrew taming narratives, in which ‘unruly’ wives were tamed into obedient and pliant women, as Clark demonstrated in her article. At the time, *The Shrew* was consumed by its audience in this context; Petruchio’s actions would not be considered abusive but curative. To an audience today, the notion that starving your wife is “curative” of the disease of disobedience, rather than abuse, is completely alien. An adaptation of *The Shrew* could choose to recreate these same actions but portray them in a negative light, rather than contextualize them as comical. Alternatively, an adaptation could take these characters and rearrange their actions to be more understandable to a modern audience – this is the route Anne Tyler took when she reframed Kate and Pyotr’s marriage in the context of immigration. In other words, there are various ways to ‘update’ a source text for modern audiences. The research question for this thesis was the following: in what ways have the selected texts (*The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed*) built a significant representation of gender that can be considered feminist, if at all? How do these novels represent their female characters, and how does this representation compare to the representation in their respective source texts?

The Hogarth adaptations were ordered by their publishing date; *The Gap of Time* was the first to be published in the series, and *Hag-Seed* was chronologically the last of the three selected

texts to be published. In *The Gap of Time*, the role of its female characters was similar to their roles in *The Winter's Tale*; on a thematic and symbolic level, there was no significant difference. Like in *The Winter's Tale*, MiMi and Perdita both function exclusively within the context of the men in their lives. Perdita was not explored or developed as a character at all, despite parts of the novel being told through her perspective. She functions to resolve the damage that hegemonic masculinity has caused Leo; as Neely points out, her role is educational. She teaches Leo to forgive, and to change his behaviour. MiMi operates on a similar level; despite the brutal sexual violence Leo inflicts on her, she is the silent trophy he wins when he decides to change. Unlike its source text, *The Gap of Time* does not allow MiMi to speak at all at the end (the act that is construed most as feminist in the source text), nor do we see her reconcile with Leo. However, like in the source text, this 'happy ending' is promised by the text's end – in *The Gap of Time*, Winterson herself enters the narrative to inform us of these happy endings and the reconciliation between MiMi and Leo. Only Pauline, a minor character, is given any agency apart from Leo or Xenon. Although she works for Xenon, she is never sacrificed for the sake of overcoming the difficulties of hegemonic masculinity as such. While she does not sacrifice herself in the way that MiMi can be described to do, she does occupy a position where, like MiMi and Perdita, she consistently educates Leo on potential improvements in his character. *The Gap of Time* does not represent its women as fully developed, independent characters, and on a thematic and symbolic level they function only in the context of men. This is also what the novel is about: the struggles with intimacy that men suffer because of hegemonic masculinity. The women in the narrative are victims of male violence, such as MiMi, or the 'solution' to these intimacy struggles, but they are never separated from this context. Karaman argues for three possible options that women must adhere to in Shakespeare's narratives: desubjectification, paternalisation, or death. In *The Gap of Time*, MiMi, Pauline and Perdita are all desubjectified.

Vinegar Girl operates very differently. *The Taming of the Shrew* was perhaps the most blatantly misogynist of Shakespeare's plays, considering its central plot and the context of shrew-taming narratives. Rather than portray Kate as a disobedient troublesome woman and a bad choice of a wife, Tyler recontextualizes Kate's attitude in a way similar to compensatory critics. Because the extradiegetic context and values systems have changed, Kate is now perhaps a little rude, but by no means a 'shrew' who must be cured of her ill behaviour. Kate is independent and does not want to get married; Kate struggles with the concept of marriage in the context of a

society that tells women they can only be happy in a marriage. Kate rejects this notion, and when she does come to consider marriage to Pyotr, it is because marriage represents independence for Kate and not a subservient role, as it does in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Pyotr shows no signs of abusive behaviour, as his counterpart does, and in fact does not seek to change Kate at all – in contrast to everyone around her, Pyotr is the only one to accept and even encourage Kate’s blunt and sometimes rude behaviour. The element of Pyotr’s Green Card creates a motivation not based in gender for a quick marriage after a courtship that would be considered short by today’s standards. Bunny has also changed considerably from her source text counterpart. Rather than be the obedient, pliant example that Kate should strive for, Bunny is just as outspoken as Kate and is, in fact, the one who opposes the marriage between Kate and Pyotr. It is also Bunny, and not Kate, that instigates the final ‘conflict.’ Kate and Bunny are both characters developed outside of male power; in fact, male power is explicitly subverted. In her last speech, Kate emphasizes the difficulty men face and the lack of power Pyotr has, considering his immigration status. Likewise, both Kate and Bunny often challenge or outright ignore their father’s wishes. It is in fact Kate who has household power over not just Bunny but her father himself. Even when circumstances go according to Louis’ wishes, like when Pyotr and Kate marry, it is not at all how he planned it or even wanted it. His efforts effectively fall flat, even if the outcome is what he wanted; the circumstances advance separate from his attempts. Unlike the women in *The Gap of Time*, Bunny and Kate are not desubjectified, nor are their paternalised or killed. They break out of these three potential options that Shakespeare’s women fall into in Shakespeare’s original texts.

Hag-Seed’s representation of women is different still. In *The Tempest*, Miranda occupied a position as a progressively educated, assertive woman for her time; nonetheless, she also functioned in the role of tool or property for Prospero. As Kunat points out, Miranda accepts this paternalisation – in fact, she was prepared for it. In *Hag-Seed*, Miranda and Anne-Marie can exclusively function in the context of male power, much like the women in *The Gap of Time*. However, unlike *The Gap of Time*, this is true because no female character’s perspective is present in the novel. *Hag-Seed* explores *The Tempest*’s Miranda’s dual nature. As was argued in the last chapter, Miranda can be read and understood on both an extra- and intradiegetic level as a progressive, independent woman. However, on both of these levels, Miranda is equally under the power of Prospero and her actions are all the result of his demands or desires. This dual nature is

brought out in the *Hag-Seed* adaptation by ‘splitting’ the representation of Miranda in two: on one hand, there is Miranda the illusion, and on the other hand there is Anne-Marie who plays Miranda in a staging of *The Tempest*. Anne-Marie is consistently portrayed as typically unfeminine, even though Felix focuses on the opposite, and contrasted against the more typically feminine and obedient illusion that Felix creates of his dead daughter. However, the end of the novel is marked by Felix recognizing his acts as an imprisonment. He sets his daughter free. In the narrative proper, Anne-Marie is paternalised and his hallucinatory daughter is desubjectified. However, despite the novel representing its female characters in these statuses, the end of the novel itself can be read as a critique of this representation; it can be read as a critique of Felix’s perspective, as the representation of women in *Hag-Seed* is all done through his perspective. This is further supported by the fact that Felix’s perspective is called into question earlier on in the novel; he perceives Anne-Marie as ‘perfect’ for the role of Miranda because he construes her as obedient, pliable, childlike, and feminine. However, Anne-Marie does not exhibit these qualities as a person outside of the role of Miranda. Even her perspective on the role of Miranda is very different from Felix’s, to the point where it ultimately challenges and changes his viewpoint of his daughter. Felix’s illusionary Miranda lacks complete free will as an extension of Felix’s subconscious, and as such has no agency. By setting her free at the end of the novel, this illusion is critiqued also. However, the critique of this representation of women is at the very end of the novel, and during the narrative proper Felix’s male power and desire stand central. Even if *Hag-Seed* is critical of its own representation of women, that representation itself does not change.

To return to the research question, in what ways have the selected texts (*The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed*) built a significant representation of gender that can be considered feminist, if at all? *Hag-Seed* and *The Gap of Time* do not represent women as significantly ‘feminist.’ *Hag-Seed*’s representation of women is somewhat complex, as its ending is critical of its own representation. In this sense, *Hag-Seed* is aware of the extradiegetic context in which it operates; its representation of women is not dissimilar to its source text, but it is aware and critical of the flaws of this representation. In fact, it dissects this by ‘splitting’ the character of Miranda into two – by creating both Miranda the daughter and Anne-Marie the actress, it can inspect the readings of *The Tempest*’s Miranda’s role as a conduit of Prospero’s power, as well as her role as an independent character. *The Gap of Time*, however, is wholly uncritical of its own female characters. MiMi’s brutal rape is never truly given the narrative attention or resolution

that it should, and instead is effectively ‘swept under the rug’ in the name of reconciliation; Perdita educates Leo in intimacy, so he may resolve his own issues regarding hegemonic masculinity, but his prior actions are never explicitly criticised or engaged with. MiMi is, in this sense, never given justice; unlike her Shakespearean source, she does not even get to speak at the end of her narrative. Despite Perdita’s role as a central character, through whose perspective we experience part of the novel, as character she is given no real development or exploration, and her agency functions exclusively in the context of Leo or Shep’s needs. *Vinegar Girl*, however, interacts with its source text in a distinctly different way. As an adaptation, it keeps the overarching plot similar enough to be an obvious rewrite of *The Taming of the Shrew*, but the character’s actions and motivations are markedly removed from its misogynist context of shrew-taming. *Vinegar Girl* purposely moves away from the context of its source text, and represents Kate and Bunny with characteristics that read as positive to modern audiences, in contrast to *The Shrew* where Katherina’s characteristics would have read as negative to audiences at the time. Kate is represented as an outspoken and independent woman, and her marriage to Pyotr is placed within a context of independence and not in a context of dependence, or the consolidation and acceptance of male power, as we see in not just *The Shrew*, but also *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Shrew*.

Out of the three selected texts, only *Vinegar Girl* can be concluded as having any representation that can be considered feminist at all. *Hag-Seed*’s last passages read as criticism on both its own representation of the Mirandas and as such *The Tempest*’s representation of Miranda. While one would be hard-pressed to call its representation feminist, one can argue the novel’s self-awareness is ‘feminist’ in a sense, even if its representation is not. The novel’s awareness of its own representation does, at the very least, points towards its complexities and problematizes any simple categorization of its interaction with gender. *The Gap of Time*, on the other hand, displays a representation of women that could not be considered feminist at all. Its representation of its female characters is effectively the same as *The Winter’s Tale*’s representation. On an intradiegetic level, the women in *The Gap of Time* lack agency, independence from male power, and any significant individuality. Out of the three novels, it has been ‘updated’ the least for the modern audiences the Hogarth Shakespeare Series sought to engage with.

This thesis cannot reach a conclusion on the representation of women in the whole of the

Hogarth Shakespeare Series. That would be its primary limitation; not all books in the series are even published yet. A project that would analyze all eight novels in the Hogarth Shakespeare series would be ambitious, but also significantly more capable of reaching a conclusion regarding how ‘updated’ Shakespeare has been by this series. This thesis also exclusively focuses on feminist criticism and gendered readings; it stands to reason that ‘updating’ Shakespeare thematically would require analysis of other elements. For example, to what degree is *The Tempest*’s colonial analysis present in *Hag-Seed*, if at all? On the level that this thesis does engage with feminist criticism, it takes its cue from the three modes of feminist criticism as observed by Thomas Carol Neely. Have any other modes of feminist criticism been observed since the publication of that article? This thesis also employs all three modes of criticism in order to give as broad an understanding of Shakespeare’s source texts as possible, but does not compare and contrast these modes against one another. Through examining Shakespeare adaptations such as the Hogarth Shakespeare Series, these *models* of criticism could be compared and contrasted against one another, rather than the analyses themselves. Any further research would likely follow a similar line of thinking. The novels could be analysed as independent adaptations, along Hutcheon’s theory of adaptation rather than along the line of feminist criticism. It would also be interesting to see research compare these Hogarth adaptations not to their source text, but to other adaptations. As noted in the introduction and first chapter, Shakespeare has been adapted many times. How do these adaptations compare against one another? This is not going into *The Gap of Time*, *Vinegar Girl*, and *Hag-Seed* as individual novels. These texts could be compared to other texts by their authors, rather than to Shakespeare. Their narratives could also be considered based on their own formal features. *The Gap of Time* supplants Hermione’s last speech with Winterson’s own interjection. The novel is also well suited to an analysis focused on the representation of hegemonic masculinity rather than the representation of women. Winterson’s passage itself could be analysed within the context of the very recent academic discourse surrounding metamodernism, for example. If *The Tempest* is a play-within-a-play, *Hag-Seed* is a play-within-a-play-within-a-novel. In other words, there is a multitude of potential perspectives beyond that of feminist criticism that could be unleashed upon these novels.

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