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**CONTEMPORARY
SHAKESPEAREAN BODIES:
ADAPTING FORMS ACROSS MEDIA**

MEGAN C M HOLMAN

PhD

2021

**CONTEMPORARY
SHAKESPEAREAN BODIES:
ADAPTING FORMS ACROSS MEDIA**

MEGAN CAITLIN MAEVE HOLMAN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the
University of Northumbria at Newcastle
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Faculty of Arts, Design & Social
Sciences

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Abstract

This thesis explores how contemporary adaptations of Shakespeare's plays across puppet theatre, animation, and graphic novels use mediatised bodies to augment or expand their narratives. In this context, "mediatised" refers to corporeal forms produced by means which permit or necessitate the full or partial absence of a live body. I argue that the artificial bodies foregrounded by the selected media provide sites for negotiating contemporary issues regarding identity and embodiment, while also elucidating how Shakespeare's narratives continue to engage modern audiences. Each chapter performs close visual readings of mediatised adaptations illuminating different facets of embodied experience: colonialism and physical difference; gender and adolescence; disability and political power; and our relationships with technology and the environment. These readings also identify resonances with the concerns and motifs of the play's original texts, suggesting ways in which Shakespeare is a useful tool for reflecting on and renegotiating our place in the world. These explorations build towards wide-reaching conclusions about how embodied identity is constructed in Shakespeare, popular culture, and beyond.

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Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges, opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved.

Approval has been sought and granted by the Faculty Ethics Committee.

I declare that the total word count of this thesis is 61891 words.

Name: Megan Caitlin Maeve Holman

Signature:

Date: 10 September 2021

Introduction

This thesis explores how contemporary adaptations of Shakespeare's plays across puppet theatre, animation, and graphic novels use mediatised bodies to augment, expand, or recontextualise their narratives. In this context, 'mediatised' refers to corporeal forms produced by means which permit or necessitate the full or partial absence of a live body. This definition partially draws upon a perceived distinction between theatre and media in theatre studies, whereby, as Meike Wagner observes,

The human body is set up as a shield to the mediatised body and there is a clear line between the two spheres: on one side of the line there is *live performance*, where the authentic human body is physically present. On the other side of the line, there are technical representations of the body as in video, film, television and the digital.¹

However, my definition's open-ended nature ('permit or necessitate', 'full or partial') reflects the ways in which this binary is complicated both by contemporary performance technologies – such as the use of digital animation to produce, augment, or replicate bodies onstage – and more traditional facets of theatre such as masks, puppets, and costuming. Shakespeare's writing offers a powerfully suggestive corpus with which to do this work because his bodies frequently question the boundaries of the human form. When, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Snout the tinker is instructed to 'have some plaster, or some loam, or some roughcast about him, to signify Wall' (III.i.63-4), where does the live actor end and the mediatised entity 'Wall' begin? By looking at depictions of Shakespearean bodies across different media, this thesis reveals how these bodies continue to engage audiences and can be used to articulate contemporary ideas about the functions and parameters of our own physical forms, and the socio-political contexts in which they are constructed and which they construct.

This thesis's aims are wide-ranging. Firstly, it reappraises media which, unlike Shakespeare, have historically been ascribed with low cultural value. As Scott McCloud attests, comic books or graphic novels have been dismissed as 'crude, poorly-drawn, semiliterate, cheap, disposable kiddie fare.'² Thierry Groensteen similarly suggests that, despite the graphic novel's sustained popularity and increasing respectability, 'the legitimizing authorities (universities, museums, the media) still regularly charge it with being infantile, vulgar, or insignificant.'³ Writing about his work in film animation, Rolf Giesen describes

¹ Meike Wagner, 'Of Other Bodies: the Intermedial Gaze in Theatre' in *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance*, eds. Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006), p.126.

² Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), p.3.

³ Thierry Groensteen, 'Why are Comics Still in Search of Cultural Legitimization?' in *A Comics Studies Reader*, eds. Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), p.31.

encountering a similar prejudice: ‘It’s animation. It’s nice – but it’s not a real movie’.⁴ Giesen recalls how Ray Harryhausen, the creator of stop motion classics such as *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963), was so embarrassed by being asked ‘Aren’t you too old to play with dolls?’ that he henceforth described his work as ‘model animation’ rather than puppetry.⁵ The stigmatisation of graphic novels, animation, and puppetry, and the concurrent evaluation of Shakespeare as ‘the pinnacle of Western high culture’, have hindered analysis of Shakespearean adaptations in these forms.⁶ Writing on *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales*, Gregory M. Colon Semenza states that most critical responses to that BBC series focused on how its adaptations edited the plays’ texts, thus reading the episodes as ‘adapted literature’ rather than assessing or appreciating them according to the conventions of their medium.⁷ In turn, this thesis counters such privileging of the literary by performing extensive visual readings of Shakespearean adaptations, centred on each medium’s treatment of the body, and in doing so unearths new and under-researched materials. However, the thesis positions its visual readings of the adaptations alongside close readings of the plays. It does so in order to suggest that, while Shakespearean bodies are now being made to ‘mean’ in ways which may have been unfamiliar to their author, contemporary adaptations nevertheless share resonances with the original concerns and motifs of the plays. My use of ‘resonances’ is indebted to Bruce Smith’s essay ‘Teaching the Resonances’, in which he argues for the importance of reading ‘at the intersection of the pastness of Shakespeare with the pressing concerns of today’. Without contradicting the historical specificity of Shakespeare’s work, he suggests that ‘the paradigm we need is not a matter of either/or but a matter of but/and’.⁸

The thesis accepts Raymond Williams’ premise that ‘the making of art is never itself in the past tense. It is always a formative process, within a specific present’.⁹ The circumstances which produce each new iteration of Shakespeare’s work are specific to a particular time and place. Similarly, contemporary adaptations’ depictions of bodies reflect culturally determined ideas of corporeality, identity, and agency. This thesis therefore elucidates how mediatising Shakespeare’s bodies can make them reflect distinctly modern ideas and concerns about class, racial, and gender difference; unequal power relations; environmental degradation; and the impact of technology on our lives. The thesis thus synthesises numerous areas of research which have yet to be sufficiently integrated: readings of Shakespeare’s plays which are

⁴ Rolf Giesen, ‘Introduction: It’s Not Just Nostalgia’ in *Puppetry, Puppet Animation and the Digital Age*, ed. Giannalberto Bendazzi (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2019), xiii.

⁵ Giesen, p.1.

⁶ Paul Prescott, ‘Shakespeare and Popular Culture’ in *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, eds Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.276.

⁷ Gregory M. Colon Semenza, ‘Teens, Shakespeare, and the Dumbing Down Cliché: the Case of the *Animated Tales*’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Vol.26. No.2 (2008), pp.37-68, p.37.

⁸ Bruce Smith, ‘Teaching the Resonances’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol.48, No. 4 (Winter 1997), pp.451-5, pp.454-5..

⁹ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.129.

sensitive to their historical context; the depictions and narrative functions of bodies; comparisons across different forms of popular culture, and contemporary critical approaches to the issues listed above. Work on transmedial narratology has made some inroads in this area: Jan-Noel Thon asserts that one of the ‘core tasks’ of such research is to ‘provide a theoretical frame within which various (more or less) medium-specific terms and concepts can be productively related to each other.’¹⁰ This thesis extends such insights by focusing on how contemporary adaptations imbue bodies with narrative functions and (in some cases) agency, and thus proposes the body as a viable focus for transmedial narratology.

Bodies in Shakespeare

Since Gail Kern Paster’s seminal monograph, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (1993), work on Shakespearean bodies has predominantly focused on how the body was conceptualised in the early modern period. Subsequent publications have revealed the complex interrelations between bodies, emotional experience and selfhood in early modern thought.¹¹ Early modern medicine was underpinned by humoral theory, a cultural relic of the classical period, in which ‘the body was thought to be composed of four humors – blood, phlegm, choler or yellow bile, and black bile.’¹² The humoral body was ‘characterized by corporeal fluidity, openness and porous boundaries’.¹³ The humours’ fluid movements and their interactions with the world beyond the body had multitudinous and far-reaching implications, as Paster observes:

The men and women of early modern Europe understood their mortality, described their sensations and bodily events, and often experienced physical and psychological benefit in humoral terms. More subtly, they experienced such basic social interpellations as their engenderment in humoral terms, since [...] humoral theory was instrumental in the production of gender and class difference.¹⁴

Research such as Paster’s argues for the necessity of reading the Shakespearean body in the context of early modern somatic experience. However, this approach does not acknowledge the ways in which Shakespeare’s work continues to engage audiences on a

¹⁰ Jan-Noel Thon, *Transmedial Narratology and Contemporary Media* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), p.6.

¹¹ See, for instance: Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995); Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004).

¹² Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England*, pp.7-8.

¹³ Paster, p.8.

¹⁴ Paster, p.7.

visceral level. As suggested above, contemporary adaptations can make Shakespeare's bodies mean something new, but this is something which is arguably facilitated by the plays themselves using two methods: strategic opacity and metatheatrical awareness.

Stephen Greenblatt uses the term 'strategic opacity' to describe the technique by which Shakespeare's narratives are rendered more compelling through the calculated omission of causal explanations - for instance, Iago's motivation for his vendetta against Othello.¹⁵ Greenblatt reads this refusal to provide 'a familiar, comforting rationale' as effectively 'tearing away' a 'structure of superficial meanings'.¹⁶ As this thesis will demonstrate, Shakespeare cultivates a similar ambiguity or opacity around some of his characters' bodies, a strategy which makes them both attractive and convenient subjects for subsequent appropriation and adaptation. Furthermore, Shakespearean characters frequently articulate a metatheatrical awareness of how susceptible their bodies are to reinterpretations in theatrical performance and across other media. Take, for example, the following passage from *Julius Caesar*:

Cassius: How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn and accents yet unknown?
Brutus: How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport
That now on Pompey's basis lies along,
No worthier than the dust?
(III.i.111-6)

In the aftermath of Caesar's assassination, Cassius imagines the scene's re-enactment in centuries to come. Brutus recasts this metatheatrical contemplation in somatic terms, presenting three different physical states or forms: the mortal flesh of the bleeding Caesar, the memorialising statue of his enemy Pompey, and the dust out of which men are fashioned and to which they return. Brutus thus elides Cassius's vision of theatrical re-enactment with one of corporeal malleability which allows for the reproduction of Caesar's body across different artistic forms as well as 'ages hence'. Similarly, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Cleopatra's vision of being led through Rome as part of a triumphal march focuses on an image of re-enactment:

The quick comedians
Extemporally will stage us and present
Our Alexandrian revels; Antony
Shall be brought drunken forth; and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
I'th' posture of a whore.
(V.ii.215-20)

¹⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (London: Pimlico, 2005), pp.323-5.

¹⁶ Greenblatt, p.324.

As with the comparable passage in *Julius Caesar*, there is dramatic irony here: on the Jacobean stage, the Cleopatra who delivered these lines would have been portrayed by a ‘squeaking’ prepubescent boy. Again, the lines articulate an awareness of how re-enactment entails corporeal distortions, as Cleopatra modulates between her own ‘greatness’, the boy who portrays her, and the ‘whore’ his representation constructs. In doing so, the speech exposes the complexities of constructing gender on the Elizabethan stage, which will be returned to later in the thesis.

The self-awareness Shakespeare’s characters so often express reflects what Greenblatt calls the early modern period’s ‘increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process’.¹⁷ The speeches quoted above expose an unease about the stability of the body as an expression of that identity. Shakespeare’s plays repeatedly explore how characters define themselves and to what extent their bodies are their own. This focus on corporeality and identity makes them particularly attractive to modern creative practitioners.

Shakespeare’s plays thus facilitate their own appropriation as sites for exploring and engaging with contemporary issues of identity and embodiment. Moreover, Shakespeare’s cultural capital also enables rather than inhibits this process. Alan Sinfield argues:

Shakespeare’s plays constitute an influential medium through which certain ways of thinking about the world may be promoted and others impeded, they are a site of cultural struggle and change. [...] Shakespeare is one of the places where ideology is made.¹⁸

More recently, Stephen O’Neill suggests:

Shakespeare is unfinished cultural and ideological business, the capacious site not only for individual and collective expression but also for discerning continuities between and changes across media; for exploring how users and technologies are coeval; and for destabilizing such binaries as old and new, high and popular.¹⁹

Echoing Williams, O’Neill demonstrates that the ideological processes that Sinfield identified are not just ideas but are enacted, or bodied forth, through the ever-evolving media and technologies through which audiences encounter, experience and recreate Shakespeare.

¹⁷ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.2.

¹⁸ Alan Sinfield, ‘Introduction: Reproductions, Interventions’ in *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, eds. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp.155-6.

¹⁹ Stephen O’Neill, ‘Introduction: “Sowed and Scattered” Shakespeare’s Media Ecologies’ in *Broadcast Your Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen O’Neill (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2018), p.23.

Shakespeare's appearances and invocations across cultures, forms and ideologies have inspired a commensurately broad – and rapidly expanding – body of scholarship focused on issues of adaptation and appropriation in popular culture. In his 2007 introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture*, Robert Shaughnessy observes:

In recent years, the study of the past and present relationships between Shakespeare and popular culture has been transformed: from an occasional, ephemeral, and anecdotal field of research [...] to one which is making an increasingly significant contribution to our understanding of how Shakespeare's works came into being, and of how and why they continue to exercise the imaginations of readers, theatregoers, viewers, and scholars worldwide.²⁰

This burgeoning field faces a number of challenges, not least of which is the breadth of material with which it seeks to engage. As Douglas Lanier suggested in 2002, 'one of the barriers to studying this topic is that it is so diffuse and contradictory a body of material'.²¹ Writing almost two decades later, in the wake of ever-diversifying technologies and audiences, Pamela Bickley and Jenny Stevens similarly remark on 'the extraordinary plurality and fluidity of the current situation'.²² One consequence of such diversity is the challenge of finding appropriate language to discuss Shakespeare's continuing presence in popular culture: as Bickley and Stevens assert, 'there is no neutral terminology'. For instance, they suggest that the 're-' prefix in terms such as 'reinvention' or 'reimagining' implies revisionist activity centred on an original source, while 'trans-' prefixed terms such as 'translation' or 'transmediation' intimate a more radical act of 'crossing over'.²³ Each of these labels reflects an ideological interpretation of the relationship between Shakespeare's cultural manifestations and the textual 'original'. This thesis uses the terms 'adaptation' and 'appropriation' to refer to the works it discusses, following the broad definitions Julie Sanders offers for both:

An adaptation signals a relationship with an informing sourcetext or original; a cinematic version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, for example [...] On the other hand, appropriation frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain.²⁴

However, like the other terms discussed by Bickley and Stevens, this terminology also comes with associative meanings. As they assert, 'adaptation brings its own connotations of Darwinian survival; appropriation must always suggest a possessive and possibly aggressive

²⁰ Robert Shaughnessy, ed., 'Introduction' in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.1.

²¹ Douglas Lanier, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.4.

²² Pamela Bickley and Jenny Stevens, eds., *Studying Shakespeare Adaptation: From Restoration Theatre to YouTube* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2021), p.2.

²³ Bickley and Stevens, p.1.

²⁴ Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p.26.

act'.²⁵ Lanier offers an additional gloss on 'appropriation': 'the term springs from Marxist analysis and retains the connotation that this struggle is contentious, a matter of a weaker party wresting something of value from unwilling or hostile hands.'²⁶ The language used to describe Shakespeare's various manifestations thus reflects broader discussions, tensions and anxieties about his place in modern culture – from whom might Shakespeare have to be 'wrested' away? – but also about the place of modern popular culture in the Shakespearean afterlife: what counts as 'Shakespeare'?

Scholarship on Shakespearean adaptation has had to contend with both these questions and more. As Shaughnessy asserts, 'whether everything and anything that operates under the banner of Shakespeare can or should be afforded any value or significance, or is of more than passing academic interest, is a matter of debate'. He goes on:

When the transmission and appropriation of Shakespeare are at stake, considerations of taste and aesthetic value are also bound up with inevitably vexed questions of cultural ownership, educational attainment and class, and with issues of who the desired and actual consumers of "popular" Shakespeares may be, who these hope to include, and who they don't.²⁷

These questions are to some extent underpinned by the perceived discrepancy, previously observed in this introduction, between the cultural value attributed to Shakespeare and forms of popular culture. Lanier is expansive in his description of this discrepancy:

Popular culture, so the story goes, is aesthetically unsophisticated, disposable, immediately accessible and therefore shallow, concerned with immediate pleasures and effects, unprogressive in its politics, aimed at the lowest common denominator, mass-produced by corporations principally for financial gain. By contrast, Shakespeare is aesthetically refined, timeless, complex and intellectually challenging, concerned with lasting truths of the human condition and not fleeting political issues, addressed to those few willing to devote themselves to laborious study, produced by a single genius 'not of an age but for all time'.²⁸

The distinction Lanier observes between the imagined target audiences for popular culture and Shakespeare is key here. How Shakespeare is produced, it suggests, determines who he is 'for', with implicit value judgements attached to both the forms in which he appears and their audiences. This has implications for the media discussed in the thesis, all of which, as this introduction has already demonstrated, have historically denigrated as trivial or juvenile, or

²⁵ Bickley and Stevens, p.1. Linda Hutcheon similarly describes the process of appropriation as 'taking possession of another's story, and filtering it, in a sense, through one's own sensibility, interests, and talents.' Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2nd edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p.18.

²⁶ Lanier, p.5.

²⁷ Shaughnessy, p.1.

²⁸ Lanier, p.3. Hutcheon notes that a similar discrepancy in value also characterises the broader field of adaptation, where 'an adaptation is likely to be greeted as minor and subsidiary and certainly never as good as the "original." ' Hutcheon, xiv.

'disposable kiddie fare' as McCloud puts it (see above). Some of the adaptations explored in the following chapters were expressly produced for young audiences; others were not. My analysis seeks to challenge two underpinning assumptions: firstly, that adaptations in the forms of puppetry, graphic novels or animation are automatically intended for – or even suitable for – children. Secondly, that if young people are among the intended audience, the adaptation is inevitably unsophisticated, unenlightened or unenlightening in its engagement with Shakespeare. This reflects a shift in scholarship on Shakespearean adaptation in recent years, away from making what Bickley and Stevens call 'hierarchized comparative judgements' on the relationship between the plays and the manifestations of their cultural afterlife. However, this thesis also goes further by arguing that contemporary adaptations can illuminate and re-enact the ways in which Shakespeare's texts themselves both depend on and anticipate a process of adaptation – as the quotes above from *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* illustrate. By suggesting this reciprocal relationship between the past 'original' and present adaptation, this thesis embraces Lanier's assertion that Shakespeare's place in popular culture 'might better be explained in terms of negotiation, collaboration, exchange, or other models.'²⁹

Bodies in Contemporary Culture

The growing interest in the body within Shakespeare studies during the 1990s coincided with its similar rise to prominence across humanities and social sciences. Dennis Waskul and Phillip Vannini note that 'since the early 1990s the body has come to bear a veritable bonanza of contemporary sociological interest'.³⁰ In the preface to the second edition of his *The Body and Social Theory*, published in 2003, Chris Shilling similarly attests that 'during the ten years that have passed since the publication of the first edition of *The Body and Social Theory* there has been a massive proliferation of writings on embodiment'.³¹ Waskul and Vannini elucidate some of the factors behind this growing fascination with corporeality:

From the diffusion of plastic surgery to the mainstreaming of tattooing, from fashion to fitness, from shifting health practices to profound changes in the experience and treatment of illness, from continued preoccupations with youthfulness to the changing definitions of the aging body, from sexual to athletic performance, contemporary scholarly literatures reveal a steady flow of provocative new sociological investigations, speculations, and research inquiries on the body and experiences of embodiment.³²

²⁹ Lanier, p.5.

³⁰ Dennis D. Waskul and Phillip Vannini, 'Introduction: the Body in Symbolic Interaction' in *Body/Embodiment: Symbolic Interaction and the Sociology of the Body*, eds. Waskul and Vannini (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), p.1.

³¹ Chris Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory*, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2003), viii.

³² Waskul and Vannini, p.1.

These diverse factors reveal how bodies operate as sites of individual expression and agency – for instance, the choice to have a tattoo – but are also subject to broader societal discourses and advances – such as the treatment of ageing and illness. Since late 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed how indivisible (and yet, simultaneously, fractious) the private and public functions of the body can be. Official regulations on vaccinations or mask-wearing have threatened some individuals' sense of physical autonomy, bringing them (and their bodies) into conflict with the broader goal of public health.

Our physical identities are undergoing a moment of even greater change as technological and medical advancements alter what a body is or can be. Prosthetics and implants provide the means of augmenting our physical hardware, whether for medical or cosmetic purposes, while more intrinsic modifications are being made possible through genetic screening and gene-editing. As Shilling suggests, 'the Human Genome Project [...] heralds the start of an era in which all aspects of embodiment are theoretically open to alteration.'³³ These advances may create an impression that humans are becoming more corporeally malleable than ever. However, as the previous section illustrated, the idea of an unstable, changeable body is not a new one. In the same way that the early modern humoral body was defined by its protean nature and inter-permeability with the wider world, corporeal malleability also characterises Mikhail Bakhtin's model of the early modern grotesque, in which 'the unfinished and open body (dying, bringing forth and being born) is not separated from the world by clearly defined boundaries: it is blended with the world, with animals, with objects.'³⁴ It is therefore possible to trace resonances from early modern concerns about the body's parameters via Bakhtin's versatile grotesque to our current questioning of the boundaries of the human. The recurrence of these images and concerns reflects the way in which, as Shigehisa Kuriyama suggests, 'the history of the body is ultimately a history of ways of inhabiting the world.'³⁵ As this thesis will attempt to show, contemporary adaptations of Shakespeare's plays present bodies which change, contort, and engage with the wider world in ways which can prove empowering as well as occasionally destabilising to characters' identity and wellbeing.

While bodies are a current focus of academic attention, they have long been a conceptual priority for marginalised groups such as the subjects of colonialism and women. For instance, the escaped slave Frederick Douglass was fond of telling abolitionist meetings: 'I appear this evening as a thief and a robber. I stole this head, these limbs, this body from my

³³ Shilling, *The Body in Culture, Technology & Society* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2005), p.4.

³⁴ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp.26-7.

³⁵ Shigehisa Kuriyama, *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine* (New York: Zone, 1999), p.237.

master, and ran off with them.³⁶ Douglass's itemisation of his anatomy draws attention to the objectification of slaves' bodies as sources of labour and as property. His description of himself as a thief underlines the absurdity – and the cruelty – of a body not belonging to the individual who inhabits it. Women have similarly experienced an enforced association with the body: Elizabeth Grosz observes 'the correlation and association of the mind/body opposition with the opposition between male and female,' in which 'man and mind, woman and body' become 'representationally aligned.'³⁷ Shilling adds that this alignment was long used to suggest that women were 'more suited to the world of private than public existence'.³⁸ The relegation of women to the domestic sphere entailed their restriction to reproductive and sexual functions. In a culture that is increasingly body-conscious, the apparatus for thinking about what it means to be a body has already been provided by groups which were long reduced to their physicality. As Schilling notes, the body is 'increasingly central to people's sense of self-identity,' but how can this be reconciled with a not-so-distant history of stripping people of selfhood by reducing them to physical functions or utility?³⁹ Looking at adaptations of Shakespeare's work in media which foreground bodies can shift the balance of power in those narratives and highlight previously marginalised narratives – as will be seen in Chapters 1 and 2.

In literary studies, David Hillman and Ulrika Maud observe a 'current interest in literary representations of the body,' similar to the preoccupation with corporeality in other fields.⁴⁰ Daniel Punday suggests that this may be a new development by asserting that reading has traditionally been imagined as a disembodied or intellectual experience, and bodies in literature have been overlooked as sites of narrative construction and transmission. He states:

While we may recognize that there are bodies in stories – and anyone who has seen the stage at the end of *Hamlet* littered with bodies can hardly think otherwise – these bodies seem to be precisely what intrude at the end of the narrative, what is left after the plot has run its course.⁴¹

Punday makes no distinction here between prose fiction and drama, and thus appears to overlook the latter medium's intrinsic corporeality: at the end of *Hamlet* the stage is covered with actors pretending to be corpses, but the same actors have bodied forth their characters for the duration of the play. Nevertheless, Punday usefully posits the body as a narrative device:

³⁶ Quoted in Tim McNeese, *The Abolitionist Movement: Ending Slavery* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), p.76.

³⁷ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p.4.

³⁸ Shilling, p.3.

³⁹ Shilling, p.2.

⁴⁰ David Hillman and Ulrika Maude, *The Cambridge Companion to the Body in Literature*, eds. Hillman and Maude (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.2.

⁴¹ Daniel Punday, *Narrative Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Narratology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), vii.

When we examine our ways of telling and talking about stories [...] we discover very specific and regular patterns in the ways that the body manifests itself in narratives. In other words, far from being an irrepressibly individual “other” to narrative representation the body is constantly given meaning and used as part of textual representation.⁴²

Punday engages with current interest in the body by placing it at the centre of his model of literary narratology: he envisages bodies as vessels for conveying narrative, rather than being subjects of it. This thesis proposes that bodies can perform a similar function across different media, particularly where the conventions of those media facilitate the foregrounding of bodies – as is the case with the examples discussed here.

Bodies in Puppetry, Animation and Graphic Novels

The three media chosen for this thesis were selected because they either adapt the entirety of the plays’ narratives or sustained portions of them, in contrast to arts like painting or photography which either select one moment or present several at once in the form of a montage. Focusing on extended adaptations allows us to explore how bodies are used to convey narrative meaning and augment storytelling. Practitioners and critics of each form are keenly aware of both the body’s centrality in their medium and the ways in which mediatised depictions of the body can engage with broader cultural concerns. This awareness further vindicates the use of mediatised adaptations to explore how Shakespearean bodies remain relevant to contemporary audiences.

Claudia Orenstein connects the medium of puppetry directly to the contemporary renegotiation of the body’s borders outlined above. She asserts:

Puppets and related figures that combine anthropomorphic elements with craftsmanship and engineering serve both as important metaphors and tangible expressions of our continually changing understanding of what it means to be human. They emerge as vital artistic elements at times when we question and reconceive long-standing paradigms about human beings and our relationship to the inanimate world, offering concrete means of playing with new embodiments of humanity.⁴³

Puppetry’s combination of ‘anthropomorphic elements’ with ‘craftsmanship and engineering’ provides a powerful visual metaphor for how the body might function as a site of self-fashioning. However, while Orenstein emphasises puppetry’s capacity for exploration and

⁴² Punday, viii.

⁴³ Claudia Orenstein, ‘Introduction’ in *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*, eds. Dassia N Posner, Claudia Orenstein, and John Bell (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2014), p.2.

renegotiation of the self, others note that the form also attracts more negative connotations. Henryk Jurkowski observes that, particularly in marionette puppetry where the strings – the means of manipulation – are visible, puppetry functions as a ‘metaphor of powerlessness’.⁴⁴ As this thesis will explore, puppetry and images of puppets recur across Shakespearean adaptations as articulations of characters’ coercion of others or their own loss of agency.

Paul Wells suggests that corporeality is central to animation’s ‘design strategy’, which foregrounds ‘redefining and exaggerating aspects of the body or environment’.⁴⁵ He expands:

Animation is unique in its address of the body and, as such, in its creation of the codes and conditions by which *mascularity* and *femininity* may be defined, and by which questions concerning *race* may be advanced. Animation has the capability of rendering the body in a way which blurs traditional notions of gender, species and indigenous identity, further complicating debates concerning the primary political agendas of men and women, and enabling revisionist readings which use the ambivalence and ambiguity of the animated form to support the view that traditional orthodoxies in society itself must be necessarily challenged.⁴⁶

Wells’s claim that animation’s approach to the body is unique is less important here than his belief in the medium’s capacity to engage with and challenge social assumptions about gender, race, and identity. This thesis will demonstrate that this capacity to challenge such categories is central to all the media under discussion.

Will Eisner, a prominent cartoonist and early theorist of graphic novels, suggests that ‘by far the most universal image with which the sequential artist must deal is the human form’.⁴⁷ He argues that the frequency with which bodies appear in the medium means that, ‘In comics, body posture and gesture occupy a position of primacy over text. The manner in which these images are employed modifies and defines the intended meaning of the words.’⁴⁸ Eisner suggests that the body is a central means of conveying narrative in the graphic novel form, pre-empting Punday’s postulation of its similar function in literature by almost two decades. While the body is a useful narrative tool in graphic novels, the genre can also foreground bodies in ways which are not available in other media. Using a simple icon of a human face as an example, McCloud asserts:

When we abstract an image through cartooning, we’re not so much eliminating details as we are focusing on specific details. By stripping down an image to its

⁴⁴ Henryk Jurkowski, *Aspects of Puppet Theatre*, ed. Penny Francis, 2nd edition (Hounds Mills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.109.

⁴⁵ Paul Wells, *Understanding Animation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p.188.

⁴⁶ Wells, p.188.

⁴⁷ Will Eisner, *Comics and Sequential Art* (Tamarac: Poorhouse Press, 1985), p.100.

⁴⁸ Eisner, p.103.

essential “meaning,” an artist can amplify that meaning in a way that realistic art can’t.⁴⁹

The graphic novel can thus foreground specific somatic symbolisms or functions more directly than many other forms of adaptation. However, while McCloud emphasises the ‘specific details’ that survive the graphic novel’s cartooning of the body over the ‘details’ which may be eliminated, this process may achieve a similar effect to Greenblatt’s principle of strategic opacity. Simplifying the body arguably expands its interpretative possibilities, as McCloud seems to recognise when he states: ‘the more cartoony a face is [...] the more people it could be said to describe’.⁵⁰ Graphic novels can therefore both increase the number of available corporeal significations and foreground a particular visual reading of the bodies they portray.

This thesis examines how all three of the selected media present bodies which can reflect and renegotiate contemporary concerns regarding different facets of embodied experience. Chapter 1 explores adaptations of *The Tempest* across all three media and assesses their depictions of Caliban’s physical difference, focusing in particular on his representation as a colonised subject. Chapters 2 and 3 take a different approach, looking at how one medium can be used to construct meaningful comparisons between bodies in different plays. Chapter 2 looks at how graphic novel adaptations of *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* in the subgenre of shōjo manga use bodies to interrogate contemporary gender stereotypes by presenting challenging narratives of feminine adolescence. By contrast, Chapter 3 explores how manga adaptations of *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar* depict bodies in their male-driven narratives, and the connections they develop between bodies, political power and narrative control. The fourth chapter expands this enquiry into power and narrative agency by assessing adaptations and appropriations of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* across puppetry, animation and graphic novels, looking at how each medium negotiates the play’s paradox of fairies which are both aligned with nature and aware of their theatrical artifice, and uses these supernatural creatures to explore issues of environmental crisis and unequal gender relations.

This thesis’s exploration of the representations of the body in Shakespearean adaptations across these media leads to far-reaching conclusions regarding contemporary attitudes to corporeality and identity. In particular, it elucidates the ways in which bodies are manipulated to construct and interrogate narratives of race, gender, (dis)ability, and our relationship to the natural environment. It demonstrates that these adaptations allow us to re-evaluate issues such as climate crisis, colonisation, and patriarchal oppression.

⁴⁹ McCloud, p.30.

⁵⁰ McCloud, p.31.

Chapter 1

'This thing of darkness': Mediatising Somatic Ambiguity in Adaptations of *The Tempest*

This chapter focuses on depictions of Caliban in four adaptations of *The Tempest* across different media: the 1992 episode of the tv series *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales*; graphic novel adaptations by SelfMadeHero (2007, as part of the publisher's *Manga Shakespeare* series) and *Classical Comics* (2009); and Little Angel Theatre's 2011 puppet production (a collaboration with the Royal Shakespeare Company).⁵¹ This focus is partly explained by John Draper's assertion that, 'of all the characters in Shakespeare, Caliban is the most fully and repeatedly described, though not always consistently'.⁵² He is referred to as a 'monster' over forty times in the play, his physical difference insisted upon through a slew of derogatory adjectives and appellations, yet the precise nature of his difference is obscure. As will be explored below, this status as a poorly defined and yet perpetually maligned Other has made Caliban a frequent focal point for discussions about nonconformity and difference, and his representation on stage and across different media has often reflected the social concerns or anxieties about belonging and outsiders in different cultures and time periods. This chapter therefore considers the *Tempest* adaptations – and Caliban specifically – not only in terms of the play's afterlife but in the broader context of contemporary popular culture's renegotiation of the relationships between its audiences and the monstrous. It addresses the following questions: how is Caliban portrayed across the different media of puppetry, animation and graphic novels? How do these depictions compare to other interpretations of the character in creative practice and literary criticism? Which broader critical and cultural concerns do the adaptations engage with in their depictions of Caliban? Can mediatising Caliban, and the play more broadly, expand our understanding of *The Tempest*'s thematic concerns, such as the manifestation of authority or the relationship between art and nature?

Caliban's Body

What does Caliban look like? After 'monster', his second most frequent sobriquet is 'fish', perhaps indicating a piscine physique; then again, this might as easily be an indicator of odour rather than appearance. Other characters shower him with further bestial epithets: 'tortoise' (I.ii.82), 'cat' (II.ii.82), 'puppy-headed' (II.ii.151) and 'mooncalf' (II.ii.104, 132; III.ii.20, 21). These could be read all together to produce a monstrous hybrid but could also be interpreted less literally as signifying sluggishness, intemperance or stupidity respectively.⁵³ Further

⁵¹ For full details of primary materials in this chapter and throughout the thesis, see Bibliography.

⁵² John W. Draper, 'Monster Caliban' in *Caliban*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1992), p.82.

⁵³ The latter approach is advocated by Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan in *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.13-15.

descriptions are vaguer, including ‘earth’ (I.ii.315), ‘filth’ (I.ii.346), ‘brutish’ (I.ii.357), ‘misshapen’ (V.i.268) or ‘disproportioned’ (V.i.290). The first two adjectives have led to Caliban being frequently associated with the earth in criticism and creative practice, usually in juxtaposition with Ariel, who is associated with the air.⁵⁴ As will be discussed, this contrast inspires the design of both characters across the mediatised adaptations. However, neither ‘earth’ nor ‘filth’ are definitive indicators of Caliban’s appearance. Even the ‘darkness’ (V.i.275) Prospero attributes to him is unclear: does it pertain to the colour of Caliban’s skin, or to his moral character? Caliban’s enigmatic body encapsulates how Greenblatt’s idea of ‘strategic opacity’ (described in the introduction) can be expanded and applied to Shakespeare’s bodies. As Greenblatt’s principle suggests, Caliban’s somatic ambiguities are as engaging as they are perplexing: as Vaughan and Vaughan observe, ‘the confusion of epithets that abounds in *The Tempest* encourages artists, actors and readers to see Caliban however they wish. For three centuries they have enthusiastically accepted the invitation.’⁵⁵ This section will explore two popular approaches to representing Caliban which have influenced the character’s mediatised appearances, demonstrating the creative opportunities Caliban’s somatic ambiguity provides and examining some of the social and literary concerns underpinning those aesthetic choices.

Harold Bloom opens his edited collection of essays on Caliban by suggesting that he is ‘probably not to be thought of as wholly human. There is something amphibian about him, something that suggests the sea-world.’⁵⁶ This impression of Caliban’s otherness is, fittingly, imprecise and contradictory: the majority of amphibians are freshwater dwellers and not inhabitants of the ‘sea-world’. Nevertheless, Bloom captures the aqueous connotations which have been ‘avidly seized’ upon by critical readers and creative practitioners, perhaps responding to the ‘fish’ moniker in the playtext.⁵⁷ Incorporating piscine features into Caliban’s appearance was, for a time, popular in theatrical productions, with the body of the actor frequently augmented by ‘fish [...] attributes – scales, fins and shiny skin.’⁵⁸ For instance, Tyrone Power’s costume in Augustin Daly’s 1897 production and Roger Livesey’s 1934 portrayal at the Old Vic both combined fur and other bestial features with fish scales in depictions which resisted straightforward classification and thus invited the designation of ‘monster’.⁵⁹ Aquatic Calibans have also been popular in pictorial representations, from early examples such as William Hogarth’s illustration (ca.1736) to twentieth-century renditions like Werner Pelzer’s misshapen amphibian (1959). In some cases, such as Daniel Nikolaus Chodowiecki’s 1780 illustration, Caliban has been depicted with a turtle’s shell and flippers,

⁵⁴ See, for instance, Paul Franssen, ‘A Muddy Mirror’, in *Constellation Caliban*, ed. Nadia Lie, Theo D’haen (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1997), p.29.

⁵⁵ Vaughan and Vaughan, p.15.

⁵⁶ Harold Bloom, ‘Introduction’ in *Caliban*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1992), p.1.

⁵⁷ Vaughan and Vaughan, p.13.

⁵⁸ Vaughan and Vaughan, p.14.

⁵⁹ Vaughan and Vaughan, pp.186-7, p.189.

perhaps combining the character's watery connotations with the play's epithet 'tortoise'. As will be seen, this interpretation is also present in the *Classical Comics* adaptation.

While the interpretations outlined above literalise epithets applied to Caliban in the playtext, some critics and practitioners have instead drawn upon his circumstances and behaviour to suggest an affinity with the wild man or wodewose – a figure from popular culture. Barbara Baert asserts that 'we learn little about Caliban's outward appearance,' but likens his 'less than elegant' qualities to those of the wild man, 'a creature driven by instinct who lacks all finer feeling and morals. He behaves almost like an animal: creeps on all fours, lives in a cave and feeds off his natural surroundings.'⁶⁰ Vaughan and Vaughan also itemise the similarities: 'Caliban carries wood – the wild man's club or tree trunk – and lives in a subterranean cave. He tries to ravish Miranda and boasts of the sexual prowess he almost put to use. He is immoderately fond of intoxicants.'⁶¹ As with his piscine incarnations, theatrical practice has also responded to the textual possibilities of Caliban-as-wild-man. In a posthumously published work of 1821, Edmond Malone contended that, from Shakespeare's time onwards, Caliban's costume had always consisted of 'a large bear-skin, or the skin of some other animal' and that 'he is usually represented with long shaggy hair', perhaps indicating the influence of the wild man tradition on the earliest depictions of the character (although Malone does not reveal the source for this claim).⁶² Portrayals such as William Burton's (1854) and Herbert Beerbohm Tree's (1904) demonstrate this interpretation's endurance through the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century.⁶³

These approaches to depicting Caliban may initially seem to have little in common, but both reflect the character's resistance to straightforward categorisation. Again, Bloom's description of Caliban as 'amphibian' is revealing: the term is primarily defined as 'having two modes of existence; *fig. of doubtful nature*'.⁶⁴ The taxonomic class has seemingly disparate or unstable characteristics including a metamorphic life cycle which, in most cases, entails both aquatic and terrestrial habitation. Incorporating features of marine lifeforms into Caliban's representation thus not only hybridises him but puts him in a liminal position between two habitats, perhaps reflecting his marginalisation in the play's island setting. The wild man is, similarly, a taxonomic curiosity. Vaughan and Vaughan identify it as 'essentially human', whereas Baert asserts that, 'in the European cultural heritage, the wild man represents everything that is non-human. The wild man is the reverse of all that is human.'⁶⁵ Both avenues

⁶⁰ Barbara Baert, 'Caliban as a Wild-Man: An Iconographical Approach' in *Constellation Caliban*, ed. Nadia Lie, Theo D'haen (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1997), p.43.

⁶¹ Vaughan and Vaughan, p.70.

⁶² Edmond Malone, ed., *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* (London: Printed for F.C. and J. Rivington et al., 1821), Vol. XV, p.13.

⁶³ Vaughan and Vaughan, pp.182-3, pp.187-8.

⁶⁴ "amphibian, adj. and n.". *OED Online*, <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/6620?redirectedFrom=amphibian&>> [accessed September 2015].

⁶⁵ Vaughan and Vaughan, p.71; Baert, p.46.

of interpretation (aquatic and wodewose) are generated by – and further propagate – the ambiguity surrounding Caliban's nature. Their popularity in both criticism and theatrical practice indicates the imaginative appeal of the character's many contrasting collocations and the conflation they suggest between the human and the bestial.

The blending of human and animal characteristics in depictions of Caliban has at times assumed greater resonance than mere creative indulgence. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, widespread interest in Darwinian theory manifested itself in a plethora of Calibans exhibiting exaggerated inter-species hybridisation, representing the theoretical evolutionary missing link between man and beast. Although Daniel Wilson's 1873 publication *Caliban: The Missing Link* assessed the character as the midpoint between mankind and a simian ancestor, artists' interpretations such as those of Thomas Henry Nicholson (ca.1856) and Wilhelm von Kaulbach (ca.1858) continued to imbue Caliban with reptilian and piscine qualities. Both aquatic and wild-man Calibans thus accommodated and reflected the intellectual preoccupations of the mid-nineteenth century. Later illustrations in a similar vein might also, however, reflect the late nineteenth-century popularity of Cesare Lombroso's theory of criminal atavism, which considered criminal deviance to be an evolutionary throwback to a primitive precursor of humanity and attempted to identify physiognomic determiners of criminality.⁶⁶ In this particular context, Caliban's pictorial monstrosity might be a response to broader cultural fears of degeneration and monstrous behaviour.

Both bestial and wild man interpretations of Caliban can also be used to situate the character in a number of colonial contexts. Edward Dudley and Maximillian Novak contend that the wild man was a key figure in Renaissance and Romantic Europe, when Western thought 'came to hold up ideals of cultures and civilization as its finest accomplishment.'⁶⁷ As suggested by Baert above, the wild man was defined against this ideal. Dudley and Novak note its invocation by European colonial and mercantile powers in descriptions of the people with whom they came into contact, as an archetype of their notions of both noble and ignoble savagery.⁶⁸ Bestial imagery was similarly used to denigrate non-Europeans. Writing in the context of colonialism in India, Adrian Carton observes that children of mixed-race were often described in terms suggesting bestial or even demonic hybridity, noting that these images were deployed 'to give the impression that straying beyond the racial contours of the European

⁶⁶ Gennaro F. Vito, Jeffrey R. Maahs, Ronald M. Holmes, *Criminology: Theory, Research and Policy* (Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2007), pp.83-5. Greta Olson identifies Caliban as 'proto-Lombrosian', and observes that 'Lombroso insisted that great artists such as Shakespeare had identified and depicted the animal type long before he did so.' *Criminals as Animals from Shakespeare to Lombroso* (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, GmbH, 2014), pp.105-6.

⁶⁷ 'Introduction' in *The Wild Man Within: An Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism*, ed. Edward Dudley and Maximillian E. Novak (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972), p. ix.

⁶⁸ Dudley and Novak, pp. ix-x.

body was tantamount to transgressing the biological border of the human species.⁶⁹ The historical portrayals of Caliban in either of these modes could thus align him with the subjects of colonialism and impose Western prejudices towards unfamiliar cultures onto him. As the next section will suggest, shifting attitudes to colonialism in the last century have played a prominent role in changing Caliban's reception in criticism and creative practice.

More recently, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen has theorised physical hybridity as intrinsic qualities of the monstrous in his seven theses of Monster Culture. Describing the monster as a 'harbinger of category crisis', Cohen suggests that the monstrous body as a cultural construct responds to anxieties about the 'order of things': 'The too-precise laws of nature as set forth by science are gleefully violated in the freakish compilation of the monster's body.'⁷⁰ The physically ambiguous Caliban fits this modern definition of the monstrous. However, as later sections will demonstrate, the monster's representations in contemporary theory and popular culture facilitate more sympathetic readings than this label may initially suggest.

Caliban and *The Tempest*: Shifts in Critical Perspectives and Popular Sympathy

Thus far, I have discussed Caliban in isolation from the narrative in which he appears. This section considers his role in the play and the dynamics between him and other characters, principally Prospero. If, as the above discussion suggests, Caliban's Otherness overshadows any physical feature as his dominant characteristic, Prospero is often presented as embodying the norm from which he monstrously deviates. However, as this section will explore, critical and creative approaches to this pair have altered dramatically over time.

In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century readings of *The Tempest*, the play 'belongs to Prospero, a wise man and moral governor'.⁷¹ As Virginia Mason Vaughan notes, 'while Caliban remained the most puzzling character in the play, Prospero held special interest because of the perceived identification between his character and the dramatist who created him'.⁷² Andrew Gurr observes that, 'through the nineteenth century, Prospero's final renunciation of his magic became the heart pump for thinking that the play was Shakespeare's farewell to the theatre'.⁷³ Vaughan further remarks that 'Shakespearean bardolatry transmigrated to the worship of Prospero from the mid-eighteenth century well into the nineteenth'.⁷⁴ As Prospero

⁶⁹ Adrian Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity in Colonial India: Changing Concepts of Hybridity across Empires* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p.11.

⁷⁰ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)' in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1996), p.3.

⁷¹ Virginia Mason Vaughan, 'The Critical Backstory: "What's Past is Prologue"' in *The Tempest: A Critical Reader*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan, Virginia Mason Vaughan (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014), p.13.

⁷² V.M. Vaughan, p.18.

⁷³ Andrew Gurr, 'The Tempest as Theatrical Magic' in *Revisiting The Tempest: The Capacity to Signify* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.34; see also Franssen, p.23, Gurr identifies Thomas Campbell's 1838 publication *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare* as the first to equate Prospero with Shakespeare, while V.M. Vaughan attributes this to Charles Gildon's 1710 edition (p.18).

⁷⁴ Vaughan, p.19.

was revered as a cypher for Shakespeare, so by contrast Caliban was perceived to be ‘incurably ignoble,’ epitomising malice and vice.⁷⁵ In this role, he was also, as one eighteenth-century commentator put it, a foil to ‘the lightness of Ariel and the innocence of Miranda.’⁷⁶

The play’s more recent history has seen striking changes of fortune for its central characters. As Jeffrey A. Rufo suggests, ‘a growing ambivalence towards [Prospero] has emerged from changes in the relationships between audiences and the play’s supporting characters, especially Caliban and Miranda, but also from a shift in focus on the part of theatre companies and literary critics.’⁷⁷ More specifically, Vaughan asserts that, by the late twentieth century, Prospero’s ‘wisdom and morality were questioned and his treatment of his island-subjects widely criticized.’⁷⁸ Like Rufo, she identifies a corresponding shift in critical assessments of the play, towards privileging ‘lesser’ characters, in particular Caliban.⁷⁹ Furthermore, criticism has shifted from opposing Caliban with Ariel or Miranda to identifying similarities between these characters based on their shared experiences of island isolation and subjugation by Prospero.⁸⁰ Prospero and Caliban remain in binary opposition to one another. Writing on postcolonial appropriations and rewritings of *The Tempest*, Chantal Zabus argues that ‘the corollary to the rise of Caliban [...] is inevitably the depriving of the Prospero-figure’.⁸¹ Similarly, Vaughan and Vaughan observe that ‘the shift in the personification of evil from Caliban to Prospero [...] is, of course, essential to the reversal in Caliban’s role from oppressor to oppressed. If Caliban is hero, Prospero must be villain.’⁸²

This reversal of the characters’ earlier reception reflects the emergence of postcolonialism as the predominant lens through which to interpret *The Tempest*. In literary studies, this approach was popularised by Stephen Greenblatt’s reappraisal of the text alongside early modern literary responses to the exploration of the New World.⁸³ However, the play and Caliban in particular were already being reappropriated by demographics that had experienced imperialist suppression earlier in the twentieth century: as Virginia Mason Vaughan observes, by the 1980s, ‘in the popular imagination, Caliban now represented any group that felt itself oppressed’.⁸⁴ However, Caliban’s rehabilitation was not limited to his

⁷⁵ Vaughan and Vaughan, p.97.

⁷⁶ Maurice Morgann, *An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* (London, printed for T. Davis, 1777), pp.75-76.

⁷⁷ Jeffrey A. Rufo, ‘New Directions: “He needs will be Absolute Milan”’ in *The Tempest: A Critical Reader*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan, Virginia Mason Vaughan (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014), p.146.

⁷⁸ Vaughan, p.13.

⁷⁹ Vaughan and Vaughan, pp.193-4.

⁸⁰ Vaughan and Vaughan, pp.16-18.

⁸¹ Chantal Zabus, *Tempests after Shakespeare* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p.9.

⁸² Vaughan and Vaughan, p.162.

⁸³ Peter Hulme, William H. Sherman, eds. ‘Part II: Introduction’ in *‘The Tempest’ and Its Travels* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p.174. Greenblatt reads the play alongside Thomas Harriot’s *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia in Shakespearean Negotiations* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), and Samuel Daniel’s 1599 poem *Musophilus in Learning to Curse* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

⁸⁴ Vaughan and Vaughan, pp.193-4. See also Footnote 19 for examples of this in theatrical practice.

representation of a cultural or racial Other. The second half of the twentieth century also witnessed the emergence of the field of ecofeminism, which asserts that, in the male tradition, ‘Nature is gendered female, while women, from the male viewpoint, are territory for adventure, wildness to be tamed, owned and controlled.’⁸⁵ Gretchen Leger explains that constructions of nature as female ‘are essential to the maintenance of hierarchical ways of thinking that justify the oppression of various “others” in patriarchal culture by ranking them ‘closer to nature’ or by declaring their practices ‘natural’ or ‘unnatural.’⁸⁶ Silvia Federici incorporates this concept into her history of women in the transition from feudalism to capitalism, a shift which she suggests ‘legitimized the exploitation of women and nature’.⁸⁷ She connects this exploitation to ‘the identification of femininity with corporeality’, which historically has proved instrumental to ‘the consolidation of patriarchal power and the male exploitation of female labour’.⁸⁸ However, Federici also suggests that such a history should not separate women from ‘the male part of the working class,’ and uses a reading of *The Tempest* to further this argument.⁸⁹ Drawing on Prospero’s observation that Caliban ‘does make our fire / Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices / That profit us’ (I.ii.312-4), Federici foregrounds Caliban’s body as ‘the container of labor-power [...] the primary work-machine.’⁹⁰ She further suggests that Caliban’s popular association with the ‘low instincts of the body’ can be related to historical denigration of the labouring classes.⁹¹ However, Caliban’s knowledge and appreciation of the island he inherits from his mother, Sycorax, arguably ties him even more directly to the model of exploitation outlined in ecofeminism. There are thus some similarities in how these three underprivileged categories (racial, gendered, and class ‘others’) experience oppression. Later analysis does not privilege or exclude any of them, but attempts to integrate the critical insights that apply to all three. As will be seen, the mediatised adaptations all utilise Caliban’s native environment to reflect his subjugation in the narrative.

Theatrical practice responded to the postcolonial turn, consistently humanising Caliban and aligning him with subjects of colonialism.⁹² This more sympathetic approach was not so enthusiastically embraced in pictorial representations: artists have proved more likely to ‘emphasize Caliban’s bestial characteristics’, and there is a paucity of illustrations which

⁸⁵ Richard Kerridge, ‘Introduction’, in *Writing the Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature*, ed. Richard Kerridge and Neil Sammells (London: Zed Books, 1998) p. 7.

⁸⁶ Gretchen T. Legler, ‘Ecofeminist Literary Criticism’ in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, ed. Karen Warren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), p.228.

⁸⁷ Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004), p.13.

⁸⁸ Federici, p.15.

⁸⁹ Federici, p.11.

⁹⁰ Federici, pp.137-8.

⁹¹ Federici, p.134.

⁹² See, for instance, Henry Baker’s and Jonathan Miller’s portrayals, both in 1970, of Caliban as African-American; Jaime Sanchez’s 1974 Puerto Rican Caliban; Denis Quilley’s Native American Caliban in the same year.

represent ‘Caliban as an American Indian or palpable victim of colonialism.’⁹³ Vaughan and Vaughan suggest that ‘painters can emphasize exotic characteristics of Caliban’s appearance without incurring the scorn of their peers; they take more pride in aesthetic execution than in conformity to an orthodox reading of the text.’⁹⁴ It seems plausible that artists, choosing either to depict one fragment of the play’s action or isolate their representation of Caliban from the broader narrative entirely, may not consider themselves obliged to present a version of the character which adheres to any single reading of the play as a whole. If this is the case, then decontextualising Caliban arguably frees the artist to indulge in the creative possibilities and challenges of portraying a character who is at once energetically and imprecisely described, without concern for the interpretative implications of their artistic choices. This creates a dilemma for mediatised adaptations of the play. We might expect animated or graphic versions to owe more stylistically to the pictorial tradition. However, they also aim to deliver the full narrative (or an edited version of it) in a way in which artists, as has been suggested, do not. How then to reconcile the creative potential of a monstrous Caliban with contemporary sensibilities? The next section explores the status of monsters in contemporary popular culture and suggests how just such a reconciliation may be facilitated.

Reconfiguring the Monstrous in Twentieth-Century Monster Studies

John Block Friedman observes that there has been a ‘remarkable surge of interest’ in monster studies over the last forty years.⁹⁵ Asa Simon Mittman similarly expresses amazement that ‘in the space of a few years, the study of monsters has moved from the absolute periphery – perhaps its logical starting point – to a much more central position in academics.’⁹⁶ This increased interest has coincided with a shift in critical and creative approaches to monstrosity itself which has implications for how contemporary adaptations of *The Tempest* in popular culture might be interpreted.

As previously suggested, monster studies recognise Caliban’s hybridity as a characteristic of the monster class. Like Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (cited above), Susan Ruddick asserts that ‘the defining quality of the monstrous is that it defies taxonomy’.⁹⁷ Ruddick also makes a distinction between ‘monsters who are visible, immediately legible and apparently ex-centric in their origin’ and ‘monsters who are invisible, not recognised on sight and

⁹³ Vaughan and Vaughan, p.250. One notable exception is Jimmie Durham’s mixed-media project *Codex Caliban*, <<https://saint-lucy.com/essays/jimmie-durham/>>, [accessed July 2021].

⁹⁴ Vaughan and Vaughan, p.250.

⁹⁵ John Block Friedman, ‘Forward’ in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. Asa Simon Mittman, Peter J. Dendle (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), p.xxv

⁹⁶ Asa Simon Mittman, ‘Introduction: The Impact of Monsters and Monster Studies’ in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. Asa Simon Mittman, Peter J. Dendle (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), p.1.

⁹⁷ Susan Ruddick, ‘Domesticating Monsters: Cartographies of Difference and the Emancipatory City’ in *The Emancipatory City? Paradoxes and Possibilities*, ed. Loretta Lees (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2004), p.25.

apparently intrinsic in their origins'.⁹⁸ Caliban's physical difference and his liminal positioning as an inhabitant of the geographically ambiguous island seem to be illustrative of the former category. Prospero, meanwhile, might resemble an intrinsic monster: rather than the true anonymity offered by appearing as 'anyone', Ruddick observes that intrinsic monsters 'often appear as icons of civility – bourgeois white males in positions of power or prestige'.⁹⁹ Conversely, Ruddick's distinction could be used to consider Caliban as 'intrinsic', in the sense that he is native to the play's only setting, and Prospero as the 'extrinsic' threat from the world beyond. In either reading, the moral superiority formerly attributed to Prospero is destabilised. The extent to which the mediatised adaptations present him as the narrative's monster will be explored in later analysis.

Ruddick's 'legible' monsters are the subject of the forementioned sea-change in portrayals of monstrosity over the course of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock observes that, particularly in light of 'post-Second World War reconsiderations of ethnic and racial difference,' there has been an increasing inclination to 'decouple' physical appearance from 'assumptions about intelligence, character, or morals'.¹⁰⁰ In place of the medieval and later Lombrosian association between monstrous appearance and moral depravity, Weinstock suggests that 'the overall trend in monstrous representation [...] has been toward not just sympathizing but empathizing with – and ultimately aspiring to be – the monster'.¹⁰¹ Citing animated films orientated towards children, such as *Shrek* and *Monsters, Inc.* (both 2001), and teen vampire narratives such as *True Blood* (2008-2014) and the *Twilight* saga (2008-2012), Weinstock argues that the viewer 'aspires towards monstrosity as an escape from the stultification of hegemonic social forces of normalization'.¹⁰² In this, he is corroborated by M. Keith Brooker's observations on the subtext of *Monsters, Inc.*, in which he states that 'the strange appearances of the monsters serve as a sort of lighthearted visual dramatization of the ethos of individualism'.¹⁰³ This reversal of polarities, in which, as Weinstock suggests, 'the traditional monster becomes the hero,' destabilises the visual code by which a physically unusual Caliban might uncritically be accepted as inherently monstrous.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Ruddick, p.26.

⁹⁹ Ruddick, p.31.

¹⁰⁰ Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, 'Invisible Monsters: Vision, Horror, and Contemporary Culture' in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. Asa Simon Mittman, Peter J. Dendle (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), p.276.

¹⁰¹ Weinstock, p.277.

¹⁰² Weinstock, p.276. This ideological facet of monstrosity bears strong similarities to Donna Haraway's cyborg in her influential essay, 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century' in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991).

¹⁰³ M. Keith Brooker, *Disney, Pixar, and the Hidden Messages of Children's Films* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), p.85.

¹⁰⁴ Weinstock, p.278.

Weinstock further asserts that ‘what follows from this decoupling of monstrosity from appearance is an important cultural shift that aligns monstrosity not with physical difference, but with antithetical moral values.’¹⁰⁵ He similarly suggests that, in the popular monster fictions he cites, ‘evil is associated not with physical difference, but with cultural forces that constrain personal growth and expression.’¹⁰⁶ Correspondingly, the monstrous has been embraced by figures promoting empowerment and inclusivity such as Lady Gaga, who has dubbed herself ‘Mother Monster’ and her fans ‘little monsters’. Gaga famously manipulates or augments her body as part of her performances or public appearances, creating images which can be ‘grotesque, sometimes mutated, and monstrous’. By doing so, she ‘presents herself as always in transition and continually giving birth to new versions of herself,’ enacting the processes of Bakhtin’s grotesque body.¹⁰⁷ Gaga thus embraces the hybridity and instability of the monster but aligns these qualities with an agenda of self-determination and self-expression. She encourages similar empowerment in her fans: her ‘Manifesto of Little Monsters’ acknowledges them as the ‘Kings’ and ‘Queens’ of the Gaga ‘kingdom’, suggesting they are authors of the culture in which they participate through their use of cameras and other aspects of the fandom.¹⁰⁸ Here, the figure of the monster is not only relocated from its liminal position on the edge of society and culture into the mainstream, but is also granted both authority and authorship over that culture. There are clear parallels here to Caliban’s critical rehabilitation and his appropriation by repressed demographics, explored above. As we shall see, the extent to which the mediatised adaptations are still hesitant to grant Caliban authority over the island he claims is his or authorship of the narrative in which he appears remains to be seen.

Popular culture has on occasion appropriated Caliban’s name, producing characters which are distinct from the Shakespearean original but which nevertheless share narrative resonances with him. Two of these appropriations - Marvel Comics series *The Uncanny X-men* and the Netflix series *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* - offer contrasting interpretations which respond to numerous facets of modern monstrosity. The Marvel Comics Caliban is a mutant, a term the numerous *X-men* series use to describe humans with genetic mutations that imbue them with superpowers. Mutants, like monsters, are frequently marginalised by society and occupy liminal spaces: Caliban makes his home in a sewer, symbolically an ambivalent space between the terrestrial and aquatic which echoes the taxonomic ambiguity of Shakespeare’s character. Although not all mutants exhibit physical abnormalities, Caliban is, like his namesake, a somatically determined Other: he is a gaunt

¹⁰⁵ Weinstock, p.276.

¹⁰⁶ Weinstock, p.277.

¹⁰⁷ Amber L. Davisson, *Lady Gaga and the Remaking of Celebrity Culture* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2013), p.44.

¹⁰⁸ Terry Richardson and Lady Gaga, *Lady Gaga* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 211), p.1; quoted in Davisson, p.45.

albino with disproportionately large eyes, a flattened nose and pronounced brow ridge (*The Uncanny X-men* #148). The latter two characteristics may recall popular simian or wild-man depictions of Shakespeare's Caliban. Furthermore, the Marvel Caliban is subject to genetic manipulations which alter his appearance, greatly increasing his size and giving him fangs and claws (*X-Factor* #50). This hybridisation blurs the distinctions between the human and the bestial, much like some of the representations of Shakespeare's Caliban explored above. It also brings the character even further in line with Cohen and Ruddick's definitions of the monstrous.

Much like his Shakespearean namesake, the Marvel Caliban is shown to have wavering loyalties. His ability to sense other mutants leads to him recurringly being recruited or manipulated by those persecuting his own kind (*X-Factor* #24-25; *Cable* #72-74; *X-man* #59-60). This is also the case in the 2017 film *Logan*, where Caliban initially helps the biotechnology corporation Alkali-Transigen hunt mutants and is later compelled through torture to track the young mutant Laura. In the comics, one storyline sees Caliban hold X-men team member Kitty Pryde prisoner in his quarters and later attempt to force her into marriage, a plot which perhaps echoes the Shakespearean Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda (*Uncanny X-men* #169-70; #178-9). However, the Marvel Caliban is also shown to have redeeming qualities: he releases Kitty when he realises she does not love him, and goes on to work alongside various iterations of the X-men. In *Logan* too, Caliban achieves redemption when he turns on Alkali-Transigen and sacrifices himself trying to eliminate the film's primary antagonist. Marvel's Caliban thus embodies Weinstock's theorised decoupling of villainy from appearance: his monstrous physique is belied by his ability to overcome the flaws of his Shakespearean counterpart, while audiences' reprehension is directed predominantly towards those like Alkali-Transigen who manipulate him for their own ends and arguably embody Weinstock's 'hegemonic social forces of normalization'.

A character named Caliban also appears as a minor antagonist in the second season of *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*. As the self-proclaimed Prince of Hell, this Caliban is arguably an extreme interpretation of the Shakespearean character's description as a 'thing of darkness'. However, rather than pursuing a bestial or demonic aesthetic, the *Sabrina* Caliban is portrayed by a good-looking young man. This is an inversion of the Marvel Caliban, but it is nevertheless consistent with Weinstock's disjunct between evil and appearance. Despite appearing physically human, the *Sabrina* Caliban is a demon moulded from the clay of Satan's pit, echoing the earthy connotations of Shakespeare's Caliban. Like Shakespeare's version, the *Sabrina* Caliban seeks to disrupt the hierarchy: he challenges Sabrina for the throne of Hell, recalling Caliban's plot to overthrow Prospero with the aid of Stephano and Trinculo. In a convoluted series of events, Caliban marries a version of the teenage Sabrina in another iteration of the threat the Shakespearean character poses to Miranda. These

narrative echoes seem to acknowledge Caliban's status as an icon of disruptive Otherness, while the depiction of the character who bears his name reflects a modern conceptualisation of the monstrous.

As we have seen, when we consider the status of monsters in popular culture and Caliban's dissemination across popular narratives, it is clear that a monstrous body does not necessarily preclude a sympathetic rendering of the character. However, the ensuing analysis will also question whether representing Caliban as a sympathetic monster can be reconciled with the play's broader narrative in mediatised adaptations.

Shakespeare: The Animated Tales

The *Animated Tales* adaptation of *The Tempest* is both the oldest of the adaptations discussed here and by far the least sympathetic in its portrayal of Caliban. This is perhaps not entirely surprising: first airing in 1992, it predates the animated monster films cited above and the trend they helped propagate towards rehabilitating monsters in popular culture. Instead, the *Animated Tales* episode reflects earlier responses to *The Tempest* which interpret Caliban as wholly other: grotesque, aggressive, and entirely lacking the pathos granted to the character by the majority of twentieth-century theatrical interpretations and critical readings. Furthermore, as this section will demonstrate, the adaptation uses the mechanics of its medium to suggest a degree of agency for Prospero and Ariel which is denied Caliban, making him a colonised subject not only of Prospero but also of the process of adaptation.

The *Animated Tales* series used different methods of animation for adapting Shakespeare's plays. For *The Tempest*, stop motion puppetry was used – a creative choice well-suited to the material, as will be explored shortly. The Caliban puppet is a monstrous hybrid. He has a flat nose and a disproportionately wide, protruding mouth with thick lips, giving him an amphibious appearance which is further suggested by his vaguely frog-like legs. His head is large and squash-shaped, yellow-skinned, with large porcine ears and quill-like hair raising in a prominent mohawk. Caliban's first appearance is heralded by the trembling of a large rock concealing the mouth of his cave, and the near-simultaneous appearance of snakes and lizards from above and below, creating both anticipatory menace and distinctly reptilian connotations for the character. Caliban then casts the rock aside and is revealed on all fours, with spindly, clawed fingers. Throughout the adaptation, Caliban's Otherness is conveyed through the difficulty he has standing on two feet: he frequently tumbles backwards, squats on his haunches, or reverts to using his forearms as legs. His croaking voice, performed by Alun Armstrong, also emphasises his difference, emulating Frank Oz's work as Yoda in the *Star Wars* saga, or pre-empting Andy Serkis's performance as Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings*. Uniquely among the adaptations, the *Animated Tales* Caliban is (at least partially) clothed: the tattered remnants of an Elizabethan doublet and hose adorn sections of his body,

implying perhaps that Prospero has made efforts to civilise him but has failed. These various facets combine to suggest a being more beast than human though, as the previous section demonstrated, this does not necessarily entail a complete lack of humanity.

More problematically, given contemporary sympathies towards the character, the animated Caliban is also the most overtly antagonistic in any of the adaptations: during his initial confrontation with Prospero, he is unafraid of approaching his master and grasping at his clothes while declaring, ‘this island’s mine, by Sycorax my mother’. When Prospero extends his staff to underscore his command ‘Hag-seed, hence,’ Caliban lunges and fights Prospero for control of it. The adaptation’s Prospero is similarly violent, frequently kicking Caliban away during their exchange, often so that he lies flat on the ground, and lifting him up by the ear while recounting his attempted rape of Miranda. However, as Gregory M. Colon Semenza asserts, ‘the likelihood that an audience will sympathise with Caliban is greatly reduced both because of his monstrous appearance and his ominous laughter upon Prospero’s accusation that he has tried to rape Miranda.’¹⁰⁹ This denigration of Caliban is exacerbated by unsympathetic editing of the script: for instance, while Prospero’s various insults before Caliban’s entrance (including ‘thou earth’, ‘tortoise’ and a slur against his parentage) are reduced to merely ‘slave!’, Caliban’s initial curses are retained, giving the impression, as Semenza suggests, that he ‘enters cursing without any apparent provocation.’¹¹⁰ The adaptation thus removes elements of the narrative which may explain or mitigate Caliban’s malevolence. By extension, Prospero’s violence towards him, which if handled differently might facilitate an interpretation of Prospero as a villainous coloniser, appears more justifiable.

The *Animated Tales* further subjugates Caliban by excluding him from the creative opportunities of the medium explored via Prospero and Ariel. As initially suggested, puppetry is a particularly appropriate mode of animation for adapting *The Tempest* because it can operate as a visual metaphor for the way in which most of the characters are manipulated over the course of the narrative. Prospero has been described as a ‘puppet master’ by numerous critics, and that role has the potential to be literalised here.¹¹¹ The adaptation explores this thematic resonance by drawing attention to its use of puppets at specific moments and by differentiating the type of puppetry used to convey the broader narrative of the play from that used by Prospero and Ariel to create their magical illusions.

¹⁰⁹ Gregory M. Colon Semenza, ‘Teens, Shakespeare, and the Dumbing Down Cliché: The Case of the *Animated Tales*’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Vol.26. No.2 (Summer 2008), pp.37-68, p.32.

¹¹⁰ Semenza, p.42.

¹¹¹ See for instance Stephen Lippman, “‘Metatheatre’ and the Criticism of the Comedia”, *Hispanic Issue*, Vol.91, No.2 (1976), pp.231-246, p.242; Ratri Ray, *William Shakespeare’s The Tempest* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2007), p.134.

The opening moments of the adaptation establish the expressive potential of the puppets by focusing on small movements such as eyeballs moving, blinking, lower jaw movement to simulate speech and subtle hand gestures. This sequence immerses the audience in the ‘liveness’ of the puppets, but it is disrupted when Prospero raises his staff and initiates the storm, which makes use of cel animation to convey winds and sea waves breaking over the ship. This creates a contrast with the established mode of animation for the adaptation, encoding Prospero’s powers in a different style and method. Moreover, Prospero’s power is also articulated through the puppets themselves. The first instance of this directly follows the storm, when Prospero compels Miranda to sleep. Laurie Osborne observes that ‘what the play presents as a gradual falling asleep’ is rendered more abrupt in the adaptation, where Prospero’s line ‘Thou art inclin’d to sleep’ instantly produces the desired effect. Miranda’s eyes close and Prospero lays her out on a rock: as Osborne suggests, the effect of her ‘total stillness’ at this point is to ‘draw attention to her as a puppet no longer in motion.’¹¹² A similar effect is achieved when Ferdinand resists Prospero’s threat to put him in manacles by raising his sword. Prospero freezes him in this position with a wave of the staff, which also bleaches Ferdinand of colour until Prospero reanimates him moments later. These moments draw attention to the natural rigidity of the puppets, which demonstrates the power Prospero exercises over the characters. This technique is also used to suggest Prospero’s control in scenes where he is absent: when Gonzalo and Alonso fall into an unnatural sleep, Alonso’s position directly recreates Miranda’s. Notably Gonzalo, Prospero’s former ally, is arranged in a more dignified seated position. This seems to suggest that the appearance of a discarded puppet is reserved for those characters over whom Prospero wishes to exercise control most directly.

Elsewhere in the adaptation, the metaphor of Prospero as puppet master is literalised further still. In a scene equivalent to Act 3 Scene 3, Alonso and his companions are entranced by ‘marvellous sweet music’. The focus then cuts to Prospero, who is shown to be conducting the music by wafting his arm in a gesture similar to what is required for the manipulation of marionettes. He then conjures four spirits who perform what Sebastian calls a ‘living drollery’ – a puppet show performed by living beings. This line is preserved in the adaptation, where it acquires a fresh irony: the spirits Prospero summons are marionettes, performing ‘liveness’. The puppets strike theatrical poses throughout their appearance, including deep bows and flourishing arms. This emphasises Prospero’s stage-management of the marionettes, but also arguably recalls the sequence’s traditional association with the spectacle of the court

¹¹² Laurie Osborne, ‘Poetry in Motion: Animating Shakespeare’ in *Shakespeare, the Movie: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, and Video*, ed. Lynda E. Boose and Richard Burt (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p.118.

masque.¹¹³ Much like the adaptation itself, Prospero's illusion creates the impression of living creatures for his audience. Towards the end of the adaptation, as Prospero draws the circle into which Ariel will lead the shipwrecked nobility, his book of magic is clearly visible in the background and the pages turn to reveal an illustration of a puppet-like figure, perhaps invoking the image of the homunculus.¹¹⁴ This further suggests that the adaptation equates Prospero's powers with its own methods of creative production.

Prospero's power is extended throughout the *Animated Tales* episode through the depiction of Ariel. Ariel's appearance is similar to that of the spirits involved in the 'drollery': gender-swapped, she is a marionette with visible joints in her arms and legs. Ariel spends almost the entire duration of the adaptation airborne, suspended by wires in the style of a traditional marionette and in contrast to the rod-operated puppets which represent the other characters. In addition to reinforcing the associations between Ariel and air (and Caliban as earth), these facets draw attention to Ariel's puppet nature and emphasise her status as an instrument of Prospero's will, through which he is able to further control the island and its inhabitants. Towards the end of the adaptation, Prospero asks Ariel 'How fares the King and his followers?', to which Ariel responds, 'Just as you left them; all prisoners, sir, they cannot budge till your release'. At the same time, Ariel reveals Alonso and the others shuffling stiffly, some with their arms raised, on the edge of a cliff, with Ariel's outstretched arm above them. The stiff, unnatural movements of the men emphasise that they are not just being represented by puppets but manipulated as such, with Ariel controlling their movements on Prospero's behalf. This also exposes the extent to which the adaptation presents Ariel as Prospero's proxy. Cel animation is used to make Ariel fade in and out of scenes and switch between translucence and a more solid appearance: this might suggest that she possesses some supernatural power of her own beyond Prospero's mastery of the puppets. However, this is undermined by her complete loyalty to Prospero throughout (as Laurie Osborne notes, in the scene detailed above Ariel does not offer any moral correction to Prospero regarding his treatment of his captives as occurs in the play) and the apparently genuine affection she demonstrates towards him, frequently encircling and embracing him.¹¹⁵

The *Animated Tales* adaptation also inscribes Prospero's power on the island setting itself. In numerous scenes human faces are visible among and in the rocks, both in the classical style and as imitations of the moai of Easter Island. This sculpting of parts of the island into human likenesses represents an insidious form of colonisation, reshaping the

¹¹³ On masques in *The Tempest*, see David Lindley, *The Court Masque* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp.50-5.

¹¹⁴ Homunculi were popularized in sixteenth-century alchemy, although their antecedents are much older. Like a marionette, a homunculus is a small artificial humanoid which can be manipulated by the person who creates it. For more, see Kevin LaGrandeur, *Androids and Intelligent Networks in Early Modern Literature and Culture: Artificial Slaves* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), pp.58-77.

¹¹⁵ Osborne, p.118

landscape in the image of its human settlers and thus symbolically displacing Caliban, who is native to the island and considers it his natural inheritance. Similarly, the adaptation's mis-en-scene includes ruined columns and carved steps, suggesting previous human habitation on the island which further challenges Caliban's primacy and right to the land. However, Prospero's most intrusive and extensive intervention in the landscape occurs in the adaptation's rendering of Act 3 Scene 2, when Caliban involves Stephano and Trinculo in his vendetta against Prospero. A moai-like head is visible in the background as Caliban begins to detail his planned usurpation, and as he speaks it rotates to face his direction. The scene then cuts to show Prospero in his study with Caliban's voice amplified, indicating that the island's carved faces and heads are not purely ornamental but also a means of surveillance. When Caliban lewdly promises Miranda to Stephano, the surrounding landscape is shown to have shifted: more heads are now visible, one of which looks directly down upon the conspirators. At the end of the scene when Caliban leads Stephano and Trinculo away, the head's eyes open and follow them. Prospero thus manipulates Caliban's homeland and natural environment and uses it against him to foil his plot. Prospero's surveillance renders Ariel's line, 'This will I tell my master,' superfluous, suggesting that Ariel is also unaware of the extent of Prospero's occupation of the island. However, it is in response to this line that Caliban reassures his companions, 'Be not afear'd. The isle is full of noises [...]', not disembodied music as in the play. This alteration reinforces Caliban's subjugation in the island hierarchy: he recognises neither Prospero's nor Ariel's surveillance, and if he is vaguely aware of the latter he misunderstands it, believing the noise to be harmless. Once again, the animation undermines the affinity between Caliban and his environment suggested by the play, though both have been similarly quelled by Prospero.

As demonstrated, the *Animated Tales* adaptation pursues a pejorative depiction of Caliban, who is rendered monstrous not only in appearance but in conduct. Furthermore, where the adaptation makes use of different animation techniques and styles to elucidate the play's power structures, this benefits Prospero and Ariel but only serves to exclude Caliban further by leaving him unaware of the artistic manipulations which both surround and produce him. As will be seen, this affinity between Prospero and Ariel and the medium of adaptation is articulated elsewhere in the adaptations, usually to Caliban's detriment. This occurs even alongside more sympathetic renderings of the character, perhaps revealing an inability to view Caliban as anything other than a victim.

The Little Angel Theatre

The Little Angel Theatre's 2011 production of *The Tempest* was a collaborative project with the Royal Shakespeare Company. As this section will show, its use of puppets provides numerous points of comparison with the *Animated Tales* adaptation. However, the

production's depiction of Caliban is far more sympathetic than its animated predecessor's and, despite also being targeted at younger audiences, it offers a more nuanced interpretation of his relationship to other characters in the play. In doing so, it more accurately reflects the late twentieth-century shift in attitudes towards the monster in popular culture explored in the introduction.

According to the education pack released alongside the production, director Peter Glanville wanted to create a Caliban who was 'more monster than man.' This enthusiasm for Caliban's monstrous possibilities was only focused on the character's physicality, however: Glanville continues, 'with the freedom of puppetry to design a character from scratch, this was an opportunity not to be missed.'¹¹⁶ In keeping with Caliban's pictorial history, the production emphasised his corporeal Otherness by drawing upon the play's aquatic imagery; the education pack states that the puppet's design began with research into underwater beasts and Renaissance depictions of sea monsters.¹¹⁷ The resulting puppet was large and bulbously shaped, with a waxy complexion, raniform legs, webbed feet and a long, leathery tail (see Figure 1). Cut-away sections in the stomach revealed Caliban's two puppeteers and the coiled cane used as a frame for his torso; this visibility drew attention to the duality of the puppet's fantastical appearance and its mechanical operation.

Caliban's puppet contrasts with Ariel's in ways which reinforce traditional binaries between the two characters. Where Caliban was heavy, earthbound and a monstrous grotesque, the Ariel puppet was a small, predominantly airborne, and humanoid marionette: much like the *Animated Tales* interpretation. However, Ariel's diminutive size meant that the two puppeteers operating him were visible to the audience; it was therefore clear that this was the same pair who operated Caliban, creating a tacit equivalence between the two which was wholly lacking from the *Animated Tales* adaptation. This was reinforced by the production's decision to make Caliban and Ariel the only mediatised roles: puppetry was used elsewhere to create the play's magical illusions, but not for any other named characters. Caliban and Ariel's puppets and the visibility of their puppeteers lent an additional hybridity to both – of performing object and human operator – which further emphasised their difference from the island's human occupants. At certain points, this material difference was used to question Prospero's primacy on the island. The production opened with puppet seagulls suspended from above: these fled when Prospero entered, but when he exited at the end of the play they returned to surround Caliban, who was left onstage. This suggested a natural affinity between

¹¹⁶ Sarah Schofield, 'Little Angel Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company present *The Tempest*: Education and Participation Resource Pack' (2011) <<https://www.rsc.org.uk/downloads/little-angel-rsc-tempest-education-pack-2011.pdf>> [accessed April 2015], p.5.

¹¹⁷ Schofield, pp.10-11.

Caliban and his environment which was undermined by or absent from the *Animated Tales* episode.

Despite these more positive interpretative possibilities, the production's use of puppetry also operated in a similar way to the *Animated Tales*: as a metaphor for Prospero's control. Prospero's staff visually echoed the rods which were used to operate some of the production's puppets. As in the *Animated Tales* adaptation, he was able to use it to control Ferdinand's movements and disarm him. Similarly, when Miranda attempted to follow Ferdinand offstage at the end of Act 1 Scene 2, Prospero used the staff to redirect her back towards him. At the beginning of the production, Prospero initiated the storm by striking his staff like a match against the stage set, suggesting a synthesis between his power and the theatrical medium. This once again echoed the *Animated Tales* in the parallel it created between Prospero's magic and the mode of adaptation. However, the Little Angel Theatre's Prospero was a crueler figure than his *Animated Tales* counterpart: prone to sulking and bouts of rage, he asserted his dominance over Caliban and Ariel alike. When reminding Ariel of his imprisonment in the cloven pine, Prospero vividly reenacted this confinement. A puppeteer brought a cane onstage which was then folded into three sections to create a close-fitting triangle around Ariel, who struggled rigorously against this new restraint. This malicious act directed audience sympathies away from Prospero, but the presence of another puppeteer and stage prop enacting his will also reinforced the impression of his control over the medium.

Although, as previously noted, Ariel and Caliban were the production's only mediatised roles, the broader mise-en-scene suggested Prospero had tried to create his own puppets. In Act 1 Scene 2, he moved large, rough-hewn chess pieces to explain the play's backstory to Miranda. One set was used to represent them, while the opposing pieces represented the antagonists. Prospero's use of these pieces anticipated his strategic manipulation of Alonso and his companions throughout the play. In her initial appearance Miranda carried a small doll in her own likeness, perhaps reflecting her subordinate status as Prospero's daughter. The onstage concurrence of these symbolically potent figures – chess pieces and doll –suggested a pattern of manufacture which echoed the production's process of mediatisation. Prospero's puppets could be interpreted as a form of cultural appropriation, imitating the materiality of the island and its inhabitants to further subjugate both. Alternatively, they could represent a subtle form of soft power the island and its inhabitants exercise over the marooned Prospero: as previously suggested, the island's difference is encoded through the mediatisation of its native residents, so Prospero's production of further mediatised bodies – however crude – may reflect that setting's influence over him.

As in the *Animated Tales* adaptation, Caliban's first appearance was designed to create a sense of menace. As Prospero delivered the lines preceding his entrance, Caliban appeared at the rear of the stage, obscured in shadow and visible only as silhouette – very

literally a thing of darkness. The misshapen outline of the puppet was made all the more monstrous by the additional, amalgamated silhouettes of the two puppeteers, creating the impression of a many-limbed beast. However, whereas the *Animated Tales* Caliban lived up to his foreshadowing, any illusory threat in the Little Angel Theatre production dissipated when Caliban moved downstage into the light and began to engage with Prospero. His initial curses and account of Prospero's arrival on the island can be delivered aggressively – as they were in the *Animated Tales* – but this Caliban's tone and behaviour more closely resembled that of an emotional child, his anger manifesting itself in a juvenile tantrum. Although initially standing upright, the puppet slumped onto its haunches after 'this island's mine,' and the rest of Caliban's speech was frequently punctuated with loud sobbing, violent shakes of the head, and banging his fists on the stage. When Prospero later compelled him to obey, his speech and exit were accompanied by more shaking of the head and much whimpering. These signals of distress also characterised later moments of frustration in the production, for instance when Stephano and Trinculo were distracted by the sudden appearance of gaudy clothes at Prospero's cell. This childish behaviour disrupted the traditional association between monstrous features and malignant characteristics and encoded Caliban instead as essentially benign, sympathetic, and a suffering victim - qualities ubiquitously acknowledged in reviews of the production.¹¹⁸

Caliban's childishness created some striking similarities to some of the monsters Weinstock uses to exemplify the 'decoupling of monstrosity from appearance' in popular culture: principally Shrek and *Monsters Inc.*'s Sully.¹¹⁹ All three are introduced using conventions designed to inspire fear, and all three are – at least initially – misinterpreted by the humans who encounter them. Like Caliban, both Sully and Shrek are prone to the emotionally excessive outbursts associated with immaturity. Their respective films further demonstrate how audiences realign their sympathies to accept monstrous protagonists. In *Shrek*, the misanthropic ogre is pitted against the intolerant human Lord Farquaad, who, not unlike the figure of the colonialist, displaces the magical creatures of his kingdom from their homes to the liminal space of Shrek's swamp. The Little Angel Theatre similarly presented a

¹¹⁸ Sandra Giorgetti, 'The Tempest', *British Theatre Guide* (2011)

<<http://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/tempestdlittleangel-rev>> [accessed June 2015]; Carole Woddis, 'The Tempest, Little Angel Theatre/Royal Shakespeare Company', *The Arts Desk* (April 23rd 2011) <<http://www.theartsdesk.com/theatre/tempest-little-angel-theatre-royal-shakespeare-company>> [accessed June 2015]; Julia Rank, 'The Tempest at the Little Angel Theatre', *Islington Gazette* (April 19th 2011)

<http://www.islingtongazette.co.uk/entertainment/theatre/theatre_review_the_tempest_at_the_little_angel_theatre_1_869969> [accessed June 2015]; Helen Babbs, 'The Tempest @ Little Angel Theatre', *Londonist* (April 15th 2011) <<http://londonist.com/2011/04/review-the-tempest-little-angel-theatre>> [accessed June 2015]; Roni Skye, 'Tempest presented by the Little Angel Theatre and RSC', *Worcester News* (18th March 2011) <http://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/8919440.Review_____Tempest_presented_by_The_Little_Angel_Theatre_and_the_RSC> [accessed June 2015].

¹¹⁹ Both Rank and Giorgetti make comparisons to Shrek in their reviews.

Caliban marginalised in his own land, whose discordant behaviour made him a sympathetic favourite of both critic and audience.¹²⁰

The production also facilitates an interpretation in which Caliban's infantile behaviour is a direct consequence of Prospero's treatment of him. As in the *Animated Tales* adaptation, the Caliban puppet could walk on its hind legs albeit somewhat unsteadily, frequently falling over backwards. However, whereas in the *Animated Tales* Caliban's wild movements are unpredictable and seemed designed to alienate him from the audience, in the Little Angel Theatre's production his unsteadiness enhanced the impression of his childishness. At times, this clumsiness seemed to be strategically deployed: in Act 3 Scene 2 Caliban was upright for much of the exchange with Stephano and Trinculo but fell back as he began to tell them how Prospero took the island from him. This action recalled his initial complaint to Prospero, which was accompanied by the same motion (see above), creating an implicit correlation between Caliban's subjugation on the island and the physical lowering of his body onstage. That the puppet's collapses were part of a pattern of childish behaviour might also reflect the tendency of colonialists to infantilise their subjects.¹²¹ In this case, Caliban's conduct might reflect Prospero's expectations of him: his oppression somatically encoded through exaggerated demonstrations of impotent anger and distress. As will be seen, graphic novel adaptations of *The Tempest* also explore ways in which Prospero's treatment of Caliban might inscribe itself on the latter's body.

Caliban's childishness found a subtle parallel in the production's depiction of Miranda. In the play, Miranda's lack of awareness of her own history and her ignorance of the wider world arguably indicates a state of arrested development. The Little Angel Theatre foregrounded this interpretation by, as previously observed, having Miranda initially enter while cradling a doll, but it also imbued her with a childlike terror in response to the spectacle of the storm. Her distress pre-empted Caliban's later in the scene, with the effect that the audience were presented with two examples of unhappy children in rapid succession.¹²² The similarity between the two meant that the audience were discouraged from seeing Caliban from Prospero's colonising perspective, as a troublesome infant; instead, this interpretation invited scrutiny of Prospero's failings as a paternal figure. In doing so, the production reflected modern readings of the play such as that of Julia Reinhard Lupton, who critically appraises Prospero as a guardian to both Miranda and Caliban.¹²³

¹²⁰ Woddis and Skye.

¹²¹ See, for instance, Monica Heller and Bonnie McElhinny, *Language, Capitalism, Colonialism: Toward a Critical History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), p.110.

¹²² This may have been intended to draw attention to colonial patriarchy's infantilizing tendency towards both female and non-white subjects. See, for instance Toby Rollo, 'Women and Children First! Childhood, Feminisms, and the Co-emancipatory Model' in *Transformational Possibilities? Gender and Politics Today and Tomorrow*, ed. Fiona MacDonald and Alexander Dobrowolsky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), p.210.

¹²³ Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Thinking With Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp.187-218: 'The Minority of Caliban'.

The production also used Miranda to subtly challenge Prospero's authority throughout, tacitly paralleling Caliban's usurpation plot. This was achieved through Miranda's interactions with stage props. For instance, after Prospero used his chess pieces to explain the play's backstory, Miranda continued to be visibly fascinated with them and played with the pieces her father had used to represent Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio. This arguably reflected her interest in people from the outside world, but also subtly placed her in opposition to her father. Both patterns of symbolism could suggest a growing desire for independence from Prospero and a progression into adulthood. This was further hinted at when, at the end of Act 1 Scene 2, after Prospero prevented Miranda from following Ferdinand she exited without her doll, which Prospero was left holding. Casting aside her doll mirrored Miranda's figurative maturation over the course of the scene, from having no knowledge of her own life story to meeting her future life partner. Correspondingly, it was also suggestive of Prospero's waning influence over his daughter: while he was still able to control her movements onstage, he was ultimately left holding her effigy, which had become symbolically unmoored from Miranda herself. Later, in Act 3 Scene 1, Miranda and Ferdinand played together by spinning around while holding the logs Ferdinand had collected between them as a means of counterbalance. The logs visually echoed Prospero's staff, which was also visible as he discreetly watched the pair. However, whereas the staff represented Prospero's manipulation and suppression of other characters, Miranda and Ferdinand's use of the logs instead suggested collaboration and parity between them. In turn, this reflected Miranda's negotiation of a different kind of relationship dynamic to the one she shared with her father. When Miranda and Ferdinand exited towards the end of the scene, Prospero fumbled and dropped his staff, further implying that Miranda's relationship with Ferdinand marked a waning in his own power over her.

The above discussion has shown how the Little Angel Theatre production creates some parallels with the *Animated Tales* adaptation in its portrayal of a monstrous Caliban and use of puppetry as a metaphor for control. However, comparing the production to the animation also demonstrates how a similar medium can be put to very different purposes. Little Angel Theatre uses its puppetry to invite criticism of Prospero and realign Caliban with his island habitat. It goes further in finding ways to challenge Prospero's power and authority, a possibility also explored by the graphic novel adaptations in the next section. However, the fact in the Little Angel Theatre production it is Miranda who uses the medium to subtly challenge her father's authority means that Caliban is, as in the *Animated Tales* adaptation, excluded from the empowering opportunities of the medium in which he appears. Correspondingly, the audience is still encouraged to see him merely as a victim of Prospero, rather than considering ways in which Caliban may successfully oppose his master.

The *Classical Comics* (2009) and *Manga Shakespeare* (2007) graphic novel adaptations of *The Tempest* embrace different aspects of the pictorial tradition in their depictions of Caliban. The *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation adopts the wild-man model, while *Classical Comics* follows the example of Daniel Nikolaus Chodowiecki's 1780 illustration by endowing Caliban with a turtle shell and other aquatic features. However, like the Little Angel Theatre production, both graphic novels subvert the traditional connotations of Caliban's monstrous appearance to present him more sympathetically. In both adaptations, this is achieved predominantly by utilising possibilities presented by the medium to introduce the character in ways which challenge or complicate Prospero's denigration of him. Both also question Prospero's moral authority and fitness as a leader by creating parallels between him and the more ostensibly 'monstrous' Caliban, and by drawing attention to how Prospero exercises his power over other characters. However, as with the other adaptations discussed in this chapter, both graphic novels still associate Prospero's power with the medium in which he appears, thus imbuing him with narrative authority. By extension, Caliban remains the victim of Prospero's manipulations, without being granted the power to shape his own narrative.

The *Classical Comics*' Caliban is large and taxonomically ambiguous. He appears grey and scaled, with a brown, barnacled shell and plated areas on his head and arms. His form incorporates additional marine features, such as tentacles under the chin, webbed fins in the place of ears and seaweed-like hair on his head and legs, while other details, such as his flat nose and bone structure, are more simian in appearance. The adaptation's front matter includes an imitation of a renaissance map of the Mediterranean which includes depictions of early modern sea monsters. Incidentally, one of these, the Steipereidur (illustrated and named as such in Abraham Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, 1570), is also visible in the initial collage for the development of Little Angel Theatre's puppet.¹²⁴ The inclusion of a map (and its monsters) overtly aligns Caliban with geographical liminality, characterising him from the outset as one of Ruddick's 'extrinsic' monsters.

The *Classical Comics* adaptation further resembles the Little Angel Theatre's production in its sinister rendering of Caliban's first appearance. He is initially depicted in the depths of his cave, mostly obscured in shadow, with a few eldritch features such as his claws and glowing red eyes visible (Figure 2). He glares malevolently in the direction of an unsuspecting Prospero and Miranda, standing with their backs turned at the cave entrance. Shortly after this, the adaptation also boldly literalises the popular anagrammatic interpretation of Caliban's name, which elides the character with historical reports of the cannibals of the new world.¹²⁵ The line 'I must eat my dinner' is accompanied by a sequence of frames showing

¹²⁴ Schofield, p.11.

¹²⁵ Vaughan and Vaughan, p.28.

Caliban seizing a passing tortoise and biting its head off before discarding it (Figure 3). The graphic blood spatter around his mouth is later unsettlingly echoed by Caliban's messy consumption of the wine offered to him by Stephano (pp.69-70, also p.80; Figure 4), queasily conflating the character's menacing and comic roles.

Even in these initial appearances, however, the graphic novel medium's creative possibilities are manipulated to affect the reader's understanding of Caliban's nature. His depiction in the cave precedes the entrance allocated to the character in the play, and he does not appear elsewhere in the sequence (as an actor inevitably would if they were to come onstage at this juncture). The graphic novel exploits its simultaneously broad and highly selective illustrative scope to juxtapose Caliban very specifically with Prospero's narrative of his brother's usurpation – a story which the reader must assume Caliban, like Miranda, is hearing for the first time. Before the first interaction between Prospero and Caliban, then, the former's hypocrisy in subjugating the latter and claiming control of the island has already been accentuated by this early creative choice. While this does not mitigate Caliban's previous attempt to rape Miranda, or fully justify the grotesque horror of the cannibalistic sequence, making him aware of Prospero's overthrow in Milan does suggest that his ensuing belligerence and scheming are a reasoned response rather than manifestations of an innate, bestial malice. The adaptation introduces Caliban once more before his scripted entrance, during Prospero's account of events on the island prior to his arrival, chiefly focusing on Sycorax's tenure and her imprisonment of Ariel within the cloven pine. As with his first appearance, Caliban's inclusion in this sequence augments and modulates Prospero's narrative, going beyond a straightforward illustration of his speech. Ariel's captivity and the death of Sycorax are conflated into a single frame, in which the badly decayed remains of Sycorax are propped up against the trunk of a tree out of which Ariel's contorted face protrudes in wooden relief (Figure 5). These elements of the frame are directly illustrative of the accompanying speech, but Caliban also appears, weeping over his mother's body. His expression is more human than his initial menacing appearance or later brutal behaviour suggest, and the condition of Sycorax's corpse insinuates a prolonged period of grief, similarly implying a greater capacity for compassion than Prospero's concomitant condemnation of him as a 'freckl'd whelp, hag-born – not honour'd with a human shape' indicates.

SelfMadeHero's *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation employs the same device in its introduction of Caliban, depicting him for the first time as part of a sequence illustrating Prospero's account of the island's previous inhabitants. In this initial portrayal, he is the least 'legibly' monstrous of any of the depictions across the discussed adaptations: his ears are pointed, he has small fangs and there is the suggestion of light fur covering his body, but his shape, features and proportions are otherwise human (Figure 6). Caliban is depicted crouching at the base of the tree in which Ariel is confined (as in the *Classical Comics*

adaptation, the sprite's agonised face is visible in the bark of the tree), looking up and extending a hand sympathetically towards him. Both Caliban's physical appearance and the empathy he seems to demonstrate are, again, at odds with Prospero's introductory description



Figure 1: Little Angel Theatre's Caliban, Little Angel Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company present *The Tempest*: Education and Participation Resource Pack p.4.

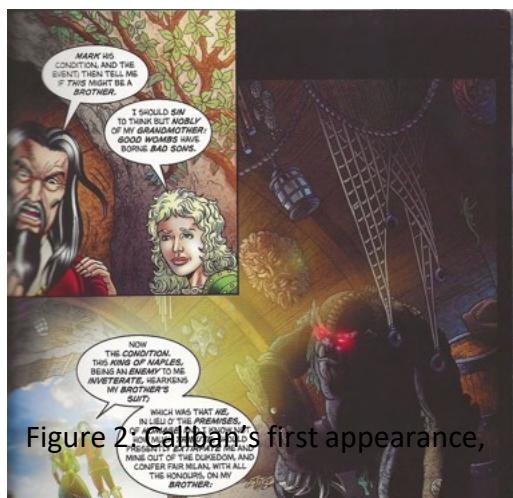


Figure 2: Caliban's first appearance,



Classical Comics, p.21.

Classical Comics, p.35.

Figure 3: Caliban as Cannibal? *Classical Comics*



Figure 4: Caliban Drinking, *Classical Comics*, p.70.



Figure 5: Caliban Mourning Sycorax, *Classical Comics*, p.31.



Figure 6: Caliban Before Prospero,
Manga Shakespeare, p.49



Figure 7: Caliban After Prospero,
Manga Shakespeare, p.55.

of him. Both graphic novels thus establish additional, alternative visual narratives which query Prospero's account, destabilising his narrative authority from the outset.

When Caliban next appears in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, answering Prospero's summons, his appearance is more bestial and in keeping with the wild man tradition (Figure 7). His hair is longer, his fingers are now clawed, his brow heavier and belligerently furrowed, his nose flatter (more simian) and his fangs more prominent. Both graphic novels create a striking contrast between Caliban's physical appearance and conduct before and after Prospero's presence on the island. Like the Little Angel Theatre production, these adaptations seem to imply that Prospero's behaviour has exacerbated his monstrous qualities: that is, if Caliban is a thing of darkness, he is not necessarily inherently so. The *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation arguably reinforces this interpretation through varying its page layouts. While in his first scripted appearance Caliban occupies relatively little page-space and is surrounded by setting details, the following verso page exaggerates and emphasises the monstrous qualities itemised above. Caliban's features are grotesquely magnified, isolated on a page devoid of background illustration, erratically fragmented and reproduced, with particular emphasis placed on his clawed hands and expectorating mouth (Figure 8). The following page reintroduces regular horizontal frames with scenes from the island; while Caliban remains visible, he is marginalised to the edges and bottom of the page (Figure 9). The division between Caliban and details of the island across the spread, and the coincidence of a final frame focusing on Caliban's glaring eyes and furrowed brow with the accusatory 'You sty me in this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me the rest of the island,' seem to visually equate Caliban's monstrosity with Prospero's containment of him and appropriation of his land.

Like the *Animated Tales* adaptation, both graphic novels present the play's island setting as one marked by human occupation. The *Classical Comics* adaptation closely echoes its animated predecessor by depicting stone heads and engraved faces in the island's rocks (p.15, p.45, p.74, p.86, p.103, p.130; Figure 10). Although there is no suggestion of Prospero using these for surveillance as he does in the *Animated Tales*, the heads nevertheless serve the same colonising purpose of inscribing the likenesses of the island's human interlopers on its landscape. Furthermore, in two instances faces are depicted in tree trunks (p.55, p.57; Figure 11): these recall the flashback to Ariel's imprisonment on p.31, and thus imply that there may be other island spirits imprisoned by Prospero or whom he has not deigned to free. In the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, a map in the front matter details the island's topography and shows an abandoned factory and oil fields, suggesting not only human settlement but a degree of industrialisation (Figure 12). Later, on p.122, there are visible signs of deforestation at the edge of the oil fields which further consolidate the impression of an exploited landscape (Figure 13). Both adaptations present the island as being indelibly marked

by the presence of humans, and perhaps thus encourage readers to consider Prospero's personal impact on his surroundings and culpability for the suffering or hostility of the island's native resident.

Prospero's culpability is further implied in both graphic novels by the creation of fleeting physical parallels between him and Caliban. In the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, this is achieved by the juxtaposition on a double-page spread between a fragmentary illustration of the top half of Caliban's face (which strongly resembles the final frame of p.57, described above) and a similar depiction of Prospero (Figure 14). The faces of both characters are contorted in rage, creating nearly identical lines around the brow, eyes and nose. In *Classical Comics*, mirroring between the pair is similarly achieved across a double-page spread (pp.34-5). In the bottom-left of the verso page, Prospero appears in silhouette with white eyes and one arm raised at the mouth of Caliban's cave as he summons his servant. Correspondingly, Caliban appears in the bottom-right of the recto page, silhouetted apart from red eyes and white teeth, with his arms aloft as he discards his tortoise dinner. In both adaptations, this paralleling occurs at moments of heightened antagonism between the characters. Coupled with both graphic novels' depictions of a gentler Caliban prior to Prospero's arrival, this once again suggests that Prospero has provided both a stimulus and a model for Caliban's monstrous aggression.¹²⁶

The *Classical Comics* adaptation creates a further instance of mirroring between Caliban and Prospero to suggest a transfer of power at the end of the narrative. Early on, a double-page spread shows Prospero on a promontory over the island's beach, raising his staff to summon the storm (Figure 15). At the narrative's conclusion, another double-page spread depicts the same beach and promontory reversed, with Caliban now occupying the higher ground watching the humans leave the island (Figure 16). He carries a spear which is angled towards the sky in a visual echo of Prospero's staff. The scene seems to imply that Prospero's authority has passed to Caliban, allowing him to finally inherit the island. However, it is problematic to suggest that Caliban can only attain power on the island by more closely resembling Prospero: impersonating the coloniser rather than crafting his own image of authority. Furthermore, Prospero remains in the foreground of the final spread: in fact he is depicted twice over, as his island identity disperses and he reappears in clothes more befitting his recovered status as a duke. Conversely, Caliban appears in the background and at the outer margin of the page. This composition suggests that, while Caliban may inherit the island, Prospero retains greater narrative prominence. As will be explored shortly, this is an impression the adaptation reinforces on its final page.

¹²⁶ This is perhaps most explicit in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, where the physical mirroring coincides with Caliban's outburst, 'you taught me language, and my profit on it is, I know how to curse.'



Figure 8: Caliban's Bestial Features,
Manga Shakespeare, p.56.

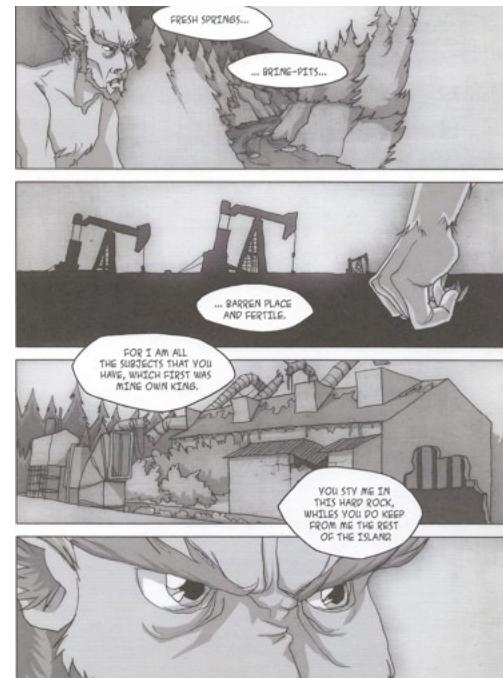


Figure 9: Caliban's Marginalisation,
Manga Shakespeare, p.57.

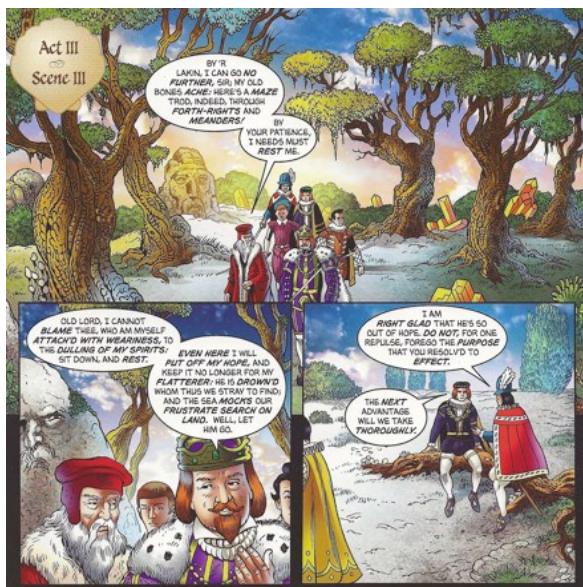


Figure 10: Faces in Rocks, *Classical Comics*, p.86.

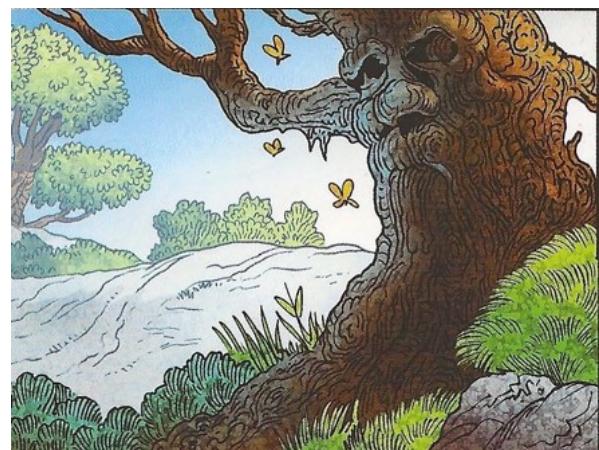


Figure 11: A Face in a Tree, *Classical Comics*, p.55.



Figure 12: Map of Caliban's Island, *Manga Shakespeare*, front matter.



Figure 13: An Exploited Landscape, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.122.



Figure 14: Double-Page Spread Juxtaposing Prospero and Caliban, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.60-1.



Figure 15: Prospero Summoning the Storm, *Classical Comics*, pp.8-9.

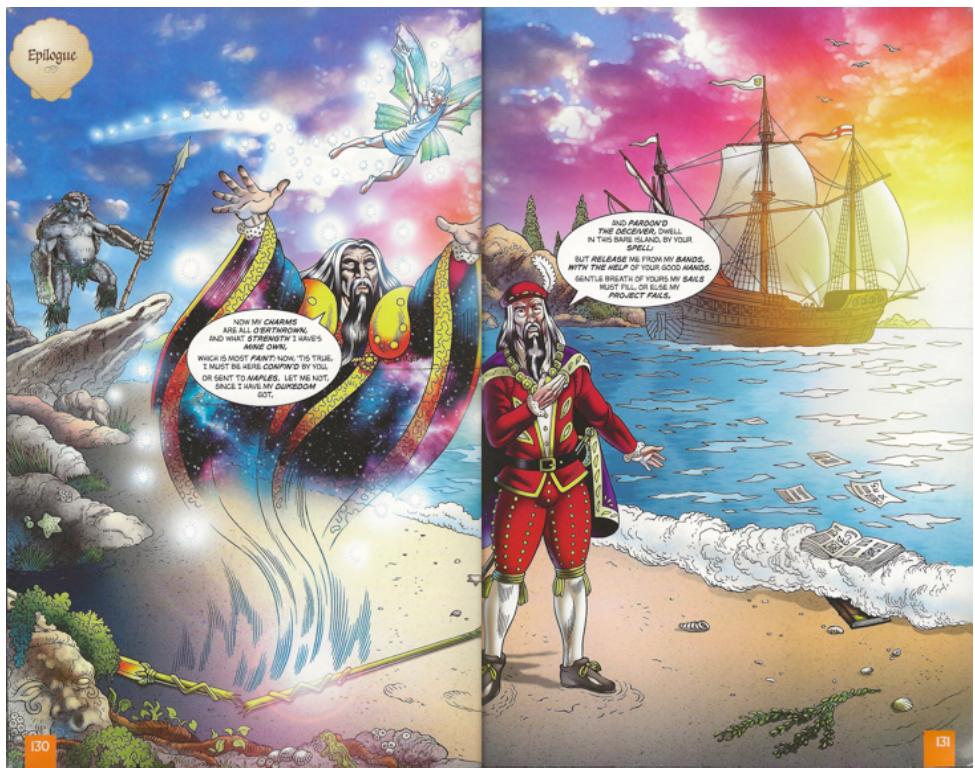


Figure 16: Caliban Watches Prospero Leave, *Classical Comics*, pp.130-1.

As well as foregrounding Prospero's monstrous characteristics, both adaptations emphasise aspects of Prospero's physicality to further draw attention to his dominance over the play's other characters and actions. Prior to the initial exchange with Caliban, Prospero has already subdued the far less adversarial Miranda and Ariel. In both *Classical Comics* and *Manga Shakespeare*, his power over both is repeatedly conveyed through frames which focus either on his hands or larger gestures involving his staff. In the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, Prospero and Miranda's initial exchange is accompanied by multiple frames in which Prospero is depicted guiding his daughter by the shoulder or elbow (p.17, p.22; Figure 17), or in which his hand extends in from beyond the frame to touch her face (p.19; p.34, where the gesture brings on sleep; Figure 18). Other frames also show Prospero's hands raised in a variety of authoritative gestures (p.24, p.30, p.34), while elsewhere in the sequence Miranda's hands are portrayed, held together limply and perhaps defensively (p.18; p.20; Figure 19).¹²⁷ The frequency with which the trope recurs establishes hands as a metonym for power and control within the adaptation. This echoes both the *Animated Tales* and Little Angel Theatre's use of puppetry as a visual metaphor for Prospero's control. In fact, towards the end of the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, puppetry is invoked to further emphasise Prospero's manipulations. Alonso is shown telling the boatswain, 'This is as strange a maze as ever men trod. Some oracle must rectify our knowledge.' (p.197) This omits a line and a half from the playtext: 'And there is in this business more than nature / Was ever conduct of.' (V.i.243-4) Nevertheless, the presence of a hidden 'conduct', or director, is conveyed through the depiction of marionette strings connecting Alonso and the boatswain to a spectral pair of hands (recognisably Prospero's) at the top of the page (Figure 20). The adaptation thus utilises the popular connotations of another medium to reinforce Prospero's manipulation of events.

Hands also feature prominently in the sequence illustrating Prospero's dispute with Ariel, where the line 'dost thou forget from what a torment I did free thee?' is accompanied by three frames showing Prospero's hand extend towards his staff (p.46). Ariel's answer is illustrated in a narrow vertical frame depicting one of the sprite's eyes, directed towards Prospero's hand in the preceding frame, suggesting its influence over him. Finally, Prospero's retort ('thou liest, malignant thing!') accompanies a frame depicting him from the chest down, with motion lines around his hand indicating the emphatic thumping of his staff on the ground. As with these early demonstrations of discipline, in Prospero's later clash with Caliban it is a frame depicting his fist clenched around the staff which precipitates his servant's submission (p.61). Prospero's domineering nature is thus established from the earliest stages of the narrative and alluded to continuously throughout the adaptation, further encoding Caliban's behaviour as a response to Prospero's interference on the island.

¹²⁷ The positioning of Miranda's arms in both instances is later recalled in the depiction of Caliban's arms at p.56.



Figure 17: Prospero Guides Miranda by the Shoulder, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.22.



Figure 18: Prospero Lulls Miranda to Sleep, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.34.



Figure 19: Miranda's Defensive Gesture, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.18.



Figure 20: Prospero's Puppetry, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.197.



Figure 21: Prospero Restraints Miranda, *Classical Comics*, p.20.



Figure 22: Prospero Lulls Miranda to Sleep, *Classical Comics*, p.25.

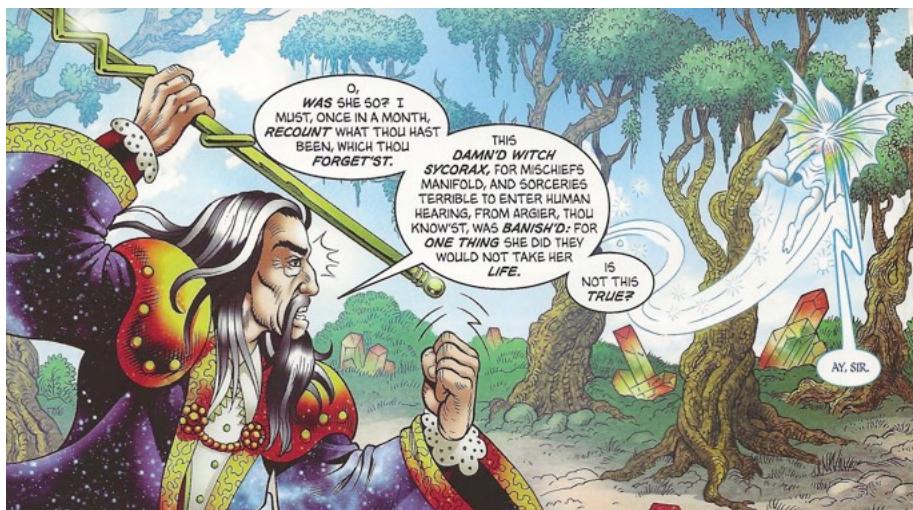


Figure 23: Prospero Wields His Staff Against Ariel, *Classical Comics*, pp.29-30.

Albeit to a lesser extent, the *Classical Comics* adaptation also uses Prospero's hands and staff as a motif to suggest his tyrannical nature early on. As a playful Miranda runs from him during his account of Antonio's usurpation, Prospero uses his staff to create a fiery screen, halting her in her tracks and vanishing her animal companion (Figure 21). Her later enforced sleep is brought about by Prospero raising his hands over her, in a cloud of supernatural smoke which isolates his hands from his body, emphasising their function as icons of agency and domination (Figure 22). Again, in Prospero's altercation with Ariel his power over the sprite is conveyed by the aggressive brandishing of his staff above his head (Figure 23). As in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, these early gestures of control and aggression are echoed in Prospero's exchange with Caliban, where his silhouetted figure at the mouth of his servant's cave holds the staff aloft, emitting a light comparable to the fire used earlier to contain Miranda (p.34). Later in the same scene Prospero uses his staff to temporarily freeze Ferdinand and, as with the corresponding moment in the *Animated Tales*, drain him of colour. This seems to suggest a similar relationship between Prospero's staff and the medium's mode of depiction as that explored in other adaptations. However, *Classical Comics* also literalises the violence otherwise implicit in Prospero's use of the staff, as he uses it as a weapon to hit Caliban across the face (p.35). In both adaptations, the emphasis placed on Prospero's dominance and potential for violence establishes him as Ruddick and Weinstock's modern, intrinsic monster: the benevolence suggested by his depiction as a silver-haired old man is undermined by actions and gestures which denote the cultural forces of repression, increasingly associated with the monstrous. In contrast, in neither graphic novel does Caliban ever display the same degree of bestiality or aggression discernible in his initial exchange with Prospero, seemingly confirming that this behaviour does not stem from intrinsic malevolence but is a result of his master's poor governance.

Despite consistently inviting readers to cast a critical eye on Prospero, both adaptations nevertheless imbue him with some narrative agency and power over the medium in which he appears. In *Classical Comics*, as has been previously suggested, Prospero is shown to have some control over the medium's aesthetics when his staff alters Ferdinand's rendering. However, he is most closely associated with the authorship of the play on the final page of the adaptation, where a spectral Prospero delivers his final lines over the shoulder of William Shakespeare, seated at his writing desk (Figure 24). This recalls traditional readings of Prospero as a cypher for the playwright and thus confers upon him the illusion of narrative control.

The *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation similarly aligns Prospero with the play's author, although it does so without invoking Shakespeare directly. This can be seen in Act 4 Scene 1, in the adaptation's treatment of Prospero's speech following the end of the 'revels' he stages for Ferdinand and Miranda (IV.i.148). As the Vaughans note of these lines in their edition of

the play, the speech is frequently ‘extracted from its context and treated as Shakespeare’s farewell to his art,’ (p.275) making it a potent moment for comparisons between Prospero and the playwright. Prospero’s description of the ‘baseless fabric of this vision’ draws attention not only to the fantastical nature of the recently-ended masque, but also to the theatrical illusion at work in producing the world of the play. Similarly, the reference to the ‘great globe itself’ can pertain to this illusory world but has also been interpreted as a metatheatrical reference to the Globe theatre.

The adaptation demonstrates an awareness of these nuances by having Prospero literally disrupt the fabric of its own visual narrative. In a full-page illustration, the island’s skyline occupies the top half of the page and segues into a depiction of the interior of a Jacobean playhouse on the bottom half (Figure 25). In the centre of the page, imposed over both halves, Prospero stands on top of the Earth. The page incorporates stylistic elements at odds with the rest of the adaptation: the island’s silhouetted factory buildings stand against a photorealistic receding sunset, and the globe on which Prospero stands recalls photographs of the Earth from space. These more realistic elements contrast with the stylised, two-dimensional aesthetic of the adaptation. This montage of images facilitates a number of readings. Firstly, the introduction of a different style of illustration arguably suggests an alternative authorial hand or narrative voice, imbuing Prospero with the semblance of power over the adaptation’s process of representation. Secondly, the depiction of an early modern theatre connects the adaptation – and Prospero – to the context of the play’s original production, perhaps subtly eliding Prospero with the playwright.

Furthermore, the combination of images exposes the contrast between the play’s fantastical setting and the emptiness of the stage in an early modern minimalist, non-illusionary staging. In performance, the exoticism of the island and its magical qualities must be imaginatively conjured by audiences and actors from the stage. This act of imagination is reflected in the adaptation’s depiction of the island rising out of the empty theatre space. Similarly, the dual depiction of the theatre and the Earth highlights both the metatheatrical reference to the Globe theatre, noted above, and the theatre’s symbolism as a microcosm for the wider world by having the world literally represented above the stage. Prospero’s central, elevated position, with his staff in hand, suggests some degree of agency in uniting these disparate elements and meanings into the narrative of the play. This impression is reinforced by the following pages, which show Prospero drawing theatre curtains together over the photorealistic image of the Earth (Figure 26). When Prospero closes the curtains, the adaptation’s island scenery is re-established. The sequence thus progresses from the ‘real’ to the theatrical and then to the graphic novel medium’s mode of representation, with Prospero responsible for effecting each transition. Like other adaptations’ interpretation of him as a puppet master, the *Manga Shakespeare* creates the illusion of Prospero having control over

the medium and narrative in which he appears, despite its early efforts to challenge Prospero's narrative regarding Caliban.

The impression of Prospero's control over the adaptation is reinforced later on in the graphic novel when Prospero renounces his powers. The breaking of his staff accompanies a frame which illustrates the page being torn, replicating a section of the illustration from the previous verso page (Figure 27). The top of the page shows an occult symbol which Prospero draws in the earth with his staff on the previous page: an act of illustration which aligns Prospero with the graphic novel's creator and thus further elides the destruction of the staff with the destruction of the page. On the facing recto page, Prospero's promise to drown his book is illustrated by a full-page image in which a book sinks underwater: the spine reveals this to be *The Tempest* and loose pages drifting towards the surface reveal illustrations from previous pages of the adaptation, including pp.166-7 (Figure 28). This image appears to affirm Prospero's connections to – or even involvement in – the creation of the adaptation in which he appears, further connecting his power to the materiality of the adaptation.

The graphic novel also explores this materiality through its portrayal of Ariel. Both adaptations embrace traditional interpretations in their depictions of Ariel as elfin and airborne. However, the *Manga Shakespeare* goes further: Ariel has a human torso but is only partially formed. From the waist down, his body dissolves into ribbons of paper which trail after him or waft around him (Figure 29). At certain points, this unravelling effect extends further up Ariel's body, or is focused on his fingers or hair (for example, pp.40-1). The character is thus elemental in the traditional sense of being associated with the air, but also represents an intrinsic element of the adaptation. Like Prospero, Ariel seems to have a metafictional sensibility. When he performs his master's bidding he moves behind and in front of frames, without being confined by their borders like other characters (for examples, see p.154, p.176, p.196; Figure 30). However, it is unclear whether this power is his own or one conferred on him by Prospero: the spirits Prospero conjures as part of the masque are of the same substance, dissolving into ribbons of paper at the end of the sequence (p.145; p.149).

As in the *Animated Tales* adaptation, Caliban is excluded from this awareness of the medium which Prospero and Ariel seem to share (although, as suggested above, perhaps not in equal measure). At the end of the graphic novel, Caliban is last seen exiting through a darkened doorway with all the other characters except for Prospero and Ariel (Figure 31). This doorway resembles a blank frame, suggesting that most of the characters remain constrained by the conventions of the medium, while Prospero and Ariel transcend their bounds. On the final double-page spread, Prospero frees Ariel and the entire scene disintegrates into ribbons of paper similar to Ariel's form – including Prospero himself (Figure 32). Prospero's final lines appear on otherwise blank ribbons of paper, suggesting a complete separation between the adaptation's representation of his character and the text. Prospero, for all his narrative power,

is ultimately subject to the limits of the adaptation's representation. Furthermore, the isolation of the text on the final page suggests its – and Prospero's - availability for further adaptations and appropriations.

This discussion has demonstrated how the graphic novels use conventions of the medium to encourage a sympathetic reading of Caliban. Both adopt a similar approach to the Little Angel Theatre production in illustrating Prospero's exploitation of the island setting and suggesting that Caliban's physicality might reflect his experiences under Prospero's mastery. However, both adaptations also contain Caliban and limit his power. In the *Classical Comics*, this is achieved by Caliban acquiring power only as Prospero cedes it, and only through imitation of him. In *Manga Shakespeare*, a similar effect is accomplished by granting Prospero and Ariel and awareness of their medium and apparent power over it, while Caliban remains seemingly unaware of - and contained within - the medium.

This chapter has introduced how bodies can be used as narrative vessels through a detailed analysis of Caliban's body and its portrayals across mediatised adaptations. The visual readings of these adaptations have demonstrated how the depictions of Caliban's body can modulate the narrative of the play and affect how the character is received. At the same time, these adaptations also reflect broader narratives regarding cultural attitudes to difference and the legacies of colonialism. Each of the readings has also shown the importance of reading bodies in the context of the adaptation as a whole: this can further elucidate how each medium is being used to convey thematic concerns such as power and authority. Many of the issues raised here will be returned to later on in the thesis: physicality and power forms the focus of Chapter 3, while the relationship between the supernatural and technologies of adaptation will be explored further in Chapter 4. For the next chapter, however, it is useful to return to the Little Angel Theatre's portrayal of Miranda and her resistance to Prospero's control. Miranda's adolescence has not been the focus here: however, Chapter 2's exploration of female adolescence will show that this life stage might be said to occupy a similarly marginal cultural space to that of the monster. As will be explored, the establishment of narrative authority for the young female protagonists of *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* requires their removal to settings which, in their liminality, parallel *The Tempest's* island.

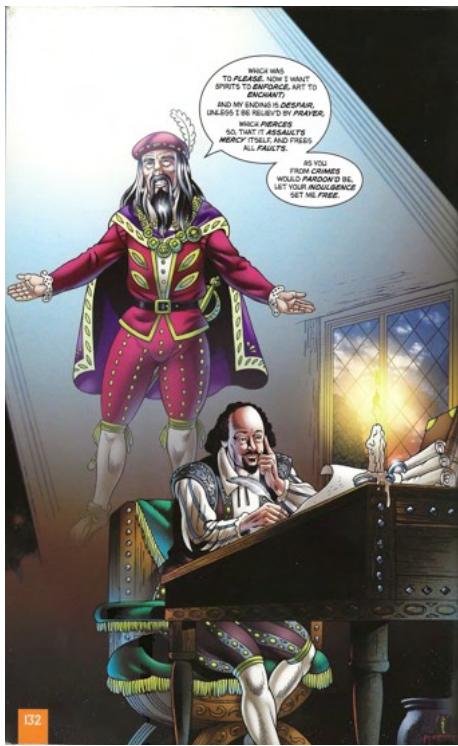


Figure 24: Doubling of Prospero and Shakespeare, *Classical Comics*, p.132.



Figure 25: Prospero and the Globe, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.151.

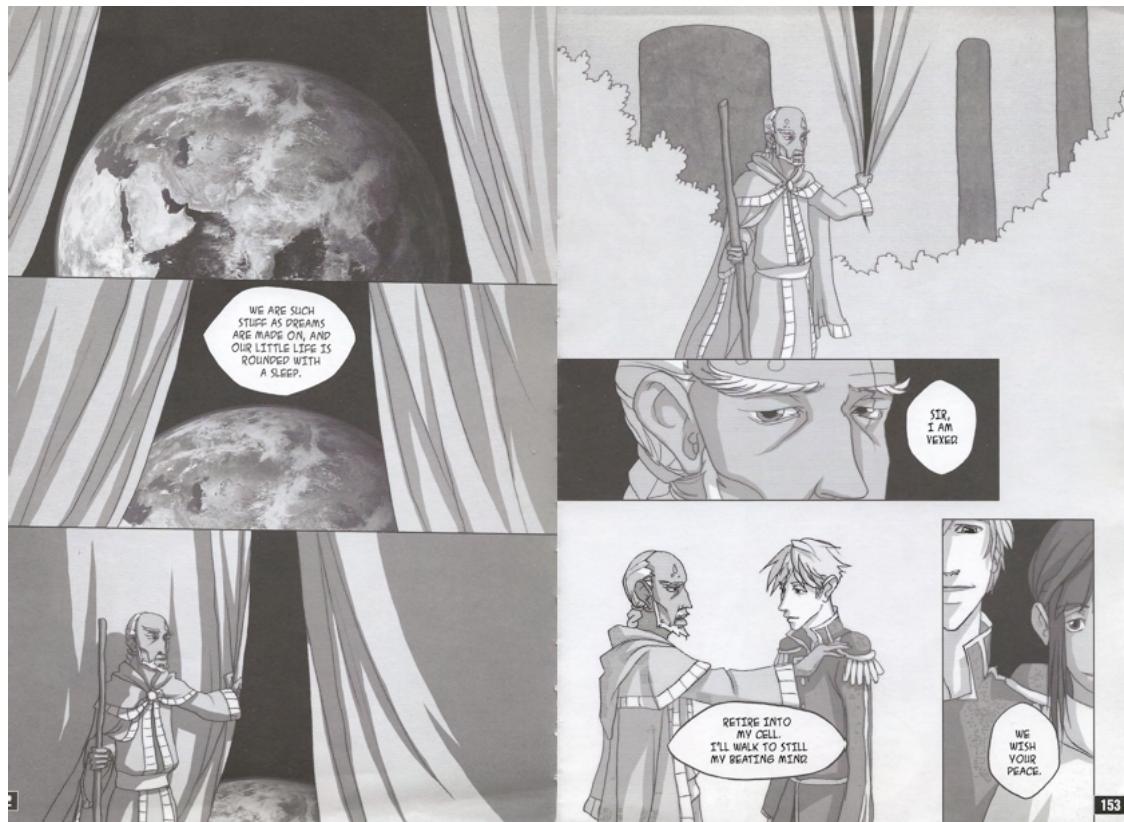


Figure 26: Prospero Draws the Curtains over the Globe, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.152-3.

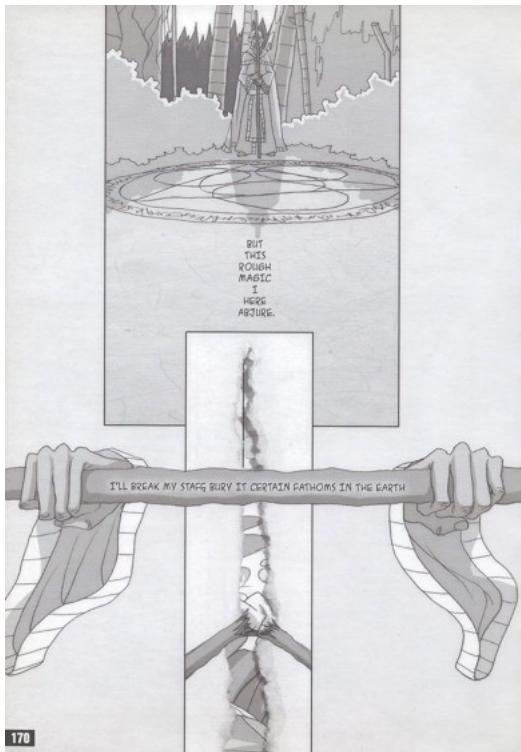


Figure 27: Prospero Breaks His Staff,
Manga Shakespeare, p.170.

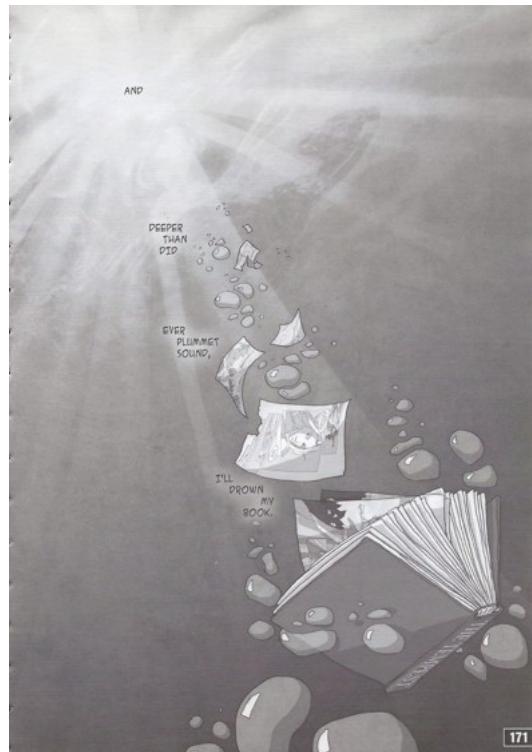


Figure 28: Prospero Drowns His Book,
Manga Shakespeare, p.171.

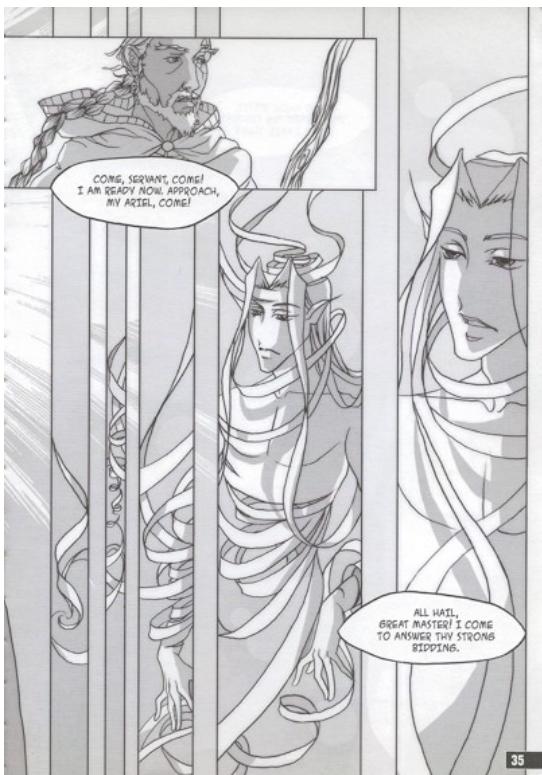


Figure 29: Ariel, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.35.



Figure 30: Ariel Moving Between Frames,
Manga Shakespeare, p.176.

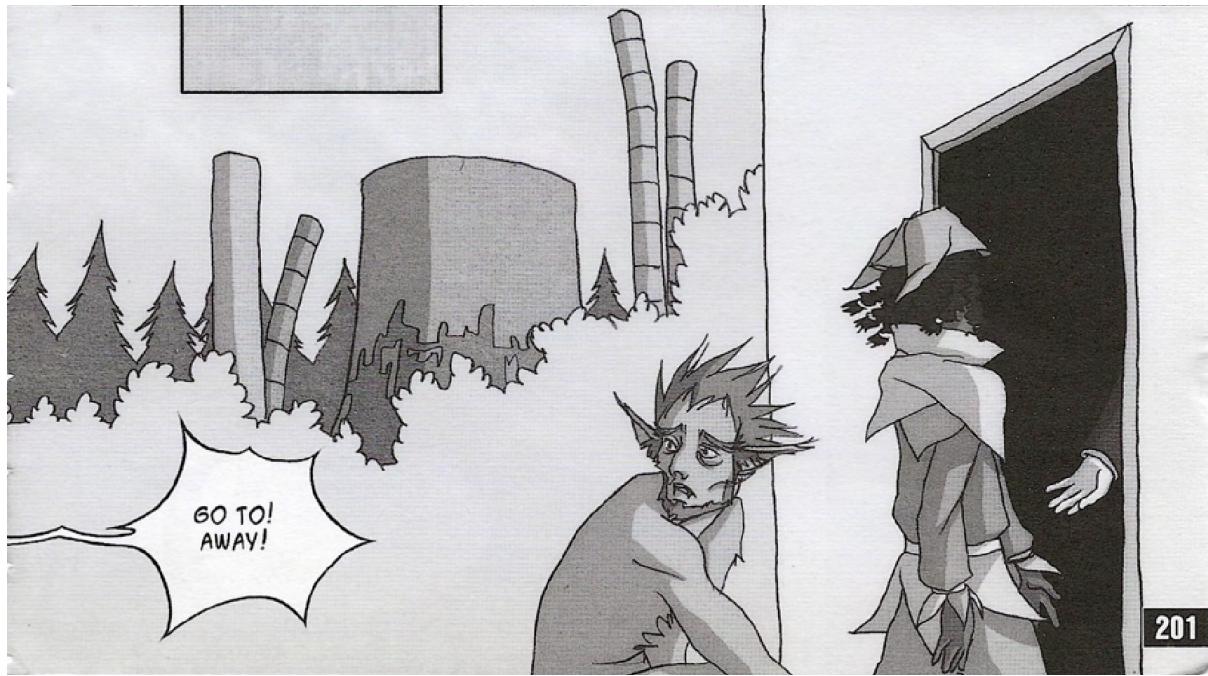


Figure 31: Caliban's Exit, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.201.

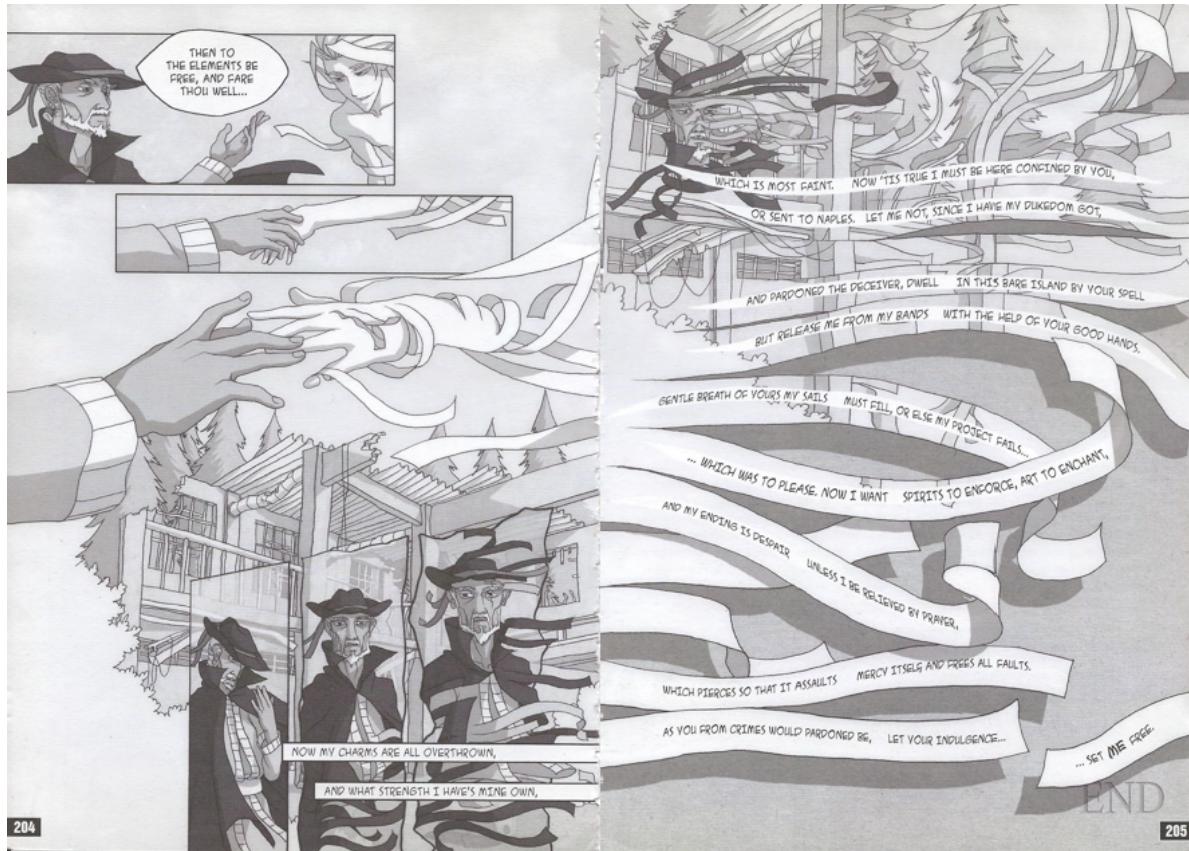


Figure 32: Prospero's Last Speech, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.204-5.

Chapter 2

Shojo Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* as ‘Manga for Girls’

In *The Tempest*, Prospero protects his daughter Miranda from the threat posed by Caliban until an appropriate life partner is presented. Miranda thus passes directly from the guardianship of one male character to another. This chapter explores two plays – *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* – where this transference of guardianship is interrupted by an interval of independence for the female protagonists Viola and Rosalind. Although these young women’s bodies are not necessarily as instantly captivating as the monstrous Caliban, they are similarly foregrounded in their respective stories through the trope of crossdressing. Building on the previous chapter’s exploration of how mediatised adaptations use bodies to both relate and augment the familiar narrative of a Shakespearean text, this chapter focuses on the synergy between one particular mode of adaptation – shojo manga – and the crossdressing comedies in order to examine how a specific set of conventions can cast new light on these plays for contemporary audiences.

This chapter focuses on adaptations of *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* by the London-based publisher *Manga Shakespeare* in the genre of shojo manga.¹²⁸ In this context, ‘shojo’ means ‘manga for girls,’ or, more precisely, adolescent women, and the genre’s conventions and the term’s broader cultural application will be outlined in following sections. The chapter explores how both adaptations present the plays as narratives of feminine adolescence while engaging with issues of body image and gender identity.¹²⁹ It argues that the adaptations depict two strikingly different forms of feminine identity: the heroines Viola and Rosalind possess vitality and agency, but are juxtaposed with reductive images of women as sexualised objects. However, both adaptations use these images to problematise the purported feminine ideals they represent. Furthermore, both portray male spectatorship in ways which invite critique of the male gaze’s objectification of women. This exploration therefore furthers the previous chapter’s querying of male authorship by extending its interrogation to the nature and effects of male spectatorship. For Viola and Rosalind, crossdressing allows them to circumvent the idolising or objectifying practices of male characters and become active spectators and desiring subjects. Finally, both adaptations conclude their protagonists’ adolescent intervals in ways which appear to reject reverting to a simplified feminine identity in favour of incorporating traits from their assumed masculine personas.

¹²⁸ *As You Like It* (2008), *Twelfth Night* (2009). For full details of primary sources, see Bibliography.

¹²⁹ Here and throughout, ‘feminine’ is used instead of ‘female’ when referring to adolescence. This is intended to distinguish between the biological changes of puberty and the broader psychological and social developments which contribute to gender identity. This follows the example of Catherine Driscoll, *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p.6.

The issues outlined above prompt a number of questions which this chapter will address. How do the adaptations engage with contemporary conceptions of feminine body image? What relationships are implied between somatic depiction and adolescence? More specifically, what function do the adaptations suggest crossdressing plays in narratives of adolescence? Can the adaptations' depiction of bodies affect the reader's understanding of the nature of desire in the crossdressing comedies? Asking these questions will further develop the thesis's arguments about the importance of positioning adaptations not only as further contributions to the plays' afterlives but in the broader context of bodies in contemporary popular culture. By doing so, it is possible to address what Shakespeare's texts mean – or can be made to mean – for audiences now.

The gender binaries underpinning many contemporary cultures – and the gender-specific subgenres of manga in particular – may appear at odds with the gender politics of Shakespeare's crossdressing comedies. Critics and commentators frequently discuss both *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* in relation to the fluidity of gender roles and 'erotic object choices' in the plays.¹³⁰ Commentaries on the plays are often preoccupied with the twofold disguise of gender identity effected by boy-actors assuming the roles of the crossdressing heroines on the early modern stage.¹³¹ Catherine Belsey reads the multiple performances of gender present in the plays' original production as a subversion of rigid gender distinctions in the period.¹³² Conversely, Phyllis Rackin argues that the crossdressing device (and its popularity in the drama of the time) reflects the 'conflicted status of gender roles in [early modern] culture at large,' a 'matrix' too complex to be accounted for by modern culture's 'binary divisions between male and female persons and homo- and heterosexual desire.'¹³³ Without the boy-actors, it might be argued that modern adaptations of these plays lose some of their nuanced commentary on gendered identity. However, as this chapter demonstrates, SelfMadeHero's shojo adaptations use their source material to scrutinise the modern gender binaries which Rackin suggests conflict with early modern conceptions of gender. In doing so, the adaptations raise questions about the construction and performance of gender now in keeping with the play's questioning of gendered selves in the past.

¹³⁰ Carol Thomas Neely, *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp.99-100; see also Juliet Dusinberre, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*, 3rd edn (Hounds Mills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.244-5; Phyllis Rackin, 'Shakespeare's Crossdressing Comedies' in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, Volume 3: The Comedies*, ed. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), pp.114-36 (p.118).

¹³¹ For example, Nancy K. Hale, 'Sexual Disguise in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*', *Shakespeare Survey*, Vol.32 (1979), pp.63-72; Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), pp.122-44.

¹³² Catherine Belsey, 'Disrupting Gender Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies' in *Alternative Shakespeares*, ed. John Drakakis (London: Routledge, 1985), pp.116-90; see also Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: the Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). More broadly, ideas of gender performativity are underpinned by Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).

¹³³ Rackin, p.114, p.120.

Feminine Adolescence in the West, Japan, and Shakespeare's Crossdressing Comedies

The following introductory sections aim to delineate the common concerns and characteristics connecting Western culture's conception of feminine adolescence to Japanese shojo and both cultures to Shakespeare's crossdressing comedies. By doing so, they not only demonstrate the suitability of shojo as a mode for adapting these particular plays, but also indicate how the plays can meaningfully engage with contemporary issues of feminine identity. This section offers some definitions and outlines a number of features of feminine adolescence in Western and Japanese cultures which inform the later analysis of the adaptations. It also explores how, despite their relatively recent emergence, modern conceptions of feminine adolescence are nevertheless reflected in the narratives of the crossdressing comedies. This chapter's analysis thus identifies and elucidates some of the resonances between Shakespeare's past and our present.

'Adolescence' broadly describes 'a period of transition between life as a child, and life as an adult'.¹³⁴ However, the nature of that transition is dependent on cultural and historical context. Accordingly, Catherine Driscoll uses the term to denote not 'any age, body, behaviour or identity,' but the 'process of developing a self [...] rather than any description of that self'.¹³⁵ Moreover, 'adolescence' is historically a narrow term: until the late nineteenth century, it was rarely applied to girls but 'predominantly to conceptions [...] of developing manhood'.¹³⁶ This can be explained by looking at the commonly accepted parameters of the adolescent interval. As Peter Smith notes, the onset of adolescence is heralded by the onset of puberty and is therefore more apparent than its end point, which depends on culturally determined markers of adult life being reached. In Western culture, where marriage long constituted one such marker, boys could delay marriage and enjoy an interval of increased independence from their family by serving as an apprentice or servant. Girls, in contrast, were considered ready for marriage from the earliest stages of their teenage years, and therefore passed directly from parental care to their adult roles as wives and mothers.¹³⁷ Driscoll observes that the emergence of feminine adolescence and a corresponding girl culture in the West coincided with the growing importance of young women as a 'labor force to be trained'.¹³⁸

Although the term 'shojo' most commonly refers to the manga subgenre in its Western usage, in Japan it more broadly encompasses a culture of feminine adolescence. In this broader meaning, shojo emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century, when it was used to denote girls of middle or high school age; in this context, the term is most frequently glossed

¹³⁴ Peter K. Smith, *Adolescence: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.1.

¹³⁵ Driscoll, pp.5-6.

¹³⁶ Driscoll, p.6.

¹³⁷ Smith, p.11.

¹³⁸ Driscoll, p.74.

as ‘little girl’ or ‘young girl’ in English.¹³⁹ Nozomi Masuda observes that, at that time, ‘a modern education system was developed that separated male and female students in middle and high schools,’ adding: ‘this division gave birth to the concept of the shojo.’¹⁴⁰ In the early twentieth century, the term came to indicate ‘unmarried women’ in the stage ‘between being a girl child and an adult woman’.¹⁴¹ Despite social changes in Japan granting greater freedom to young unmarried women, the term continues to carry strong pre-sexual connotations. Emerging at a similar time to notions of feminine adolescence in the West, shojo’s broader definitions seem to identify a similar transitional period for young women, with the rites of marriage and sexual initiation as its natural end point.

In both Japan and the West, the concept of feminine adolescence appears to be specific to the late nineteenth and, more predominantly, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. However, *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* are both concerned with a similarly demarcated transitional phase in young women’s lives, following their progress from the abrupt loss of familial dependence towards marriage. Notably, this interval is only achieved through exceptional circumstances: for Rosalind and Celia, usurpation and banishment; for Viola and Olivia, the deaths of fathers and shipwreck. These misfortunes reflect broader concerns surrounding transitional life phases. Arnold Gennep argues that rites of passage are distinguished by three major phases: separation, transition, and incorporation or reintegration.¹⁴² The purpose of such rites is to allow an individual to progress from one well-defined stage of life to another.¹⁴³ Marjorie Garber applies this model to marriage, exploring it as both a rite of separation from a previous family and social group and one of incorporation into new ones.¹⁴⁴ She observes that ‘it is not the condition of being in any given stage, but rather the passage from one to the next, that is the crucial (and sometimes traumatic) time for the individual.’¹⁴⁵ Mary Douglas similarly asserts that ‘danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is undefinable.’ For Douglas, people who linger in these transitional phases are ‘in a marginal state’, ‘left out of the patterning of society’.¹⁴⁶ This assessment echoes the ‘category crisis’ associated with the figure of the

¹³⁹ Jennifer S. Prough, *Straight from the Heart: Gender, Intimacy and the Cultural Production of Shojo Manga* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011), p.7; Mizuki Takahashi, ‘Opening the Closed World of Shojo Manga’ in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, ed. Mark W. MacWilliams (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 2008), p.115.

¹⁴⁰ Nozomi Masuda, ‘Shojo Manga and Its Acceptance: What Is the Power of Shojo Manga?’ in *International Perspectives on Shojo and Shojo Manga: The Influence of Girl Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 2015), p.23; see also Takahashi, p.115.

¹⁴¹ Prough, pp.7-8; Takahashi, p.115; Jennifer Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), pp.64-5.

¹⁴² Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University Press, 1960), p.11.

¹⁴³ Gennep, p.3.

¹⁴⁴ Marjorie Garber, *Coming of Age in Shakespeare* (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), p.5.

¹⁴⁵ Garber, p.6.

¹⁴⁶ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p.95.

monster in the previous chapter. The women in the crossdressing comedies occupy a tenuous space, separated from their adult guardians but not yet protected by husbands. As Garber observes, their liminal state is reiterated by their removal to the separate spaces of the Forest of Arden and Illyria.¹⁴⁷ The marriages – or promises of marriage – which end the plays therefore mark their reintegration into society and successful recovery from the perils of adolescence.

Popular discourses conceive of feminine adolescence differently from its masculine equivalent. Driscoll observes that feminine adolescence tends to be ‘measured by the womanly roles of motherhood, feminine sexuality, and wifedom, which prescribe end points to that process.’ She suggests a double standard between masculine adolescence, which is imagined as ‘a progress towards Subjectivity’ and feminine adolescence, which ‘ideally awaits moments of transformation from girl to Woman.’¹⁴⁸ Driscoll’s distinction suggests that social conceptions of adolescence emphasise young men’s development of selfhood, whereas young women’s maturation is determined by observable milestones in their relationships to men and reproductive functions. This in turn reflects the traditional binary in which men are associated with the mind and women with matters of the body, noted in my introduction. As will be discussed below, the shojo adaptations of the cross-dressing comedies foreground some of the tensions between appearances of womanhood and the practice of feminine subjectivity. In doing so, they create opportunities for a complex, multifaceted understanding of contemporary feminine adolescence.

Girl Culture: Feminine Body Image and the Male Gaze

In both the West and Japan, the emerging concept of feminine adolescence resulted in a proliferation of magazines targeting young women in the early decades of the twentieth century.¹⁴⁹ In part, these were intended to be instructional: in Japan, such magazines (called *shojo zassi*) advised shojo audiences on ‘the proper comportment of a young girl,’ while in the West, magazine culture was complicit in preparing young women to be part of a labour force.¹⁵⁰ However, in both cultures, girls’ magazines were also - and continue to be - influential in shaping ideas of feminine body image. In shojo magazines, hand-drawn illustrations of young girls have been intended to ‘visualize the inner qualities of sexual naiveté as something that must shine through’: the largely homogenous mode of depiction to which this gave rise directly informed the stylistic conventions of shojo manga, as will be explored in more detail

¹⁴⁷ Garber, p.6.

¹⁴⁸ Driscoll, p.57.

¹⁴⁹ Driscoll, p.75 (on Western magazine culture); Masuda, p.23; Takahashi, p.117 (on shojo magazines or *zassi*).

¹⁵⁰ Takahashi, p.117; Driscoll, p.74.

shortly.¹⁵¹ In the West, Driscoll observes, magazines still disseminate ‘an idealized projection of a sexualized body,’ in doing so ‘delineating a simultaneous and equated development of gender identity and sexual identity.’¹⁵² She adds: ‘far from prescribing sexual activity, the girl’s body is eroticized in a space of preparation for heterosexuality.’¹⁵³ By depicting their young female audiences in terms of their nascent sexuality, both Western and Japanese magazines indulge a secondary audience alongside girls and girl culture: the male spectator.

These ideas have been theorised by many scholars, most influentially Laura Mulvey in 1975, who asserted that ‘in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly.’¹⁵⁴ Mulvey’s ideas continue to be popular: numerous commentators have noted that, as Western culture becomes more and more preoccupied with the visual, women are increasingly encouraged to approach their bodies as objects for the aesthetic pleasure of others.¹⁵⁵ The feminine body image propagated by magazines is part of this broader culture of objectification. However, magazines also use various means of reader engagement to enlist their female audiences as active participants in shaping that image. Jennifer Prough reads shojo magazines as ‘a system of texts that describe and circumscribe their subjects, girls, but not without input from girls themselves.’¹⁵⁶ Similarly, Driscoll argues that ‘girls’ magazines are defined by their audience and define this audience.¹⁵⁷ The reciprocal relationship between audience and product might be interpreted as redressing the imbalance in the gendered gaze observed by Mulvey: Driscoll asserts that ‘visual girl cultures clearly constitute girls as not only what is seen but as an audience and a viewing subject’. However, she adds that ‘dominant theories of the gaze and visual cultures claim that how girls/women are brought to look at themselves is not self-recognizing in the same way as the valorized gaze by which the [male] Subject knows himself.’ Magazines and other examples of visual culture can enable young women to become empowered spectators but may also make them complicit in their own objectification. This contradiction is reflected in the narrative and visual conventions of shojo manga, as will be explored in the following section. In turn, this has implications for how we understand the gender dynamics of Shakespeare’s crossdressing comedies when they are adapted into this form.

¹⁵¹ Takahashi, p.117; Masami Toku, ed., *International Perspectives on Shojo and Shojo Manga: The Influence of Girl Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 2015), p.12; Masuda, p.23.

¹⁵² Driscoll, p.75.

¹⁵³ Driscoll, p.77.

¹⁵⁴ Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 2nd edition (Hounds Mills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.19.

¹⁵⁵ Sinikka Aapola, Marnina Gonick and Anita Harris, *Young Femininity: Girlhood, Power and Social Change* (Hounds Mills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), p.136; Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1993), p.166.

¹⁵⁶ Prough, p.4.

¹⁵⁷ Driscoll, p.75.

Shojo Manga: A Double Vision of Womanhood

Shojo emerged as a distinct subgenre of manga after the Second World War, when the medium diversified to appeal to audiences of different ages and genders.¹⁵⁸ Its aesthetics are strongly influenced by the hand-drawn illustrations of the earlier *shojo zassi*.¹⁵⁹ Female bodies are exaggeratedly slender and lacking in musculature.¹⁶⁰ Long, flamboyant hairstyles frame distinctive facial features: mouths are tiny, noses mere dots or absent completely, eyes disproportionately large and often filled with stars.¹⁶¹ The overall effect is childlike, embodying a presexual naiveté.¹⁶² Frenchy Lunning relates this childishness to male fantasies of the Lolita-type, a ‘girl-child who is positioned as presexual and hypersexual, virginal but seductive, innocent but dangerous’.¹⁶³ Further, Lunning argues that the homogenous appearance of girls in shojo has produced a highly commodified ‘proto-character’, specifically termed a *kyara* in the context of shojo culture in Japan. The *kyara* is ‘interpolated from the long historical and global tradition of seeing the feminine as an image, an object, and a set of essentialised characteristics’.¹⁶⁴ Although feminist critics identify female representation across visual media as homogenising, Western culture has come to associate the ‘aesthetics of sameness’ with shojo manga and the *kyara* in particular.¹⁶⁵ The homogenous appearance of girls in shojo manga has facilitated the global commercialisation of the shojo heroine’s image, which is reproduced across a range of merchandise, including toys, stationery and sweets as well as animation, video games and print media.¹⁶⁶ Both shojo’s aesthetics and its broader marketing franchises thus appear to make its readers complicit in objectifying and commodifying female bodies.

Nevertheless, a number of critics argue that shojo’s stylistic and narrative conventions empower its female characters and, vicariously, its readers.¹⁶⁷ This empowerment is predominantly achieved through the visual representation of feminine subjectivity. In other

¹⁵⁸ Toku, p.11.

¹⁵⁹ Takahashi, p.117.

¹⁶⁰ Takahashi, p.119.

¹⁶¹ Ulrich Heinze, ‘Making history herstory’ in *Manga and the Representation of Japanese History*, ed. Roman Rosenbaum (New York: Routledge, 2013), p.105; Toku, p.12; Susan J. Napier, *From Impressionism to Anime: Japan as Fantasy and Fan Cult in the Mind of the West* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), p.139; Takahashi, pp.118-22.

¹⁶² Takahashi, p.117.

¹⁶³ Frenchy Lunning, ‘Between the Shojo Kyara and the Modern Man’ in *International Perspectives on Shojo and Shojo Manga: The Influence of Girl Culture*, ed. Masami Toku (New York and London: Routledge, 2015), p.94.

¹⁶⁴ Lunning, p.96.

¹⁶⁵ Aapola, Gonick and Harris, p.134; Bordo, pp.24-5; Rebecca Coleman, ‘The Becoming of Bodies,’ *Feminist Media Studies*, Vol.9 (2008), pp.163-179, p.164; Deborah Shamoon, ‘Situating the Shojo in Shojo Manga: Teenage Girls, Romance Comics, and Contemporary Japanese Culture’ in *Japanese Visual Culture*, ed. Mark W. MacWilliams (New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 2008), p.141.

¹⁶⁶ Prough, p.4.

¹⁶⁷ Tamaki Saito, *Beautiful Fighting Girl*, trans. J. Keith Vincent and Dawn Lawson (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), p.185; Paul Gravett, *Manga: 60 Years of Japanese Comics* (London and New York: Laurence King Publishing, 2004), p.74; Leith Morton, *Modern Japanese Culture: The Insider View* (Melbourne and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.248; Toku, p.3.

words, the features of the genre convey emotions and psychological states which foreground female characters' inner experiences. Shojo narratives tend to feature adolescent, 'relatively empowered' heroines, and take love as their central concern; they focus on the developing relationships (both social and romantic) between characters, rather than dramatic action sequences.¹⁶⁸ Susan Napier notes that shojo storylines 'emphasise emotional interaction and delve quite deeply into the characters' psychology.'¹⁶⁹ Nozomi Masuda similarly asserts that readers of shojo are required to 'interpret relationships, patterns, and changes by focusing on reading the manga characters' internal worlds.'¹⁷⁰ Stylistically, characters' internal experiences are reflected in complex arrangements of frames and irregular page layouts. The frequent use of patterns and flower motifs in the background of frames also indicates moods and characterises moments of emotional intensity.¹⁷¹ The genre thus appears to be preoccupied with excavating and portraying the internal experiences of its female protagonists.

Criticism on the genre is yet to adequately discuss the contradiction shojo appears to present, between feminine empowerment on one hand and objectification on the other. For the commentators who acknowledge the presence of both empowering and objectifying facets in shojo, one of these agendas is usually deemed to outweigh the other. Napier argues that the depictions of female characters, 'albeit highly sexualised,' nevertheless 'anticipate genuine, although small, changes in women's empowerment'.¹⁷² Kimiko Akita takes the opposite view, asserting that shojo writers 'disempower' female protagonists through the 'quality of cuteness,' subordinating them to the 'traditional male norms' of popular culture.¹⁷³ Acknowledging both perspectives, Anne Allison contends that the shojo text 'defies easy categorization as either (or simply) a feminist or sexist script'.¹⁷⁴

How do such concerns manifest in contemporary mediatised adaptations? *Manga Shakespeare's* adaptations of *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* seem to address this ambivalence in the genre by juxtaposing Rosalind and Viola with Celia and Olivia: the former benefit from shojo's empowering depiction of feminine subjectivity, while the latter embody the sexualised facets of the *kyara* stereotype. This juxtaposition is not absolute – Rosalind and

¹⁶⁸ Sarah Kornfield (quoted), 'Cross-Cultural Cross-Dressing: Japanese Graphic Novels Perform Gender in U.S.', *Critical Studies in Communication*, Vol.28, No.3 (2011), pp.213-29, p.213; Toku, p.12; Masuda, p.28; Napier, p.139.

¹⁶⁹ Napier, p.138.

¹⁷⁰ Masuda, p.28.

¹⁷¹ Takahashi, pp.122-5; Shamoon, p.146.

¹⁷² Napier, *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.33.

¹⁷³ Kamiko Akita, 'Cuteness: The Sexual Commodification of Women in the Japanese Media' in *Women and the Media: Diverse Perspectives*, ed. Theresa Carilli and Jane Campbell (Lanham: University Press of America, 2005), p.50.

¹⁷⁴ Anne Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), p.137.

Viola still display some of the characteristics of the *kyara* – but it does permit both adaptations to foreground the opposing feminist and misogynistic agendas at work in the production of shojo manga.

The production of manga in the West (by publishers like *Manga Shakespeare*) may present an opportunity for global girl audiences to confront some of the issues surrounding feminine body image. Driscoll suggests that ‘Anglophone girl culture tends in particular to utilize Japanese girl culture as an iconography of a childhood that is both familiar and alien but remains proper to a discourse on feminine adolescence.’¹⁷⁵ This duality of the familiar and alien is key: the shojo *kyara* reduces features and anatomy to stark icons, which, as Scott McCloud observes, afford the reader closer identification with the protagonists by enabling them to substitute their own image for that of the characters.¹⁷⁶ However, the genre’s aesthetics remain distinct from other forms of visual culture which may inform young women’s self-image. The Otherness of shojo enables Western audiences to recognise the constructed nature of the *kyara*, which may facilitate reflections on more culturally immediate issues of representation, the male gaze, and their own agency as consumers and gazing subjects. When it comes to adaptations of Shakespeare’s comedies, this capacity is amplified by shojo’s foregrounding of crossdressing.

Shojo manga frequently uses crossdressing as a trope for the exploration of gender identity in adolescent narratives. Sarah Kornfield, writing on the ‘large and popular’ shojo subgenre of so-called ‘Gender Benders’, asserts that there are over six hundred such series available in the U.S., demonstrating the acceptance of the convention by Western manga audiences and its prevalence in Western manga production.¹⁷⁷ Ryuta Minami associates the crossdressing trope with shojo’s propensity for coming-of-age narratives, noting that ‘typically, an androgynous heroine or an adolescent girl in boy’s clothes finally accepts her femininity when heterosexual love is fulfilled.’ He adds: ‘the disguise has meanwhile allowed her to postpone or evade sexual maturity.’¹⁷⁸ These conventions are also recognisable plot points in Shakespeare’s crossdressing comedies, where the heroines’ adolescent gender fluidity apparently ends with their incorporation into heteronormative relationships. Minami also correlates adolescent crossdressing in shojo with a division of the self, echoing the psychoanalyst Erik Erikson’s assertion that the ‘major crisis of adolescence’ is a crisis of identity.¹⁷⁹ Driscoll similarly argues that ‘adolescence defines the ideal coherence of the

¹⁷⁵ Driscoll, p.296.

¹⁷⁶ Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), p.44.

¹⁷⁷ Kornfield, pp.213-4.

¹⁷⁸ Ryuta Minami, ‘Shakespeare for Japanese Popular Culture: Shojo Manga, Takarazuka and *Twelfth Night*’ in *Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance* ed. Dennis Kennedy, Yong Li Lan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.111.

¹⁷⁹ Minami, p.111; Erik Erikson, ‘Identity and the Life Cycle,’ *Psychological Issues*, Vol.1, No.1 (1959), pp.1-171, p.10.

modern subject [...] while not necessarily ensuring its achievement,' in which she gestures towards Julia Kristeva's figure of the 'subject-in-process.'¹⁸⁰ While the *kyara* might be said to represent the 'ideal' endpoint of feminine adolescence, shojo's use of cross-dressing heroines creates an alternative focal point for narratives centred on the psychological and social developments of young women. As with the use of other shojo conventions in the West, crossdressing introduces a degree of defamiliarisation which may enable audiences to question prevalent constructions of gender, to see them as constructions and to consider alternative definitions.

Feminine Body Image and the Male Gaze in Shojo Shakespeare

One of the aims of this chapter is to explore the ways in which shojo adaptations of the crossdressing comedies represent and complicate the relationship between the male gaze and images of women in contemporary mediatised adaptations and beyond. To do this, it will begin by considering how the adaptations juxtapose Viola and Rosalind and Olivia and Celia as models of empowered and objectified femininity respectively. It will suggest that the crossdressing protagonists are presented as active spectators and their counterparts as objectified *kyara*. Moreover, it will also suggest that the adaptations deliberately foreground the *kyara* as the object of the male gaze, in ways which may encourage criticism of that gaze. Where other interpretations of the plays might place greater emphasis on the ensemble of characters, both adaptations prioritise the crossdressing heroines as protagonists. In doing so, they encourage female readers to empathise and identify with these characters in particular. This creative choice is apparent even in the composition of the front covers. Viola and Rosalind feature prominently and gaze out towards the reader, creating a connection between protagonists and audience. This connection is later borne out by the frequent elision of their perspectives in frames which show the scene from the protagonists' viewpoint. On the *Twelfth Night* cover, Orsino and Oliva are also depicted but are positioned behind - and on either side of - Viola, with their gazes averted or directed towards her (Figure 33). Similarly, on the *As You Like It* cover, Orlando is present but depicted with his back to the reader, obscuring his features; his gaze is also directed towards Rosalind (Figure 34). Viola and Rosalind are thereby established as focal points both for the reader and for other characters from the offset, although neither appears in the opening scenes of their narratives. The significance afforded to the direction of characters' gazes on both covers encourages the reader to consider the dual status of the protagonists and other characters as spectating subjects (who may even return the readers' look) and gazed-upon objects.

¹⁸⁰ Driscoll, p.53; Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

Viola and Rosalind conform to the shojo stereotype in a number of respects. They share willowy builds and large eyes, which are perhaps the most recognisable features of the *kyara*. Both are portrayed with long hair prior to assuming male disguises, although this is worn straight rather than in the more ornate styles which often adorn the shojo heroine. In contrast, Olivia and Celia are depicted with more elaborate hairstyles, the size of their eyes is even more exaggerated, and the fullness of their lips is often emphasised (where Rosalind's and Viola's are usually omitted), creating an impression of sensuality. In both adaptations the characters are juxtaposed early on, before they have all entered the narrative. In *As You Like It*, Rosalind and Celia are portrayed side by side as an illustration to Charles the wrestler's speech (Figure 35). In *Twelfth Night*, Olivia's image similarly illustrates the captain's speech; she appears directly below a frame depicting Viola (Figure 36). These initial appearances encourage the reader to recognise distinctions between the two sets of female characters, establishing the different models of femininity they come to represent.

Both Olivia and Celia are more overtly sexualised than the protagonists, through multiple illustrations which draw attention to their breasts – in both cases, more prominent than the protagonists' (for instance, *Twelfth Night*, p.54; *As You Like It*, p.67). Furthermore, while most frames depicting the protagonists show their bodies, upper torsos or faces in their entirety, Olivia and Celia are often subjected to what Masami Toku calls 'exaggerated view,' a mode of frame composition which focuses on (and often enlarges) specific parts of the body, omitting others (see, for instance, Celia's legs, *As You Like It*, Figure 37; Olivia's lips, *Twelfth Night*, Figure 38).¹⁸¹ In her work on cinema, Mulvey suggests that the comparable effect of a close-up on parts of a fragmented female body functions as a 'mode of eroticism' within the narrative and gives the depicted object 'flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon.'¹⁸² The frame composition in both adaptations thus reinforces the iconicity of the *kyara* type which Celia and Olivia embody, but also its objectifying and dehumanising effects. This is foregrounded in the *Twelfth Night* adaptation when Olivia constructs an inventory of her body, a moment in the text which both reconstructs and subverts the Petrarchan blazon. In the graphic novel, the reductive effects of itemising the female body in this way are highlighted by depicting each of the body parts Olivia lists on store tags, likening them to commodities (Figure 39). Furthermore, the separation of these parts is illustrated in the manner of an anatomical dissection: Olivia's reference to 'two grey eyes, with lids to them' accompanies a tag showing two eyeballs, with the lids next to them; her neck is similarly portrayed in isolation from the rest of her body with a clean cut across the top exposing the spine within; her chin is represented by the lower half of a skull. This comically gruesome sequence of images

¹⁸¹ Toku, p.10.

¹⁸² Mulvey, p.20.

undermines Orsino's idealisation of Olivia's body while also emphasising the dehumanising effect of his gaze.

Both adaptations also go to some length to represent Olivia and Celia explicitly as the objects of a desiring male gaze. For example, as well as being eroticised, Olivia and Celia's large eyes also make them appear childlike: they thereby fulfil the dual nature of the Lolita-type described by Lunning and are closely aligned with an objectifying male fantasy. This sexualised objectification intensifies over the course of the adaptation. Olivia is first introduced through Orsino's account of her in the opening scene. When Orsino is first illustrated, he is shown clutching an oval to his chest (p.12). This is soon revealed to be a portrait of Olivia, but when it is first depicted it appears in a frame which bisects her face and also renders her featureless apart from the outline of her hairstyle (Figure 40). Olivia's next two appearances occur on the same spread, where they illustrate Valentine's account of her grief for her brother: in the first, she appears in silhouetted profile, while the second presents an 'exaggerated view' of her weeping eye (p.15). Her first three appearances thereby establish Olivia as a fragmented and obfuscated icon of the male gaze. The image of her eye in particular might be read both as visually rendering the Petrarchan blazon and reflecting Orsino's fetishisation of her mourning. Olivia appears as a pawed-over portrait again on the final spread of the opening scene (Figure 41). In this instance she is given facial features, but these are still sparsely detailed and, unlike the portrait's previous depiction, her hair is unrendered. As with its first appearance, frames depicting the portrait from Orsino's perspective are counterbalanced with frames showing his gaze, with the back of the portrait visible in the foreground (p.14; p.16). These frames reinforce the binary establishing Orsino as the spectating male subject and Olivia as the passive object of his gaze. Olivia's appearance is invoked in a similar way later on in the adaptation, during the gulling of Malvolio. Malvolio's fantasy of coming 'from a day-bed where I have left Olivia sleeping' is accompanied by a wordless frame in which an 'exaggerated view' of Olivia's cleavage is visible in the background, while a drooling Malvolio dominates the foreground (Figure 42). The appropriation of Olivia's image by multiple men with whom she has not engaged in a reciprocal relationship consolidates the *shojo kyara* as the manifestation of male-driven fantasy within the adaptation, objectifying the sexualised female body.

However, the adaptation also consistently encourages criticism of the masculine gaze through its negative portrayal of Malvolio when he conjures Olivia's image. The frame's composition draws more attention to the drooling Malvolio than to Olivia's breasts. Malvolio's expression is likely to provoke disgust, which makes it difficult for the reader to find his fantasy in any way titillating. This negative depiction appears to condemn the objectifying nature of the male gaze.

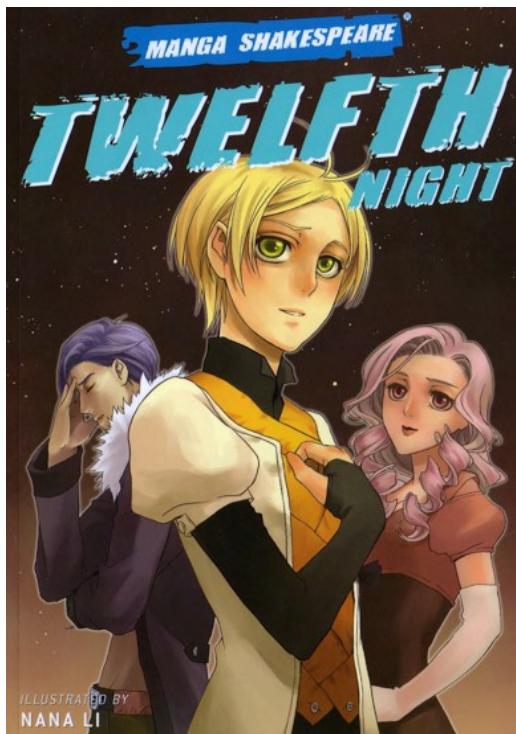


Figure 33: *Twelfth Night* Front Cover, *Manga Shakespeare*.

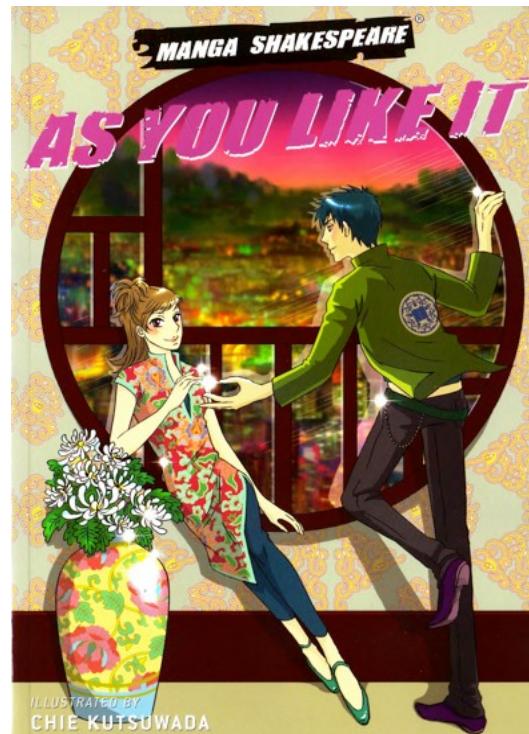


Figure 34: *As You Like It* Front Cover, *Manga Shakespeare*.



Figure 35: Rosalind and Celia, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.21.



Figure 36: Viola and Olivia, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.21.



Figure 37: Celia's Legs, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.66.



Figure 38: Olivia's Lips, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.56.



Figure 39: Olivia's Blazon, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.55.



Figure 40: Orsino Fetishises Olivia 1, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.14-15.

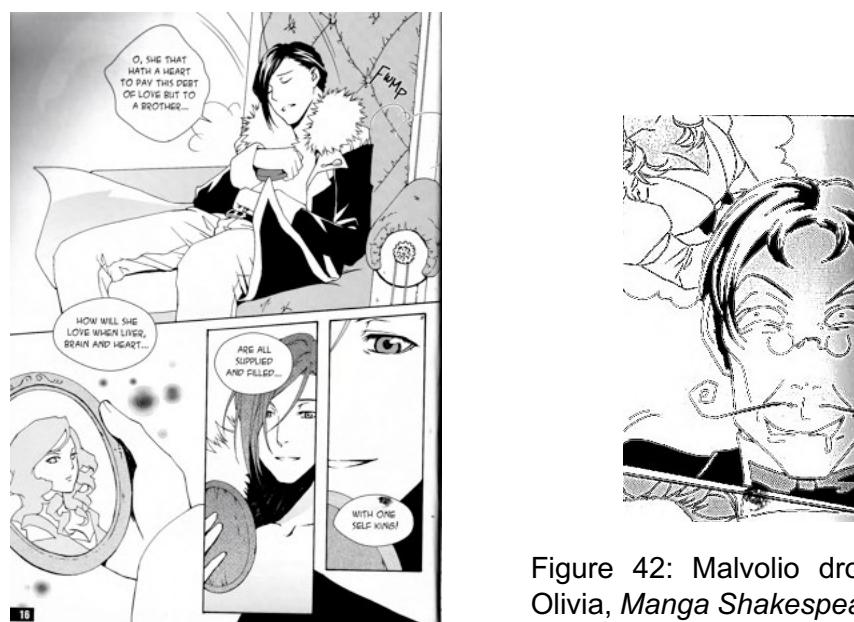


Figure 41: Orsino Fetishises Olivia 2, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.16.

Figure 42: Malvolio drools over Olivia, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.94.



Figure 43: Touchstone as a Voyeur,
Manga Shakespeare, p.32.



Figure 44: Touchstone's Memory, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.103.



Figure 45: Jaques on City Women,
Manga Shakespeare, p.106.



Figure 46: Feste's Song,
Manga Shakespeare, p.84.

Similarly, in the *As You Like It* adaptation, Celia is presented as the object of the male gaze, and that gaze is similarly confronted. In three non-sequential frames across the narrative she is depicted in her underwear (a degree of exposure to which Rosalind is never subjected, though she appears in the same scenes). In one of these, she is portrayed in her bra while Touchstone leers at her in the background through binoculars (Figure 43). Here, the male gaze is mediated through the lens of the binoculars, which magnifies and fragments Celia's body in the same way as frames using exaggerated view do. However, while *Twelfth Night* imposes the male perspective of Olivia's body on the reader by composing some frames as if from Orsino's viewpoint, both adaptations refuse to conflate the male gaze with the reader's perspective consistently. By showing the male spectator, both adaptations shift attention from the gazed-upon object to the perpetrator of that gaze. Malvolio's drool and Touchstone's smirk both imbue the male spectators with unpleasant, undesirable countenances and thus invite criticism of their spectatorship.

Later on in the *As You Like It* adaptation, this criticism of the male gaze is developed when Celia and Rosalind are depicted in a frame which illustrates Jaques's account of his encounter with Touchstone (Figure 44). The frame portrays Touchstone in the act of speaking, but also depicts the memory he relates of 'strange places crammed / with observation' (II.vii.40-1). In this visualised memory, Rosalind and Celia adoringly watch him dance. The frame's multiple layers of narrative are encoded through distinct illustrative styles. The foreground of the frame, which depicts Touchstone speaking, is drawn and rendered in ink, distinguishing it from the surrounding digitally-rendered frames portraying Jaques and the Duke. The background of the frame, which represents Touchstone's memory, is even more sparingly rendered in the style of a freehand pencil illustration. Celia and Rosalind's appearance at this moment is thus stylistically marked as the product of a twice-inflected male narrative. Their presence as sparse outlines can be read as reflecting the reductive nature of the male gaze. It is when male characters control the narrative that women appear most often like rough outlines, literally half-realised characters. These sections clearly differ from scenes which are not mediated through male characters' narrative: in those, female characters display individuality and emotional depth. These images demonstrate that the male gaze does not merely take pleasure in images of women but is also responsible for shaping those images.

In both adaptations, the aesthetic of the shōjo *kyara* is not exclusive to the secondary female characters. The more widespread use of a female proto-character creates a broader narrative of the effects of the male gaze. In *As You Like It*, Jaques's diatribe on the 'unworthy shoulders' of city women is accompanied by a background illustration in which three anonymous *kyara* pose, surrounded by shopping bags and various commodities (Figure 45). These objects may remind the reader of the *kyara*'s association with feminine

commodification. The ‘aesthetics of sameness’ evident in the illustration lends weight to Jaques’s question, ‘who can come in and say that I mean her / When such a one is her neighbour?’ (II.vii.77-8). The *kyara*’s appearance here is invoked by male speech – much like the image of Rosalind and Celia described above – again suggesting that it is a model of femininity created by men. Its manifestation in anonymous women, rather than named characters, indicates that the *kyara* represents a much broader pattern of masculine objectification. As with the previously discussed image (which closely precedes this in the adaptation), the effect is to indicate that the *kyara* is a product of the male gaze and not merely its object. Consequently, Jaques’s generalising question can be interpreted as revealing more about his attitudes towards women than about the women he criticises.

The male gaze’s homogenising, reductive effect is also evident in *Twelfth Night*, particularly in the full-page illustration accompanying Feste’s song ‘Come Away Death,’ which makes similar use of the *kyara* (Figure 46). The song’s performance is not illustrated, and neither is the narrative it relates. Instead, the page consists of a montage of images against a starry background including Feste’s hat, a planet and, most prominently, a slender young woman with billowing hair and clothes, her eyes demurely lowered. The montage constitutes a fantasyscape, perhaps representing the space into which the music transports the lovesick Orsino. This is corroborated by the sequence of frames at the top of the following page (p.85). A series of increasingly wide frames depicting a bubble recreate the effect of a cinematic fade-in. The series culminates in a broader frame with similar bubbles in the background, depicting Orsino in profile with his eyes closed; the final frame in the sequence closely replicates the preceding one, but shows Orsino with his eyes open. The cumulative effect is to suggest a withdrawal from the fantasy induced by the song. The woman who dominates the preceding page is therefore quite overtly the object of Orsino’s fantasy. Her exaggerated size and passivity embody the unrealistic expectations Orsino has already demonstrated regarding romantic love and women. The adaptation thus draws attention to the passive *kyara* as an unrealistic ideal, as an ideal constructed by men, and as an ideal which can be rejected even by the women who seemingly embody it within the narrative – as shown when Olivia dismisses Orsino’s suit.

These adaptations seem to foreground the male gaze as objectifying female characters. Both also go further and suggest that male spectatorship actively shapes a stereotypical image of femininity which is passive and sexually receptive. In the case of *Twelfth Night*, the representation of Feste’s song for the Duke Orsino, as discussed above, further implies that this passive image is reinforced by officially sanctioned art forms, in this case a song, within the visual narrative. Neither adaptation abandons the *kyara* stereotype completely or presents a radically alternative feminine aesthetic. However, both adaptations take incremental steps towards empowering female audiences by exposing masculine

spectatorship and inviting negative responses to those who practise it. The next section suggests that the adaptations present crossdressing as a means by which Viola and Rosalind are able to evade the male gaze and embody a different model of feminine identity.

Crossdressing and Adolescent Differentiation

The adaptations' use of the shojo *kyara* seems to represent the desirable end point of the feminine adolescent phase, albeit one mediated by an intrusive male gaze. However, as noted above, the aesthetic of the *kyara* incorporates juvenile qualities which also aligns it with pre-adolescent childhood. Furthermore, the *kyara* propagates an 'aesthetic of sameness' between young women and thus embodies a pre-sexual stage of girlhood even as it eroticises the body in anticipation of heterosexual relationships. Celia and Olivia are eroticised in a way that Rosalind and Viola are not. However, the crossdressing heroines are still depicted using the same template of features and proportions as their more overtly objectified companions. In this respect, the *kyara* is not only a symbolic outcome of adolescence but also its point of departure. It embodies the childlike uniformity from which the adolescent must differentiate themselves to progress through the rites of feminine adulthood and achieve selfhood.

Shojo's aesthetic of sameness visually echoes the notion of the 'paradisa' or 'idealised childhood twinship' in Shakespeare's works. This describes characters who have been friends from youth and who rhapsodise about their past relationship, often overemphasising the similarities between them.¹⁸³ An instance of this occurs in *As You Like It*, when Celia comments on her childhood friendship with Rosalind:

We still have slept together
Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together;
And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans,
Still we went coupled, and inseparable.

(I.iii.70-3)

As Garber observes, every instance of idealised twinship is eventually 'superseded by romantic heterosexual love.'¹⁸⁴ Elsewhere, she suggests that the twin image is 'a sign of interchangeability and lack of differentiation,' while 'individuation, the finding and asserting of identity, is [...] closely related to sexual maturity.'¹⁸⁵ Garber compares the homosocial bonds practised in the Shakespearean idealised twinship to the ties of the nuclear family, noting that both must be left behind in order for the individual to 'contract new bonds.'¹⁸⁶ Shojo's aesthetic of sameness may similarly be said to represent the social or familial bonds of early life. Viola's

¹⁸³ Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004), p.44; Ruth Nevo, *Comic Transformations in Shakespeare* (London: Methuen, 1980), p.102.

¹⁸⁴ Garber, p.44.

¹⁸⁵ Garber, *Coming of Age in Shakespeare*, pp.31-2.

¹⁸⁶ Garber, p.30.

twinship with Sebastian is another such bond which must be displaced to make way for a more mature, individualised identity.

Both adaptations seem to recognise the plays' twinships as signifiers of childhood, and present crossdressing as a means of achieving adolescent individuation. In both, accounts of twinship are illustrated in a manner reminiscent of the Chinese taijitu symbol, in which the biological or idealised twins take the place of the corresponding yin and yang components (*As You Like It*, Figure 47; *Twelfth Night*, Figure 48). The symbol traditionally represents the transcendental unity of its composite parts and therefore consolidates the group identification within the twinships.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, its circular structure and the depiction of each twin in the foetal position also tacitly recall the womb, visually anchoring the twinned relationship to juvenescence.

Whereas Viola and Sebastian experience a forced separation after the shipwreck, Rosalind and Celia's bond is not challenged in the same way. In the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, the continued presence of Rosalind's imagined twin is subtly portrayed as a hindrance to her developing relationship with Orlando. The evolving intimacy between Rosalind and Orlando is conveyed through sequences of frames which alternate between their faces. Throughout the narrative, these sequences are interrupted – often comically – by Celia's appearance. For instance, nine frames from Act 1 Scene 2 alternate between Rosalind and Orlando after they first meet, ending with Rosalind's blessing, 'the little strength that I have, I would it were with you' (Figure 49). Celia's reappearance in the next frame to add 'and mine, to eke out hers,' is humorously sudden but also intrusive: it breaks the illusion of privacy afforded by the preceding sequence's exclusive focus on Rosalind and Orlando (p.45). The repetition of this pattern in later scenes where all three are present suggest that, from the earliest moments of Rosalind's romantic interest, the ongoing presence of her childhood friend is obtrusive.

Correspondingly, Rosalind's infatuation with Orlando increasingly alters the nature of her interactions with Celia. Early depictions of the cousins, both in scenes where they are present and in illustrations to the speeches of others, emphasise points of physical contact between the two. For instance, in their first appearance, invoked by the wrestler Charles, one image shows them holding hands while a second portrays Rosalind comforting Celia (p.21; Figure 35). Throughout the first act, similarly affectionate and comforting gestures are often exchanged between the pair (for further examples, see pp.65-66). However, as the narrative and Rosalind's courtship of Orlando progress, exchanges between the cousins in which he is discussed are characterised by a lack of eye contact and increasingly self-referential gestures, in which their hands are raised to indicate themselves instead of reaching out to one another

¹⁸⁷ Paul Gladston, *Deconstructing Contemporary Chinese Art* (New York and London: Springer, 2016), p.57.

as in earlier appearances (Figure 50). The cousins hug after the scene in which Celia performs a mock wedding for Ganymede-as-Rosalind and Orlando, but after Rosalind exclaims ‘that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love!’ Celia breaks off the embrace by slapping Rosalind’s bottom, a crude and somewhat sexualised gesture at odds with their previous tenderness (p.164). In the final two frames in the sequence, Celia looks dejected as Rosalind reiterates, ‘I am in love’ and turns away from her. The sequence corroborates the sense of Rosalind’s relationship with Orlando displacing her earlier bond with Celia, and the weakening of the childhood twinship is physically encoded throughout the adaptation by the shifting depiction of gestures.

Viola’s and Sebastian’s separation for most of *Twelfth Night*’s narrative precludes direct comparison to the changing twinned relationship seen in *As You Like It*. However, Sebastian indirectly impedes Viola’s relationship with Orsino since it is his appearance she adopts as her male disguise. Furthermore, while their bond is destabilised by the circumstances of their separation (which leads each to believe the other is dead), the twinship is also arguably suspended by Viola adopting Sebastian’s appearance: as Cesario, she performs both halves of the twinship herself. Rosalind’s crossdressing has a similar function, breaking the illusion of her twinship with Celia. Crossdressing imbues Viola and Rosalind with a gender-fluidity which lessens the influence of their childhood relationships. Though temporarily delaying their assumption of sexualised gender identities, it circuitously enables their heterosexual relationships by creating the space for individualisation.

Crossdressing enables the protagonists to move towards maturity less fractiously than other instances of the idealised twinship, such as Hermia and Helena in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Valentine and Proteus in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, or the more advanced Leontes and Polixenes in *The Winter’s Tale*. In these cases, a lack of differentiation results in conflict and potential violence. Nevertheless, crossdressing can be interpreted as a division of the self which undermines the cohesion of identity perceived as the desirable result of adolescence.¹⁸⁸ In both adaptations, this division is alluded to in the images surrounding Rosalind and Viola’s initial transformation into their crossdressed identities.

In *As You Like It*, the process of transformation is immediately preceded by a sequence of frames in which Celia and Rosalind envisage their disguised identities, who appear alongside them (Figure 51). However, these projections are markedly different in nature. Celia remains in the foreground, overlapping the image of Aliena, who shares a similar pose. In contrast, Rosalind is positioned slightly behind the vision of Ganymede, kneeling demurely with her hands clasped under her chin and her eyes closed, while her soon-to-be adopted

¹⁸⁸ Ryuta Minami, ‘Shakespeare for Japanese Popular Culture: Shojo Manga, Takarazuka and *Twelfth Night*’ in *Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance* ed. Dennis Kennedy, Yong Li Lan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.111.

persona stands with a hand on one hip, facing the opposite direction and staring confidently back at the reader. Between the two figures, the undulating lines in the background suggest an unidentifiable substance is separating. Side by side, Celia's adopted guise appears as a natural continuation or extension of her own identity, while Rosalind's transformation seems to entail the abjection of her feminine self.

Similarly, in *Twelfth Night*, Viola's transformation into the boy page Cesario enacts a visual severance (Figure 52). On the double-page spread, Viola appears in her feminine attire in three images on the left, and as Cesario in two images on the far right. Between these two groups of images, the adoption of her disguise is signified by a page-long frame depicting a pair of scissors with hair falling from them. This long vertical frame bisects the spread but is also divided internally by the horizontal line of the scissors, which cut across the longer vertical movement of the falling hair. The multiple severances enacted in this composition suggest a similar division within Viola's self. Furthermore, as in *As You Like It*, there is a notable difference between the direction of Viola's gaze in her final appearance undisguised, where she appraises herself in a mirror, and the final frame on the page where, as Cesario, she stares back at the reader over her shoulder. Despite shōjo manga's investment in constructing feminine subjectivity, the problematic implication of these particular sequences seems to be that it is only when Viola and Rosalind adopt male identities that they are granted agency as spectating subjects and are able to return the reader's gaze.

The initial adoption of crossdressed identities is encoded as an act of separation in both adaptations, and crossdressing instigates a gender fluidity which characterises the adolescent period of transition for Viola and Rosalind. The graphic novels' use of crossdressing might therefore be considered a somatic rendering of Gennep's three phases defining rites of passage. However, where Gennep's phases are conceptualised in terms of an individual's relationship to social and familial groups, the adaptations appear to reproduce the process for the internal development of the protagonists. Gennep's final stage, reintegration, is represented in the plays when Viola and Rosalind unite with their partners and re-establish their positions in society. Does this suggest, though, that the adaptations include images which suggest that, at the conclusion of the narratives, Rosalind and Viola's male identities are incorporated – or reintegrated – into their sense of selfhood? In both, moments in which the protagonists come close to acknowledging their concealed gender identities are accompanied by illustrations showing their original, gender-normative appearances. In *Twelfth Night*, this image accompanies Viola's assertion that 'what I am and what I would are as secret as maidenhead' (Figure 53), while in *As You Like It* the comparable moment comes when Rosalind tells Oliver, 'in faith, I should have been a woman by right' (Figure 54). In both cases, the original identity is depicted in fainter outline behind Cesario and Ganymede, overlapping with them and appearing in exactly the same pose and with the same

expression. This duplication suggests a greater accord between the different personas than the initial process of transformation, visually affirming Juliet Dusinberre's assertion that Rosalind and Viola come to 'travel easily between the world of men and the world of women' and 'extend rather than endanger their sense of self when they assume a man's dress.'¹⁸⁹

The process of integration is evident again in the final scenes of both adaptations, where Viola and Rosalind both appear in gender-normative clothing again. In Viola's case, her dress in her final appearance is lower cut than the one she wore before her disguise, signalling her adoption of a sexualised gender identity, but her short hair maintains a point of continuity with her appearance as Cesario (Figure 55). Additionally, the male clothing and ribbons encircling Viola and Orsino recall the structure of the taijitu symbol. The symbol's designation of unity between composite parts perhaps implies that the presence of Viola's masculine and feminine clothes should be interpreted as reflecting the successful unification of two gender identities. In *As You Like It*, Rosalind's incorporation of her different gendered identities is implied through the creation of a parallel between her final appearance as Ganymede and her appearance on the final page. As Ganymede exits for the last time, in the final frame she is depicted winking back at the reader over her shoulder (Figure 56). During the epilogue, this conspiratorial motion is repeated, suggesting more continuity with her male identity than is connoted by her feminine apparel (Figure 57). Further, the same frame positions Rosalind between Celia and Orlando, both of whom gaze at her, perhaps intimating the achievement of a balance between homosocial and heterosexual, male and female identities. In both cases, the adaptations stop short of imbuing the crossdressing protagonists with an entirely homogenous gender identity, instead hinting at a more independent process of adolescent self-production. How can this independence be reconciled with narratives that resolve in marriage? The next section explores how both adaptations represent desire in ways which might redress the power balance in the plays' relationships.

Practising Adolescent Desire

As previously discussed, the shojo adaptations encode male desire as idolatrous and objectifying. Orsino's fetishisation of Olivia's body is explored above; however, as Dusinberre suggests, the idolatrous gaze also underpins Orlando's 'tedious homily of love' for Rosalind, carved into the trees of Arden (III.ii.151-2).¹⁹⁰ Viola and Rosalind's crossdressed guises enable them to interact with the objects of their desire in ways which evade the idolatrous gaze. Dusinberre observes: 'Orsino [...] who can only address the high fantastical to the Lady Olivia,

¹⁸⁹ Dusinberre, p.264.

¹⁹⁰ Dusinberre, pp.158-9.

talks to his page as to a rational being. Had Rosalind worn a skirt, Orlando may have courted her with the masculine panache which she delights to display in the body of Ganymede.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Dusinberre, p.245.

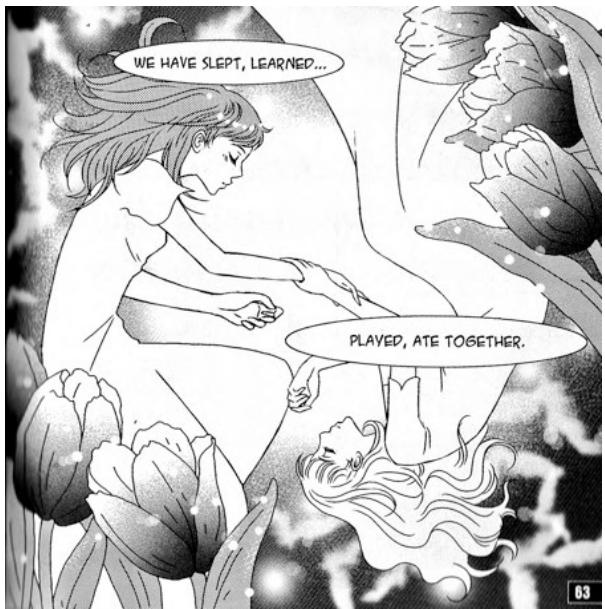


Figure 47: *As You Like It* taijitu, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.63.



Figure 48: *Twelfth Night* taijitu, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.62-3.



Figure 49: *Rosalind and Orlando, Interrupted by Celia*, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.44.45.



Figure 50: Celia's Self-Referential Gestures, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.146-7.



Figure 51: Rosalind and Celia's Dual Identities, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.68-9.

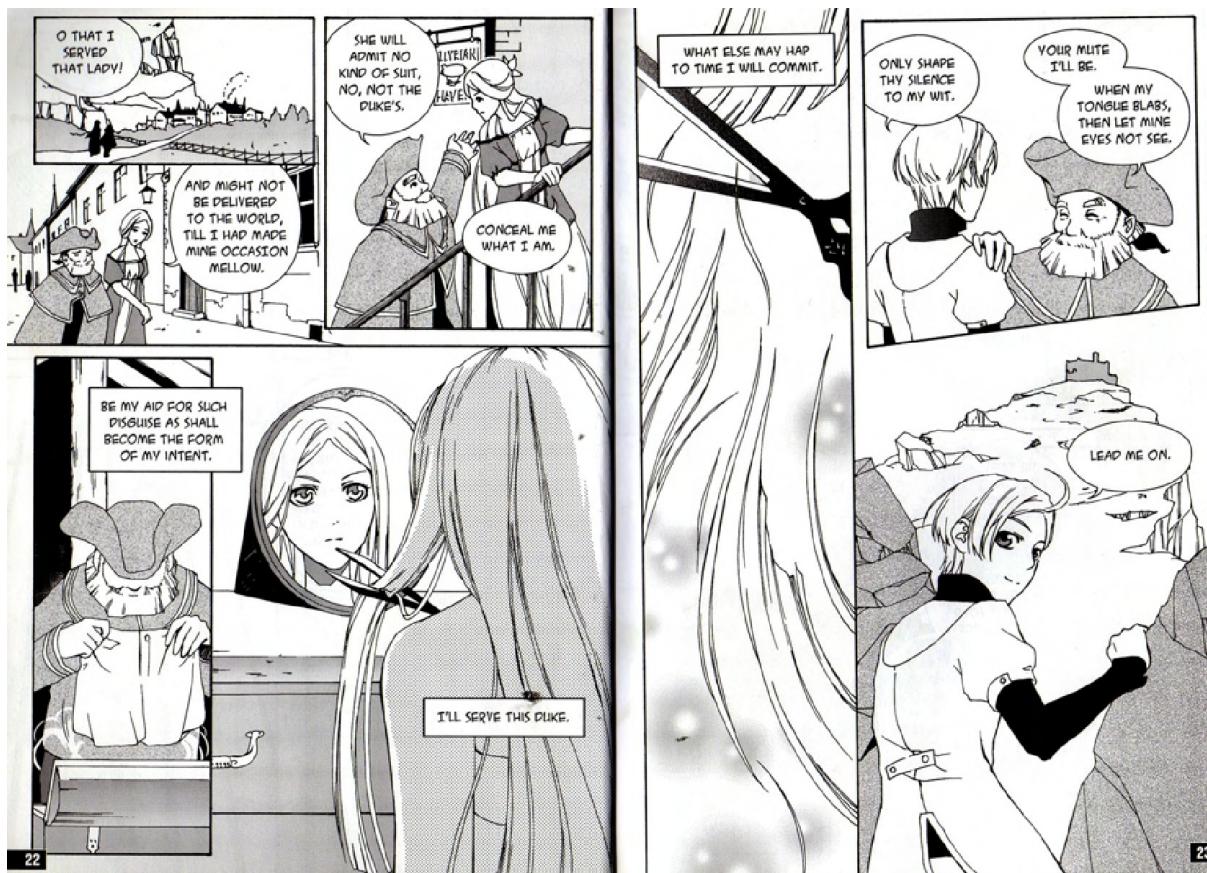


Figure 52: Viola's Transformation, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.22-3.

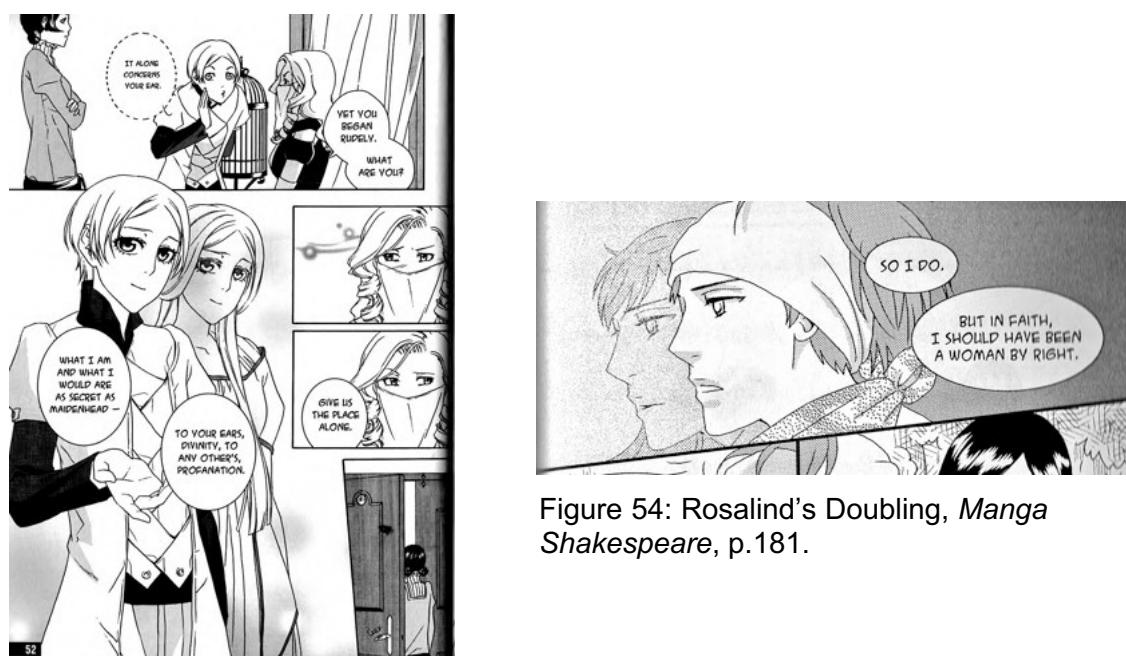


Figure 53: Viola's Doubling, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.52.



Figure 55: Viola's Final Appearance, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.205.



Figure 56: Rosalind's Last Appearance as Ganymede, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.193.

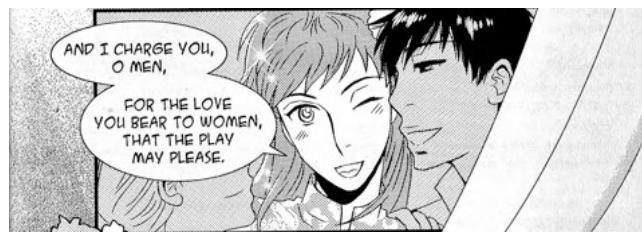


Figure 57: Rosalind's Last Speech, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.205.



Figure 58: An Example of Rosalind and Orlando's Interactions, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.136-7.

However, the female protagonists' disguises also grant them a proximity to their romantic interests in which they can become desiring subjects. Both adaptations depict the feminine practice of desire in ways which distinguish it from the mode of fantasy in which the male characters indulge. In both cases, the protagonists' practice of desire is ultimately transformative: it corrects their romantic interests' idolising tendencies.

In both adaptations desire is the most prominent site or expression of feminine subjectivity. The perspectives of Rosalind and Viola are most consistently conflated with the reader when they are gazing at Orlando and Orsino. In *As You Like It*, Celia and Rosalind's early interactions are predominantly rendered in frames which depict both of them (pp.64-71); in contrast, Rosalind's exchanges with Orlando are characterised by frames which depict him from her perspective (pp.43-45; pp.134-37; Figure 58). Similarly, where Viola and Sebastian's appearance together utilise mirroring within frames to emphasise their duality (pp.62-3; pp.190-1), her interactions with Orsino are intersected with frames which reveal her perspective (p.81; p.183; Figure 60). Additionally, multiple frames show Viola gazing upon an oblivious Orsino (p.81; pp.173-4; Figure 61). While her perspective is not disclosed in such frames, they work together with others in which it is to establish her as a gazing subject; further, as the only witness to Viola's gaze, the reader becomes complicit in it even without sharing it. In both adaptations, the concomitance of the protagonists' subjective gaze with the objects of heterosexual desire reinforces the association between the emergence of individuated selfhood and the adolescent interval.

The nature of Rosalind and Viola's gaze and their interactions with their romantic interests reveal at least three significant differences from the mode of desire exhibited by the male characters. First, while frames which portray Orsino and Orlando from the perspective of the female protagonists still recreate a selective gaze – showing only portions of their bodies – this gaze is neither as anonymising or as objectifying as the gaze so frequently directed at Olivia and Celia. As the examples cited above demonstrate, Rosalind's gaze consistently focuses on Orlando's face, and Viola's is similarly directed towards Orsino's face or neck. These images are sensualised because of the intimacy they suggest, but also precisely because they are nonsexual in nature and maintain a chaste distance from the observed object. The gaze they construct is therefore more individuated than the homogenously sexualised gaze associated with certain male characters, though perhaps it is also intended to indicate the spectators' pre-sexual status.

Secondly, as suggested above, feminine desire is constructed and practised through physical proximity, in contrast to the distancing fantasies and mediations of the male gaze. Orsino's fetishisation of Olivia's image in the opening pages of the adaptation does not require her presence and is in keeping with the play's separation of the two until the final scene. Similarly, Orlando's verses are produced and displayed in Rosalind's absence: she is an

audience to her own elevation (or reduction) to an object of fantasy. These examples illustrate how, in both adaptations, male characters use art forms (portraiture and poetry, but also Feste's song, discussed above) to construct their fantasies of women. This might encourage readers to reflect on the role of the male gaze in forming images of women in popular culture. Dusinberre suggests a direct correlation between the idolatrous gaze and the physical absence of its object, asserting that 'idolatry cannot accommodate the facts of the physical world.'¹⁹² In contrast, as the sequences cited above illustrate, the desiring gaze of the female protagonists is most fully realised in the presence of its objects. Further, feminine desire is consistently inscribed on the bodies of its subjects through the depiction of blushes and sweat drops when Rosalind and Viola interact with Orlando and Orsino (for examples see *As You Like It* pp.52-3; pp.134-5; pp.158-9; Figure 62; *Twelfth Night* p.35; p.82; p.87; Figure 63). Where male desire is predicated on the reproduction of homogenous, static images of feminine objects, Rosalind and Viola suggest an 'awareness of mutability' in their roles as desiring subjects by succumbing to the physical effects of desire.¹⁹³

Finally, in addition to requiring the presence of their romantic interests, the mode of desire practised by Rosalind and Viola demands and instigates a reciprocity absent from the fantasising male gaze. As noted above, Viola's desire for Orsino is in part manifested in a series of unreturned gazes. However, she is able to circumvent this lack of reciprocation by subverting the objectification of the male gaze. The moment in which Viola expresses her love for Orsino by displacing it onto a sister who 'loved a man, as it might be perhaps, were I a woman, I should love your lordship,' is accompanied by an illustration of a weeping statue, an icon of 'patience, on a monument, smiling at grief' (Figure 64). The statue closely resembles Viola as she appears before adopting her masculine disguise, and the composition of the page positions it so that it roughly reciprocates Viola's lowered gaze, recollecting her self-reflective look in the final frame before her transformation (p.22). While it is also depicted as an object on Orsino's balcony, the statue's exaggerated size and significant positioning at this point seem to conflate it with Viola's perspective and narrative agency.

In displacing her own identity onto that of a statue, Viola arguably reproduces the mediated, objectifying tendency of the male gaze. However, she also challenges it through vocalising her concealed lovesickness, and the statue's demonstrative tears contrast with the static, passive images of femininity which the male gaze more frequently takes as its object within the adaptation. The weeping statue also subverts sculpture's association with the idealised classical body, which Bakhtin characterises as presenting 'an entirely finished, completed, strictly limited body' and where 'all orifices of the body are closed'.¹⁹⁴ The

¹⁹² Dusinberre, p.167.

¹⁹³ Dusinberre, p.169.

¹⁹⁴ Bakhtin, p.320.

adaptation's statue more closely resembles the leakiness of the Bakhtinian grotesque than this hermetic model. In tacitly taking the statue as her object, Viola performs an instance of self-production which confronts the idolatrous tendency of the male gaze with a physical and internal reality it is otherwise incapable of acknowledging. Its effect is immediate: the remaining three frames all depict Orsino directing his gaze towards Viola, establishing a redirection of his interest before the pair's next appearance together in the final scene, where their eventual union is initiated by a mutual gaze (Figures 65-6).

As already noted, Rosalind and Orlando's exchanges are characterised by frames alternating between them, establishing a more consistently reciprocal gaze than that enjoyed by Viola. However, their relationship culminates with a series of images in which they also touch each other through holding hands and interlocking fingers (featured in four frames during their performed wedding, Figure 67). This chaste gesture almost climaxes in the more intimate touch of a kiss, anticipated across two frames and then comically aborted, precipitating Orlando's abrupt departure (Figure 68). In their next encounter Orlando admits that he can no longer be satisfied by feigning courtship with Ganymede, hastening Rosalind's renunciation of her male guise (p.185). Rosalind's reproduction of her own identity while disguised as Ganymede thus draws Orlando into a reciprocal relationship which the adaptation encodes through eloquent physical interactions, and in doing so teaches him to reject the degree of distance inherent in his initial masculine fantasy of desire.

Rosalind and Viola's disguised bodies thus provide both the means by which they initially evade the idolatrous gaze of their romantic partners and the means by which they eventually overcome it. By drawing Orlando and Orsino into reciprocal relationships, visualised by the adaptations in somatic terms, they not only eliminate the physical distance between them but also draw the adolescent interval to a close.

This chapter has shown how adaptations in shōjo manga can help cast new light on the crossdressing comedies as narratives of feminine adolescence. In the same way that the previous chapter showed that engaging with contemporary monster theory and the position of the monster in popular culture can augment readings of *The Tempest* in adaptation, so the use of shōjo manga places these plays in a vital and current debate about depictions of young women and representations of feminine subjectivity. As with the previous chapter, this argument is furthered by looking at the adaptations' use of internal mediatisation – used in versions of *The Tempest* to convey power and manipulation – to reflect on the construction of female body image and the effects of the male gaze. Again, as in Chapter 1, this discussion demonstrated the ability of graphic novels to foreground small gestures or details. This degree of precision is harder to achieve on stage: in *The Tempest* graphic novels, we saw how close-

ups of hands conveyed Prospero's coercion of other characters; in these adaptations, similar close-ups are used to convey feelings such as intimacy and yearning.

Thus far, the thesis has focused on the bodies of characters who are, or who temporarily become, marginalised, lacking in power, and separated from society. This reflects the interrelations between subjugated demographics and the body suggested in my introduction. In contrast, the next chapter explores bodies at the centre of political power and public life in *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar*. In the case of Richard III, his is still an abject body, but one which nevertheless wields power. The chapter will expand the focus of the thesis by shifting from exploring female experience to examining predominantly male environments and concerns. Correspondingly, we will see a shift from the private forms of mediatisation explored in this chapter to the reproduction of bodies as public icons and sites of power, subject to appropriation, manipulation and usurpation.

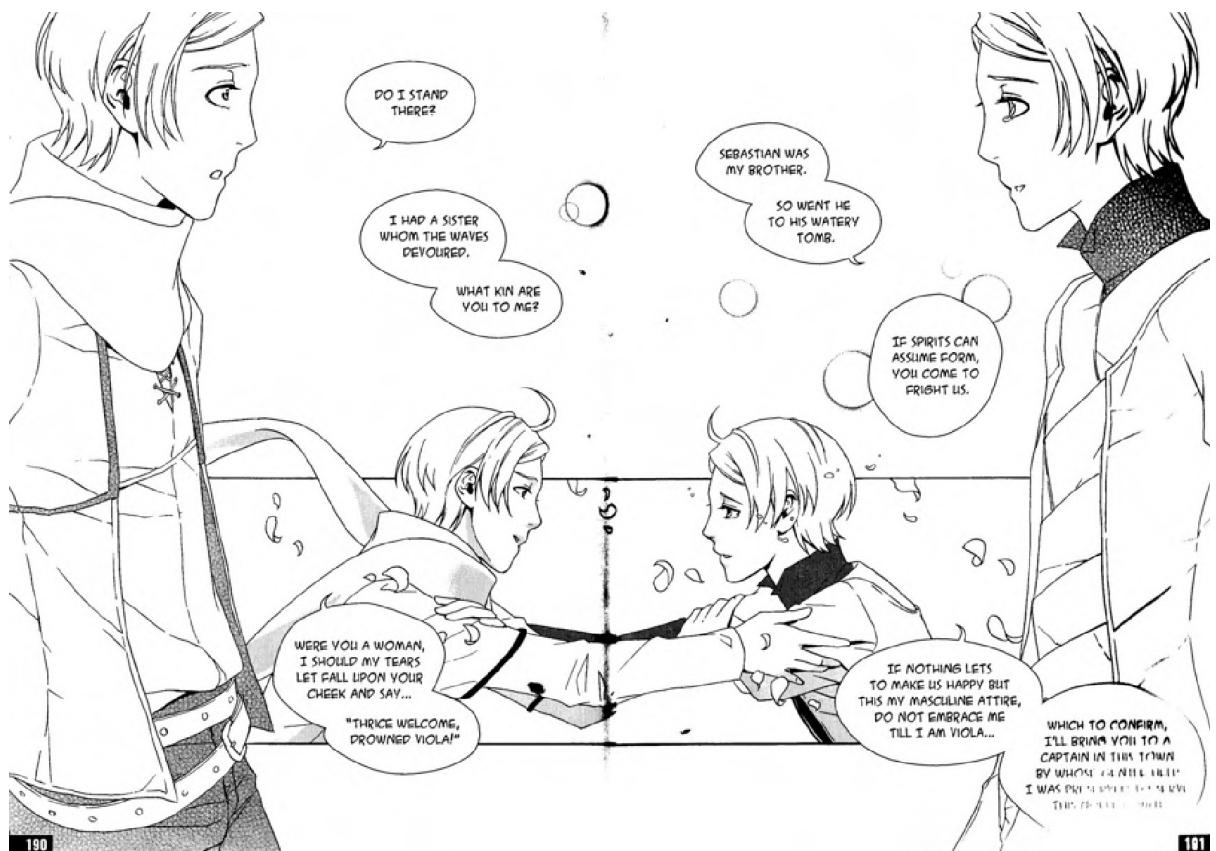


Figure 59: Viola and Sebastian's Mirroring, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.190-1.



Figure 60: Viola's Gaze 1,
Manga Shakespeare, p.81.



Figure 61: Viola's Gaze 2,
Manga Shakespeare, p.173.



Figure 62: Rosalind and Orlando's Blushes and Sweat, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.134-5.



Figure 63: Examples of Viola's Blushes, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.82; p.87.



Figure 64: Viola and The Statue, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.88-9.



Figure 65: Orsino Redirects His Gaze Towards Viola, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.90.



Figure 66: Orsino and Viola Unite, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.193.



Figure 67: Rosalind and Orlando's Mock Wedding 1, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.160-1.



Figure 68: Rosalind and Orlando's Mock Wedding 2, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.162-3.

Chapter 3

Unruly Bodies: Somatic Power and Political Turmoil in *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar*

So far we have looked at the representations of abjected bodies – colonial, bestial and young women's – in contemporary mediatisations of Shakespeare and shown how their abjection compounds their social and political marginality and disempowerment (even as the adaptations challenge this). But what happens when the body belongs to someone with power? This chapter focuses primarily on the UK publisher SelfMadeHero's graphic novel adaptations of *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar* as part of the *Manga Shakespeare* series.¹⁹⁵ It argues that both graphic novels respond to and develop Shakespeare's portrayal of bodies as visual metaphors for power and vessels of political agency. Moreover, these adaptations establish connections between physical dominance, political power, and narrative control, and both reflect on how iconic bodies can be appropriated within the plays as well as in the process of adaptation. The chapter goes on to examine how the metafictional and intertextual qualities of the *Kill Shakespeare* graphic novel series create similar relationships between physicality, power and narrative agency. The *Kill Shakespeare* series removes characters from the plots of Shakespeare's plays and incorporates them into a new narrative. Assessing characters' appearances and actions in this new context can reveal which facets of the Shakespearean 'originals' have transcended the plays and been absorbed into popular culture. In turn, this provides another way for us to understand the impact of applying this kind of representation to Shakespeare. The chapter poses the following questions: how are politically prominent bodies depicted in contemporary graphic novel adaptations of Shakespeare's plays? How is the political turmoil of both plays encoded in the ways that bodies are depicted in these adaptations? Do the depictions of bodies in these adaptations reflect other critical or creative interpretations of the function of bodies in the plays as vehicles for political action? In what ways might the depiction of bodies in graphic novel adaptations add to our understanding of the plays' power struggles?

Bodies and Power in Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar*

Richard III and Julius Caesar are both subject to physical transformations in Shakespeare's dramatisations of their lives. The playwright's exaggeration of Richard's deformity has long been assumed, with the attribution of a limp in particular considered a Shakespearean invention.¹⁹⁶ Vivian Thomas asserts that Caesar's partial deafness is, likewise, a

¹⁹⁵ *Richard III* (2007), *Julius Caesar* (2008). For full publication details of primary materials, see Bibliography.

¹⁹⁶ James Siemon, ed., *King Richard III* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2009), p.3. See also Marie-Helene Besnault and Michel Bitot, 'Historical legacy and fiction: the poetical reinvention of King Richard III' in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.106-7.

Shakespearean fabrication.¹⁹⁷ Shakespeare also notably changes the number of wounds Caesar receives from the twenty-three recorded in Plutarch to thirty-three, a revision which some critics have suggested is intended to create a parallel with Christ, who died at the age of thirty-three.¹⁹⁸ In both cases, then, Shakespeare appropriates and refashions bodies from the available source texts, and makes them the central concerns of the narratives in which they appear. With these refashionings in mind, this chapter's opening section looks at how these transformed bodies are imbued with political significance in their respective plays.

As a play, *Richard III* seems to intimate that Richard's physical shortcomings motivate his political machinations. In his opening soliloquy, he declares himself to be 'deformed, unfinished, [...] scarce half made up' (I.i.20-1), and therefore 'not shaped for sportive tricks' and 'determined to prove a villain' (I.i.14; 30). This assertion – that his antagonism is physiologically determined – foregrounds what David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder call 'bold equations between external deformity and psychic immorality' in the early modern period.¹⁹⁹ Francis Bacon expressed this attitude in 'Of Deformity', noting:

Deformed persons are commonly even with nature; for as nature hath done ill by them, so do they by nature; being for the most part (as the Scripture saith), 'void of natural affection'; and so they have their revenge of nature. Certainly there is a consent between the body and the mind; and where nature erreth in the one, she ventureth in the other [...] ²⁰⁰

The play insists on Richard's physical difference and subsequent unsuitability to rule, leading many to interpret Shakespeare as either the 'unwitting dupe' or 'co-conspirator' of earlier chroniclers of Richard's reign in a political project to validate the Tudor ascendency by denigrating Richard as 'self-evidently a villain'.²⁰¹ Richard has frequently been read as the maligned object of providential history, 'a political emblem for human degradation, set against the idealised regeneration, the divine purpose represented by Richmond'.²⁰² Richard's body thus determines his Machiavellian rise to power but also enables his opponents to challenge and invalidate that power, both within the play's narrative and in the broader progress of historiography. Marjorie Garber suggests that his 'twisted and misshapen' body may be read

¹⁹⁷ Vivian Thomas, 'Shakespeare's Sources: Translations, Transformations, and Intertextuality in *Julius Caesar*' in *Julius Caesar: New Critical Essays*, ed. Horst Zander (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), p.105.

¹⁹⁸ See, for instance: Maurice Hunt, 'Cobbling Souls in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*' in *Shakespeare's Christianity: The Protestant and Catholic Poetics of Julius Caesar, Macbeth, and Hamlet*, ed. Beatrice Batson (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), p.112; Nasser Behngar, 'Who is Shakespeare's Julius Caesar?' in *Shakespeare and the Body Politic*, ed. Bernard J Dobski, Dustin A. Gish (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), p.79; Anselm Haverkamp, *Genealogies of Power: A Whispering of Nothing in Hamlet, Richard II, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice and The Winter's Tale* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), p.69.

¹⁹⁹ David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p.102.

²⁰⁰ Francis Bacon, 'Of Deformity' in *The Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral*, ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.99.

²⁰¹ Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers: Literature as Uncanny Causality* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p.40.

²⁰² Besnault and Bitot, pp.106-7.

as a means of encoding ‘the whole strategy of history as a necessary deforming and unforming,’ establishing Richard’s body as subject to – and reflective of – the narrative control of historians and dramatists.²⁰³

However, as Rebecca Lemon asserts, Richard’s body is ‘more interpretatively rich’ than the ‘simplistic link of deformity and villainy allows,’ and this complicates a stable reading of the character as a victim of a distorted history.²⁰⁴ The following close reading explores the textual evidence for Richard’s awareness of his body’s malleable significations and his conscious manipulation of its meanings at different moments throughout the narrative. The purpose of this is to establish the breadth of material in the play to which the graphic novel adaptation responds in its visual rendering of Richard’s body. Richard himself subverts his body’s meanings over the course of the first two scenes. In his opening soliloquy, he introduces a dichotomy between the role of a romantic lover and his own predetermined path: ‘Since I cannot prove a lover [...] I am determined to prove a villain.’ (I.i.28-30) Nevertheless, in the following scene he combines these seemingly antithetical roles in order to woo Lady Anne. Anne is aware of Richard’s villainy: she initially addresses him as ‘Thou dreadful minister of hell!’ (I.ii.46) As the scene progresses, her epithets for him include ‘thou lump of foul deformity’ (I.ii.57) and ‘hedgehog’ (I.ii.104). These insults are part of a broader pattern in the play in which Richard’s character is aligned with his physical difference, which is often described or reflected in bestial terms similar to those applied to Caliban in *The Tempest*. Despite recognising what Richard himself claims is physically obvious about his character, Anne is nevertheless persuaded to marry him by the end of the scene. This unlikely conquest, along with Richard’s later successful deceptions, confound what Michael Torrey describes as the ‘semiotic status of his deformity’ and create the appearance of self-authorship and control over his body’s meanings.²⁰⁵

At the end of Act 1 Scene 2, Richard reflects on his success with Anne in a soliloquy which closely echoes and subverts his opening speech in the previous scene. Whereas Richard declares himself to be ‘cheated of feature by dissembling Nature’ (I.i.19), he describes Anne’s previous husband Edward as ‘framed in the prodigality of Nature’ (I.ii.246), inviting comparison between the virtuous Edward’s appearance and his own. Richard boasts that he has won Anne with ‘no friends to back my suit withal / But the plain devil and dissembling looks’ (I.ii.238-39). ‘Plain’ could mean ‘homely’ or ‘unattractive’ but could also be read as ‘open’ or ‘obvious’. Both senses are at work here: Richard’s physical ugliness is obvious, and – according to the medieval equivalence of disability and vice – so should be his malignant intent.

²⁰³ Garber, p.48.

²⁰⁴ Rebecca Lemon, ‘New Directions: Tyranny and the State of Exception in Shakespeare’s *Richard III*’ in *Richard III: A Critical Reader*, ed. Annaliese Connolly (London: Bloomsbury Arden, 2013), p.111.

²⁰⁵ Michael Torrey, “The plain devil and dissembling looks”: Ambivalent Physiognomy and Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, *English Literary Renaissance*, Vol. 30, No.2 (2000), pp.123-53, p.126; p.141.

Anne's insult at I.ii.46 aligns him with the diabolical, and in victory he appears to revel in the association: it has not stopped him achieving his aim. 'Plain' in the sense of 'open' contrasts with Richard's use of 'dissembling' to describe his looks. This echoes his earlier reference to 'dissembling Nature' but transfers the quality of deceit onto his own physical attributes, perhaps indicating that Richard is now taking a more active role in how his appearance is interpreted. His looks have been misleading in that, according to Richard's claim at I.i.28, they should preclude him playing the part of a lover, and yet he has successfully persuaded Anne to marry him despite the obvious discrepancy between her first husband and her current suitor. The Act 1 Scene 2 soliloquy goes further in anticipating Richard's strategy of physiognomic deceptions later in the play. Exploring this in greater detail helps us to understand Richard's seduction of Anne not just as a romantic conquest but as part of a broader agenda to seize political power. Richard's ascension to the throne requires an ever-greater number of people to be taken in by his corporeal refashioning: Anne functions as a preview audience. Whereas in the opening scene Richard declares that he is 'not made to court an amorous looking-glass' (I.i.14), he now boasts:

I do mistake my person all this while!
Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,
Myself to be a marvellous proper man.
I'll be at charges for a looking-glass
And entertain a score or two of tailors
To study fashions to adorn my body

I.ii.255-60

The recurring image of the looking-glass is in one sense ironic - it symbolises a vanity at odds with Richard's withering self-appraisal - but it is also significant as an emblem of self-reflection and as a projected image of the body which can be distorted. Richard's second reference to the looking-glass indicates a fresh interest in how other characters' perceptions of his body might be manipulated. Similarly, the Act 1 Scene 2 soliloquy revisits the image of Richard's shadow introduced in the opening scene. There, Richard claims to have:

No delight to pass away the time
Unless to see my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity.

I.i.25-7

In the later soliloquy, Richard concludes: 'Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass, / That I may see my shadow as I pass.' (I.ii.265-6). As with the looking-glass, this new appreciation for his shadow can be read as a performance of mock-vanity. However, like a mirror's reflection, a shadow is another form of projected image which can be distorted and thus

misinterpreted. By revisiting these images in the second scene, Richard draws attention to his developing attitude to his appearance: in the opening soliloquy he is preoccupied with the limitations imposed by his deformity, but later acknowledges alternative interpretations of his body and how these may be manipulated to further his agenda.

Richard's new strategy of physical dissimulation is manifest in the reference to tailors being employed to 'adorn' his body at I.ii.259-60. There is perhaps another echo here of the opening soliloquy, where Richard claims to be 'scarce half made up' (I.i.21), arguably evoking an incomplete garment. However, while his body itself cannot be changed, Richard now sees that it can be embellished or obscured in ways which allow him to conceal his true nature and intentions. This pattern is expanded on in the following scene, when, having made a show of piously forgiving those who have brought about Clarence's imprisonment (in fact his own doing), Richard confides to the audience:

I clothe my naked villainy
With odd old ends, stol'n forth of Holy Writ,
And seem a saint when most I play the devil.

I.iii.335-7

Once again, Richard associates his character with his physical form in his description of his 'naked villainy'. However, by 'clothing' himself in the appearance of Christian virtue, Richard is able to negate his physiognomic meaning and mask his malevolence. This misdirection prefigures his later performance of piety at Baynard's Castle in Act 3 Scene 7. Facing resistance to his attempts to seize the throne, Richard appears 'aloft, between two Bishops' in a public pantomime which is narrated and interpreted by his accomplice Buckingham:

Two props of virtue for a Christian prince
To stay him from the fall of vanity;
And see a book of prayer in his hand,
True ornaments to know a holy man.

III.vii.95-98

Here, Richard's earlier metaphorical donning of scripture has become literal: he is using external symbols or 'ornaments' of religious fervour to create a misleading impression of his own internal qualities. Richard so successfully confuses those receiving his somatic signifiers that when he later tells a bold truth - 'I am unfit for state and majesty' (III.vii.205) - it is misconstrued as evidence of his modesty and reluctance to govern. When he finally accepts the crown that others have been persuaded to offer him, Richard does so in terms which further transfigure his body's meaning:

Since you will buckle fortune on my back,

To bear her burden, whe'er I will or no,
I must have patience to endure the load.

III.vii.227-9

The image of kingship as an unsought-weight on Richard's shoulders provides a spontaneous alternative interpretation of his spinal distortion. Rather than an external expression of his inner wickedness, it thus becomes an emblem of his personal sacrifice to ensure the stability of the country through his leadership. As demonstrated, Richard successfully adopts numerous roles – lover, holy man, king – which confound his body's prescribed meaning. His ability to perform these roles confounds his opening declaration that he is excluded from any path except for villainy. However, this does nothing to curb his nefarious schemes or political ambitions: instead, he uses his corporeal ambiguity to further his pursuit of power.

Many of the quotations identified above also hint at Richard possessing an awareness of theatrical tropes and mechanisms, aligning him closely with the medium in which he appears. The recurrent image of the looking-glass pre-empts Hamlet's advice to the players, when he suggests that the 'purpose of playing' is to 'hold [...] the mirror up to Nature' (III.ii.20-2). There are similar portents of Macbeth's rumination that 'Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage' (V.v.21) in Richard's contemplation of his own shadow. These images, as observed above, are both distorted simulacra of reality, and thus potent metaphors for theatrical illusion. Richard's repeated use of both suggests a metatheatrical awareness of his role as an actor both within the fiction of the play and as part of its performance. Richard's reference to the 'odd old ends' he uses to conceal his villainy has clear overtones of theatrical costuming, but may also allude specifically to the fact that early modern theatrical costume stores often depended on donations of cast-off clothing from members of the nobility.²⁰⁶ Buckingham's description of the bishops as 'two props' may not have been overtly theatrical at the time: James Siemon notes of these lines in his edition of the play that 'props' is not recorded in the sense of 'stage requisites' until the nineteenth century (p.298). Nevertheless, this is a meaning available to modern readers which further enhances the impression of Richard's theatrical awareness. This knowledge of stagecraft also tacitly extends the reach of his manipulations beyond other characters and plot points to the theatrical medium and the execution of the play itself. As will be seen in later analysis, the graphic novel adaptation adapts this illusion of narrative authority for its own medium.

This detailed analysis of the play helps to elucidate how scholars such as Linda Charnes have read Richard's manipulation of how other characters interpret his body as a metaphor for the processes of dramatic enactment. There is, she suggests, a 'principle of multiplicity' inherent in dramatic adaptation – in which the same characters are revived time

²⁰⁶ Peter Hyland, *Disguise on the Early Modern Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p.29.

and again by different actors and directors – which destabilises the relationship between characters and their textual identities, enabling them to ‘enact a desire to be their own originals’. Richard’s success in convincing others he is harmless, despite what his physical form suggests, may reflect a similar ambition to become self-determining.²⁰⁷ Interpretations like this attribute Richard with a physical agency within the narrative, which enables him to deliberately manipulate his body as a political tool. Such readings are important to the later analysis in this chapter, which will demonstrate that the manga adaptation of *Richard III* tacitly reflects both the historiographical and dramatic manipulations of Richard’s body and explores the possibility of his own somatic and narrative agency.

Can similar readings be performed focusing on Julius Caesar and his appearances in adaptations? While Caesar’s body is not as immediately iconic as Richard’s, it has nevertheless provoked a broad range of interpretations: as one component of a multi-faceted, diseased body politic, as a metaphor for the process of martyrdom and canonisation, and as a forcibly feminised corpse.²⁰⁸ Of vital relevance here, however, is the critical preoccupation – in the readings already cited and in many others – with blood as a central trope of the play. Gail Kern Paster observes that ‘one way of phrasing the play’s central political struggle up to the point at which civil war breaks out is to say that it occurs discursively as a struggle over kinds and meanings of blood and bleeding.’²⁰⁹ Similarly, Maurice Charney argues that the ‘central issue about the meaning of *Julius Caesar* is raised [...] by the imagery of blood.’²¹⁰ The play’s central characters all articulate a social or political position in terms of their and others’ blood. When Cassius laments, ‘Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!’ (I.ii.50), he initiates a sequence of associations between blood and superiority, both moral and social, which grows increasingly literal as the action progresses. Brutus rejects the need for the conspirators to swear an oath, invoking a similar ideal of noble Roman blood:

Every drop of blood
That every Roman bears, and nobly bears,
Is guilty of a several bastardy,
If he do break the smallest particle
Of any promise that hath passed from him.

III.i.36-40

²⁰⁷ Linda Charnes, *Notorious Identity: Materialising the Subject in Shakespeare* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp.8-9.

²⁰⁸ Martha Kalnin Diede, *Shakespeare’s Knowledgeable Body* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc, 2008), p.75; Lisa S. Starks-Estes, *Violence, Trauma, and Virtus in Shakespeare’s Roman Poems and Plays: Transforming Ovid* (Hounds Mills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.129; Coppelia Kahn, *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds and Women* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), p.104.

²⁰⁹ Gail Kern Paster, “In the Spirit of Men there is no Blood”: Blood as a Trope of Gender in *Julius Caesar*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No.3 (Autumn, 1989), pp.284-98, p.285.

²¹⁰ Maurice Charney, *Shakespeare’s Roman Plays: The Function of Imagery in the Drama* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), p.48.

As far as Brutus is concerned, the conspirators are physically bound to their cause by their blood; to break faith would be to tarnish themselves with the indelible stain of illegitimacy. Brutus envisages noble blood as an inherent Roman trait, whereas Cassius, whose plotting is more overtly motivated by a desire to secure his own supremacy, is invested in deplored the absence of the same blood. Nevertheless, the connections both men draw between blood and nobility reinforce their belief in their own worthiness, underpinning their aspirations to govern the city. In the aftermath of Caesar's assassination, Antony appropriates this ennoblement of blood, observing that the conspirators' swords have been 'made rich/With the most noble blood of all this world' (III.i.155-6). The visibility of Caesar's blood at this moment encourages a literal rather than metonymic interpretation of 'noble blood', grounding Rome's political crisis in somatic terms.

Caesar's conceptualisation of his body contrasts sharply with that of his antagonists. Where they are preoccupied with the fluid, protean matter of blood, he instead claims a state of physical solidity, asserting that he is constant as the northern star' (3.1.60). When confronted by the conspirators, Caesar (perhaps) unwittingly rejects their interpretation of blood as a signifier of superiority, dismissing it as an unseemly weakness he has overcome:

These couchings, and these lowly courtesies
May fire the blood of ordinary men,
And turn pre-ordinance and first decree
Into the law of children. Be not fond
To think that Caesar bears such rebel blood
That will be thawed from the true quality
With that which melteth fools [...]

III.i.36-42

Caesar's claims of solidity can be more thoroughly explored in the context of humoral theory. In the prevailing medical thought of the early modern period, physical and mental well-being were believed to depend on the balance of the four humours – of which blood was one – and moderating their movements around the body.²¹¹ An individual's susceptibility to the motions of the humours – and the emotional states they were believed to modulate – was a prevalent concern of the period.²¹² Each humour was associated with a particular combination of temperature and moisture, one of the classical elements, and a specific temperament: blood was categorized as hot and wet, relating to fire and sanguinity.²¹³ To 'fire the blood' was to provoke an emotional response, but might also create a dangerous imbalance in the elemental properties of the body. This could in turn have broader societal effects by allowing 'pre-

²¹¹ Paster, *Humoring the Body*, p.10; p.31.

²¹² Paster, *op cit.*, pp.10-11.

²¹³ Mark Waddell, *Magic, Science and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p.77.

ordinance and first decree', the laws of the land, to be disrupted by humoral influence. Caesar's images of thawing and melting similarly suggests the distorting, even corrosive, power of humoral imbalance. However, rather than recognising the humours as unstable forces to which all individuals are subject, Caesar suggests that he has mastered his: he distinguishes himself from those whose 'rebel blood' can become overheated, clouding their reason. Like Richard, Caesar masters what he and others perceive to be a physical flaw by promoting his own somatic self-image. The application of 'rebel' to blood is also loaded with dramatic irony, given the conspirators' preoccupation with blood when establishing their plot. Caesar returns to this theme later in the same scene:

Men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive;
Yet in the number I do know but one
That unassailable holds on his rank,
Unshaken of motion; and [...] I am he

III.i.67-70

The 'motion' to which Caesar juxtaposes himself here can be read as 'emotion', but also describes the fluctuations of the humours. Once again, he expresses belief in his own mastery of the forces which govern others. Caesar's defiance of his body's fluid components thus creates a political rhetoric which directly contradicts that of his assassins. Commenting on this opposition, Paster observes:

Because the conspirators tend to present their own political integrity in somatic terms, their body images and Caesar's necessarily become functionally interrelated. If Caesar grows, the conspirators shrink; if Caesar reveals bodily weakness, the conspirators gain in strength; if Caesar is sick, the conspirators are whole.²¹⁴

This correlation galvanises the conspirators' attempts to figuratively compromise Caesar's body image, reflected in their frequent comments on his frailty and bodily afflictions. For instance, Cassius relates Caesar's weakness during a childhood swimming contest, and a fever in Spain (I.ii.110-5; 119-28), and Casca recounts an incident in which Caesar 'fell down in the market-place and foamed at / mouth, and was speechless' (I.ii.250-1).

How might these complex somatic motifs and interrelations translate into the visual language of graphic novels? As will be explored in later analysis, the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation preserves the play's distinction between the conspirators' preoccupation with blood and Caesar's imagined physical constancy in its depictions of their respective bodies. As with the *Richard III* adaptation, it also presents bodies as vessels of narrative agency and political power.

²¹⁴ Paster, "In the Spirit of Men there is no Blood": Blood as a Trope of Gender in *Julius Caesar*, p.290.

Tyrannical Bodies: Caesar and Richard as Icons of Despotism

While the previous section explored the foregrounding of Richard's and Caesar's bodies in Shakespeare's plays, this section looks at how both bodies remain symbolically and politically potent in specific facets of contemporary culture. Just as Chapter 1's discussion of Caliban's monstrosity or Chapter 2's exploration of shojo manga demonstrated the value of situating Shakespearean adaptations in the context of contemporary popular culture, this section further illuminates later analysis of Richard's and Caesar's bodies in mediated adaptations. By establishing the contexts in which they are commonly invoked, or into which they are transposed in adaptations, I will illustrate how both characters function as popular cyphers for inappropriately wielded power. Doing so not only identifies the cultural connotations which inform graphic novel renderings of the characters but also demonstrates how the adaptations can engage with contemporary discussions about different models of leadership and civil unrest.

Despite Richard's broad range of interpretative possibilities (explored above), he has most commonly been portrayed as an archetypal tyrant in his dramatic afterlife. Before Shakespeare's play, comparisons between Richard and Elizabeth's advisor Robert Cecil were a popular means of demonising the latter.²¹⁵ Parallels between the two drew heavily on their shared physical disabilities, which were, in both cases, thought to reflect ruthless ambition and other deplorable characteristics.²¹⁶ This equation of deformity with moral depravity is ostensibly less palatable to modern sensibilities, though it lingers on in the enduring trope of the scarred villain in film and television.²¹⁷ Despite these shifting attitudes, Richard has continued to be associated with modern forms of tyranny and oppression. As M.G. Aune observes, 'since World War II, the characterisation of Richard has consistently recalled European fascism.'²¹⁸ He adds: 'cast members and audiences have continuously invoked Hitler and Stalin.'²¹⁹ Some adaptations, such as Richard Eyre's 1990 production (starring Ian McKellen as a proponent of British fascism) and Sulayman al-Bassam's 2007 *Richard III: An Arab Tragedy* (which relocates the play to an unidentified Gulf state), downplay Richard's

²¹⁵ M.G. Aune, 'The Uses of Richard III: From Robert Cecil to Richard Nixon', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Vol.24, No.3 (2006), pp.23-47, p.26.

²¹⁶ Aune, p.27.

²¹⁷ For examples of work commenting on and challenging this trope, see: Martin Norden, *The Cinema of Isolation: A History of Physical Disability in the Movies* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994); Katie Ellis, *Disability and Popular Culture: Focusing Passion, Creating Community and Expressing Defiance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016); Paul Longmore, *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003).

²¹⁸ Aune, p.36.

²¹⁹ Aune, p.39.

disability, focusing instead on how his charisma and cunning mirror the trappings of contemporary totalitarianism.²²⁰

More recently, Richard has been invoked in relation to tyrannies and totalitarianisms of a different sort. In October 2016, less than a month before Donald Trump was elected president of the United States, Stephen Greenblatt wrote an article for *The New York Times* entitled 'Shakespeare Explains the 2016 Election.'²²¹ In it, he explores how *Richard III* addresses the question: 'how could a great country wind up being governed by a sociopath?' No presidential candidate is mentioned by name, but parallels between Richard's rise to power and Donald Trump's ascent to political prominence are strongly implied throughout. Take, for instance, Greenblatt's initial characterisation of Richard:

Richard, as Shakespeare conceived him, was inwardly tormented by insecurity and rage, the consequences of a miserable, unloved childhood and a twisted spine that made people recoil at the sight of him. Haunted by self-loathing and a sense of his own ugliness [...] he found refuge in a feeling of entitlement, blustering overconfidence, misogyny and a merciless penchant for bullying.

With the exception of Richard's scoliosis, this portrait comprises qualities widely attributed to Trump by his opponents over the course of his campaign.²²² Greenblatt was writing to encourage voter turnout: warning against Trump's election, his piece ends, 'Do not think it cannot happen, and do not stay silent or waste your vote.' The article accordingly emphasises the role of others in enabling Richard's rise to power, describing 'a fatal conjunction of diverse but equally self-destructive responses from those around him' and suggesting that these characters – including Anne, Hastings, and Buckingham – represent 'a nation of enablers'. In an ensuing taxonomy of Richard's enablers, Greenblatt identifies:

Those who trust that everything will continue in a normal way, that promises will be kept, alliances honored and core institutions respected [...] those who cannot keep in focus that Richard is as bad as he seems to be [...] those who feel frightened or impotent in the face of bullying and the menace of violence [...] those who persuade themselves that they can take advantage of Richard's rise to power [and] those who take vicarious pleasure in the release of pent-up aggression [...] in the open speaking of the unspeakable.

These groups parallel failures to respond adequately or appropriately to Trump's ambitions.²²³ Greenblatt thus demonstrates Richard's enduring vitality, not only as a mirror to unsuitable

²²⁰ Frank Rich, 'Review/Theater; Richard III; McKellen's Richard is for this Century', *The New York Times*, June 12th, 1992, <<http://www.nytimes.com/1992/06/12/theatre/review-theatre-richard-iii-mckellen-s-richard-is-for-this-century.html?pagewanted=all>>, [accessed January 2016]; Margaret Litvin, 'Richard III: An Arab Tragedy (review)', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Vol. 25, No.4 (2007), pp.85-91, p.86.

²²¹ Stephen Greenblatt, 'Shakespeare Explains the 2016 Election', *The New York Times*, October 8th, 2016, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/09/opinion/sunday/shakespeare-explains-the-2016-election.html>>, [accessed April 2020].

²²² Jeffrey Wilson, *Shakespeare and Trump* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2020), p.68.

²²³ Wilson, p.69. See also pp.99-100 on 'the problem of political complicity in Trump's campaign and presidency'.

leaders of the current era, but also as a symptom of broader breakdowns in society and the body politic.

As noted above, some of the more recent interpretations and uses of the play attempt to distance Richard's tyranny from his iconic body. However, responses to the discovery of his remains in 2012 reconfirm public fascination with the latter. Allison Hobgood asserts that 'barely second in importance behind confirming that the buried bones belong to Richard is the discovery that the king was, indeed, disabled.'²²⁴ She continues: 'his skeleton provokes examination and diagnosis [...] as if one might finally uncover Richard's "real" nature by scrutinizing the truths of his "real" body.'²²⁵ Philip Schwyzer's observation that, in the wake of the excavations, 'the old debate over Richard's true nature and possible crimes has been revived with unprecedented vigour' similarly attests to the potency of his body as a symbol of his character.²²⁶ The widespread preoccupation with the condition of Richard's remains exposes his body's continuing power in the popular imagination: in its absence, its distorted shape endured as a vivid visual metaphor for Richard's assumed villainy; discovered, its examination has renewed speculation over the accuracy of this designated meaning.

Caesar has also become a versatile emblem of modern threats to peace and democracy. This may in part be due to his enthusiastic appropriation by authoritarian regimes of the twentieth century: the Third Reich recast Shakespeare's Caesar as a Germanic hero, while Fascist Italy made extensive comparisons between itself and the glories of the Roman past with particular emphasis on Mussolini as a modern Caesar.²²⁷ More recently, Maria Wyke notes that during the 2003 invasion of Iraq and its aftermath, comparisons between Caesar and George W. Bush became a 'common rhetorical strategy' in the popular media to criticise the perceived aggression of American foreign policy.²²⁸ Fashioning Bush's administration as an 'imperial presidency,' these Caesarian analogies were predominantly employed to dress the Commander-in-Chief in 'the deep purples of a ruthless tyranny.'²²⁹ Although Caesar is now most frequently invoked as a parallel to modern American leadership, elsewhere he has also been closely aligned with its adversaries. In the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2012 production, set in a fractious African state, a large statue of Caesar dominated the rear of the stage for the first two acts until it was pulled down after the assassination. The production's most immediate point of reference was almost certainly the recent defeat of dictators such as

²²⁴ Allison Hobgood, 'Teeth Before Eyes: Impairment and Invisibility in Shakespeare's *Richard III*' in *Disability, Health and Happiness in the Shakespearean Body*, ed. Sujata Iyengar (New York: Routledge, 2015), p.24.

²²⁵ Hobgood, p.24.

²²⁶ Philip Schwyzer, *Shakespeare and the Remains of Richard III* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.9.

²²⁷ Werner Habicht, "German Shakespeare, the Third Reich, and the War", p.23; Nancy Isenberg, "Caesar's word against the world": Caesarism and the Discourses of Empire", p.83; both in *Shakespeare and the Second World War: Memory, Culture, Identity*, ed. Irena Makaryk and Marissa McHugh (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

²²⁸ Maria Wyke, 'A Twenty-First-Century Caesar' in *Julius Caesar in Western Culture*, ed. Maria Wyke (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006), p.306.

²²⁹ Wyke, p.318.

Muammar Gaddafi during the Arab Spring and the iconoclastic toppling of their statues; however, the destruction of Caesar's statue also recalled similar scenes in Iraq after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

Caesar's disparate modern analogues reflect the breadth of his cultural dissemination, but the role of his body in such comparisons is not necessarily immediately clear. Nevertheless, his invocations as a parallel to both Western figureheads and their adversaries depend, albeit at times obscurely, on Caesar's notoriety as a humiliated and violated body. The RSC production's demolition of Caesar's statue after his assassination echoed the murder, re-enacting its violence with the substitution of a public effigy for the body itself. However, the timeliness of the image of the toppled statue also encouraged audiences to understand it as figuring the defeat of the dictatorial model of power which Caesar is perceived to espouse. Just as the Arab Spring and Iraq provide a fresh lens for viewing Caesar, the creation of a Caesarian parallel also affects our understanding of these modern conflicts. Destroying the statue literalised the curiously bloodless victory proposed by Brutus prior to the assassination when he urges 'let us be sacrificers, but not butchers' (II.i.166), but onstage that ideal had already been undermined by the sight of Caesar's murderers drenched in his blood. Caesar's body thus functions as a vessel for questioning or critiquing the perceived ideological victories of the Arab Spring and Iraq – which, in many instances, imitated Rome after the assassination by giving way to sustained civil conflict and the emergence of new threats.

Comparisons between Caesar and American presidents have typically stopped short of referring to the former's assassination. As Wyke suggests, much like Richard, Caesar has become a popular prism through which to criticise political leadership. However, Wyke also notes that 'only within the relative safety [...] of performances of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* has it been possible to touch upon Caesar's assassination as a lesson about contemporary events, for fear of appearing literally to advocate the president's assassination.'²³⁰ Outside the 'safe' fiction of the playhouse, then, the image of the fallen, physically broken Caesar remains too potent to be invoked in modern political discourse.

Even in a theatrical context, Caesar's assassination can aggravate political and cultural tensions. This was particularly evident in the summer of 2017, when the Public Theater's production of *Julius Caesar* at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park generated national controversy. The production drew close parallels between Caesar and Donald and Melania Trump, which extended beyond costuming, make-up, and accents to include gestures which had excited media scrutiny: Calpurnia refused to hold Caesar's hand; Caesar grabbed Calpurnia's crotch.²³¹ Conservative news outlets and social media responded

²³⁰ Wyke, p.319.

²³¹ James Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America* (London: Faber and Faber, 2020), p10, p14; Wilson, p.144.

furiously, arguing that the production intended to incite violence against Trump and the right wing more broadly.²³² Criticism focused almost exclusively on the assassination scene: one headline on the conservative website *Mediaite* declared, ‘Senators Stab Trump to Death in Central Park Performance of Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar’.²³³ This direct substitution of Trump for Caesar was typical of responses claiming the production advocated for the assassination of a sitting president. The outrage extended far beyond the production’s viewership and resulted in sponsors such as Delta Air Lines withdrawing their support, protests and stage invasions at the remaining performances, and threats being made against the director, his family, cast members and even other Shakespearean acting companies across the country.²³⁴ The Far Right’s response to the Public Theater’s production demonstrates Caesar’s enduring iconicity and potential to provoke visceral, even violent reactions in the context of contemporary politics.

What does this tell us? That in Richard’s and Caesar’s dramatic afterlives, their bodies have become objects of both fascination and discomfort, and the mediatised adaptations in focus here extend this. In Richard’s case, modern rejection of the medieval alignment of disability and vice coexists with an ongoing fascination with – and perhaps indulgence in – the image of Richard as a villainous grotesque. Caesar’s bloodied corpse is conspicuous in its absence from most of his popular invocations as a parallel to presidents and other leaders – an exclusion which arguably heightens its potency as a symbol of political and social turmoil – but it is also potentially a prism through which we might take ghoulish delight in the downfall of modern tyrants. The breadth of responses to and invocations of these bodies demonstrates the extent to which their meanings are unfixed and socially determined; they are susceptible to reinterpretation and appropriation over time and across cultures. Western adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays in the Eastern tradition of manga are a further manifestation of this cultural malleability, one with a distinctive set of aesthetics and narrative conventions. The following sections examine how adopting this form might enable modern audiences to reappraise these politically potent bodies.

Caesar’s Public Bodies

Despite his importance to its narrative, Julius Caesar famously comprises a small part in the play which bears his name: he appears in only three scenes and speaks fewer than 150 lines.²³⁵ He is similarly largely absent from the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation. Of the 274

²³² Shapiro, pp.230-2; Wilson, pp.166-7, p.171

²³³ Shapiro, p.231.

²³⁴ Shapiro, pp.236-44; Wilson, p.129, pp.166-7, pp.174-7.

²³⁵ Robert Miola, *Shakespeare’s Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.102-3; Jessica Wolfe, ‘Classics’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur Kinney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.523.

frames or distinct images preceding the line ‘Et tu Brute?’ (in other words, the span of the play in which Caesar is alive), he is present in 46 – roughly 17%. In 31 of these appearances, Caesar is rendered indistinct: heavily shadowed, silhouetted, or disorientatingly portrayed from an aerial perspective. Only fifteen frames depict him in detail. In a further fifteen frames prior to his assassination, Caesar is depicted either as a mediatised body or image (on posters; as a statue; as a puppet), or as an illustration to other characters’ speeches. After his death, Caesar is reproduced as an image or statue on three occasions, and during Antony’s oration the moment of his death is reproduced seven times across a double spread. He appears as a corpse in nineteen frames, although never clearly depicted, and as a ghost in a further four.

Tallying Caesar’s appearances in this way does not account for the significance of his depiction at certain points in the narrative, but it nevertheless helps to identify some broad trends in the adaptation’s approach to the character. While alive, Caesar’s body is comparatively marginalised: equal, if not greater, weight is given to its public reproduction through mediatisation and his invoked appearances as an illustration to the speeches of others. The adaptation’s cover is congruent with this pattern: it depicts Caesar’s colossal public statue rather than the man himself (Figure 69). After death, his body becomes more dominant but its consistently opaque depiction renders it an ambiguous icon, the meaning of which Antony is able to manipulate to suit his purposes. Throughout the adaptation, then, Caesar’s body arguably achieves greater significance as a reflection or articulation of other characters’ notions of power and political process than as a denotation of him as an individual. His body’s public representation is consistently appropriated by the conspirators, who manipulate that body’s meanings to further their agenda in the Roman power struggle.

This appropriation is illustrated by two recurrent forms of corporeal mediatisation. The first – and most prominent – of these is the huge statue of Caesar erected over the city, which features on the adaptation’s front cover. Despite its size, the statue only appears in a handful of frames across the adaptation, punctuating the narrative at moments which lend it greater significance. It is first seen during Cassius’s initial exchange with Brutus, where it is visibly under construction in the background (Figure 70). This incomplete appearance draws attention to the process of manufacture, inviting the reader to interpret the statue as an embodiment of Caesar’s carefully constructed public image. However, this image is already being appropriated by Cassius as a means of manipulating Brutus: its appearance is similarly a literal manifestation of his description of Caesar as a ‘colossus’, which it closely follows in the adaptation. Cassius uses this image to present Caesar’s political dominance as a form of tyranny and a threat to the republic. The proximity of the colossus simile to the illustration of Caesar’s statue projects the negative connotations of the first onto the latter, aligning the image with Cassius’s purpose more immediately than with Caesar’s political aspirations.

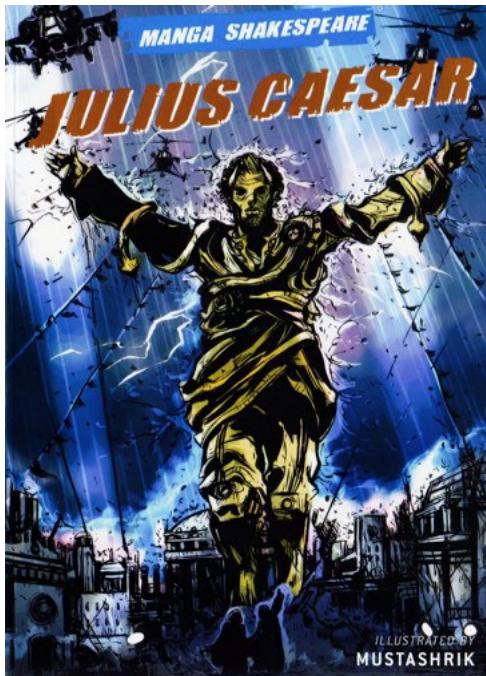


Figure 69: *Julius Caesar* Front Cover,
Manga Shakespeare.



Figure 70: Caesar's Colossus Under Construction, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.23.



Figure 71: Calpurnia's Dream,
Manga Shakespeare, p.79.



Figure 72: Octavius's Colossus,
Manga Shakespeare, p.205.



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Figure 73: The Conspirators' Puppets, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.42.



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Figure 74: Brutus in Puppet Form, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.45.



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Figure 75: Cassius Manipulates the Caesar and Antony Puppets, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.57.



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Figure 76: The Hanging Senators, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.152.

The statue becomes more closely aligned with Cassius's vendetta on its next appearance, during his exchange with Casca in 1.3 (p.41). The colossus is now complete and illuminated by multiple floodlights at its base; it towers over the silhouetted conspirators who appear beneath its feet. The structure of this illustration recalls Cassius's earlier vision of Caesar as the colossus under whose 'huge legs' all other Romans walk (I.ii.136). On this occasion, the statue's appearance coincides with Cassius's exclamation 'What trash is Rome to illuminate so vile a thing as Caesar!' (p.41). As before, the illustration literalises Cassius's speech: the floodlights beneath the statue suggest that the city has indeed chosen to illuminate Caesar's image. Cassius is using this public edifice to corroborate his interpretation of Caesar's rise to power as the unwarranted elevation of an inappropriately ambitious individual. By instructing his fellow conspirators (and perhaps the reader) on how to view Caesar's statue, Cassius successfully manipulates what Caesar's body means: its representation becomes a symbol of the threat posed by his increasing political dominance.

When the colossus next appears, it illustrates the account of Calpurnia's dream Caesar offers Decius, in which 'she saw my statue which, like a fountain, did run pure blood' (Figure 71). Calpurnia interprets the dream as a warning of 'evils imminent,' but the conspirator Decius intervenes with the assurance that 'this dream is all amiss interpreted' (p.80). This extends the previously established pattern by which the significance of Caesar's body is redefined to suit the conspirators' cause. However, the statue's appearance at this juncture exposes a number of implications. The image of the bleeding statue belies the physical constancy Caesar will shortly claim to have achieved (see above), replacing solid, impenetrable stone with fluid, mortal matter. It also, perhaps more obviously, foreshadows the physical violence Caesar will shortly suffer at the hands of the conspirators. The appearances of the colossus thus consolidate and extend the play's use of bodily metaphors in political discourse. By illustrating Cassius's assertions of Caesar's tyranny with depictions of Caesar's public monument, the adaptation ensures that the physical wreckage of the assassination can be readily interpreted as a cypher for the more abstract concept of political overthrow. The adaptation fosters associations between blood and the conspirators' bodies (explored below), which heighten the political conflict embodied in Calpurnia's vision of the statue: Caesar's bleeding colossus becomes a political hybrid, a confluence of his own political agenda and the conspirators' blood-motivated aspirations to supremacy.

After the assassination, the conspirators' assumption of power is projected onto the colossus. Brutus's oration at Caesar's funeral is illustrated with two frames showing the statue being toppled. The images, like the mis-en-scene of the RSC's 2012 production, recall the destruction of Saddam Hussein's statues during the Iraq conflict. The act represents not only a second mutilation of Caesar's body but also the removal of the threat of tyranny, with which

the statue has become affiliated. However, the overthrow of Caesar's perceived tyranny, or absolute power, proves fleeting: the final page of the adaptation sees the restoration of the colossus trope, this time in the likeness of Caesar's nephew Octavius (Figure 72). As Octavius goes on to become the emperor Augustus, this conclusion reflects the more permanent assumption of imperial power and the death of the Roman republic.

The other type of mediatised body to feature prominently, if less regularly, in the adaptation is the puppet. Puppets appear for the first time in 1.3, where four small marionettes representing Trebonius, Cinna, Decius and Metellus Cimber dangle from Cassius's fingers as he states that he has 'moved already some of the noblest-minded Romans' to join the conspiracy (Figure 73). The puppets continue to be associated exclusively with Cassius: he is the only character to appear in the role of puppet master, and the marionettes operate most obviously as a metaphor for his manipulation of other political players. A prominent example of this concludes 1.3 (Figure 74), where a panel showing a puppet likeness of Brutus foreshadows the manipulation for which Cassius has laid the groundwork over the preceding frames, and which is brought to fruition in the following scene. More than symbols of manipulation, however, the puppets are also another means by which the conspirators' opposition to Caesar is somatically encoded. If Caesar's statue is made to represent a tyrannical model of power in which authority is located in one individual, the smaller and frequently multiple puppets symbolise a pluralistic power structure ostensibly more in line with the conspirators' republican cause. The preceding chapter on *The Tempest* demonstrated how numerous adaptations use puppetry as a visual metaphor for Prospero's control over other characters. Similarly, its use in the *Julius Caesar* adaptation reflects Cassius's manipulation of his fellow conspirators in a way which echoes his appropriation of Caesar's colossus. The puppets' initial depiction reinforces the juxtaposition between these mediatised bodies, appearing on the page following the first image of the completed colossus.

The puppets reappear in Act 2 Scene 1, when Cassius argues for the assassination of Antony alongside Caesar (Figure 75). Initially, Cassius holds puppet likenesses of Caesar and Antony aloft when he declares: 'I think it is not meet Mark Antony, so well beloved of Caesar, should outlive Caesar.' A frame which shows the puppets falling accompanies Cassius's following line 'Let Antony and Caesar fall together,' before the final frame on the page shows the shattered puppets on the ground. As with the later appearances of the colossus, this sequence replicates the violence the conspirators plan to enact: Caesar's fragmented puppet foreshadows both the assassination itself and the ensuing demolition of his statue. The replication of Caesar's image in puppet form is also in line with the conspirators' appropriation of the colossus trope, further reducing Caesar's agency over his body's image and its interpretations.

The puppets do not appear again after the assassination, perhaps because Cassius's control over the situation, which they represent, immediately begins to wane. They are invoked, however, in the image of the hanging senators executed by Antony and Octavius (Figure 76). Recalling the lifelessness of inanimate puppets, the bodies mark a shift in the trope's signification, from representing the conspirators' control and manipulation of events to signalling the frustration of their cause. Both the colossus and puppets, then, reflect the instability of bodies as political signifiers: both become distanced from their originators (Caesar and Cassius, respectively) as they are repurposed by opposing factions. The graphic novel's use of internal mediatisation to highlight this instability arguably encourages the reader to be aware of the adaptation's own acts of corporeal appropriation, both as an adaptation of Shakespeare's play and as a fictionalised account of historical figures. All this points to a suggestive question. Caesar and the conspirators have been mediated at least four times over: in historical accounts, in Shakespeare's play, in the adaptation's rendering of those Shakespearean characters, and finally in its internal mediatisations of their bodies. What can the graphic novel achieve by drawing attention to this pattern of reproduction? If nothing else, it exposes the ways in which all prominent public figures, past and present, apparently abject, putatively powerful, or otherwise, are susceptible to similar appropriation and semiotic volatility.²³⁶

Richard III and the King's Bodies

In contrast to Caesar's sparse appearances, Richard visually dominates the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, appearing in approximately 40% of its 642 frames. This difference between the two is not necessarily simply due to the characters' respective number of lines. Where Caesar is absent or marginalised, Richard is ubiquitous and prominent. Furthermore, none of Richard's appearances are mediatised in the way Caesar's are when he appears on posters and in statue or puppet form. In only four frames does Richard appear as an illustration to the speeches of others. However, even these invoked appearances differ from comparable moments in the *Julius Caesar* adaptation. For instance, while Caesar is never present for speeches to which he is an accompanying illustration, Richard is visible elsewhere on the page when he appears in two frames accompanying Anne's account of him killing her husband in battle (p.32). His presence here destabilises Anne's narrative authority: do the frames truly illustrate her speech, or do they represent Richard's own reconstruction or memory of the event? Elsewhere, Richard appears as illustration in the background of a frame as Clarence realises his treachery shortly before his murder (p.70). However, the illustration is a replication

²³⁶ For work exploring how this appropriation operates in contemporary celebrity culture, see for instance: P. David Marshall and Sean Redmond, eds, *A Companion to Celebrity* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016); Robert van Krieken, *Celebrity Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).

of an earlier frame in which Richard is present, during his encounter with Clarence (p.19); it does not suggest that Clarence is able to moderate Richard's image in any way. Overall, then, the adaptation does not reproduce Richard's image in his absence in the way that Caesar's frequently is. Instead, his body is an icon which Richard fully inhabits and over which he seems to exercise complete control, as will be explored further below.

Though Richard's image is never internally mediatised in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation he, like Caesar, is obliged to engage with a public body in the form of the body politic. In the early modern period, a ruler was popularly imagined as 'the possessor of two bodies – a body natural and a body politic,' a concept which distinguished between the individual's mortal body and the transcendent, divinely-bestowed royal body.²³⁷ The image of the body politic permitted a more narrowly hierarchical society than the senate-led Roman republic to identify a single person as its 'head'.²³⁸ Charnes interprets Richard's quest throughout Shakespeare's play as one to 'sublate his deformed body to the perfect "Body" of the king,' or, to 'replace an *obvious* body with one that is implied, one not necessarily determined by physical characteristics'.²³⁹ Although the concept of the body politic has become more metaphorical in its modern usage, in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation Richard nevertheless negotiates his relationship to the kingship in somatic terms. However, as will become clear, the comparisons between Richard's physical form and other kingly bodies not only serve to elevate Richard but also complicate the idealised monarchical body. Richard's first appearance as king conceals his body almost entirely in darkness, creating a stark contrast to the crown and mantle he now wears, which are scantily rendered and therefore appear highlighted in white (Figure 77). The juxtaposition reemphasises that, according to medieval thought, Richard is a physically unsuitable ruler: the trappings of kingship are directly opposed to Richard's deformity and the opacity with which his body is imbued throughout the adaptation (as explored in greater detail below). The contrasting whiteness of crown and mantle also enables the reader to interpret them as props, which Richard can appropriate to perform the role of a king. These objects seemingly alter the meaning of Richard's body, transforming him into a royal presence, but crucially they do not change his appearance or nature. The crown and mantle bear some functional similarity to Caesar's statue, in that they too are symbols of supreme power. The comparison, however, is superficial: the two sets of symbols operate in different ways. Caesar's statue is his non-verbal attempt to extend his influence through increased public presence. As an image, it is appropriated by others and comes to subvert its intended purpose. Conversely, the props of kingship are pre-existing symbols of divine rule conferred upon Richard by the state to

²³⁷ Diede, p.1.

²³⁸ Diede, p.1.

²³⁹ Charnes, pp.31-2.

designate him as its head. While Caesar must refuse the crown offered to him by Antony to avoid the appearance of naked ambition, Richard is able to use these emblems to alter perceptions of his status and his body's meaning, although, as previously observed, its substance remains unchanged.

Richard's first appearance as king is not his first interaction with kingship. In a departure from the play text, the body of Henry VI is left behind after Anne departs in 1.2 (p.39). Richard lifts the king out of his coffin, exposing him as a badly withered corpse, and proceeds to grotesquely manipulate the body. As he props the remains against his shoulder, Richard's exclamation 'Will she yet debase her eyes on me, that am misshapen thus?' could indicate either himself or Henry, forcing a mirroring between the two (Figure 78). This is consolidated in the next frame, when Richard turns the skull to face him: Henry's hollow eye sockets and skeletal smile uncannily reflect his own shadowed eyed and long, thin mouth (p.41). Richard's manipulation of Henry's corpse loosely echoes the use of puppetry in the *Julius Caesar* adaptation but is perhaps more nuanced: he is not only seizing control of a politically potent body - symbolically so, even in death - but also foregrounding his desire to manipulate his own bodily meanings. By making the dead king his double Richard projects his own disfigurement onto the body of Henry. This might be read as a way of distracting the reader's attention from the way in which, as Mitchell and Snyder observe, 'his physical differences underline his own metaphysical unfitness to govern'.²⁴⁰

Henry reappears as one of the ghosts haunting Richard on the eve of Bosworth, where his physical appearance seems to serve a different purpose (Figure 79). Garber theorises ghosts as an 'acknowledgement of the loss of the original,' which also exemplifies the 'potential proliferation or plurality' of that original, questioning its primacy and inspiring a 'fear of loss through multiplication'.²⁴¹ The figure of the ghost, then, challenges the opportunities for self-definition Charnes observes in the pluralities of dramatic re-enactment. It is a reminder of both an absent original and the potential for infinite reinterpretations and re-representations of that original – what Derrida theorises as the unstable opposition between 'the thing itself and its simulacrum'.²⁴² Approaching the graphic novel with these ideas in mind, Henry's ghost can be interpreted as a metaphor for the process of adaptation: as Richard's death approaches, the apparition both pre-empts and reflects on the historical Richard's reproduction in drama, historical chronicles and modern media, shattering the illusion fostered elsewhere in the adaptation of, as Charnes would have it, Richard 'being his own original' and drawing attention instead to his pre-scribed nature. Furthermore, Henry is unique amongst the ghosts of the pre-

²⁴⁰ Mitchell and Snyder, p.101.

²⁴¹ Garber, p.21.

²⁴² Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), p.10.

Bosworth sequence for not appearing as he did at the moment of his death – in fact, he is perhaps even more extensively decayed than in his previous appearance. Rather than evoking Richard's involvement in his death, as the other ghosts' appearances do, this physical deterioration recalls Richard's humiliation of Henry's corpse and foreshadows its subsequent dramatic and historiographical manipulations.

As suggested above, the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation locates kingship in the objects associated with it - the crown and mantle - which Richard must adopt and attempt to incorporate into his own identity. He furthers his ambitions by co-opting another physical body - Henry's - which more ostensibly manifests the attributes of kingship, manipulating it into his own mirror image. However, as with Caesar's colossus, the king's body proves to be an inconsistent symbol: its later spectral appearances pre-empt Richard's demise and posthumous appropriations by subsequent retellers of his story. Henry's decaying corpse and the deformed usurper Richard present two imperfect visions of kingship, perhaps subverting the notion of a transcendental body politic and the power structures it supports.

Caesar and Rome's Augmented Bodies

The previous section noted that Richard's crown represents a political order at odds with the structure of the Roman republic. Early on in *Julius Caesar*, Casca reports that Antony has publicly offered Caesar a crown three times, which he has refused on each occasion although Casca believes that 'he would fain have had it' (I.ii.234-241). Antony later recalls this incident during his oration, refuting Brutus's claim that Caesar was ambitious (III.ii.97). Notably, this recollection is the only part of Antony's opening speech to the plebeians which provokes a direct response from them: one declares, 'He would not take the crown; / Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious' (III.ii.113-4). Although Caesar's motivation for refusing the crown is ambiguous, the meaning of the crown itself as a symbol of supreme power is consistent. Richard must augment his body with the crown to consolidate and legitimise his political power; were Caesar to do the same, it would be interpreted as a display of inappropriate ambition. Nevertheless, the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation of *Julius Caesar* depicts numerous augmented bodies which shape the narrative's political landscape.

Although uncrowned, the adaptation's Caesar is nonetheless augmented by a set of horns – not unlike the laurel wreath worn by triumphant Roman commanders – which he wears in almost every frame in which he appears. Unlike the wreath, however, these horns are not an indicator of status or achievement: Caesar even wears them in frames accompanying Cassius's recollection of their childhood (Figure 80). Furthermore, after the assassination the horns are shown to be discarded on the ground (Figure 81). This suggests that, unlike the relationship between the crown and the head that wears it, the horns are a token of Caesar's individuality and cannot confer power on another: they have no inherent political power.



Figure 77: Richard's First Appearance as King, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.126.



Figure 78: Richard Manipulating Henry VI's Corpse, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.40.



Figure 79: Henry's Ghost Appears on the Eve of Bosworth, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.188-9.



Figure 80: Caesar and Cassius as Children, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.20.



Figure 81: Caesar's Horns After the Assassination, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.105.



Figure 82: Examples of Augmented Bodies in Rome, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.12-13.

In fact, Caesar's horns are part of a much broader pattern of physical adornment in the adaptation. Almost every Roman citizen wears a visor, mask, veil or goggles, or displays prominent facial tattoos. These ubiquitous embellishments echo the cyberpunk *mise-en-scène* of popular films such as *Bladerunner* (1982), *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), and the *Star Wars* franchise (from 1977), and thus create an aesthetic which is at once futuristic and familiar to consumers of popular culture. Similarly styled tropes of physical alteration or augmentation are also prevalent in manga and anime which have become popular in the West, such as *Full Metal Alchemist* (manga published 2001-2010; anime television adaptations 2003-2004, 2009-2010), *Ghost in the Shell* (manga 1989; anime film 1995, television series 2002, 2020), or *Akira* (manga 1982; anime film 1988). Cyberpunk, which combines advanced technology with the subversive qualities of street life and counterculture, foregrounds the body as a site where the boundaries between human and machine are frequently blurred or renegotiated.²⁴³ Dani Cavallaro notes that, 'In cybersculture, the body is often conceived of as a fluid entity. Much recent scholarship concerned with the relationship between the biological organism and technology has stressed the body's lack of clear boundaries.'²⁴⁴ This emphasis on the body as open and porous in turn echoes Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the grotesque body, even if the introduction of assistive technologies may seem to eradicate the biological imperatives which govern that model.²⁴⁵ Although the Romans' adornments represent a comparatively non-invasive form of physical augmentation, the somatic permeability invoked by the cyberpunk aesthetic would nevertheless appear to further challenge Caesar's belief in his own body's constancy.

In more practical terms, the adaptation's widespread use of these embellishments helps to distinguish between the conspirators, who are otherwise homogenised by the robes and cloaks they wear. Similarly, when they appear in puppet form their accessories become increasingly emblematic, identifying them when all other features are obscured. Antony and Octavius also wear distinct visors. When Octavius's colossus is erected at the end of the adaptation, his visor differentiates the statue from its predecessor: the public edifice is the symbol of power, while the adornment is a personal identifier.

A variety of accessories also augment the bodies of the Roman plebeians, both at the adaptation's opening (Figure 82) and during Casca's account of their response to Caesar's

²⁴³ David Bell, 'Meat and Metal' in *Contested Bodies*, ed. Ruth Holliday, John Hassard (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p.172; Sonay Ayyildiz and Senem Müstak, 'Time, Space and Body Reading in Terms of Cyberpunk Style in Science Fiction Cinema: The Case of the Island Movie' in *A Body Living and Not Measurable: How Bodies are Constructed, Scripted and Performed Through Time and Space*, ed. Ya-hui Irenna Chang, Lukasz Matuszyk (Freeland: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2019), p.6.

²⁴⁴ Dani Cavallaro, *Cyberpunk and Cybersculture: Science Fiction and the Work of William Gibson* (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), p.72.

²⁴⁵ Bakhtin, p.317.

faint (p.28), but most extensively during Caesar's funeral (pp.110-130). Where the *Richard III* adaptation signals Richard's political dominance by juxtaposing his recognisable body with indistinct, anonymous crowds and sparsely rendered opponents (p.116; p.189), Caesar's body is fashioned comparably to both his opponents and the crowds of distinct individuals above whom he is elevated. The absence of any distinction of dress is, perhaps, indicative of a more fluid society and political hierarchy than that of Richard's England. The adaptation's mediatised bodies (the statues of Caesar and Octavius, and the conspirators' puppets) demonstrate how accessories facilitate the transformation of private individuals into public icons, instantly recognisable even when otherwise obscured. The ubiquity of augmented bodies in Rome suggests that any individual could become elevated in this way, perhaps tacitly challenging the central characters' assumptions about their inherent superiority.

Thus far, the chapter has focused on how the public presentation of bodies serves political purposes in both adaptations. This section explores how bodies are intentionally obscured in both graphic novels, in ways which further encode the narratives' power dynamics as well as creating associations between physicality and narrative control. By purposefully obfuscating specific bodies, the adaptations arguably engage with Stephen Greenblatt's principle of strategic opacity. As previously observed in the introduction, Greenblatt suggests that Shakespeare strategically renders narratives more compelling through the calculated omission of causal explanations. Greenblatt reads this refusal to provide 'a familiar, comforting rationale' as effectively 'tearing away' a 'structure of superficial meanings'. Instead, an internal logic is fashioned 'through the resonant echoing of key terms, the subtle development of images, the brilliant orchestration of scenes, the complex unfolding of ideas, the intertwining of parallel plots, the uncovering of psychological obsessions.'²⁴⁶ Graphic novels present an opportunity to further this internal logic by visual means, through recurring tropes and patterns which may come to denote a broad range of associative meanings. The previous analysis of the puppet and colossus tropes has already demonstrated the narrative efficacy and potential of this approach. However, both adaptations develop Greenblatt's model of thwarted visuality further by strategically obscuring politically vital bodies.

Although more present than Caesar's, Richard's body is also an obscure one. The precise details of his deformity, pronounced hunchback aside, are disguised by the all-encompassing cloak he wears in almost every frame in which he appears. This is an intelligent artistic shorthand: Richard is both instantly menacing, and easily replicable across frames. It also, however, reflects a textual vagueness regarding his appearance similar to that surrounding Caliban in *The Tempest*. Katherine Schaap Williams argues that, while the play 'draws attention to Richard's physical difference,' it 'ultimately remains ambiguous about his

²⁴⁶ Greenblatt, p.324.

physical form, staging instead a frenzy of interpretative fervour about what Richard's body really means.²⁴⁷ Hobgood goes further, suggesting that the manifold interpretations of Richard's body in the play actually cause its obfuscation. She writes: 'as the play progresses, his habitus comes to contain so many possibilities for meaning that it actually fades from view; the precise, disabled body that prompts such intense attention from spectators, in the end, gets erased by over-signification.'²⁴⁸ Numerous characters attribute wildly differing connotations to Richard's physicality, from Anne and Margaret denigrating his deformity (in Anne's case, previously noted at I.ii.57 and I.ii.104) to Buckingham commenting on his pious posturing at Baynard's Castle. These contradictions create corporeal ambiguity in the place of a straightforward somatic designation.

It might be easy to read *Manga Shakespeare*'s opaque Richard as embodying a process of erasure, or Derridean 'sous rature,' where the conscious obfuscation of a figure underlines the impossibility of rendering them fully present.²⁴⁹ However, rather than making him a passive victim of spectatorship, the adaptation suggests that Richard's form is actually enabling: he appears to use his obscurity to actively encourage a greater breadth of interpretative possibilities, which he can exploit to his advantage. His physical ambiguity facilitates the substitution of one bodily meaning for another, easing his transitions between the different roles he adopts, from affectionate brother and uncle, to lover, to pious man, to king. In a medium which would enable Richard's deceptions to be aided by refashioning his body, his physical constancy when, for instance, commiserating with Clarence, wooing Anne or feigning reluctance to accept the crown heightens awareness of the manipulative power behind his successes. For example, during his encounter with Anne, nothing prevents the graphic novel Richard from being depicted in the guise of a debonair lover in the appropriate frames. Such a transformation would be comical, but tonally congruent with Richard's delight in the improbability of his seduction. Instead, Richard's dark and looming form – and its implied malevolence – is undisguised in this sequence and others like it. Nevertheless, his victims consistently fail to recognise the corporeally obvious, creating the impression that Richard can exploit his physical indeterminacy to control his own bodily meanings.

Beyond this strategy of self-definition, Richard's opaque depiction also extends his authority within the adaptation in less subtle ways. His exaggerated size and opacity consistently make him more solidly rendered than other characters. For instance, in Richard's early encounters with Clarence and Hastings, their delicate, feathered outlines make them seem less substantial in comparison to his dense form (Figure 83). By leaving these basic pen

²⁴⁷ Katherine Schaap Williams, 'Enabling Richard: The Rhetoric of Disability in *Richard III*', *Disability Studies Quarterly*, Vol.29. No.4 (2009) <<https://disq-sds.org/article/view/997/1181>> [accessed March 2015].

²⁴⁸ Hobgood, p.31.

²⁴⁹ Michael Strysick, 'Erasure' in *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism*, ed. Victor Taylor, Charles Winquist (London: Routledge, 2001), pp.113-114.

techniques exposed, the adaptation draws attention to its own process of production and subverts the play's usual designation of formed and unformed bodies: it is Clarence and Hastings, not Richard, who are 'scarce half made up' (I.i.21). This effect is exaggerated when Richard is juxtaposed with larger groups of anonymous characters. At Baynard's Castle and in the prelude to Bosworth, for example, Richard appears as a small silhouette, but his body is nevertheless distinct and instantly recognisable. In contrast, the crowds he addresses are depicted as a comically under-defined shape at Baynard's Castle (labelled 'mob' to emphasise their shapelessness, Figure 84) and as a densely repeated doodled loop at Bosworth (Figure 85). Compared to these reductive depictions of the populace, Richard's physical dominance becomes even more pronounced. As with Caesar's public statue, Richard's political ambitions are encoded through physical distinction.

Richard's opacity also aligns him closely with the medium in which he is produced, while disguising the process of that production. He is consistently the most densely inked area on the page: the highest concentration of the substance through which the narrative is conveyed. However, his rendering also disguises the process of composition, which is consistently exposed elsewhere in the adaptation through sketch-like illustrations. Richard's density distinguishes him from characters whose feathered features or doodled bodies draw attention to their status as artistic creations, creating the illusion that he is his own original.

Considering Richard as a concentration of ink on the page literalises relationships between his body and visual tropes which are often purely analogous in textual readings or other adaptations. Whereas, for instance, Olivier's 1955 film associated Richard with shadows to signify his 'derivation from the traditional dark images of evil,' the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation's many shadows are identical to him in substance.²⁵⁰ They function as an uncanny extension of his body, through which he is able to exert his influence over characters and events. An early instance of this occurs during Richard's seduction of Anne. The sequence initially creates a predictable binary between Richard's darkness and Anne's paleness, drawing on connotations of innocence and purity as long-established as the association between darkness and evil (Figure 86). When Anne finally submits, however, she appears in deep shadow for the first time, in a position which replicates Richard's in the frame directly above (Figure 87). Richard's corruption instantly inscribes itself on her body, his substance altering hers, in a way which prefigures the physical distortions he later effects through execution and murder. Here, too, Richard's opacity provides a means of asserting his influence. In the scene depicting the execution of Rivers, Grey and Vaughan, a graphic blood spatter closely echoes the tattered bottom of Richard's cloak (Figure 88; for comparable portrayals of the cloak see p.65, 121). Again, the lack of distinction between Richard's cloaked

²⁵⁰ Gillian Day, *Shakespeare at Stratford: King Richard III* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002), p.26.

body and his victims' blood establishes his culpability in their deaths (even in his absence) by transposing his own image onto them via bloody dismemberment.



Figure 83: Juxtaposition of Richard with Clarence and Hastings, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.20-1.

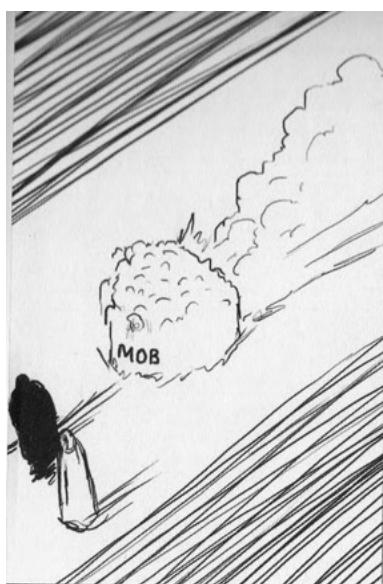


Figure 84: Richard at Baynard's Castle, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.116.

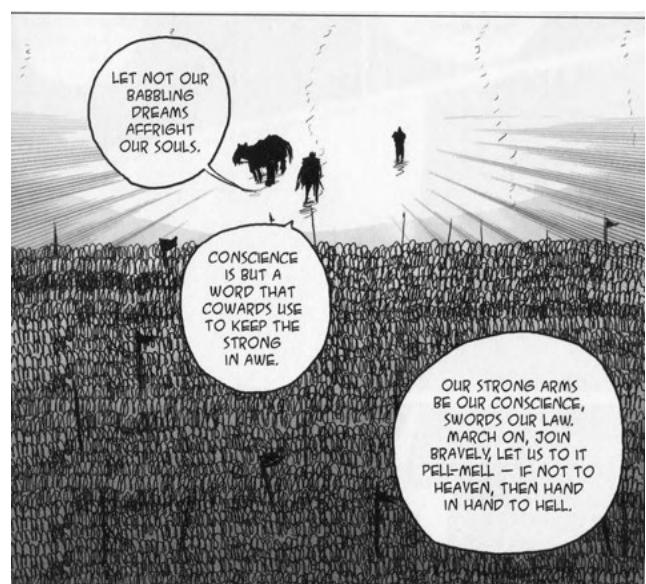


Figure 85: Richard at Bosworth, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.189.



Figure 86: Juxtaposition of Richard and Anne, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.33.



Figure 87: Anne's Submission, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.35.



Figure 88: The Execution of Rivers, Grey and Vaughan, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.99.

As previously explored, *Manga Shakespeare* also strategically obscures Caesar's body and absents it from much of the visual narrative, but it is the conspirators who provide a more direct parallel to Richard's physical opacity. Like Richard, the conspirators frequently appear cloaked or in concealing robes; in some scenes, the addition of hoods obfuscates their bodies further, frequently making it difficult to distinguish one character from another. These creative choices, even within the same series, are probably coincidental, in that the adaptations were developed by different illustrators, working years apart. Nevertheless, as shall be seen, the effects achieved are similar, and the coincidence highlights certain similarities between Richard and the Roman conspirators.

Much like Richard, the conspirators possess a metatheatrical instinct. Coppélia Kahn observes that 'Brutus and Cassius [...] refer to themselves in the third person, as though they are spectators and audience of themselves as public figures.'²⁵¹ Brutus urges his accomplices to pursue their course 'as our Roman actors do' (II.i.226). After the assassination, Cassius's exclamation 'How many ages hence / Shall this our lofty scene be acted over, / In states unborn, and accents yet unknown!' (III.i.113) seems to both anticipate and reflect on Shakespeare's dramatisation. Both their tendency to narrate themselves and their awareness of the theatricality of their actions establish the conspirators as not only agents of historical change but also self-conscious creators of dramatic narrative. They share this theatrical awareness with Richard, who likewise appears to acknowledge the duality of his historical and dramatic identities. It is therefore appropriate that the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptations, which constitute the further pluralisation of the characters' identities by transposing them into a new medium, closely align both with the form in which they are reproduced.

As is the case in the *Richard III* adaptation, the conspirators' prominent opacity encourages close identification with other visual tropes, most prominently with the play's dominant visual metaphor of blood. The irregular, fluctuating silhouettes created by the conspirators' cloaks and robes echo the fluidity of the blood with which they so often align themselves, perhaps also embodying the violence they perpetrate and the civic instability that follows. The conspirators' unstable shapes also create a striking juxtaposition with the static public images of Caesar, thus re-enacting the play text's opposition of his assumed physical constancy and his assassins' more malleable humoral metaphors.

Curtailing Somatic and Narrative Agency

In both adaptations, then, bodies are intentionally obscured in ways which present them as malleable and refashionable objects. In turn, this malleability permits a wealth of interpretative possibilities, establishing bodies as flexible visual metaphors for the plays' power struggles.

²⁵¹ Kahn, p.78.

In both cases, these metaphors are furthered by the interrelation of bodies and ink, which creates the illusion of narrative agency in the characters who appear most solidly rendered on the page. However, both graphic novels also manipulate somatic depictions to undermine and contain this apparent agency.

In the *Julius Caesar* adaptation, this curtailment is most readily observed by comparing the representation of the deaths of Caesar, Cassius and Brutus. The depiction of Caesar's assassination is visually encoded in a way which suggests the conspirators' dominance. Their onslaught is confined to a single frame in which all figures appear in silhouette, negating the distinctions between Caesar's body, those of his assailants, and the blood spurting from his wounds (Figure 89). In the same way that Richard's influence inscribes itself on the bodies of his victims, the portrayal of Caesar in the style more prevalently used for the conspirators reflects their physical and political dominance at this moment. Depicting Caesar as an unstable silhouette, a concentration of ink comparable to an effusion of blood, subverts the ideal of the constant, hermetic body he propagates earlier in the scene and replaces it with the permeability of the Bakhtinian grotesque.²⁵² Caesar's substance is rendered equivalent to the blood with which the conspirators identify themselves, and to which he has previously opposed himself. The narrative agency which the conspirators' bodies have previously signified thus translates into political power as their usurpation of Caesar entails replacing his somatic representation with a depiction of his body in keeping with their own blood-motivated political ideology.

Caesar's corpse is immediately visible in the first frame on the recto page, but here, and in all subsequent appearances, its precise details and the exact nature of his wounds are obscured by dense rendering on his skin, hair and clothes (Figure 90). This dense rendering makes his body closer in appearance to those of his assassins, but as a mute, obscured corpse it also presents interpretative possibilities: an opportunity which Antony seizes during his funeral oration, directing his audience's attention to the significance of Caesar's wounds. Caesar's trajectory is thus the inverse of the conspirators': his physical obfuscation and destruction of his public icons marks his political downfall, but also imbues his body with greater narrative power than it possesses while he is alive. Just as the conspirators are able to imprint their authority on Caesar's body, Antony manipulates the physical ambiguity they create to construct his own narrative.

This shift in narrative control is illustrated during Antony's oration, when, immediately after presenting Caesar's body, he reimagines the moment of his death in a sequence in which Caesar and Brutus are replicated multiple times across a double-page spread (Figure 91). The figures are indistinct, but more clearly rendered than in the silhouetted frame of the

²⁵² Bakhtin, p.317.

assassination itself: it is possible to distinguish between Caesar's body, Brutus's, and the extravagant blood spatter issuing from Caesar's back. Separating the elements of the assassination scene in this way destabilises the ideologically-encoded earlier depiction of the event. At the end of Antony's revisionist sequence, Caesar disintegrates over his last three images until only a dark splatter remains. The nature of this mark is uncertain: it could be blood or ink, and this ambiguity suggests that the distinction between the two substances which Antony's visualisation of the assassination momentarily establishes (by making the blood spatter distinguishable from the other elements of the scene) ends with the conclusion of his re-authorisation of events.

The sequence becomes more significant in light of the later depictions of the deaths of Cassius and Brutus. The conspirators' suicides follow the stylistic precedent of Antony's fictionalised account of the assassination, encouraging comparison between the two. Cassius's physical dissolution begins in the frame preceding his death, where he is portrayed in profile, disembodied from the neck down (Figure 92). The following frame, in which Cassius clasps Pindarus while being run through with his sword, closely echoes the earlier sequence in the positioning of the bodies and the garish blood spatter stemming from Cassius's back (p.189). Accordingly, the final two frames of the spread portray a similar physical disintegration into flecks of ambiguous matter. Soon after, Brutus's suicide replicates the pattern once more, in the posing of his body against Strato's, the spurting blood and his ensuing dissolution (Figure 93). It is significant that Cassius's and Brutus's suicides visually echo a narrative retelling of Caesar's assassination, rather than recalling the adaptation's depiction of the death itself. The conspirators' decisions to kill themselves might be interpreted as their attempts to maintain control over the conclusion of their narratives; correspondingly, the stylistic recollection of Antony's oration in the abstract depiction of their suicides seems to imply that they conceptualise their own lives similarly, as narrative constructs. This is congruent with the metatheatrical instinct they earlier demonstrate through the self-conscious shaping of history and narration of themselves as public figures. Further, the abstract disintegration of Cassius's and Brutus's bodies reflects their earlier conceptualisation of their identities and political purpose in somatic terms. At the moments of their deaths, the destruction of the self is visually equated with the disappearance of the body, reflecting their corporeally-centred world view.

However, the adaptation undermines the conspirators' efforts to editorialise their deaths by depicting their corpses in multiple frames after their deaths. If the conspirators' intention is to maintain the illusion of their narrative control, it would be more effective to absent their bodies from the moment of their corporeal disintegration. Instead, the adaptation repeatedly portrays their corpses: eight times in Cassius's case (pp.191-5) and five in Brutus's (Figure 94). This seems to indicate a deliberate redistribution of narrative power, in which the graphic novel's creators reclaim the agency with which they temporarily imbue the

conspirators. Furthermore, the conspirators' bodies in death differ from their living manifestations, with the adaptation stripping them of their former opacity. Cassius is sketched in rough outline in his post-mortem appearances, while Brutus's white shroud contrasts with the opaque cloaks and heavily rendered robes he wears elsewhere. The ink-less portrayal of their corpses coincides with the characters' loss of narrative agency, but also arguably continues the adaptation's equation of blood and ink: the loss of one brings about the absence of the other.

Within the visual narrative of the adaptation, it might be said that Caesar's error is to imagine that the intended constancy of his public mediations extends to his physical body. Nevertheless, the adaptation's displacement of his political agency onto public icons enables Caesar's ideology to endure beyond his death, animating Antony, Octavius and their factions. In contrast, the conspirators, whose political aspirations are motivated by their belief in the inherent nobility of their blood, lose all vitality as icons of power once deceased. Ironically, when the adaptation mediates their bodies as opaque, malleable signifiers, this affords the conspirators a political potency which their own preoccupation with the intrinsic qualities of their blood ultimately precludes.

A similar shift in representation occurs in the *Richard III* adaptation, in the prelude to Richard's death. After the sequence in which the ghosts of Richard's victims visit him and prophesy Henry Tudor's victory, Richard appears for the first – and only – time in sketched outline, with little rendering on his clothes or the surrounding setting (Figure 95). This rare exposure of Richard's body reflects his waning control and increasing vulnerability, an effect augmented by multiple frames amplifying Richard's bulging eyes, so often malevolently shadowed elsewhere. Although Richard soon recovers his opaque self, over the course of the battle of Bosworth multiple frames reiterate this physical deterioration through showing the increasing corrosion of his cloak (Figure 96; pp.195-8). Again, by disintegrating the means by which his body has previously been concealed and its significations manipulated, the adaptation reflects Richard's diminishing political and narrative agency as his death draws near.

Even when Richard is physically and politically advantaged, however, the adaptation enforces an element of fragmentation in his depiction. For instance, the double-page spread on which Richard issues his instructions to Clarence's murderers is typical of the graphic novel's amplification of his body at moments which mark an escalation in his influence; nevertheless, his physical dominance of the page is interrupted by overlaid images of Clarence, one of the murderers, and Richard's own mouth (Figure 97). Across the adaptation, the cumulative effect of figurative dismemberments like this is arguably to suggest a state of physical incompleteness after all, or at least to resist Richard's presentation of a coherent body.



Figure 89: Caesar's Assassination, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.92.



Figure 90: Caesar's Body After the Assassination, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.93.



Figure 91: Antony's Funeral Oration, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.124-5.





Figure 92: Cassius's Suicide, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.188-9.



Figure 93: Brutus's Suicide, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.200-1.



Figure 95: Richard on the Eve of Bosworth, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.182.



Figure 96: Richard's Cloak Disintegrating, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.193.



Figure 97: Richard Instructs the Murderers, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.84-5.

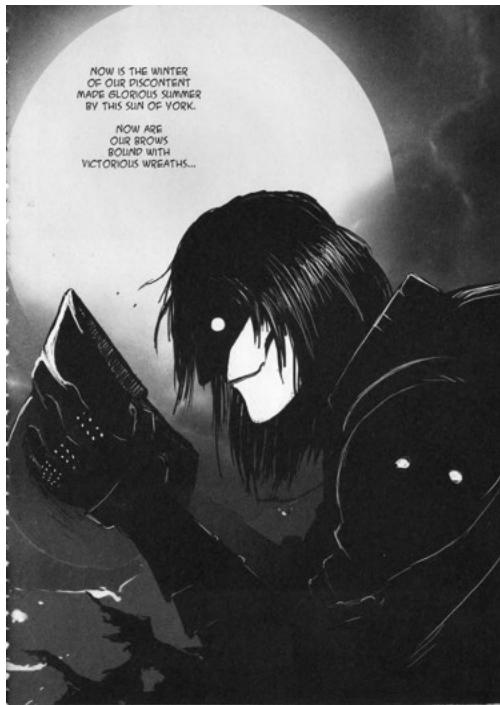


Figure 98: Richard's First Appearance, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.13.



Figure 99: Richard's Figurative Dissection, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.190.



Figure 100: Richard's Death 1, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.199.



Figure 101: Richard's Death 2, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.198.

In some instances, the visual pattern of dissection directly foreshadows Richard's eventual demise. In Richard's first appearance, a shadow separates the top half of his head from the bottom (Figure 98), an effect later replicated by the separation of frames at the onset of Bosworth (Figure 99). Both instances prefigure Richmond's eventual severance of the top half of Richard's head, a moment which imaginatively embellishes both Shakespeare's play and historical records (Figure 100). The nature of Richmond's blow is not immediately apparent: on the page preceding the illustration of Richard's dissected head, the motion lines of Richmond's sword are almost indistinguishable from the lines which separate the frames (Figure 101). The alignment of frames makes it appear as though an impossibly tall Richard is being severed into three parts. His death and the disruption of his body's depiction are, therefore, one and the same: the adaptation curtails Richard by discontinuing the physical dominance it elsewhere grants him.

Kill Shakespeare: Conclusions on Somatic Power and Meta-Narrative Control

This chapter has demonstrated how graphic novel adaptations of Shakespeare's political dramas can use bodies to articulate individual authority and ideology, but also broader power structures and social upheaval. In doing so, it has expanded on previous chapters' explorations of how narrative agency can be expressed in corporeal terms, suggesting that narrative power, somatic power, and political power are aligned in these adaptations of *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar*. As with previous chapters, this discussion has suggested that the adaptations reflect broader social trends and concerns – in this case, the widespread use of Caesar's and Richard's iconic bodies as cyphers for inappropriate power – to elucidate how these narratives of historical social unrest can engage audiences now and comment on current topical issues. By way of conclusion, some of the readings above can be developed further by exploring the *Kill Shakespeare* graphic novel series.²⁵³

The *Kill Shakespeare* series was published within ten years of SelfMadeHero's *Manga Shakespeare*. Its illustrative style is very different to that of the manga, but it nevertheless creates comparable associations between somatic prominence, political power and narrative agency. In the first two volumes of the series, Richard is the primary antagonist and the focus of these thematic intersections. The similarities between *Kill Shakespeare*'s rendering of the character and his representation in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation indicate which facets of Richard's character and narrative have proven particularly potent in the play's afterlife.

As in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, the series draws sustained parallels between Richard's control over his bodily signifiers and his assumption of narrative authority.

²⁵³ Page numbers are unavailable for *Kill Shakespeare*.

The series' metafictional premise, which attributes characters from across the Shakespearean canon with an awareness of themselves as the playwright's creations, enables prolonged and overt consideration of Richard's – and other characters' – awareness of their own agency, but also provides a means of curtailing that agency. In the first two instalments, Shakespeare's long absence from a world populated by his characters has generated overwhelming tensions between predestination and self-determination. Juliet's assertion that, 'by Will's grace, in this life we are blessed to choose what our role should be,' expresses an oft-reiterated vacillation between characters' sense of their own free will and the primacy of their author's guiding hand. In this world, Richard's ambition is not to ascend to the English throne: he has already done so. Instead, he seeks to procure Shakespeare's quill, the source of his creative authority. This is arguably an escalation of Richard's self-determining agenda: while the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation creates the illusion of him being able to manipulate the mode of his depiction, here he seeks to control the means of his original textual production. In this pursuit, however, he is hindered not only by his physical attributes, but also by a prophecy foretelling the ascendance of the 'Shadow King' (Hamlet, as it transpires) in conjunction with the fall of an 'unjust lord'. *Kill Shakespeare* thus makes Richard a victim of its own internal providential history in a way that closely imitates his historical defamation. In other words, just as early modern historians emphasised Richard's wickedness to align the rise of the Tudor dynasty with the will of God, so *Kill Shakespeare* incorporates his rule into a narrative that paves the way for the emergence of the 'rightful' king.

Unlike his counterpart in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, Richard's body in *Kill Shakespeare* is undisguised and unimpaired, apart from the withered right arm that features in his early appearances (Figure 102). This comparatively understated deformity is nevertheless the focus of how Richard and others interpret his body. In an early exchange with Hamlet, Richard provides two interpretations of his arm's significance, tailored for different audiences. He states, 'My enemies see it as a sign of weakness. It makes them foolish. It makes me powerful. And for my own people to have a ruler who is flawed? It lets them take comfort in their own weaknesses.' As with the manipulation of his physical opacity in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, Richard is 'redefining the significance of his deformity,' and editorialising his own body.²⁵⁴

Lady Macbeth – Richard's ally and lover in the *Kill Shakespeare* narrative – interrupts this self-defining agenda later in the first volume by offering an alternative interpretation of the arm, asking, 'How will you use Will's quill? Your arm is built for the sword.' Here, she prioritises Richard's body as predetermined both in its features and the significations inscribed upon it. His anger at the suggestion is predictable, but perhaps exacerbated by the timing of the

²⁵⁴ Torrey, p.146.

exchange, which swiftly follows a sexual encounter between the pair. This performance of a lover ‘shaped for sportive tricks’ (I.i.14) exceeds the role prescribed for Richard’s play-self, arguably constituting a transcendence of his textual identity, only for him to be once more curtailed by another spectator’s interpretation of his body.

Tellingly, after this incident Richard is almost completely absent from the series until the climactic battle at the end of the second volume and his fatal encounter with Shakespeare: it is as though the tensions between creator and creation have been sufficiently established. On the battlefield, Lady Macbeth’s cynicism proves warranted: Richard temporarily seizes the quill but is incapable of using it, or indeed retaining it for long. It soon becomes the instrument of his demise in the hands of his author. Here, then, as in the *Manga Shakespeare* edition, the price of Richard’s aspirations to narrative agency is exacted upon his body through the means by which that body has been produced. *Kill Shakespeare*’s metafictional premise allows for the explicit foregrounding of Richard’s narrative awareness and manipulation, facets which are present in the playtext and the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation but may require some interpretative work on behalf of the reader or audience to access. However, as is the case in the manga adaptation, *Kill Shakespeare* goes to some lengths to curtail Richard’s power at the end of the second volume. The consistency with which Richard’s narrative control is constrained might suggest that audiences find his machinations thrilling only as long as they are also reassured that he cannot succeed in exceeding the bounds of someone else’s narrative.

The *Kill Shakespeare* saga also echoes both *Manga Shakespeare* adaptations by creating physical parallels between Richard and another king, Old Hamlet. This comparison is not dissimilar to the *Manga Shakespeare* Richard’s construction of a parallel with Henry VI. However, the parallel is also created – and subverted – in ways which present an analogue to the public iconography of powerful bodies in the *Julius Caesar* adaptation.

When initially attempting to win Hamlet over to his cause, Richard claims that, ‘I am not unlike your father [...] I believe the way to make my people strong is by uplifting them.’ He thus makes his (pretended) benevolence as a ruler the basis for his identification with the celebrated Danish king. Prior to this, however, a passing physical resemblance has already been established through the multiple public effigies of Old Hamlet that appear in the volume’s opening pages, which echo Caesar’s public colossus (Figure 103). These memorialising images literalise the process of what Nietzsche calls ‘monumental history,’ in which the past is examined for models considered ‘worthy of imitation.’²⁵⁵ Most immediately, the plurality of images of Old Hamlet might be understood to provide an aspirational model of kingship for

²⁵⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘The Use and Abuse of History’ in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.70.

Hamlet, the future Shadow King, to strive towards. However, the idealisation of Old Hamlet as a monarch also supplies Richard with a suitable, if misleading, corollary when courting his son. Nietzsche warns that monumental history ‘incurs the danger of becoming somewhat distorted,’ and ‘deceives by analogies’: Richard is a distorted, if close, imitation of Old Hamlet’s physical precedent, and also an unworthy appropriator of his legacy.²⁵⁶ He thus transforms himself into the perpetrator of a distorted history, and not merely the victim of providential chronicles.

When Hamlet later encounters his father’s ghost, the physical similarity between Old Hamlet and Richard throws the veracity of this ghostly reproduction into doubt (Figure 104). The ghost is preoccupied with convincing Hamlet to further Richard’s agenda, and, particularly when depicted in silhouette, there is little to suggest that this is not in fact Richard, reaching out to Hamlet through apparitions in the same way he does at novel’s onset. Both this ambiguity and the ghost’s manifestation in the guise of Old Hamlet’s disintegrating remains corrupt the composed, hermetic model represented by the statues at the start of the narrative, once more reflecting the distorting power of Richard’s manipulation of monumental history. Richard’s parallel with Old Hamlet is both consolidated and undermined in the second volume, when Hamlet unexpectedly reveals that his father was ‘not a wise king,’ but rash, suspicious, miserly and belligerent. This narrative swerve makes the comparison Richard constructs truer than he knows, but in doing so it also subverts his narrative of self-definition: his appropriation of Old Hamlet’s image does not signify what he thinks it does. *Kill Shakespeare* thus distorts the familiar Shakespearean narrative in order to contain Richard’s own authorial endeavours.

The common use of statues in both the *Manga Shakespeare Julius Caesar* adaptation and *Kill Shakespeare* hints at a broader cultural understanding of how sculpture can preserve and perpetuate figures and models of power. This has already been hinted at in the discussion of similarities between Caesar’s statue (in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation and the RSC’s 2012 production) and the statues toppled during the Iraq war and the Arab Spring. However, these narratives’ manipulation of statues has only attained greater relevance in light of more recent debates surrounding memorial statues of Confederacy leaders in America and imperial figures – such as Cecil Rhodes and Edward Colston – in the UK. The public defacing and removal of the latter’s statue in Bristol during protests in 2020 creates a powerful corollary to *Manga Shakespeare*’s *Julius Caesar*, further demonstrating how destructive acts towards public monuments can turn them into testaments not only to the individuals they initially memorialise or the values they espouse, but also to the social forces that oppose them.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ Nietzsche, p.70.

²⁵⁷ For more on the shifting symbolism of the Colston statue, see Damien Gayle, “A potent historical artefact”:the statue of Edward Colston’s new role’, *The Guardian* (4th June 2021)
<<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/04/edward-colston-statue-potent-historical-artefact-david-olusoga>> [accessed July 2021].

Congruently, as previously suggested, adapting Shakespeare's work into new forms can similarly shift the power balance within these canonical texts.

The next chapter will continue this chapter's exploration of how mediatised adaptations seem to imbue certain characters with narrative agency and control over the medium in which they appear. However, whereas the subjects of *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar* ultimately find their manipulative powers curtailed by their respective adaptations, the supernatural creatures of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are permitted even further-reaching control over the mechanics of their own creative reproduction.



Figure 102: Richard III, *Kill Shakespeare*.



Figure 103: Old Hamlet's Statues, *Kill Shakespeare*.



Figure 104: Old Hamlet's Ghost, *Kill Shakespeare*.

Chapter 4

Mediatising Magic: Adapting the Fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

This chapter focuses on the fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and explores their depiction in contemporary mediatised adaptations, with a view to bringing together concerns and questions that have informed previous sections. Whereas Chapter 1 considered each medium separately, and Chapters 2 and 3 examined adaptations within a single medium, this chapter goes further by offering direct comparisons between adaptations across different media. This approach furthers the thesis's inquiry into how mediatised bodies can augment and expand the narratives in which they appear, and what such augmentation or expansion suggests about how contemporary revisions of Shakespeare's plays engage contemporary audiences across different modes of adaptation. The chapter also revisits and expands on issues discussed in earlier chapters. As Chapter 1 did, this chapter explores how the supernatural is aligned with technologies of adaptation. We saw how, in *The Tempest*, this approach was used to convey Prospero's power and control over Ariel and Caliban, and foregrounded the latter's subjugation and lack of narrative agency. Yet, as we will see here, the fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* similarly use their magic to manipulate other characters and thus propel the play's plot but they do not carry the negative colonialist, autocratic, or despotic connotations attributed to Prospero by recent criticism: they are native to the play's wood, while the humans – like Prospero on Caliban's island – are interlopers. This chapter therefore proposes that in mediatised adaptations, the fairies are frequently imbued with the ability to engage with and manipulate the form in which they appear. As will be demonstrated, the fairies' awareness of their visual medium expands on the play's insistence on their metatheatrical sensibility.

Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrated that the liminal settings of *The Tempest* and the cross-dressing comedies reflect the marginalised narratives of central characters: Caliban as a colonised subject, and Viola and Rosalind as female adolescents. While the fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are not marginalised in their woodland setting, that setting does constitute a similarly liminal space of transition for the Athenians, one which poses particular peril to the female characters. Upon entering the woods, Demetrius rebukes Helena for trusting 'the opportunity of night / And the ill counsel of a desert place / With the rich worth of your virginity,' (II.i.217-9) and shortly afterwards threatens to 'do thee mischief in the wood' (II.i.237). A similar anxiety regarding the vulnerability of feminine virtue also suffuses the exchange between Lysander and Hermia in the following scene, underpinning Hermia's request for Lysander to 'lie further off, in human modesty' (II.ii.61): it is her reputation, not his, at stake. These threats to feminine virtue represent a pattern of female subjugation in the play,

vividly rendered in the asymmetrical power relationships between Hippolyta and Theseus, Hermia and Egeus, and the enchanted Titania and Oberon. This chapter therefore also explores how some mediatised adaptations of the play challenge male authority and foreground the construction of female narratives, often using the fairies to do so. Whereas Chapter 2 focused specifically on how the shojo subgenre of manga foregrounds feminine subjectivity and narrative agency, this chapter suggests that different media can create similar opportunities for the female characters of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Although the play's young Athenians escape to the liminal space of the wood, the fairy rulers and their followers closely replicate the ducal court the humans leave behind. This parallel is often foregrounded in theatrical performance through the doubling of parts between Theseus and Oberon, and Hippolyta and Titania.²⁵⁸ The multiple central doublings arguably create a more sustained analogue between the play's urban power centre and its pastoral setting than, for example, the exiled duke's forest court in *As You Like It*. This in turn facilitates a reading of the woodland sequence as an extended reflection on patriarchal society and male authority, even when the Athenians believe they have escaped it. In this regard, this chapter's reading of the play's interrogation of male power recalls the central concerns of *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar*, as explored previously in Chapter 3. The current chapter therefore also considers how some mediatised adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* somatically encode the power dynamics between characters.

Why end an extended discussion of mediatised bodies as narrative vessels by focusing on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? In part because, as Douglas Lanier asserts, 'of the three groups of characters featured in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – the Athenians, the Mechanicals, and the fairies – it is the fairies who have most fired the post-Romantic imagination and inspired popular adaptations well into the twentieth century.'²⁵⁹ But why, in turn, should this be the case? One possible explanation is that the fairies display a similar physical ambiguity to that of Caliban or Richard III. Previous chapters have explored how these characters' corporeal ambivalence enables a proliferation of interpretative possibilities: the same opportunities may make the fairies particularly attractive to audiences and creative practitioners. Perhaps because of the fairies' popularity and malleability, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has inspired a broader range of mediatised adaptations than the other plays discussed in this thesis. This chapter therefore explores a broader number of adaptations than previous ones: graphic novel adaptations by Classical Comics and SelfMadeHero; puppet productions by the RSC (2005) and Handspring Puppet Company (2013); and an episode of the *Animated*

²⁵⁸ James Calderwood, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream: Anamorphism and Theseus' Dream', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No.4 (Winter, 1991), pp.409-30, p.410.

²⁵⁹ Douglas Lanier, "'That You Have but Slumbered Here": *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Popular Culture', in *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Shakespeare in Performance*, ed. David Bevington and Peter Holland (London: A & C Black Publishers Limited, 2006), p.27.

Tales. It also examines the appropriations of the play's characters and narrative in the *Kill Shakespeare* and *Sandman* graphic novel series and the RSC's research and development project *Dream* (2021), which made use of motion capture animation.²⁶⁰

Thinking about how and why this chapter connects to previous ones, and the work it intends to do, brings its aims, and the aims of the thesis overall, into sharper focus, even as the types of media forms discussed here diversify. The aims of this chapter are, indeed, to examine how fairies are depicted across a range of media and to explore how these depictions reflect both critical interpretations of the play and broader social or cultural concerns, including the climate crisis and our relationship to technology. As suggested above – and explored in greater detail below – the play imbues its supernatural characters, in particular the hobgoblin Puck, with a theatrical awareness which has proved influential to mediatised adaptations. This metatheatricality seems to create a paradox: the fairies are closely associated with the natural, organic world they inhabit, but simultaneously demonstrate an awareness of their own artifice, others' synthetic constructs, and the means of theatrical production. This chapter will explore how mediatised adaptations negotiate these apparently contradictory associations and use them to engage with the concerns outlined above. The chapter will further elucidate how mediatised fairies can affect our understanding or experience of other facets of the play, such as representations of male authority and female narrative agency.

Fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

To demonstrate how mediatised adaptations respond to the source material of the play, this section explores some critical responses to the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and supplies a close reading of some of their functions in the narrative. This is intended to establish the ideas which underpin contemporary adaptations, whether those are rooted in the text itself or in popular critical responses to the play. Two themes in particular inform the later analysis of the adaptations: the relationship between the fairies and the natural world, and the fairies' metatheatrical qualities.

On the first of these topics, pertaining to the environment, Tom MacFaul asserts that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 'contains some of Shakespeare's most resonant poetry of the natural world.'²⁶¹ However, the play also distinguishes between how humans and non-humans engage with nature. In the opening scene, Hermia recalls that she and Helena 'Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie' (I.i.215). As MacFaul observes, this line exemplifies how the

²⁶⁰ For details of all primary sources, see Bibliography. *The Sandman* and *Kill Shakespeare* volumes do not have page numbers.

²⁶¹ Tom MacFaul, *Shakespeare and the Natural World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.54.

human characters exist ‘solidly and weightily in the world’.²⁶² In contrast, the unnamed fairy’s opening speech in Act 2 Scene 1 suggests a more porous, intimate relationship with their environment:

Over hill, over dale,
 Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
 Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander everywhere
Swifter than the moon’s sphere,
And I serve the Fairy Queen
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be.
In their gold coats, spots you see:
Those be rubies, fairy favours;
In those freckles live their savours.
I must go seek some dew drops here, And
hang a pearl in every cowslip’s ear.

(II.i.2-15)

The first three lines produce a varied topography of both wild and cultivated landscapes, which give way in the fourth to the classical elements of water and fire, fundamental components of the natural world. The alternating repetition of ‘over’ and ‘thorough’ (an archaic variant of ‘through’) creates an impression of undulating movement, akin to an insect’s flight, allowing the fairy to travel effortlessly over their environment but also to permeate it, traversing barriers both manmade (‘pale,’ or fence) and natural (the ‘flood’ and ‘fire’). The combination of these actions suggests a greater awareness of – or attention to – the contours of nature than Hermia’s recollection of the flower beds she and Helena lay upon, figuratively and literally flattening the landscape. The second half of the speech introduces the fairies’ scale in relation to the ‘tall’ cowslips. The precision with which the fairy locates the flowers’ scent (‘savours’) in their ‘freckles’ (markings on the petals) conveys both a sense of their relative size and an intimate knowledge of the natural world. This is further foregrounded by the miniature scale of the fairy’s task – collecting dew drops to function as pearls. By anthropomorphising the cowslips as Titania’s pensioners, or bodyguards, the speech also suggests that the fairies’ social structures allow for a degree of interconnectivity with different forms of life.

The relationship between the fairies and their environment is foregrounded again later in the scene, when Titania describes the impact of her dispute with Oberon on the natural world (II.i.81-117). Early on in her speech, Titania declares:

Never, since the middle summer’s spring,

²⁶² MacFaul, p.55.

Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margin of the sea
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport.

(II.i.83-7)

Both 'hill' and 'dale' directly echo the opening line of the fairy's speech earlier in the scene, and this passage similarly embeds the fairies' activities in the natural landscape. Adam Rzepka suggests that these lines 'perform a capsule survey of the English countryside, from its heights to its delimiting shores'.²⁶³ In Rzepka's reading, 'hill' and 'dale' 'mark out the vertical limits of the land', 'forest' and 'mead' 'describe its two primary surface environments', and the transition from 'fountain' (or spring) via 'brook' to the 'beached margin of the sea' marks a fluid progression through the landscape to its outer limits. Titania's concise catalogue of the contours of the land thus replicates on a grander scale the fairy's awareness of the topography they move 'over' and 'thorough' and implies a similar affinity for the natural world. However, Titania constructs this landscape in order to illustrate more vividly the ways in which it has been damaged by her conflict with Oberon, as seen in the following lines:

Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain, As
in revenge have sucked up from the sea
Contagious fogs, which, falling in the land,
Hath every pelting river made so proud That
they have overborne their continents.

(II.i.88-92)

As Rzepka notes, this passage reverses the journey from spring to sea traced in the previous passage, following the 'contagious fogs' from the shore to inland rivers: Titania 'disfigures the imagined landscape systematically, blurring or erasing its demarcating "margent[s]" in the reverse order of the preceding survey'.²⁶⁴ Titania's account of a landscape obscured by fog and overflowing rivers demonstrates the distorting effect of the fairies' altered behaviour on their environment.²⁶⁵ However, Titania is also aware that this environmental upheaval has repercussions for those with whom the fairies share the landscape. She continues:

The ox hath therefore stretched his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn

²⁶³ Adam Rzepka, "How easy is a bush supposed a bear?": Differentiating Imaginative Production in *AMidsummer Night's Dream*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol.66, No.3 (Fall 2015) pp.308-28, p.315.

²⁶⁴ Rzepka, p.316.

²⁶⁵ Titania's vision of natural disruption corresponds with early modern anxieties about 'visible tokens of disorder' such as bad weather, which were believed to signal more consequential upset to the earthly order. E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Random House, 1998), pp.25-26.

Hath rotted ere his youth attained a beard.
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrain flock.
The nine men's morris is filled up with mud,
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,
For lack of tread, are indistinguishable.

(II.i.93-100)

The 'drowned field' arguably extends the reverse trajectory observed by Rzepka in the previous passage, echoing the 'mead' mentioned at II.i.84. However, instead of a setting for fairy dances, Titania now considers the field as a site of human activity (agriculture), disrupted by the floods issuing from her conflict with Oberon. As Sukanta Chaudhuri notes in his edition of the play, exceptionally bad weather led to poor harvests and subsequent famine in the mid-1590s, coinciding with cattle-plague and sheep-rot similar to the 'murrain' Titania describes (p.288). The fairies' dispute is thus proffered as a cause of natural phenomena which may have directly impacted some members of the play's original audiences. Titania's references to the 'nine men's morris' and 'mazes' invoke early modern rural pastimes: in being rendered 'indistinguishable', they extend the obfuscation of the landscape initiated by the sea's 'contagious fogs' into other areas of human settlement and life beyond the fields. Titania observes that among the 'human mortals', 'no night is now with hymn or carol blest' (II.i.101-2). The interruption of these rituals has further consequences:

Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air
That rheumatic diseases do abound.

(II.i.103-5)

The repetition of 'therefore' throughout the speech (II.i.88, 93, 103) propels a sequence of cause and effect indicative of an interdependent world, presaging modern understandings of ecosystems. The last part of the speech, in which Titania observes that 'thorough this distemperature, we see / The seasons alter' (II.i.106-7), extends the pattern of anthropomorphising nature seen in the fairy's description of cowslips as Titania's 'pensioners' and in Titania's designation of the moon as the 'governess of floods'. Winter is personified as 'old Hiems', wearing an 'odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds' on his 'thin and icy crown' (II.i.109-10). This is Titania's fullest example of how all the seasons 'change / Their wonted liveries' (II.i.112-3), or customary clothing, until 'the mazed world / [...] now knows not which is which.' (II.i.113-4) In the early modern period, liveries indicated allegiance to a particular

individual or institution.²⁶⁶ By imagining the seasons in livery, Titania incorporates these forces of nature into the same sartorially codified system as the cowslip pensioners, the same system to which the play's first audiences would have adhered. The effect of this fairy perspective is to create a parity between humans and other facets of nature by replicating the distinctions of dress which helped to delineate social hierarchies in early modern England.²⁶⁷ When Titania describes the seasons changing their liveries, she is therefore not only further expounding upon the ways in which the fairies' dispute has disrupted the natural order but also tacitly suggesting its impact on the social order. In this instance, the fairies' conceptualisation of nature is congruent with early modern concerns about theatre's potential to disrupt social hierarchies through the practice of players donning costumes. The antitheatrical polemicist Stephen Gosson asserted:

The proof is evident, the consequent is necessary, that in stage plays for a boy to put on the attire, the gesture, the passions of a woman; for a mean person to take upon him the title of a prince, with counterfeit port and train; is by outward signs to show themselves other than they are, and so within the compass of a lie [...]. [T]hey learn to counterfeit, and so to sin.²⁶⁸

Titania's vision of the personified seasons altering their clothing thus serves numerous functions. It reinforces the impression of equivalence between the natural order and the social hierarchies governing early modern England, and warns of the dangers of disrupting either. By invoking courtly distinctions of dress, Titania also arguably creates a parallel between the fantastical world of the fairies and the more familiar ducal court of the opening scene, encouraging further comparison between the play's disparate settings. Furthermore, Titania's lines seem to tacitly reaffirm popular early modern conceptions of the theatre as a microcosm for the world or a mirror to nature, aligning the fairies with theatrical practitioners in terms of their ability to disrupt the established order. The fairies' metatheatrical capacity will be explored in greater detail shortly, but the interpretations outlined above demonstrate the infeasibility of discussing the fairies' affiliation with nature in complete isolation from the awareness they frequently appear to demonstrate of theatrical practices and their own artifice.

Titania's insistence on the interconnectedness of the fairies, their environment, other life forms and the seasons foregrounds the fairies' responsibility for maintaining the natural order. Their culpability for the disruption she describes is made explicit in her conclusion:

²⁶⁶ Gabriel Egan, 'Livery' in *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, eds. Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.256.

²⁶⁷ Kate Augherson notes that 'Restrictions on behaviour, social and geographical movement and political hierarchy could be enforced through statutes on appropriate clothing', in *The English Renaissance: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, ed. Kate Augherson (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p.163.

²⁶⁸ Stephen Gosson, *Plays Confounded in Five Actions* (1582), in *Shakespeare's Theater: A Sourcebook*, ed. by Tanya Pollard (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 84-114, p.102.

This same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension:
We are their parents and original.

(II.i.115-7)

This acknowledgement of responsibility makes Titania's speech – and the play as a whole – attractive material for ecocritical readings in the context of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries' climate crisis. For instance, Robert Watson states that the play 'can be useful in our ecological crisis' because it demonstrates that 'our insularity as individuals and as a species is a destructive illusion, an enclosure crisis of the human self'.²⁶⁹ Watson suggests that Shakespeare's fairies perform a role comparable to microbes or hormones, representing 'the world we do not know, but could not live without'.²⁷⁰ He further asserts that the fairies' interventions in the mortals' narratives reflects 'the way our illusory boundaries of selfhood are overrun (interpenetrated, as well as interpellated) by entities much smaller and seemingly weaker than ourselves'.²⁷¹

This permeability is exemplified by the play's multiple cross-species hybridisations, both literal – as in the case of the transformed Bottom – and figurative. Puck boasts of his disguises as a 'filly foal' (II.i.46) and a 'roasted crab' (II.i.48 - probably a crabapple), blurring the boundaries between fairy, fauna, and flora. Later, when he pursues the mechanicals as 'a horse [...] a hound, / A hog, a headless bear' (III.i.104-5), the men's fear figuratively transforms them into 'wild geese' or 'choughs' (III.ii.20-1). These transformations are not solely initiated by the play's supernatural characters: the mechanicals also fear that Snug the joiner will be too convincing in the part of the lion and frighten the ladies in the audience (III.i.25-30). Bottom refers to the lion as 'wildfowl', creating taxonomic ambiguity; his proposed solution, whereby 'half [Snug's] face must be seen through the lion's neck' (III.i.33-4) introduces further chimeric blending, between man and beast. The lovers' interactions are similarly laden with inter-species imagery: Helena begs Demetrius to treat her as his 'spaniel' (II.i.205) and later complains that she is 'ugly as a bear' (II.ii.98). Hermia uses bestial epithets when she believes Demetrius has killed Lysander, declaiming 'Out, dog, out, cur!' (III.ii.65) and referring to him as an 'adder' and a 'serpent' (III.ii.66-7). During the argument between the four lovers in the same scene, Hermia herself is referred to as a 'vixen' (III.ii.324) by Helena and a 'cat' by Lysander, who also threatens to 'shake thee from me like a serpent' (III.ii.260-1). Under the love juice's influence, Demetrius comes to see Helena's lips as 'kissing cherries' (III.ii.140),

²⁶⁹ Robert N. Watson, 'The Ecology of Self in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*' in *Ecocritical Shakespeare*, eds. Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton (New York: Routledge, 2016), p.53.

²⁷⁰ Watson, p.36.

²⁷¹ Watson, p.34.

an image Helena returns to when she describes herself and Hermia as a ‘double cherry’ (III.ii.209) or ‘two lovely berries moulded on one stem’ (III.ii.211). These hybridisations could be interpreted as a consequence of the humans entering into the fairies’ realm, the liminal space of the woods, where usual distinctions can become blurred. In this sense, the lovers and mechanicals become subject to the same disruption of the natural order observed by Titania in Act 2 Scene 1. However, inter-species permeation also pervades the ducal court of Athens in the figure of Theseus. As Watson observes, in Greek mythology Theseus is the son of two fathers: the sea god Poseidon and Aegeus, whose name suggests a goat-human hybrid.²⁷² The play presents a spectral copy of Aegeus in Hermia’s father Egeus, drawing attention to Theseus’ taxonomic ambiguity. Such hybridity at the heart of civilisation further challenges human insularity by subverting the binary between the fairies’ disrupted space and the humans’ ordered world. This subversion foregrounds the ‘enclosure crisis’ observed by Watson, resonating with contemporary environmental concerns.

As the next section will explore, there is an ongoing association between fairies and nature in contemporary popular culture. Later analysis of how fairies are depicted in mediatised adaptations of the play will suggest that this association is a response to the current climate crisis and ecocritical readings of the playtext, such as Watson’s. However, while the relationship between the fairies and nature suffuses all the adaptations and appropriations under discussion, many are also preoccupied with the fairies’ metatheatrical functions. As suggested above, this metatheatricality should be seen as continuous with, not distinct from, the fairies’ interactions with - or characterisations of - their environment; and as will be shown below, some adaptations create intricate fusions between nature and artifice to exemplify this. By way of informing such readings, the remainder of this section will explore how the play’s supernatural creatures can be said to perform theatrical functions.

Critical readings of metatheatricality in the play have frequently focused on Puck. Ruth Nevo describes him as a ‘genius of comedy’ who ‘stage-manages’ events for Oberon’s amusement and convenience.²⁷³ Jonathan Bate asserts that Puck ‘has the right to think of himself as author of the play, since it is his dispensing of the love juice that fuels the plot’.²⁷⁴ Peter Holland emphasises the flexibility of Puck’s narrative role, describing him as ‘simultaneously playwright and actor and audience’.²⁷⁵ Thomas Betteridge similarly suggests that ‘Puck’s role is to produce narrative; he operates as an embodied textual device or literary trope making the play happen’.²⁷⁶ These metatheatrical or metafictional interpretations of Puck

²⁷² Watson, p.37.

²⁷³ Nevo, pp.106-110.

²⁷⁴ Jonathan Bate, *Complete Works* ed. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 2007), p.366.

²⁷⁵ Peter Holland, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.49.

²⁷⁶ Thomas Betteridge, *Shakespearean Fantasy and Politics* (Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2005), p.74.

align narrative agency with supernatural power in a similar way to the adaptations of *The Tempest* in Chapter 1. For instance, the many guises Puck boasts of in his speech at II.i.42-58 demonstrate a magical ability to alter his shape, but also identify him as an actor who can switch between different roles at will.

However, while Puck is the character most directly responsible for managing the action by maneuvering lovers and mechanicals across the stage, many of his functions are shared by his master Oberon. Oberon's desire for the changeling Indian boy is the catalyst for the fairies' dispute and Titania's enchantment, and his decision to intervene in Helena's pursuit of Demetrius propels much of the lovers' plot. Furthermore, when Puck addresses Oberon as 'king of shadows' (III.ii.347) he echoes the use of shadow as a metaphor for theatrical illusion previously discussed in the context of *Macbeth* and *Richard III*, and in doing so suggests Oberon's primacy in directing the events of the play. This meaning of 'shadow' is foregrounded towards the play's conclusion, when Theseus comments on the mechanicals' performance that 'the best in this kind are but shadows' (V.i.210), referring to theatre's illusory quality. A little over two hundred lines later, Puck begins the play's closing monologue with a reference to 'we shadows' (V.i.413), which in the context of the speech's broader apology for the play could indicate the actors as well as the fairies. This ambiguity further elides the supernatural with the theatrical, and Puck's direct address to the audience (comparable to Prospero's final speech in its request for applause, 'give me your hands', V.i.427) suggests an awareness of the medium in which he appears. As will be demonstrated, this tantalising suggestion of metatheatrical awareness has inspired numerous adaptations to depict fairies capable of shaping their narrative and medium.

This section has explored how *A Midsummer Night's Dream* presents fairies which are simultaneously attuned to nature and aware of their own artifice or illusory nature. The next section shifts focus to perceptions of fairies in popular culture since Shakespeare, in order to identify ideas and associations which may inform their depictions in contemporary adaptations.

Fairies After Shakespeare

Some critics have observed that Shakespeare's depiction of miniature fairies is remarkable in the context of extant folklore at the time. Watson refers to his creations as 'unusually small and benign'.²⁷⁷ A.D. Nuttall is more expansive:

²⁷⁷ Watson, p.36.

We can no longer assert [...] that Shakespeare was the first to present minuscule fairies, since earlier examples have been found, but we can say that he chose the then unusual miniature fairy, in preference to the more usual version.²⁷⁸

Describing the more prevalent image, or ‘usual version’, of fairies in medieval folklore, Lisa Wenger Bro states:

These are not the fairies of popular conception; they are not cute, tiny, winged female creatures who grant our every wish. Instead, we see more monstrous, human-like fey. These fey are capricious and can just as easily end a life as commit a benevolent deed.²⁷⁹

Observing how Shakespeare’s depiction of fairies differs from earlier folkloric traditions is important for later analysis of contemporary adaptations of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. As will be seen, the tradition of ambivalent or even malevolent fairies is resurgent in popular culture and influences the aesthetic choices of the adaptations under discussion. The miniature fairy, meanwhile, became more culturally prominent after Shakespeare and also continues to shape modern images of fairies. This section traces some of the functions and connotations attributed to fairies in popular culture after Shakespeare, in order to elucidate their symbolism and significance in contemporary adaptations.

The Victorian period’s fascination with fairies is well documented.²⁸⁰ For Wenger Bro, the era consolidated the popular image of ‘cute, tiny, winged female creatures’ she describes above. Katherine Briggs similarly suggests that Victorian fairies were products of ‘whimsy’ and that ‘passion for the miniature [...] rendered them less and less formidable. When they were given butterfly and dragonfly wings they were reduced to almost the status of insects, and [...] every care was taken to render them unalarming.’²⁸¹ Wenger Bro observes that this physical curtailment coincided with the emergence of fairy tales as a means of delivering moral instruction, noting that the period’s tales ‘frequently reflect a patriarchal ideal – women should know their place in the world (below men) and have no agency.’²⁸² In this sense, the diminished fairies reflected the ‘nineteenth-century impulse both to idealise and infantilise women’.²⁸³ Their reduced size corresponded to the limited roles of the female protagonists

²⁷⁸ A.D. Nuttall, ‘*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: Comedy as Apotrope of Myth’, *Shakespeare Survey*, Vol. 53(2000), pp.49-59, p.53.

²⁷⁹ Lisa Wenger Bro, ‘Killing Tinker Bell: Re-mythologizing the Fey in a Technocentric Age’ in *Monsters of Film, Fiction and Fable: The Cultural links between the Human and Inhuman*, eds. Lisa Wenger Bro, Crystal O’Leary-Davidson and Mary Ann Gareis (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), p.45.

²⁸⁰ Far-reaching surveys include Nicola Brown, *Fairies in Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Carole G Silver *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²⁸¹ Katherine Briggs, *The Fairies in Tradition and Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1967), p.249.

²⁸² Wenger Bro, p.49.

²⁸³ Marija Reiff, “‘More Aerial, More Graceful, More Perfect’: Madame Vestris’s Oberon, Victorian Culture, and the Feminized Fairies of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, 1840-1914”, *Victorian Review*, Vol. 44, No.2 (Fall 2018), pp.251-269, p.252.

they assisted. The sentimentalisation of fairies after Shakespeare impinged on performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Marija Reiff asserts that fairies became so 'extensively romanticized' that it became 'impossible to stage Shakespeare's full script with its faulty, flawed, and feuding fairies'.²⁸⁴ A popular solution was instigated by Lucia Elizabeth Vestris – more commonly known as Madame Vestris – who established a trend for staging the play with all-female fairies in an influential production at Covent Garden in 1840, where she performed the role of Oberon.²⁸⁵ Reiff observes:

By making the fairies women, Vestris capitalized on the associations among women, children and supernaturality, thus allowing her to portray idealized nineteenth-century fairies. Yet as these fairy portrayals became increasingly feminized, they also became progressively more childlike, pure, and naïve.²⁸⁶

The saccharine portrayal of feminised fairies was perpetuated in twentieth-century popular culture, prominent examples of which include Disney's animated adaptations of fairy tales such as *Cinderella* (1950) or *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), arguably consolidating reversions to reactionary gender roles after the limited emancipation of the war years, or pre-emptively striking against Second Wave feminism.

Wenger Bro suggests that Victorian fairies were defined by their didactic functions in preparing young women for their domestic roles and were therefore 'severed completely from nature'.²⁸⁷ However, some critics suggest a more complex reality. Laurence Talairach-Vielmas argues that the Victorian preoccupation with fairies is closely connected to the era's fascination with the burgeoning field of natural history.²⁸⁸ He suggests that the popularity of fairies in this period can be seen as both a reaction against and an engagement with scientific developments: fairies 'made up for the Victorians' own disenchanted world,' but also exemplified 'microscopic animalcules – natural wonders which typified nature's marvellous potential'.²⁸⁹ This suggests that the Victorians retained at least some of the older associations between fairies and the natural world, incorporating them into their contemporary perspective of the world. Talairach-Vielmas also observes the key role played by women in the sphere of popular science, and notes that 'many of them were both writers of fairy tales and naturalists, active participants in both the literary and scientific fields'.²⁹⁰ Fairies, natural science and constructions of femininity thus intersected. As Barbara Gates suggests, 'What women said about nature was predicated in part upon the ways in which they themselves were constructed

²⁸⁴ Reiff, p.252.

²⁸⁵ Reiff, p.251.

²⁸⁶ Reiff, p.252.

²⁸⁷ Wenger Bro, p.48.

²⁸⁸ Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, *Fairy Tales, Natural History and Victorian Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.1.

²⁸⁹ Talairach-Vielmas, p.1.

²⁹⁰ Talairach-Vielmas, p.4.

as nature.²⁹¹ Even when women historically wielded comparatively little agency, fairies may have provided a means of elucidating or renegotiating their position in the world.

More recently, Wenger Bro suggests that fairies have been subject to a 'remythologizing' in popular culture, which has revived the 'capricious' fairy of medieval folklore.²⁹² This is borne out in the portrayal of full-sized, morally ambivalent fairies in popular series such as *True Blood* (2008-2014) and *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell* (2015). Wenger Bro asserts that 'these new fey come to represent a loss our society faces in its ongoing quest for scientific and technological advancement, one that suggests our own need for a closer connection to nature.'²⁹³ She elaborates:

The discussion that dominates talk of technology frequently is related to the devastating impact it has on us, with everything from privacy issues, government and corporate control [...] and catastrophes like Chernobyl and Hiroshima under debate.²⁹⁴

In ways that develop this thesis' observations in Chapter 1, Wenger Bro suggests that modern fairies provide an 'outside lens' through which 'we can see the way modern life breeds monstrosity'.²⁹⁵ As will be seen, some of the adaptations under discussion use fairies for this purpose, predominantly to emphasise humanity's culpability in the ongoing climate crisis. However, other commentators challenge the binary Wenger Bro suggests between fairies and technology in contemporary popular culture. For instance, Amie Doughty observes that in the young adult series *Artemis Fowl* (from 2001) and *Faerie Wars* (2003-2011), fairy magic and technology are closely intertwined.²⁹⁶ In the *Artemis Fowl* books, Doughty suggests that 'despite the magical ability of the fairies, it is their technology which is most noticeable and which [...] appears magical, especially since it is far more advanced than human technology'.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, the series contains numerous instances in which magic and technology are combined, as when the centaur Foaly has warlocks 'do their thing into lithium batteries' to circumvent problems relating to stamina while spell-casting (*Artemis Fowl*, p.145). Both *Artemis Fowl* and *Faerie Wars* explore the dangers of overdependence on magic and technology, as Doughty notes:

²⁹¹ Barbara T. Gates, *Kindred Nature: Victorian and Edwardian Women Embrace the Living World* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press), p.3.

²⁹² Wenger Bro, p.45.

²⁹³ Wenger Bro, p.45.

²⁹⁴ Wenger Bro, p.49.

²⁹⁵ Wenger Bro, p.62.

²⁹⁶ Amie A. Doughty "Just a Fairy, His Wits, and Maybe a Touch of Magic": Magic, Technology, and Self-Reliance in Contemporary Fantasy Fiction', in *Children's Literature and Culture*, ed.Harry Edwin Eiss (Newcastle:Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), p.55.

²⁹⁷ Doughty, p.56.

Magic and technology seem to create for the characters a false sense of security and invulnerability. As this sense of security is articulated by the characters, it is systematically removed, thereby forcing the characters to fend for themselves without, or with severely limited, access to magic and technology.²⁹⁸

However, while these cautionary tales seem to reflect an ambivalence regarding our relationship to modern technology similar to the pessimism expressed by Wenger Bro, the narratives do not use fairies or their magic as foils to human technology. Instead, the comingling of supernatural creatures and advanced technology employs the former as a means of articulating what confounds or unnerves us about the latter. There is an echo here of Arthur C. Clarke's adage, 'any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.'²⁹⁹ Watson rearticulates this in his reading of the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where he suggests that 'in biology as in so many areas of early modern science, "magic" is the place-holder for phenomena with pending explanations.'³⁰⁰ In this light, contemporary popular culture's preoccupation with fairies can be interpreted not as a rejection of the modern world and the technological age, but as an attempt to understand and negotiate a place in it. Fairies may thus perform for us a similar function as they did for the Victorians and for Shakespeare and the early moderns, alerting us to the ways in which the world around us is ever-changing.

Fairies as Modern Monsters

As has been suggested above, Shakespeare's fairies display a somatic ambiguity similar to that of *The Tempest*'s Caliban. The play says little about their appearance, aside from implications of their diminutive size in comparison to their surroundings – such as the unnamed fairy's reference to 'cowslips tall' or Puck's description of Titania and Oberon's followers 'creep[ing] into acorn cups' (II.i.31). The preceding sections suggest other ways in which the fairies resemble Caliban, in that they have been linked to broader cultural anxieties such as climate change and overdependence on technology. This section therefore considers whether, like Caliban, the fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* can be usefully read in the context of contemporary monster theory. To do this, it explores the depiction of fairies in the adaptations in terms of the criteria Cohen and Ruddick were shown to suggest in Chapter 1, namely as monstrous emblems of 'category crisis' but also, where appropriate, as 'extrinsic' or 'intrinsic' to their narratives.

²⁹⁸ Doughty, p.63.

²⁹⁹ Arthur C. Clarke, *Profiles of the Future: An Inquiry into the Limits of the Possible* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p.383.

³⁰⁰ Watson, p.36.



Figure 105: The Fairies, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.51.



Figure 106: Puck and the Fairy, *Classical Comics*, p.27.



Figure 107: Oberon and Titania Clash, *Classical Comics*, p.30.



Figure 108: Puck, *Kill Shakespeare*

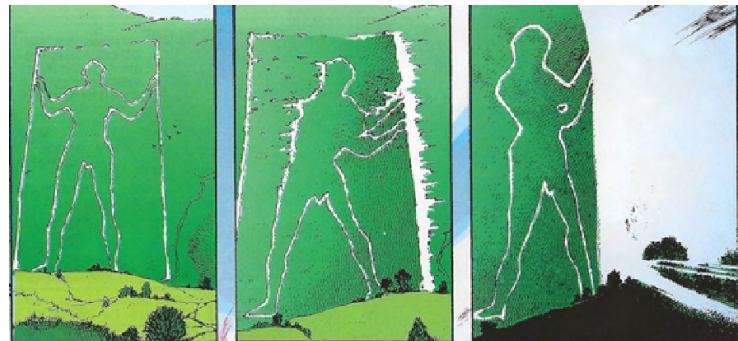


Figure 109: Wendel Opens the Door, *The Sandman*.



Figure 110: The Fairy Audience 1, *The Sandman*.

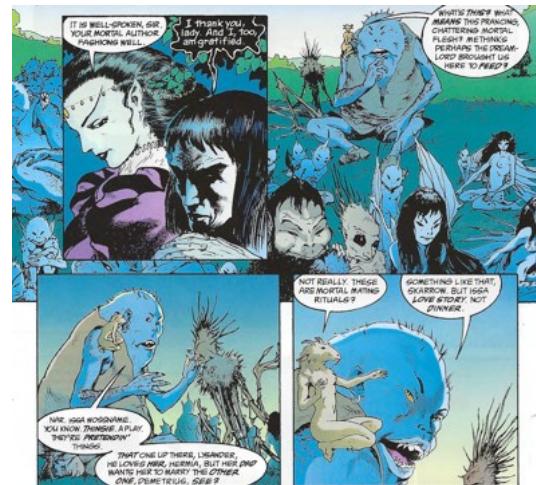


Figure 111: The Fairy Audience 2, *The Sandman*.

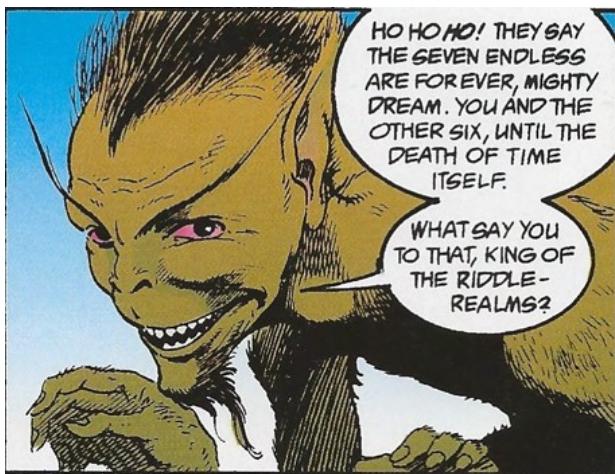


Figure 112: Puck, *The Sandman*.



Figure 113: Peaseblossom, *The Sandman*.



Figure 114: Rehearsal Photo Showing Fairy Dolls, RSC 2008 (reprisal) programme.



Figure 115: Puck, Handspring 2013 programme, p.26.



Figure 116: Titania's Fairies in Rehearsal, Handspring 2013 programme, pp.8-9.



Figure 117: Titania's Fairies Onstage, Handspring 2013 programme, p.11.

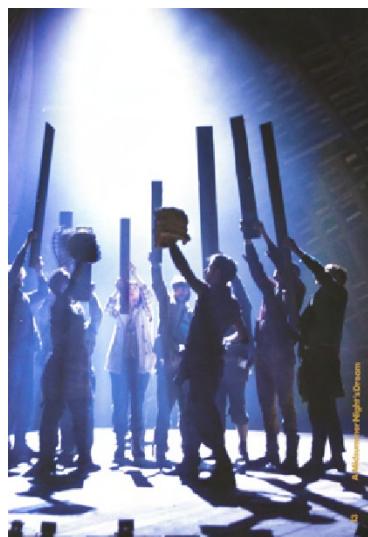


Figure 118: The Wood Planks, Handspring 2013 programme, p.13.



Figure 119: Poster 1, Handspring
2013.

Almost all of the adaptations emphasise heterogeneity and hybridisation in their portrayals of fairy bodies, creating taxonomic ambiguities in keeping with Cohen and Ruddick's definitions of monsters. For example, the *Classical Comics* and *Manga Shakespeare* graphic novel adaptations, Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* graphic novel series (1989-1996), the *Animated Tales* episode and the Handspring and RSC theatre productions all present large and diverse fairy groups, whose individual members incorporate human, bestial, and in some cases floral or mechanical elements into their corporeal make-up. Of these, the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation imposes the greatest homogeneity on its fairies: they tend to be one of two shapes, either humanoid or ovoid with bat-like wings. However, even within these comparatively narrow margins, the fairies are depicted with a range of unique and hybridised features: demonic arrow-pointed tails, caprine horns, insect-like antennae, butterfly wings and bat wings appear in various combinations (Figure 105).

The *Classical Comics* adaptation, *Sandman* and the *Animated Tales* all pursue this heterogeneity to a greater extent. In all three cases, this is partly achieved through the use of a broad range of colours, in contrast to the monochrome style typical of manga. However, all also go further in presenting a broader range of sizes, shapes and inter-species characteristics. In *Classical Comics*, the supernatural is introduced through familiar, non-threatening images which nevertheless entail hybridity. Puck appears as a faun, incorporating human and caprine characteristics, while the unnamed fairy appears human, aside from her butterfly-like wings (Figure 106). Both these renderings conform to standard tropes of mythological creatures: they look like a faun and a fairy, with little ambiguity or deviation from expectation. However, when Titania and Oberon enter with their respective trains, a much greater – and in some cases unnerving – range of features are discernible (Figure 107). Every individual is unique and possesses a distinct combination of facets: for instance, some have a furry tail but insect wings, or a beetle-like head with bat wings. Some possess antlers, while others have antennae, or gargoyle features with feathered wings. The adaptation's emphasis on variety among the supernatural creatures might suggest that monstrosity is being used to promote individualism, as Keith Brooker suggests in his analysis of *Monsters, Inc.* Alternatively, the creative choice might also function as a metaphor for biodiversity, in keeping with popular ecocritical responses to the play.

Diversity characterises the *Animated Tales* episode too: as with the *Classical Comics* adaptation, no two fairies are identical. However, the animation's fairies display features which are, if anything, even more wildly incongruous: one has an elephant's trunk with insect wings, while another combines a porcine snout with feathers. The adaptation also goes further in depicting fairies with bodies incorporating parts of plants: one fairy has a root for a nose, another grass for hair. These hybridisations further blur the boundaries between the fairies

and the natural world surrounding them, evoking Bakhtin's model of the grotesque body, in which 'the confines [...] between the body and the world are overcome'.³⁰¹ A similar effect is achieved in the *Kill Shakespeare* series' depiction of Puck. Previously discussed in the last chapter, *Kill Shakespeare* imagines a world in which Shakespeare's characters coexist with their creator. The only one of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s fairies to appear in the series, Puck is one of a number of 'true prodigals' who serve Shakespeare. The prodigals are a homogenous group compared to other iterations of the fairies, but their bodies are similarly hybridised: their size and shape are evocative of insects, as are their wings and the onomatopoeic 'thrwwirr' which accompanies their appearances (Figure 108). Moreover, their bodies consist of bark, twigs, and moss or grass in the place of hair, combining flora and fauna.

The Sandman is unusual in imagining Titania and Oberon's cohort to be made up of a range of supernatural species. This innovation is facilitated by the fictionalised backstory the series constructs for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Written by Neil Gaiman and published between 1989 and 1996, *Sandman*'s overarching narrative focuses on the Dreamlord Morpheus, one of seven beings known as the Endless who personify powerful forces or emotions. However, each volume takes on an anthological structure, presenting numerous stories which can intersect either tangentially or directly with Morpheus's narrative. In the second volume of the series, Morpheus meets Shakespeare and makes a bargain with him: he grants Shakespeare his creative powers, in exchange for commissioning two plays. In the third volume, the story '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*' concerns the performance of the first of these plays. Shakespeare and his company meet Morpheus and perform in front of an audience made up of the 'real' Titania, Oberon and their attendants. The story displaces the company from the theatre to a rural location on the Sussex downs, by the ancient hill figure known as the Long Man of Wilmington. This setting arguably replicates the Athenians' transition to the woods beyond the city, suggesting a space to which the fairies could be considered intrinsic by Ruddick's definition. However, the fairies also enter this space from elsewhere: the hill decorated by the Long Man (called Wendel in Gaiman's rendition) is revealed to be a fairy mound, the door to which is opened by Wendel (Figure 109). The fairies' ambiguity is thus heightened: the rural setting is one with which they seem to have an affinity, but they are also extrinsic to it, arriving from an unknown dimension.

The Sandman incorporates a variety of folkloric creatures into its depiction of the fairy horde (Figures 110-1). As one member of Shakespeare's company exclaims, 'I saw bogarts, and trolls, and, and nixies, and things of every manner and kind.' *The Sandman*'s inclusion of different supernatural species affiliated with the land of 'Faerie' is similar to the *Artemis Fowl*

³⁰¹ Bakhtin, p.317.

series, where ‘fairy’ is a generic term applied to a range of creatures, including ‘pixies, sprites, dwarves, centaurs, goblins, trolls, imps, and demons.’³⁰² This diversity suggests that fairies, like the monsters of popular culture explored in Chapter 1, are being employed to celebrate difference rather than feared as a homogenised Other. Nevertheless, Gaiman’s fairies present a menacing alternative to Shakespeare’s benign entities, as their commentary on the actors’ performance consistently demonstrates. One creature with a miniature humanoid body and goat’s head wonders, ‘what means this chattering mortal flesh? Methinks perhaps the dream-lord brought us here to feed?’ The same creature later comments, ‘if you ask me, none of those women are women at all. They’re males. I can tell. Human males taste more like rabbit than the females – and they stick in your teeth.’ These predatory musings seemingly align Gaiman’s creatures with the ‘capricious’ medieval fairies characterized by Wenger Bro. However, the narrative also offers the goat-headed creature’s outraged response to Bottom’s transformation: ‘what’s so funny about having a donkey’s head? Eh?’ This humorous aside creates a moment of solidarity between the creature and Bottom as a fellow cross-species hybrid, tacitly reflecting the power of fictional bodies to raise contemporary issues of inclusivity and accepting physical difference.

The Sandman goes further in depicting ‘real’ versions of Puck and Peaseblossom, who watch human actors inhabit their fictionalised selves. Again, Gaiman’s creations are more eldritch than their Shakespearean counterparts, both in appearance and temperament. Puck is a crouching, furry creature with red eyes, a flat nose and a disproportionately large mouth full of pointed teeth (Figure 112). He inspires fear in his fellow creatures: during the character’s first appearance in the performance, Peaseblossom comments, “I am that merry wanderer of the night?” I am that giggling-dangerous-totally-bloody-psychotic-menace-to-life-and-limb, more like it.’ One of his companions responds, ‘Shush, Peaseblossom. The Puck might hear you!’ Peaseblossom himself is also unsettling in appearance: much like *Kill Shakespeare*’s Puck, his body comprises twigs, branches and vines which are far enough apart for the scenery behind him to be discernible through his torso (Figure 113). He is also affronted by Shakespeare’s rendering of him, exclaiming, ‘Peaseblossom! That’s meant to be me, that is! Iss nuffink like me! Nuffink!’ He goes on to complain, ‘I’m the only Peaseblossom among the fay,’ implying that his primacy is threatened by Shakespeare’s theatrical reproduction of him. This further suggests that *The Sandman*’s diverse creatures are intended to foreground the monstrous as an emblem of individuality. These eldritch fairies reflect the series’ broader narrative concern with morally ambiguous forces beyond human comprehension, as personified by Morpheus and the other Endless. By comparison, Shakespeare’s fairies appear sanitised, at once fascinating and horrifying their ‘originals’, to quote Linda Charnes (cited in

³⁰² Doughty, p.56.

Chapter 3). Gaiman's monstrous fairies thus also throw into relief the distorting, destabilising effects of adaptation, as the fairies struggle to differentiate themselves from their Shakespearean 'source'.

Both puppet adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* also engage in the pattern of fairy hybridity traced through the *Animated Tales* adaptation and the graphic novels, despite the use of human actors in both. The RSC's 2005 production suggested a range of bodies using both digital animation and puppets. The puppets were dolls carried by many members of the large fairy ensemble and were made up of mismatched parts with unnerving results (Figure 114). This blending of proportions – both in the dolls' forms and between the dolls and their human manipulators – formed part of the production's broader experimentation with portraying the fairies' scale, which will be explored in greater detail in a later section.

The 2013 Handspring production initially created an impression of homogeneity by using plain planks of wood, held by members of the cast, to represent Titania and Oberon's fairy servants. However, the production's named fairies were each distinctively realised using a range of materials and objects. As Handspring's Puppetry Associate Joseph Wallace affirms in the programme, 'nearly every puppet in the show is different, each utilizing different mechanisms and technologies and each requiring a different way of operating.'³⁰³ Puck, for instance, was represented by a collection of garden shed implements, including a basket, a jerry can, a trowel and a mallet, requiring three puppeteers to operate his various parts (Figure 115). These could be reconfigured to suggest a human-like walk on hind legs or more animalistic movements on all fours. At certain points, such as when Puck promised to 'put a girdle round about the earth / in forty minutes,' (II.i.175-6), his corporeal form was disbanded and the objects were carried offstage over the puppeteers' heads in an uneven line, suggesting a process of physical dissolution and reformation. Titania's attendants were presented with more consistent forms, but each was nevertheless unique (Figures 116-17). One resembled a gargoyle with cloth wings; one was similar to a Japanese bunraku puppet, rendered stranger by the absence of a hairpiece; another was contrastingly carnivalesque, decorated in a style arguably evocative of commedia dell'arte's *zanni*. While *The Sandman*'s heterogeneous creatures evoked different folkloric traditions, Handspring's array of fairies thus appear to reference diverse performance or puppet traditions from around the world. The effect achieved is arguably similar: to revel in difference and resist cultural homogenisation. Although Handspring's Puck was innocuous compared to Gaiman's creation, Titania's fairies similarly embodied a more sinister fairy tradition. For instance, at one point the bunraku-like puppet blew kisses to the audience before abruptly swooping down towards the front row. As

³⁰³ Joseph Wallace, 'No Strings Attached', *A Midsummer Night's Dream* programme notes (London: Handspring Puppet Company, 2013), pp.10-11, p.10.

it did so, its mouth opened: its lips had been painted quite small, but the mouth operated on a hinge which dropped away the entire lower portion of the fairy's face, revealing an unexpectedly large red interior. This motion was accompanied by a demonic laugh, further unsettling the audience. The Handspring production's puppets thus presented bodies that were unpredictable and malleable, reflecting the monster's embodiment of category crisis.

This section has explored the ways in which the fairies' appearances across contemporary adaptations overlap with conceptualisations of the monstrous in popular culture. The foregrounding of heterogeneous and hybridised fairies in these adaptations can be interpreted as an affirmation of the value of the individual over what Jeffrey Weinstock terms the 'hegemonic social forces of normalization' (cited in Chapter 1). However, particularly in the context of *The Sandman* and the Handspring production, it has also been shown that modern incarnations of Shakespeare's fairies can also be unsettling or even frightening, arguably representing a less rehabilitated model of monstrosity. The next section explores how the adaptations explore the relationship between fairies and the natural world. Cohen suggests that the monster 'appears at times of crisis'. Are these frightening fairies reflections of our own very human monstrosity?

Fairy Bodies and the Natural World

The previous section ended by suggesting that a discussion of the fairies' relationship with nature in contemporary adaptations is contiguous with their status as modern monsters. We can develop this point to observe that if monsters are cultural reactions to crises, and the environment is the most universal crisis of the modern world, we would expect monstrously-conceived, 'naturally'-derived 'monsters' like fairies to embody just such reactions. This would not be unprecedented: a rapidly growing body of work considers popular monsters like Godzilla, Swamp Thing, and the White Walkers of *Game of Thrones* as manifestations of climate anxiety.³⁰⁴ Yet while not every adaptation under discussion here explicitly links *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s fairies to the current climate crisis, almost all of them explore connections between the fairies and their environment which inevitably invite audiences to contemplate their own relationships with – and responsibilities to – the natural world.

The previous section noted that the Handspring Company's production of the play used plain planks of wood to represent many of the fairies (Figure 118). This abstract portrayal was part of a broader mis-en-scene that foregrounded processes of manufacture: the initial

³⁰⁴ See, for instance, Gerry Canavan and Kim Stanley Robinson, eds., *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2014); Sean Rhoads and Brook McCorkle, *Japan's Green Monsters: Environmental Commentary in Kaiju Cinema* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2018); Marc DiPaolo, *Fire and Snow: Climate Fiction from the Inklings to Game of Thrones* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018).

set was a workshop; most of the ensemble wore overalls, aprons, utility belts or safety goggles. The emphasis on manufacture extended into the production's publicity material, with one poster displaying multiple images of the puppets under construction and being held by their creators (Figure 119). Nevertheless, the production's anonymous fairies were closely associated with the natural world: the same planks that represented them also stood for the trees of the forest and, in Act 2 Scene 1, waves and wind during Titania's speech about the altering seasons. These multiple symbolisms or theatrical functions made the fairies materially indistinguishable from their environment. Furthermore, the planks were also sporadically incorporated into Titania's physical form, fanning out behind her like a tail or clustering at her back in the shape of wings. This again created the impression of a porousness between fairy physicality and nature, which was made more explicit in another poster for the production where a woman's hair segues into tree branches, on which smaller humanoid figures could be seen climbing (Figure 120). The image further collapses the boundaries between the planks' different designations by fully realising both their fairy and tree symbolisms. As Wallace states, in the production, 'puppetry is used as more than just a technique, puppetry makes up the fabric of the world'. This approach is in keeping with the company's animist ethos – the belief that 'anything can come alive'. The production thus imagines a seamless continuity between the manmade objects which make up Puck, the similarly inanimate planks of wood, and the natural and supernatural entities they come to represent. Handspring's programme elides fairies and puppets with contemporary climate change. In a short segment titled 'What Kind of World Requires Fairies?' the production's designer Vicki Mortimer asks a corollary question: 'where are we if nature has broken its own rules, and burst the banks of rivers, reversed seasons?' A plausible answer to both questions is 'here, this world.' Mortimer suggests:

The gods of a fragile survival must be invoked by the re-invention of everything we have taken for granted. Perhaps this world must take puppets and re-conjure their very nature, so that they are participants, votives, wood spirits, emotional valves, initiatory objects?³⁰⁵

Such a perspective conceives a telling continuity between the materiality of performance and the broader, even spiritual, symbolism of the medium, which extends into the production's synergies between modern puppetry and fairy traditions.

Though less consistently than in the Handspring production, the fairies of the RSC's production also function as a living landscape. This occurs particularly towards the end of the play, when Puck leads the lovers 'up and down' before laying them to rest. While the lovers

³⁰⁵ Vicki Mortimer, 'What Kind of World Requires Fairies?', *A Midsummer Night's Dream* programme notes (London: Handspring Puppet Company, 2013), p.14.

staggered, bewildered, across the stage, the fairy ensemble intervened and stymied their progress by emulating different topographical hindrances. The fairies formed a hill which Demetrius climbed by walking over their backs (Figure 121). A group of six created a thicket out of their arms, through which Helena struggled. When Hermia entered, the fairies repeatedly lifted her up and carried her back across the stage, provoking her line ‘never so weary, never so in woe’ (III.ii.42). The fairies then used their arms again to create the ‘briers’ (III.ii.43) tearing at Hermia before one grabbed her ankles, causing her to fall and exclaim, ‘I can no further crawl’ (III.ii.44). While the fairies’ manipulations were obvious to the audience, the lovers seemed to only perceive the woodland setting they manifested. As with the Handspring production, the fairies’ dual function as supernatural creatures and natural landscape suggested both their indivisibility from their environment and their permeability within it.

The permeability achieved between fairy bodies and the natural world in the puppet productions is also realised in other media. The previous section observed it in the hybridised bodies of the *Animated Tales*, *Classical Comics*, *Manga Shakespeare* and *The Sandman*, and in the arboreal form of *Kill Shakespeare*’s Puck. The supernatural’s affinity with nature is also foregrounded by the way *The Sandman*’s creatures emerge from and disappear into the Sussex hillside. The *Animated Tales*, *Classical Comics* and *Manga Shakespeare* adaptations all go further in presenting fairy bodies which do not just replicate facets of nature, but segue into their surroundings. In the *Animated Tales*, this effect is most consistently observable in the adaptation’s depiction of Oberon. Like some of the other animated fairies, Oberon’s body incorporates some natural elements: his hair is dark green and grows upright like grass, and areas of his torso, arms and legs are covered in leaves. However, he is animated in a way which suggests a greater synthesis with his surroundings. When he first appears only his hair and leafy portions are visible and blend in with surrounding vegetation. Oberon then rises up from the forest floor in a highly stylised motion which reveals his head, neck and legs last: the sequence creates the impression of a large plant growing to fruition. Later, when Demetrius and Helena enter the forest, most of Oberon’s body becomes translucent and fades out to render him invisible. Nevertheless, his hair and leafy sections remain discernable, subtly blending with his surroundings, and some lighter portions of his costume, skin, and eyes are also represented by lighter leaves. These lighter sections suggest that Oberon does not merely perform a vanishing act, but metamorphoses himself into a vegetative form. This impression is reinforced when Demetrius and Helena depart, walking straight past Oberon’s concealed form. His transition back to full visibility begins with parts of the surrounding foliage becoming brighter, standing out against the dark background. These leafy shapes then smoothen and blend into Oberon’s shape, suggesting he is drawing himself back together from a more diffuse intermingling with the woodland landscape.

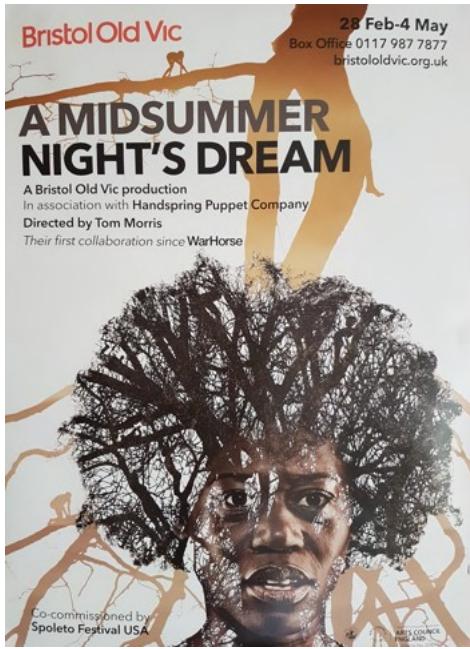


Figure 120: Poster 2, Handspring 2013.



Figure 121: Rehearsal Photo Showing the Fairies' Living Landscape, RSC 2008 (reprisal), programme.



Figure 122: Oberon Seguing into a Tree, *Classical Comics*, p.37.



Figure 123: Oberon Seguing During the Lovers' Quarrel 1, *Classical Comics*, p.66.



Figure 124: Oberon Seguing During the Lovers' Quarrel 1, *Classical Comics*, p.67.



Figure 125: Titania's Body Segues into a Wave,
Manga Shakespeare, pp.56-7.

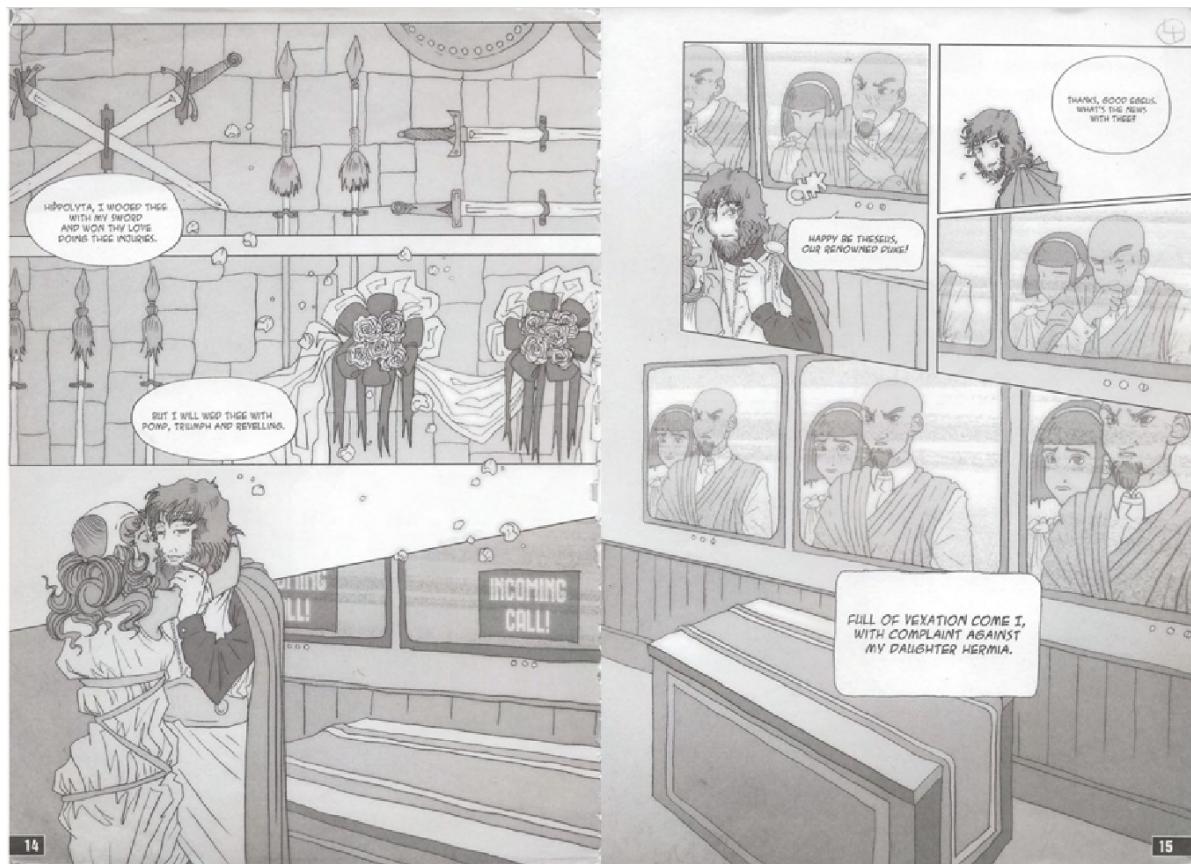


Figure 126: The Ducal Court and Digital Screens, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.14-5.



Figure 127: The Wood Imposes Itself on the Page, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.31.



Figure 128: Nature Penetrates Athens, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.175.



Figure 129: Fairies in the Ducal Palace, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.177-8.

In the *Classical Comics* adaptation, Oberon's invisibility entails a similar merging with nature. As Demetrius approaches, Oberon's outline becomes blurred as he moves to the periphery of the frame (Figure 122). In the next frame, Oberon's face is visible in a tree trunk similarly positioned at the edge of the frame. This recalls the images of spirits trapped in trees in *Classical Comic's* adaptation of *The Tempest*. However, in this instance, Oberon retains agency and some freedom of movement: the following frame shows the tree with which he has merged bending over so that Oberon can see past Demetrius to where Helena is positioned. Oberon uses the same technique to become invisible during the lovers' fight in Act 3 Scene 2. While his transformation is not shown on this occasion, his face is visible in the tree trunk against which he is seated in the previous frame (Figure 123). As before, Oberon is able to manipulate the tree's form: Puck is prevented from guiltily sneaking away by branches which emerge spontaneously from the trunk and function as arms, holding him in place (Figure 124). Oberon's transformations in both the *Animated Tales* and *Classical Comics* thus suggest a continuity and intermingling between fairy bodies and the natural world.

By contrast, in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation of the play it is Titania who displays the greatest permeability with nature. When she describes how 'the winds in revenge have sucked up from the sea contagious fogs,' the accompanying illustration shows Titania's hair segueing into a sea wave. Shortly afterwards, the lines and patterning on Titania's skirt are mirrored in the depiction of a shoreline on the facing page (Figure 125). The trajectory of the shoreline leads the reader's eye back to Titania's waistline on the preceding page, further suggesting a continuity between the two. Titania frequently appears surrounded by white flecks reminiscent of bubbles or sea foam, but this motif is also associated with the fairies more generally, as can be seen in their first appearance (p.51). These flecks create the impression that the fairies are always on the brink of appearing from or dissolving into their surroundings and, as will be illustrated shortly, can be used to suggest a fairy presence or influence even when the fairies are not otherwise depicted.

The blurring of boundaries between fairies and the natural world is mirrored in the adaptation's depiction of the play's settings, which are used to suggest a breakdown of distinctions between human and fairy spaces over the course of the narrative. The adaptation initially presents a juxtaposition between a technologically advanced Athens and the natural world of the fairies' wood. The adaptation opens in the interior of the ducal palace, which is depicted as a curiously hermetic space: the lack of windows suggests Theseus and other inhabitants have sealed themselves off from the outside world and excluded nature entirely (Figure 126). This impression is reinforced when the conversation between Theseus, Egeus, Hermia and her suitors is conducted via a number of large electronic screens rather than in person (pp.15-28). However, later in the opening scene the natural world beyond the city

asserts itself visually on the page. When Lysander instructs Hermia to meet him ‘in the wood’, the top half of the page shows a silhouetted treeline against a night sky (Figure 127). Later, when Hermia confides to Helena that ‘in the wood [...] Lysander and myself shall meet,’ a similar silhouette dominates much of the page, dwarfing Lysander and Hermia’s inverted silhouettes (p.36). This effect occurs yet again in Act 1 Scene 2, when Quince’s instruction for the mechanicals to meet him ‘in the palace wood’ is followed by a sequence of three frames: the treeline occupies the outer two, flanking Quince’s appearance in the central frame (p.46). These illustrations clearly foreshadow the shift to the woodland setting, but their coincidence with lines mentioning the wood also creates an illusion of it being unwittingly summoned forth, spectrally intruding into the otherwise closed city environment.

Towards the end of the adaptation, when the action shifts back to Athens, the city’s aesthetic has altered. In Act 4 Scene 2, the mechanicals occupy an external space instead of the interior setting for Act 1 Scene 2. The city is no longer portrayed as an impenetrable space: weeds can be seen growing between tiles, vine leaves and tendrils grow down from the roof, and a pot plant wilts on the windowsill (Figure 128). When Bottom enters, the pot plant perks up in response, perhaps implying that Bottom, who has spent the most time among the fairies, has been left with an enduring affinity with the natural world (p.176). This pattern of rewilding the city continues on the recto page, which marks the progression to Act 5 and the return to the ducal palace. Whereas at the opening of the adaptation the palace seems sealed off from the outside – and the natural – world, a large window is visible behind Theseus and Hippolyta in a full-page illustration, immediately suggesting an increased permeability (p.177). Furthermore, vines have wrapped around the window frame and are also climbing along the wall and floor, marking nature’s intrusion into the palace interior. The next frame on the following page explicitly connects the vines to the fairies: two can be seen among the leaves at the window, and the bubbles associated with them drift down the hallway after Theseus and Hippolyta (Figure 129). Windows are visible consistently throughout the scene leading up to the mechanicals’ performance (pp.182-7). In every instance trees can be seen outside, seemingly close to the palace, and in some cases are accompanied by the flecks associated with the fairies. The suggested proximity of the fairies’ wood, encroaching at the margins of the palace, foreshadows Titania and Oberon’s visit with their cohort after the mechanicals’ performance. However, it also arguably reflects the influence the fairies have had over the palace residents and the transformations they have wrought over the course of the narrative. The Athens of the adaptation’s final act is one which seems to have become open, accommodating the natural world and allowing itself to be altered by it.

Arguably the fullest exploration of the relationship between fairies and the natural world, and the one most directly engaged with the current climate crisis, was enacted by the RSC’s *Dream*, a research and development project which culminated in a series of

performances livestreamed from Portsmouth Guildhall in March 2021. *Dream* did not adapt any part of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directly. Instead, it presented a thirty-minute alternative narrative in which Puck explored the woodland setting and encountered Titania's attendants Peaseblossom, Mustardseed, Cobweb and Moth. The initial serenity of the wood was disrupted by a storm, echoing the environmental upheaval of Titania's Act 2 Scene 1 speech wherein, as she observes, 'the seasons alter'. The project developed a virtual wood, into which the actors' fairy avatars were introduced using Unreal Engine – the same software underpinning the popular multiplayer game Fortnite – during live performances. This resulted in an innovative combination of live theatre and motion capture animation. Furthermore, the project invited audience members to directly participate by appearing in the animated wood as fireflies, whose movements could be controlled by touch screens and track pads on participants' personal devices.

Dream's digitised sprites all had bodies fashioned out of natural components. Moth was a cloud of moths, which at times were configured to resemble a large moth flapping its wings but could also form less well-defined shapes. Peaseblossom was a humanoid fashioned out of brambles and twigs, loosely resembling the character's depiction in *The Sandman*. Cobweb was a giant eye at the centre of a spider's web. Mustardseed appeared as a mouth and eyes hidden in a tree's root system. Puck resembled an artist's mannequin, but each part of her body was represented by rocks of different shapes and sizes. The movements of each of these figures were controlled by the live actors wearing motion capture suits in a 'specially created 7x7 metre motion capture volume' in the Guildhall.³⁰⁶ In post-show sessions, the actors demonstrated how small movements of their hands and feet determined greater gestures within the animation: for example, Durassie Kiangangu could alternate between Moth's different configurations by slightly raising or lowering his left hand. *Dream* thus emulated the play's synthesis of the natural and artificial by exploring how innovative technology could be used to produce a sophisticated rendering of the spirits' bodies as natural entities or amalgams. However, this metanarrative also disrupted the cohesion between its technology and the natural landscape it created in ways which encouraged viewers to reflect on humanity's culpability in creating environmental crises.

Whereas, in the play, Titania accepts that she and Oberon are the 'parents and original' of the natural disruption she describes, the sprites of *Dream* held Puck responsible for the calamitous storm which hit the forest. Borrowing lines from Oberon, Peaseblossom asserted that 'this is thy negligence.' (III.ii.345) However, he also more specifically insinuated that the storm was a consequence of Puck bringing 'new friends and strange companions' into the

³⁰⁶ <<https://www.rsc.org.uk/press/releases/live-performance-and-gaming-technology-come-together-to-explore-the-future-for-audiences-and-live-theatre>> [accessed August 30th, 2021].

wood. This referred to the presence of audience members as fireflies, suggesting that humans were behind the destructive power of the storm. As it reached its climax, the storm increasingly posed a threat to the corporeal stability of the wood's spirits: Moth and Peaseblossom fell apart in the high winds, Mustardseed's tree was uprooted, and Cobweb went missing. Finally, Puck's body also appeared to be on the brink of breaking apart, and the screen abruptly went black. As the action resumed in the storm's aftermath, the camera pulled out to reveal the digital wood, now badly damaged, on an LCD screen in the motion capture volume, with the actors and performance space visible. This foregrounded rupture, between the technology and the illusion it supported, seemed to suggest a failure of human industry to work in harmony with the natural world, or perhaps even that our destructive impact could see us cast out of a natural idyll in emulation of a biblical fall from grace. Then, as EM Williams, the actor playing Puck, picked themselves off the floor, their avatar made the corresponding movement on the screen in the background. Responding to their entreaty 'help me,' the ensemble cast joined Williams in the performance area and lifted them into the air. However, Puck remained the only avatar visible on the screen, creating the impression of being lifted by invisible forces. The ensemble moved Williams between different blocks in the motion capture volume, which translated to Puck leaping between broken tree branches and stumps in the virtual forest. This sequence exposed the mechanisms underpinning *Dream*'s performance and heightened the audience's appreciation of the technology's illusory power when the camera's focus returned exclusively to the virtual wood. As Puck surveyed the debris, the wood began to restore itself, regrowing fallen trees and bringing flattened plants back to full bloom. During this process, Puck encountered each of the sprites in reduced, more naturalistic forms: Mustardseed and Peaseblossom as plants, Cobweb as a tiny spider, and Moth as a lone moth. Tellingly, the completion of the wood's regeneration coincided with the disbanding of the last humanoid figure as Puck's body collapsed into a pile of rocks, returning them to a natural state. This conclusion seemed to suggest that ecological renewal can be achieved through the correct balance of technological innovation and a reduced human presence.

Although *Dream*'s ecocritical commentary is arguably the most sustained and explicit of any of the versions of the play discussed here, *The Sandman* also makes use of its rural setting to question humanity's primacy. When Shakespeare meets Morpheus on the hillside, he comments that this is 'an odd choice of place for us to perform,' to which Morpheus replies that 'Wendel's mound was a theatre before your race came to this island'. Shakespeare asks, 'before the Normans?' and Morpheus responds, 'before the humans.' This exchange subverts the established binary between artifice (of which theatre is one instance) and nature, by situating theatre in the natural landscape and suggesting it is of pre-human origin. This shift is further emphasised when Shakespeare persuades Burbage to perform in this setting by describing it as a 'natural theatre'. There is an echo here of the mechanicals' woodland

rehearsal in Act 3 Scene 1, when Quince declares ‘this green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn brake our tiring-house’ (III.i.3-4). In theatrical performance, Quince is projecting theatrical architecture onto a woodland setting which has in turn overlaid the stage, either through setting or through the imagery the play evokes. This dramatic irony is lost on the mechanicals – they do not realise they are already in a theatre – and *The Sandman* catches both Shakespeare’s company and the reader similarly unawares with Morpheus’s alternative theatre history.

This section has explored how fairies across adaptations and appropriations are shown to engage with nature. It has suggested numerous ways in which this discussion is congruent with fairies’ status as monstrous manifestations of contemporary climate anxiety. The common hybridisation of fairy bodies and their intersections with the natural world underscore the interdependency of ecosystems which underpin readings of the play such as Robert Watson’s. However, this section has also suggested that some contemporary versions, in particular the RSC’s *Dream* project, more directly hold their audiences to account and encourage broader consideration of humanity’s relationship to nature. The discussion of *Dream* also demonstrates how mediated responses to the play can engage with the fairies’ synthesis of artifice and nature to reflect more broadly on our own complex relationships with technology and nature. The next section furthers this discussion by focusing on how different adaptations approach the fairies’ size. As it will show, their miniature scale can be used both to align them more closely with the natural world and to draw attention to their artifice and the role they perform in the imaginative fabric of the narrative.

Issues of Scale

As previously suggested, our sense of the fairies’ size comes primarily from their descriptions of and interactions with nature. However, their miniature size has also been interpreted as a ‘failed theatre’.³⁰⁷ The early nineteenth-century essayist William Hazlitt famously declared *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* impossible to stage successfully, stating that ‘fairies are not incredible, but fairies six feet high are so.’³⁰⁸ Hazlitt refers to the discrepancy between the play’s descriptions of fairies operating on a minuscule scale – for instance, stealing the ‘honey-bags’ from bees (III.i.162) or ‘pluck[ing] the wings from painted butterflies’ (III.i.166) – and their embodiment on stage by human actors. More recent commentary on the play has suggested that this disjunct is not a theatrical failure, but a reflection of ‘theatre’s capacity to work comfortably within the apparent paradoxes of representation it is uniquely capable of

³⁰⁷ Rzepka, p.323.

³⁰⁸ William Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays*, 3rd edition (London: John Templeman, 1838), p.131.

posing.³⁰⁹ In other words, the implausibility of human actors playing tiny fairies highlights the necessity for the audience to contribute to the performance through the suspension of their disbelief. Recognising this underlines the points made above about how some adaptations confer agency (and culpability) on audiences, but also makes it more plausible to conceive the synergies of ‘artifice’ and ‘nature’ in the play and contemporary revisions of it. As Mary Plasse elaborates:

The fairy creatures [...] constantly call into question their own “reality” by insisting on their artificiality and winking at their own plausibility: they do not ask for our unconditional acceptance of their reality. I would add that it is precisely the disjunction between the abstract or nonhuman qualities attributed to the human actors who play the fairies, on the one hand, and their palpable, human-sized presence, on the other, that contributes to this playful questioning of the illusion.³¹⁰

The fairies’ diminutive size may be said to have two main functions: because their scale is constructed through references to their interactions with the flora and fauna around them, it reinforces a sense of affinity and continuity between fairies and nature. However, as Plasse and Rzepka (quoted above) suggest, the fairies’ size also has a metatheatrical dimension. By repeatedly insisting upon their miniature proportions, the play acknowledges the imaginative work required to transform human actors into Shakespeare’s fairies. Can mediatised adaptations achieve a similar effect? Different technologies facilitate representing the fairies to scale, which potentially reduces the need for audiences’ active participation in creating the imaginative world of the play. This section explores how some mediatised adaptations negotiate the fairies’ size, identifying some common approaches and considering how these may affect audiences’ experiences of the narrative.

Rzepka asserts that, in theatrical performance, ‘the problem of imagination posed by the fairies’ size does not apply to Oberon or Titania, or even necessarily to Puck [...] but rather to Titania’s attendants in Acts 2 and 3’. Referring to Peaseblossom, Mustardseed, Moth, and Cobweb, he suggests that ‘these attendants [...] are named for their tiny scale and perform their labors in a more explicitly miniature world’ than that of the fairy monarchs.³¹¹ It is therefore Titania’s servants who most forcibly foreground the discrepancy between human actors and diminutive fairies explored above. Some of the mediatised adaptations embrace the opportunity to depict these fairies on a miniature scale in ways which visually foreground their place in their natural environment. This is particularly the case in the graphic novel adaptations of the play. For example, the front matter of the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation introduces

³⁰⁹ Rzepka, p.324.

³¹⁰ Marie A. Plasse, ‘The Human Body as Performance Medium in Shakespeare: Some Theoretical Suggestions from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*’, *College Literature*, Vol.19, No.1 (Feb 1992), pp.28-47, p.40.

³¹¹ Rzepka, p.324.

Puck and Titania's attendants with an illustration in which they use upright flowers as a series of steppingstones, indicating both their size and apparent weightlessness. This use of flowers to provide a scale for the fairies returns later in the adaptation, when multiple frames show Titania's fairy 'sentinel' standing next to and under a flower (Figure 130). In the *Classical Comics* adaptation, Titania's lullaby is accompanied by a full-page illustration in which her servants actively engage with the creatures they are trying to fend off (Figure 131); a similar approach is used for the same sequence in the *Animated Tales* episode. Mediatised adaptations can thus avoid theatre's discrepancy between the play's description of the fairies' miniature world and the characters' human actors. However, most of the adaptations discussed here create another discrepancy by presenting Titania and Oberon as human-sized and their servants as significantly smaller. This is the case in both the *Manga Shakespeare* and *Classical Comics* graphic novel adaptations, the *Animated Tales* episode, and Neil Gaiman's depiction of the characters in *The Sandman*. It is also suggested through the use of puppetry in the productions staged by the RSC in 2005 and Handspring in 2013, even when the fairies' human actors remain visible.

Why is this approach to scale so popular and significant in mediatised adaptations? One explanation is that Titania and Oberon's comparative size may simply reflect their narrative importance, directing audiences' focus towards them. This is somewhat borne out by the fact that Puck is generally also depicted as larger than other servants, although still smaller than Titania and Oberon. However, the fairy monarchs' human proportions may also recall the traditional doubling of their parts with Theseus and Hippolyta in theatrical performance. The adaptations discussed here do not otherwise choose to create physical similarities between the two pairs, with the possible exception of the Handspring production where the parts were doubled (although the production's use of puppetry still created a meaningful somatic distinction between them, as will be expanded on shortly). Nevertheless, preserving human proportions for Titania and Oberon more readily facilitates comparisons between the woodland rulers and their Athenian counterparts than would be the case if they were depicted on a scale consistent with the rest of their species. Although the Handspring production is the only adaptation discussed here to double the parts, others do create visual analogues between the two sets of characters. The RSC 2005 production ended with fairy and human characters facing each other in parallel lines, with the ruling couples directly mirroring each other in the centre. In the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation, a full-page illustration depicts the reunited Titania and Oberon dancing, while Hippolyta and Theseus appear upside down, also directly mirroring them on the bottom half of the page (Figure 132). As a later section will explore, these enduring, complex parallels enable adaptations to develop broader narratives regarding the play's presentation of issues such as male authority and female exploitation.

The portrayal of fairies in a range of sizes across mediatised adaptations might also reflect contemporary awareness of a variety of fairy traditions. The diminutive servants replicate the popular miniaturisation of fairies in the Victorian period, discussed previously, but Titania and Oberon's human proportions create more of a parallel to the 'human-like' fairies of medieval lore, as described by Wenger Bro. Like *The Sandman*'s portrayal of multiple supernatural species or the Handspring company's use of puppets inspired by different cultural traditions, varying sizes of fairies is another way for adaptations to engage with ideas of difference and individuation. However, depicting fairies of differing sizes may also provide a way for these media to continue actively engaging their audiences in the imaginative work of the play's narrative. To put this differently: each medium demonstrates its ability to present miniature fairies, but the presence of human-sized Oberon and Titania in each adaptation prevents audiences from taking tiny fairies for granted. Their imaginative participation is required in order to reconcile fairies of vastly different sizes. Each medium can thus claim to sustain the 'paradox [...] of representation' Rzepka suggests fairies pose in the theatre. This possibility seems to be affirmed by the Handspring production's programme, in which Joseph Wallace states that the company's intention was to expose 'the artifice of puppetry' and thus challenge the audience to 'suspend their disbelief'. He expands, 'We are not pretending these objects are real, we know they are puppets but if you believe with us, and come with us on this journey, you may experience something that can be incredibly moving.'³¹²

The Handspring production was one of many adaptations which portrayed fairies capable of changing their size, or which otherwise disrupted audiences' perception of the fairies' scale. This was particularly evident in both puppet productions, where the visibility of human actors provided one scale and their puppets another. In the Handspring production, Titania and Oberon were of greater size than their human actors. This was chiefly conveyed through the large size of the puppets' heads (and for Oberon, a similarly proportioned hand), and the height at which the actors held these above their heads (Figure 133). At the end of the production, Titania and Oberon's scale was more fully realised by the placement of the puppet heads on top of cane figures large enough for the actors to step inside and operate from within. As in other adaptations, the size of the fairy rulers contrasted with the production's other fairies, chiefly represented by planks of wood held by the ensemble. The dolls used for Titania's attendants introduced a further variant size, as did the multifaceted Puck. In each of these instances, the visibility of the puppets' manipulators provided a human scale against which to measure the mediatised fairies but also created secondary embodied identities – or shadows – for the characters, disrupting a consistent interpretation of their proportions.

³¹² Wallace, p.10.



Figure 130: Titania's Sentinel,
Manga Shakespeare, p.76.



Figure 131: Titania's Lullaby,
Classical Comics, p.43.



Figure 132: Mirroring Between
Oberon, Titania, Theseus and
Hippolyta, *Manga Shakespeare*,
p.159.



Figure 133: Titania, Handspring
2013 programme, p.23.



Figure 134: The Fairy Vanishes,
Classical Comics, p.27.



Figure 135: The Prodigals' Transformation, *Kill Shakespeare*.

This disruptive effect was arguably even more prominent in the RSC's 2005 production. Whereas the Handspring ensemble did not interact with their own puppets or appear separately from them while representing the fairies, the RSC fairies were more ambiguously portrayed. Some, though not all, of the fairies carried small dolls with them in some, though not all, scenes. At times these dolls seemed to be treated as beloved toys, in keeping with the production's childish characterisation of the fairies; at others, the dolls seemed to function as avatars or embodiments of the fairies themselves. For instance, in Act 3 Scene 1, Titania's attendants used their dolls to interact with Bottom, though the fairies' disdainful reactions were fully embodied by the human actors. At the end of the scene, the whole cohort (enlarged beyond the four named attendants) surrounded Titania and Bottom as they lay down to sleep: those with dolls raised them aloft and held them parallel to the stage in emulation of their own sleeping positions. This duplication was further enhanced by the use of the theatre illusion Pepper's ghost – which employs mirrors to cast a spectral body onstage – to project the fairies above the stage. The fairies' bodies were thus reproduced twice over, once in replica through Pepper's ghost and again more figuratively through the presence of the dolls. The changing scales involved in these duplications – from human actors on the stage, to dolls held above their heads, to the spectral bodies above the stage – blurred the fairies' precise dimensions and called the audience's perception of their size into doubt.

The tableau described above was the climax in a pattern of distortions to the fairies' size throughout the first half of the RSC production. These were not only achieved through the intermittent presence of the dolls, but also via a digital screen at the back of the stage on which fairies appeared in silhouette. During Puck's encounter with the unnamed fairy in Act 2 Scene 1, two fairy silhouettes appeared on this screen. These were roughly childlike in stature, introducing a gradation of size between the actors on stage and the doll carried by the unnamed fairy. Were these silhouettes the 'true' forms of Puck and the fairy, or eavesdropping sprites? Was the doll a toy or indicative of the fairy's actual size? As with the later montage of bodies in Act 3 Scene 1, these ambiguities cast doubt over the fairies' proportions and the audience's ability to interpret them accurately. In Act 2 Scene 2, similar silhouettes appeared on the screen during Titania's lullaby. One of these was then shooed away by a giant shadow hand as Oberon entered in greatly magnified silhouette on the screen to enchant Titania with the flower's juice. Oberon's enormous size reflected his power and control at this point in the narrative, but also further disrupted perceptions of the fairies' size, both onstage and on screen.

Act 2 Scene 2 presented at least one further ambiguity of somatic scale. When Oberon completed his speech over Titania's sleeping body, the screen and stage lights faded to black before Hermia and Lysander entered. They came on in the dark, surrounded by six fairies carrying small green lanterns on long rods: in the production's prompt book these were

referred to as ‘glow worms’, but the fairies’ manipulation of them opened up a number of alternative interpretations. The colour and size of the lanterns were reminiscent of Tinkerbell in Disney’s *Peter Pan*, suggesting the possibility that these lights could represent the fairies themselves – an impression further enhanced by the human actors’ initial obfuscation on the darkened stage. In a similar vein, the lanterns also seemed to evoke the folkloric wills-o'-the-wisp: spirits who led travellers astray in the guise of flickering lights. This interpretation was reinforced by the fairies’ reaction to Lysander’s admission that he had ‘forgot our way’: the group let out a cruel snicker which seemed to imply they may have been behind his disorientation. The scene’s juxtaposition of Oberon’s giant silhouette and the ‘glow worms’ which immediately follow it onstage encapsulates the production’s broader questioning of the fairies’ scale. Both the RSC and Handspring productions thus made use of mediatised bodies to challenge audiences further by emphasising the fairies’ artifice even while demonstrating their ability to more fully realise their miniature scale.

The *Classical Comics* adaptation also evoked the wills-o'-the-wisp in its depiction of the fairies. However, whereas the theatrical productions used intermedial elements to suggest different scales for the fairies, the graphic novel goes further in depicting their ability to change their size. This occurs on the first page on which the fairies appear, at the beginning of Act 2 Scene 1. As the fairy tells Puck ‘I must go seek some dew-drops here,’ the accompanying frame tracks her miniaturisation through a number of stages (Figure 134). Above Puck’s head, the red aura which surrounds the fairy in the first two frames demarcates her original outline and links this initial shape to a series of increasingly reduced circles, finally trailing to a small red dot with emanating lines indicating the fairy’s new size. This explicitly demonstrates the fairies’ mutable size early on, but similar reductions are implied by the recurrence of will-o'-the-wisp-like orbs of light throughout the adaptation, suggesting the fairies’ sustained presence in the background of scenes including the argument between Demetrius and Helena in Act 2 Scene 2 (pp.37-8) and portions of the lovers’ fight in Act 3 Scene 2 (e.g. p.66).

The *Kill Shakespeare* graphic novel series initially depicts Puck and other ‘true prodigals’ as tiny insect-like creatures, whose surrounding orbs of light also recall the will-o'-the-wisp. However, while most of the examples discussed above explore how mediatised adaptations exploit their technologies to present fairies who can become smaller than they initially appear, *Kill Shakespeare* subverts this pattern. In the climactic battle at the end of the second volume, Puck and the prodigals accompany their master Shakespeare to the battlefield. Othello dismisses them as Shakespeare’s pets, but Shakespeare responds that they are his soldiers: on this cue the prodigals undergo a disturbing transformation, growing until they dwarf the human characters and ripping open their own flesh to unleash additional arms, eyes, and mouths (Figure 135). This monstrous metamorphosis foregrounds the physical mutability associated with fairies in other adaptations – as seen above – but also

perhaps reflects anxieties about the disproportionate power and influence of microbial life over our own, as is also suggested in Watson's reading of the play. That the prodigals intercede on the side of good may also tacitly acknowledge the benefits to be gleaned from a more co-operative relationship with other life forms.

Dream also played with the scale of its woodland sprites. Peaseblossom and Puck appeared human-sized, but Puck was then dwarfed by Cobweb during their initial encounter. Paradoxically, Puck then promised to carry Cobweb in an acorn cup to keep her safe during the storm, suggesting the sprites' size was not consistent throughout. As observed above, the sprites appear in naturalised forms in the storm's aftermath, perhaps gesturing towards natural cycles of growth, decline and renewal. Unlike other versions of the play discussed here, *Dream* also presented its audience with a view of themselves as the wood's fireflies. This subverted the scale provided by the play: where we are used to imagining Shakespeare's fairies as much smaller than us, in *Dream* the audience avatars were tiny in comparison to the wood sprites. As with the monstrous prodigals of *Kill Shakespeare*, the intention may have been to prompt audience members to reassess their place in the ecological order and their responsibilities to other forms of life.

This section has suggested that depictions of the fairies' size in contemporary adaptations are contiguous with this chapter's broader consideration of their function in popular culture as reflections of climate crisis. Particularly in the later exploration of *Kill Shakespeare* and *Dream*, it has demonstrated how manipulating the fairies' scale – and disrupting impressions of their comparable size to humans – can speak to contemporary concerns regarding the unintended consequences of modern life for unseen, yet vital, sections of the ecosystem. Across adaptations and media, approaches to the fairies' size can sustain the meta-awareness inspired by their presence in theatrical performance. Fairies of changing or indeterminate size draw attention to the technologies at work in each adaptation and align the fairies with the power of illusion in each form. The next section further explores how adaptations present fairies who are aware of and capable of manipulating the forms in which they appear.

Mediatising Puck

The character who most fully embodies the play's questioning of its own theatricality is Puck. As demonstrated above, critics have suggested that he fulfils numerous roles related to the play's production and performance: stage manager, playwright, and actor among them. This section explores how adaptations represent Puck and his metatheatrical functions. It suggests that, as with Prospero in Chapter 1 and Richard III and the Roman conspirators in Chapter 3,

adaptations respond to Puck's agency within the play by creating the illusion that he can also shape the medium in which he appears.

The *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation acknowledges Puck's theatricality with numerous frames which invoke the conventions of dramatic performance. For instance, when Puck is first introduced, his line 'I am that merry wanderer of the night' is accompanied by a frame in which he performs a deep theatrical bow (Figure 136). Later, the lines 'Cupid is a knavish lad, / Thus to make poor females mad' is illustrated with an image of Puck wearing costume wings tied around his shoulders, indicating that this is a role he has self-consciously played in his interactions with the lovers (Figure 137). Puck's theatrical sensibility is foregrounded to a greater extent earlier in Act 3 Scene 2, where Puck uses a puppet theatre to explain the events of the previous scene to Oberon. Puck appears on a wooden stage, with a theatre curtain above him and crudely cut-out stars and a moon dangling on strings (Figure 138). All of the characters involved in the previous scene's action are represented by small finger puppets, which are then suspended on strings like marionettes as Puck's narration progresses (pp.112-4). The sequence imbues Puck with narrative power by giving the character a distinctive medium within the adaptation in which to relate his version of events. The puppets themselves reflect Puck's control over other characters: as a metaphor for manipulation, they recall the marionettes of *Manga Shakespeare*'s *Julius Caesar* adaptation, or the similar use of puppetry in adaptations of *The Tempest*. Puck's puppets reappear later in the scene, when he accompanies his impersonations of Lysander and Demetrius by dangling their respective puppets in front of him (pp.149-50). This seems to suggest that puppetry provides a means for Puck not only to recount what has already transpired, but to actively shape the narrative's course in a similar fashion to Ariel's manipulations in animated and graphic novel adaptations of *The Tempest*: the adaptation's internal mediatisation of Demetrius and Lysander's bodies enables Puck to direct their actions.

While the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation makes use of theatrical forms and conventions to suggest Puck's narrative agency, it also goes further in imbuing him with power over the graphic novel form itself. At the beginning of Act 2 Scene 1, Puck initially appears in a sequence of blank, pale grey circular frames which stand out against the dark background and woodland scenery which dominates the rest of the page (Figure 139). In the last of these frames, Puck leans an elbow over its edge to address the fairy, whose position in the wood is implied by the grass growing around their feet. The page's composition suggests that Puck is leaning through into the narrative's setting from an alternative space, perhaps the equivalent of the backstage area in a theatrical production. This impression is reinforced by the recto page on the following spread, which shows Puck leaning back into this blank 'backstage' space through a square frame, with the night's sky visible behind him (Figure 140). The adaptation's portrayal of a space behind or beyond the play's settings, and its depiction of

Puck as a figure capable of moving between its different spaces, seems to align him with the graphic novel's construction of narrative. Like Ariel in the *Manga Shakespeare*'s adaptation of *The Tempest*, Puck and (to a lesser extent) the fairies can pass through, in front of, and behind frames in ways which suggest that they can manipulate or permeate the fabric of the adaptation at will (see, for instance, p.82).

However, while Ariel remains bound to perform his master Prospero's will, the conclusion of the *Manga Shakespeare*'s *A Midsummer Night's Dream* imbues Puck with even greater narrative power and significance. As Puck delivers the final speech of the play, a sequence of frames shows the broom vanishing from his hand (p.203). The remaining frames of the adaptation have blank backgrounds, suggesting that Puck has magically erased the props and scenery which comprise the play's narrative. Two frames at the bottom of the same page show Puck alternating roles in ways which align him with Shakespeare. In the first, he wears a pair of reading glasses and holds a set of pages, the foremost of which has 'MND V.I' in the bottom-right corner, establishing Puck as a reader or perhaps even the author of the play. In the next frame, Puck no longer holds the play but wears an Elizabethan ruff, alluding to the context of the play's original production and further supplanting Shakespeare as its originator. On the final double-page spread, Puck is alone in the grey expanse of the adaptation's backstage space (Figure 141). Clutching a quill, he writes the final line ('And Robin shall restore amends') by hand, completing his transition into the role of playwright. This closing sequence suggests that Puck is in fact not only the play's author but has also been instrumental in the creation of the graphic novel adaptation.

As *Manga Shakespeare* does, *The Sandman* suggests that Puck possesses both theatrical awareness and power over its own mode of representation. Like Peaseblossom and other supernatural audience members, Puck is initially bemused by the humans' performance. He exclaims, 'This is magnificent – and it is true! It never happened; yet it is still true. What magic art is this?' However, soon afterwards Puck lulls the actor portraying him into an enchanted sleep and adopts the role for himself. This substitution is initiated by a frame in which Puck hunches over the oblivious actor, directly mirroring his position (Figure 142). The mask the actor wears lies between them, signaling a transition not only from one actor to another but also between Puck's 'true' identity and his theatrical persona. Unlike Peaseblossom, Puck does not seem unsettled by his theatrical reproduction, or feel it poses a threat to his primacy: as he leaves the actor sleeping under a cart he says, 'you played me well, mortal. But I have played me for time out of mind. And I do Robin Goodfellow better than anyone.' (Figure 143) This statement seems to acknowledge the multiplicity of characters brought about by theatrical re-enactment and further acts of adaptation or appropriation. Simultaneously, in the accompanying illustration Puck holds the actor's mask so that its angle and expression mirror his own, perhaps suggesting a greater elision is occurring between

Puck the ‘original’ and Shakespeare’s theatrical entity. As the play concludes, the divergence of these two Pucks is implied by a frame in which Puck begins to remove the mask (Figure 144). It still overlaps his face but his identity is once again discernible, causing Shakespeare to exclaim ‘that is not Cowley!’ in realisation that a substitution has taken place. Puck remains behind on the hillside after the rest of the creatures return to Faerie and delivers the final speech of the play. While doing so he kicks the mask away, as if ultimately rejecting Shakespeare’s authorship of his persona. The frames accompanying the speech grow increasingly dark, showing fewer details of Puck’s body until, like the Cheshire Cat of *Alice in Wonderland*, only his eyes and teeth remain visible (Figure 145). The last frame in the sequence is entirely blank. The implication seems to be that, as in *Manga Shakespeare*, Puck has progressed from knowing engagement with his own theatricality to assuming control over the graphic novel’s representation, with the power to draw the episode to a close.

Classical Comics similarly appears to imbue Puck with a distinctive narrative style and control over the medium. When he boasts of his exploits to the fairy in Act 2 Scene 1, his speech’s illustrations are surrounded by a distinctive floral border, or ‘gutter’, which contrasts with the regular border used elsewhere in the adaptation (Figure 146).³¹³ Scott McCloud suggests that the gutter ‘plays host to much of the magic and mystery that are at the very heart of comics’.³¹⁴ In the gaps between frames, ‘human imagination takes two separate images and transforms them into a single idea’.³¹⁵ Just as theatrical performances of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* require audiences to imaginatively construct the fairies’ miniature world, McCloud suggests that graphic novel readers use the gutter to ‘mentally construct a continuous, unified reality’.³¹⁶ The gutter thus plays an integral role in facilitating the imaginative work the adaptation demands of its audience. Giving Puck’s speech a distinctive gutter thus suggests that the medium is being adapted to accommodate his narrative voice, and Puck potentially has the power to influence how readers interpret the story. The same gutter is used for Puck’s speech describing his transformation of Bottom and pursuit of the other mechanicals (Figure 147). On this occasion a simplified, cartoonish style of illustration is employed, further distinguishing the sequence from the rest of the adaptation. This shift seems to suggest that Puck extends his narrative agency as the adaptation progresses.

Kill Shakespeare uses a similar technique to the *Classical Comics* at one point in its second volume. The story sees Hamlet enter the ‘Globe Woods’ to visit Shakespeare at his home. Like the Athenian woods of the play, the Globe Woods prove difficult to navigate until the prodigals, led by Puck, arrive to show Hamlet the way. This sequence occupies a double

³¹³ McCloud, p.66.

³¹⁴ McCloud, p.66.

³¹⁵ McCloud, p.66.

³¹⁶ McCloud, p.67.

page spread, on which the images are separated by the trunk and branches of a tree (Figure 148). As the illustrations of Puck on the recto page make clear, the tone and texture of the tree are identical to Puck's body. The graphic novel thus briefly elides Puck's role in guiding Hamlet through the wood with the means of the narrative's unification and progression.

This section has thus far focused on how graphic novels lend Puck the semblance of narrative control and power over the medium. However, other media explore the character's metatheatrical functions in comparable ways. For instance, while the RSC's *Dream* project did not include Puck's final address to the audience, the character was instrumental in inducting the audience into the narrative. The central performance was preceded by footage of the actor EM Williams walking through the corridors of the Guildhall and into the motion capture volume, bringing the audience into the performance space and promising to be a 'reasonably reliable guide' to the virtual wood. When the animation began, the audience's perspective was initially elided with Puck's; as the avatar examined its apparently unfamiliar body, the audience saw hands being held up and turned over in front of the screen as if we were looking through Puck's eyes. This comingling of Puck and audience was unexpected, but nevertheless in keeping with criticism and creative practice's attribution of different metatheatrical functions to the character. Similarly, it was fitting that Puck was the only character who appeared in doublein the sequence after the storm: their metatheatrical awareness facilitated them performing asactor and avatar at once.

The Handspring production's portrayal of Puck may initially have seemed to preclude investing the character with narrative control: the visibility of his three puppeteers emphasised the extent to which he was a subject or product of manipulation, rather than its instigator. However, Puck was responsible for constructing what was arguably the production's most striking mediatised body: the transformed Bottom. After Puck's aside, 'a stranger Pyramus than ere played here' (III.i.83), Bottom is usually next seen with his head transformed into that of a donkey. In this production, Bottom unexpectedly returned to the stage unchanged: his transformation was only triggered when he tripped over the objects comprising Puck. On this cue, the three puppeteers responsible for controlling Puck lifted Bottom onto a trolley, so that he lay face down with his legs at the front end of the trolley. The puppeteers pulled down his trousers to expose his buttocks and attached a tail to his head, donkey's ears to his rear. The front legs of the trolley were mechanised and jointed like a donkey's legs, and Bottom could move around by using his arms to turn wheels at the back of the trolley. Where audiences are used to seeing Bottom as a human-animal hybrid, Handspring presented a more complex entity: part exposed human flesh, part machine, combining to create the semblance of an animal. Puck's enchantment had the unusual consequence of altering Bottom's corporeal medium, making him closer in nature to the objects which bodied forth the production's fairies. This transformation was a further reflection of the company's animist ethos, explored above,



Figure 136: Puck Takes a Bow, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.50.

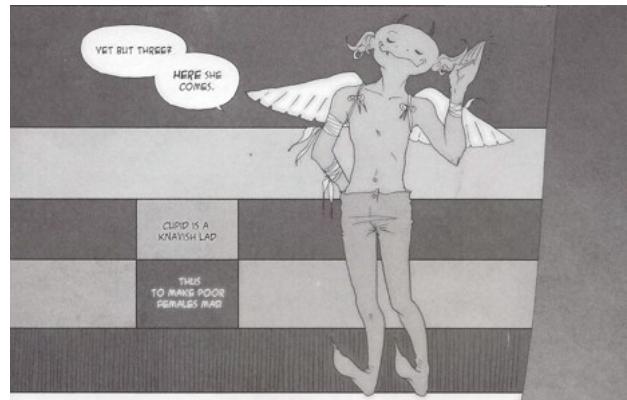


Figure 137: Puck as Cupid, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.151.



Figure 138: Puck's Puppet Theatre, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.110.



Figure 139: Puck Leans Through, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.47.



Figure 140: Puck from the Reverse Side, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.49.

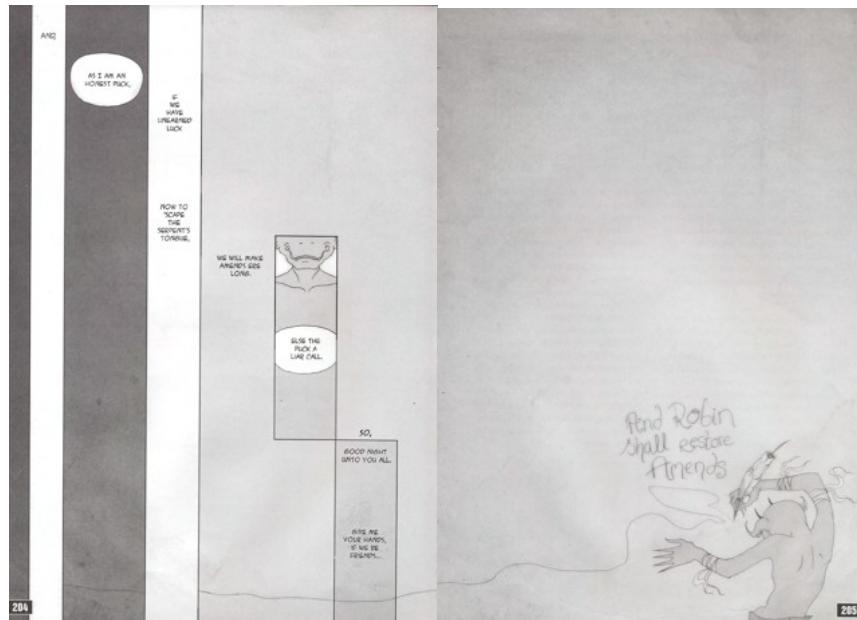


Figure 141: Puck as Creator, *Manga Shakespeare*, pp.204-5.



Figure 142: Puck Mirrors His Actor, *The Sandman*. Figure 144: Puck Unmasks, *The Sandman*.



Figure 143: Puck Plays Himself, *The Sandman*.



Figure 145: Puck Vanishes, *The Sandman*.



Figure 146: Puck's Gutter,
Classical Comics, p.29.



Figure 147: Puck's Gutter and
Cartooning, *Classical Comics*, p.65.



Figure 148: Puck Guides Hamlet in the Globe Woods, *Kill Shakespeare*.

but its alteration of one of the play's human bodies arguably posed a further challenge to the audience's assumptions about the definitions and parameters of our own physical forms.

This section has suggested that some mediatised adaptations extend the challenges of representation posed by fairy bodies, explored in the previous section, by imbuing fairies – and in particular Puck – with the power to shape the forms in which they appear. Where the supernatural becomes aligned with the narrative conventions underpinning graphic novels, animation, or puppetry, appropriations in those media ask questions about narrative and somatic control. The next section explores how adaptations develop this questioning to use both fairy bodies and their narrative manipulations to renegotiate the play's gender dynamics.

Fairies, Gender, and Narrative Control

The introduction to this chapter observed that the fairies' descriptions of the natural world used courtly terms such as 'pensioners' or 'liveries' to re-enact the social hierarchy familiar to the play's Elizabethan audiences. Another facet of this hierarchy was the privileging of men over women.³¹⁷ *A Midsummer Night's Dream* opens with Egeus's efforts to exercise his paternal rights over his daughter Hermia, to whom, as Theseus instructs, 'your father should be as a god' (I.i.47). Hermia's solution is to flee to the woods, where the issue of female disobedience and male retaliation reappears in Oberon and Titania's dispute over her changeling and Titania's subsequent humiliating enchantment with Bottom. For James Calderwood, this 'fairyland problem' functions as a 'phase in the Athenian plot'.³¹⁸ Through the doubling of the central parts, Oberon's subjugation of Titania in the woods entails Theseus's successful quelling of what Elizabethan audiences would have considered the 'unnatural disobedience and sensuality' of his Amazon bride, Hippolyta.³¹⁹ How do contemporary adaptations of the play approach these ostensibly antiquated gender dynamics? This section suggests that, as in Calderwood's reading, fairies provide a means of addressing or even renegotiating the human characters' unbalanced gender relationships.

Across different media, critiques of the play's patriarchal figures focus predominantly on Oberon. As Marija Reiff observes, modern adaptations often depict Oberon as 'teeming with masculine virility [...] a warrior who is formidable, sexy, and abounding with machismo'.³²⁰ This association with a particular model of masculinity makes the character an attractive focal point for interpretations seeking to address the unpalatable qualities of patriarchy. For example, in the Handspring production the actor playing Oberon wore a large hand over his own, which could be manipulated between an authoritative point and a more aggressive

³¹⁷ See, for example, John Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A Godly Form of Household Government* (1589) in Aughterson, p.449.

³¹⁸ Calderwood, p.410.

³¹⁹ Calderwood, p.413.

³²⁰ Reiff, p.251.

clenched fist. This hand was specific to Oberon – Titania did not have a similar appendage. The hand's prominence provides a point of comparison with the graphic novel adaptations of *The Tempest* discussed in Chapter 1, where frames emphasising Prospero's hands were used to indicate his control over other characters. The Handspring hand had similarly coercive functions: for instance, Oberon could control the lovers' movements and put them to sleep by lowering his hand onto their heads. At one point, a canine-like Puck affectionately nuzzled the prosthetic hand, perhaps further suggesting that it operated as the locus of Oberon's authority. However, the Handspring production also challenged Oberon's narrative (and gendered) authority by presenting both his and Titania's puppets as Hippolyta's creations. As previously noted, the production's initial setting resembled a workshop, in which various dolls and puppets – including the cane figures which represented Oberon and Titania at the play's conclusion – could be seen under production, in unfinished forms. A figure wearing a welding helmet entered carrying Oberon's head, which was tossed from hand to hand as if the craftsman was testing its weight. After making some adjustments to the head on one of the workbenches, the figure set it down and removed the helmet. It only became clear that this was Hippolyta when the first scene began. This prelude to the play supplied an alternative reading to Calderwood's by proposing that the fairy portion of the plot may be an articulation of Hippolyta's concerns, not Theseus's. The director Tom Morris explains: 'At the start of the play Hippolyta is carving the figures which will bless and protect her marriage to Theseus and the house they live in. These carvings embody the spirits of Oberon and Titania.'³²¹ Through the doubling of parts, however, the fairy rulers were also embodied by Theseus and Hippolyta, perhaps creating an opportunity to act out Hippolyta's fears of being forced to defer or submit to her husband. Whereas in the play Hippolyta is silent after the conclusion of the mechanicals' performance, in the Handspring production Theseus's line, 'lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairytime' (V.i.354) was delivered by Hippolyta instead. This stripped the line of the cynicism it can articulate when delivered by a man who has previously declared he does not believe in 'fairytoys' (V.i.3). Instead, Hippolyta's creation of the puppets which populated the production reflected a sincere belief in 'fairy time,' and suggested that her craftsmanship of fairy icons might continue to provide a means of exercising agency in her married life.

When we consider Oberon in graphic novels, we see that *Classical Comics*, *Manga Shakespeare* and *The Sandman* all depict him in the guise of a more blatantly toxic masculinity, with horns or antlers, conjuring demonic connotations. In the *Classical Comics* adaptation, this is part of a much broader pattern which casts Oberon as an antagonistic figure. This is established during the fairies' first appearance, when Titania and Oberon confront each other along with their respective groups of servants (p.30). While, as previously discussed, no

³²¹ Quoted in Wallace, p.10.

two fairies are identical in the adaptation, each group nevertheless shares some characteristics. Titania's fairies have wings modeled on insects and are surrounded by a pink glow; Oberon's have clawed bats' wings and a blue aura. One of his attendants carries a teasel to further emphasise the latter group's abundance of sharp edges. The contrasting auras seem to reinforce traditional gender roles, but also cast Oberon in a colder, more hostile light befitting the more aggressive appearance of his cohort. During this scene, Oberon's cloak operates as a menacing extension of his body, reaching out in a claw-like fashion to grab the changeling boy (Figure 149). Titania's hair breaks through the cloak to halt this effort, but the fabric can be seen magically reuniting at the bottom of the page. Later on in Act 3 Scene 2, Oberon again uses the cloak as an arm, gripping Puck and holding him over a waterfall (Figure 150). Both the cloak's menacing qualities and its function as an extension of Oberon's body echo Richard III's opaque physicality in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation discussed in Chapter 3.

Despite his horns, the Oberon of the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptation is not as explicitly antagonistic as his *Classical Comics* counterpart. However, as with the series' depiction of Prospero's authority, numerous frames focus on Oberon's hands in ways which evince him seeking to assert his dominance over other characters. On multiple occasions, Oberon's miniature servants are shown clinging to the tip of his extended index finger (Figure 151; p.109). The gesture suggests a carelessness for the creatures who do his bidding but also emulates Puck's finger puppetry, further articulating his manipulation of others. After Oberon encounters Demetrius and Helena in the wood, his directions to Puck are punctuated by another frame focusing on a similarly extended index finger (Figure 152). This directly precedes two frames separated by an image of the magical flower: in the first, Helena reaches a hand towards Demetrius asking, 'Love?' while Demetrius sticks out his tongue in response, answering 'No love'. In the second image, following the flower, both Demetrius and Helena exclaim, 'Love!' while reaching out to each other. The comically simple dialogue in these panels coincides with a simplified, cartoonish style similar to that of Puck's Act 3 Scene 2 speech in the *Classical Comics* adaptation. As with that sequence, the different style gives the impression of an alternative narrative voice, in this case Oberon's. This style, like Puck's finger puppets, is humorous but reductive in its portrayal of the characters Oberon and Puck manipulate. Furthermore, the use of a theatre setting for Puck's re-enactment emphasises the lovers' and mechanicals' function as a form of entertainment for both him and Oberon, as illustrated by a frame showing Puck tossing popcorn in his mouth as he and Oberon watch the lovers' quarrel from cushioned seats (p.138). When the pair later use a similar position to view Titania and Bottom, the impression created is one of exploitative voyeurism, comparable to instances of the male gaze described in Chapter 2.

Both *Classical Comics* and *Manga Shakespeare* extend their criticism of the play's male characters into the final scene, where Theseus's speech about 'antique fables' expresses his doubts about the veracity of the lovers' accounts about their experiences in the woods. In *Classical Comics*, Theseus delivers this speech in front of a large statue of himself battling the minotaur (Figure 153). The statue invokes Theseus's broader mythology at the same time as he rejects the plausibility of such 'fables', foregrounding his lack of awareness that he is himself a mythological figure. Furthermore, the story of the minotaur leads to Theseus's abandonment of Ariadne on Naxos, an event Oberon refers to earlier in the play (II.i.79-80). The adaptation is thus bookended with references, one verbal, the other visual, to Theseus's infidelity. This tacitly undermines Theseus's virtue as a heroic figure, and arguably subverts his statue's intended purpose in a manner similar to Richard III's misuse of Old Hamlet's statues in the *Kill Shakespeare* passages discussed in the previous chapter. In *Manga Shakespeare*, the same speech accompanies the frames discussed earlier, in which fairies infiltrate the ducal palace. Tellingly, Hippolyta glances over her shoulder and appears to notice the fairies, while Theseus remains oblivious. As with the *Classical Comics* adaptation, the effect is to underscore Theseus's lack of awareness – this time of his surroundings, rather than his own history – but the fact that Hippolyta notices the fairies also implies a similar affinity between her and the supernatural to the one suggested in the Handspring production. Particularly in light of the connections the *Manga Shakespeare* and *Classical Comics* adaptations create between the fairies and the construction of the play's narrative, Theseus's denial of fantasy undermines his narrative authority and extends the adaptations' questioning of the play's male figures.

The Titania and Oberon depicted in *The Sandman* do not appear to be in conflict with one another. However, as a member of Shakespeare's audience, Titania reflects on her treatment in the narrative, observing first that 'it seems to me that I heard this tale sung once, by a boy with a lyre,' and later that 'in the old tale, there was a love potion that left the goddess rutting with an ass...'. Titania's comments are a curious echo of Cleopatra's premonition, quoted in the introduction to this thesis, that in defeat she will see 'some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness / I'the posture of a whore' (V.ii.219-20). Both acknowledge that the stories in which they appear are subject to replication and both share visions of the degradations such re-enactments can impose on women of power. In the context of *The Sandman*'s broader narrative, Titania's commentary is also a reflection on the objectifying or sexualising effect of the male gaze: she is observing a version of herself performed by a man, in a play written by a man (Shakespeare), commissioned by a male entity (Morpheus), who is himself the creation of a man (Gaiman). In the same way that Cleopatra's fear of her identity being appropriated by a boy for the entertainment of Octavius Caesar draws attention to the fact that such belittling re-enactments have already taken place, Titania's response to Shakespeare's play

emphasises the way performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have perpetuated the degradation of her character. It might also ask future adaptations to do better. More generally, too, these final examples illustrate what this chapter has consistently sought to consider: how adaptations, appropriations and mediatisations of fairy identities, especially fairies' bodies, can illuminate the play's darker parts or blind spots for diverse, contemporary audiences, while also creating synergies between early modern and modern concerns about the environment, hierarchy and power.

This chapter has demonstrated some of the ways in which the fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* draw together the issues explored throughout this thesis relating to embodied experience. Like Caliban, the fairies are defined by physical difference; like the heroines of the crossdressing comedies, they provide a means of addressing and redressing gender dynamics; like Richard III, Julius Caesar and the Roman conspirators, their bodies reflect the influence they exert over other characters and extend that power to shape the medium in which they appear. However, the fairies are also, in numerous adaptations, manifestations of specific cultural concerns regarding humanity's impact on the environment and our developing relationship with technology. In this respect, they provide fresh insight into how bodies in mediated adaptations of Shakespeare's work are used to renegotiate our own position in a rapidly changing world.



Figure 149: Oberon's Cloak 1,
Classical Comics, p.34.

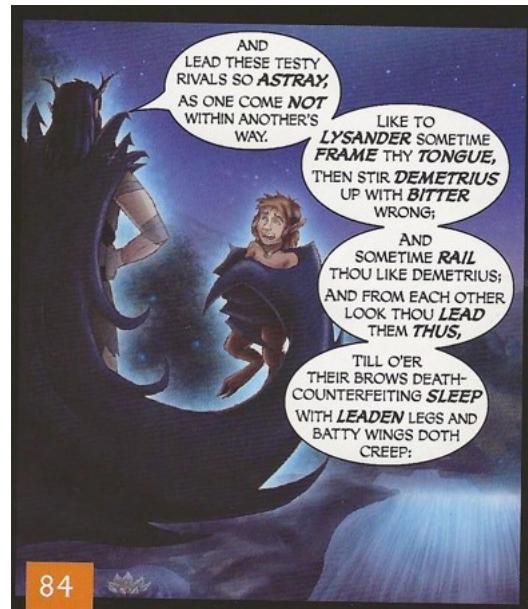


Figure 150: Oberon's Cloak 2,
Classical Comics, p.84.

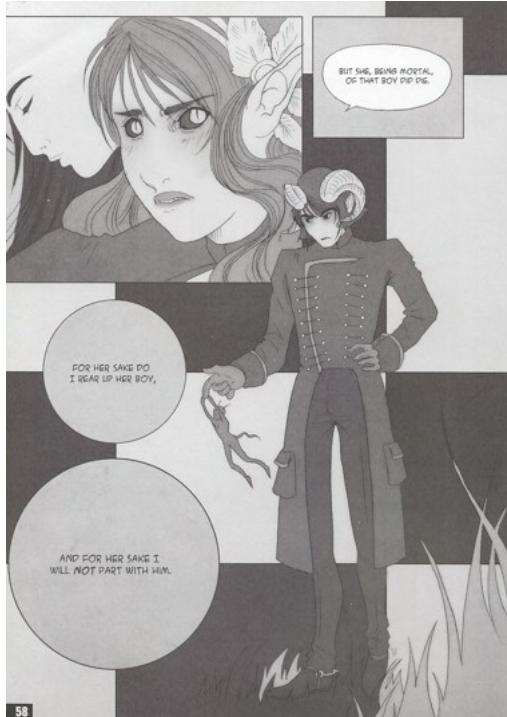


Figure 151: Oberon and Servant,
Manga Shakespeare, p.58.



Figure 152: Oberon's Illustrated Narrative, *Manga Shakespeare*, p.74.

Conclusion

Over four chapters, this thesis has explored how contemporary mediatised adaptations of Shakespeare's plays evince modern culture's complex interrelations between embodiment and identity. It has demonstrated how these adaptations create or draw upon resonances between present-day concerns and the plays' historically specific representations of somatic experience. These resonances in turn foreground how bodies are constructed within narratives but also have the capacity to construct, expand and convey narrative meaning across media. Chapter 1 examined contemporary interpretations of Caliban's physical difference and somatic ambiguity, and suggested ways in which adaptations of *The Tempest* challenge – and continue to be challenged by – the legacies of colonialism. Chapter 2 considered how adapting the crossdressing comedies as shojo manga enables the foregrounding of bodies in ways which critique and subvert the construction of feminine body image in contemporary popular culture, and prioritise the adolescent experience of the plays' female protagonists. Chapter 3 argued that manga is a similarly effective form for adapting *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar*, demonstrating how those plays' male-driven narratives of political power and manipulation can be articulated in somatic terms. Finally, Chapter 4 demonstrated ways in which mediatised adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* use fairy bodies to express a broad range of contemporary concerns, including climate change, our rapidly changing relationships with technology, and gender dynamics. Each chapter contributes to the thesis's overarching argument that Shakespeare's work constitutes a site for the exploration and renegotiation of contemporary embodied experience and, correspondingly, mediatisation provides a means of drawing out how Shakespeare's bodies remain potent, relevant, and accessible to new audiences. To review some of the key concepts explored in this thesis and suggest how they are central to other contemporary Shakespearean adaptations, demonstrating the thesis' broader reach, this conclusion explores Nicki Greenberg's bold and inventive graphic novel adaptation of *Hamlet* (2010).³²²

Remediatising the Theatre

This thesis has demonstrated how the adaptations it explores translate Shakespeare's theatrical medium into new forms without losing sight of the original texts' theatricality. The performativity foregrounded by theatre's live bodies is rearticulated in the construction of bodies which expose or reflect on their own processes of manufacture – for instance, the hand-drawn bodies of *Manga Shakespeare's* adaptation of *Richard III* (Chapter 3), or the

³²² For full publication details, see Bibliography.

puppets in the Handspring Puppet Company's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Chapter 4).

Greenberg's *Hamlet* similarly invokes theatrical conventions alongside its remediatisation of the play. The credit on the front cover describes the adaptation as 'staged on the page,' an approach which underpins Greenberg's vision of a performance of the play in which almost all the parts are assumed by sentient inkblots. The adaptation thus explicitly synthesises the materiality of its own form with the mode of the play's original production. Numerous pages in the adaptation's opening evoke a theatrical setting by depicting a velvet theatre curtain (Figure 153). The curtain reappears at the peripheries of the double-page spreads which open each scene of the play. This recurring motif recalls the evocations of theatrical architecture in the *Manga Shakespeare* adaptations of *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, discussed in Chapters 1 and 4 respectively. However, like the adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Greenberg's graphic novel also constructs a variety of 'backstage' spaces, which appear on double-page spreads in between scenes (Figure 154). In these spaces, a secondary narrative plays out as a dumbshow in which the inkblot representing Hamlet shares a relationship with the 'Ophelia' inkblot, has an affair with 'Gertrude', and is ultimately sabotaged by 'Osric', who is infatuated with 'Ophelia'. These interludes foreground identities and motivations distinct from the inkblots' onstage personas, creating a parallel to the dynamic between actors and their characters in live theatre which in turn reflects the broader somatic instability inherent in re-enactment and adaptation (previously explored in Chapters 3 and 4). The backstage spaces also present bricolages comprising different arts and crafts materials, books, and assorted ephemera. These arrayed materials draw the inkblots out of the theatrical context of the play by surrounding them with a range of alternative media and representative possibilities. The bricolages reflect the ways in which Shakespeare can be refashioned both in material and narrative terms, as evinced further by Greenberg's presentation of the parallel plot described above.

Before the start of the adapted play, Hamlet appears in front of the theatre curtain. He is initially faceless, holding his facial features in one hand like a mask. On the opposite page, he uses both hands to raise the mask to the front of his head. The inkblot's assumption of Hamlet's part is equated with the augmentation or alteration of its physical form. This draws attention both to the mask as an indicator of an adopted persona, but also the sense in which any embodied identity is the product of a process of construction.

Bodies and Narrative Agency

Each chapter of the thesis explored ways in which adaptations imbue bodies with narrative agency, frequently by eliding their corporeality with the medium in which the adaptation is

produced. Greenberg's adaptation extends this approach in its depiction of inkblots, which means that her characters literally embody the substance of their medium, more fully than the suggested relationships between characters and ink in Chapter 3's discussion of *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar*. Greenberg's inkblots are foregrounded against colourful, predominantly abstract backgrounds, which make their bodies the focal point of the adaptation and the primary means of conveying the narrative. Moreover, characters carry pens and brushes in place of pikes and swords (Figures 155-6), a substitution which elides the threat of physical harm or death with the adaptation's means of producing bodies. Once again, this foregrounds the adaptation's characterisation of bodies being manufactured or constructed.

This duality of creation and destruction is foregrounded in the adaptation's rendering of Act 3 Scene 4, where Hamlet kills Polonius with his pen-sword (p.250) and then uses the same instrument to produce 'the counterfeit presentment of two brothers' in the blank space at the top of the page (Figure 157). This is a more literal rendering of the way in which adaptations of *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* use different illustrative styles to imply that characters are capable of producing narrative.

Malleable Bodies

Many of the bodies examined in the thesis have renegotiated the nature and confines of the human body. We have seen that this renegotiation is visually expressed either through corporeal malleability (as is the case with the cross-dressing heroines in Chapter 2, or the cloaked bodies of *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar* in Chapter 3), or hybridisation (as was explored in relation to Caliban in Chapter 1 and the fairies in Chapter 4). Greenberg's adaptation similarly presents bodies which exemplify different types of malleability, instability and ambiguity. The inkblots' forms are highly fluid and prone to distortion, resonating both with the early modern period's model of the fluid humoural body and Bakhtin's grotesque. A character's death is almost always represented by their body melting into a pool of ink on the stage (Figure 158), but dramatic contortions or even dissolutions of bodies are used throughout the adaptation, particularly to convey emotional distress. For instance, in Act 1 Scene 3, when Polonius warns Ophelia not to be taken in by the 'tenders' Hamlet has offered her, predatory plants extend in from the outer edge of the frames and pull parts of Ophelia's body out of shape (Figure 159). As Polonius's speech continues, Ophelia's growing dismay is reflected by her reduced presence on the page: more and more of her is pulled away by the plants (p.64). These plants reappear in silhouette in Act 3 Scene 1, when Hamlet tells Ophelia 'I loved you not.' (p.179) They do not have the same corrosive effect here, but in the aftermath of Hamlet's rejection Ophelia's distress is conveyed through a number of frames in which she gradually melts into an inky puddle (Figure 160). Both these sequences occur at the end of a

scene and are immediately followed by pages in which the Ophelia inkblot is shown backstage, either in the process of reforming or already fully intact (Figure 161; see also pp.190-1). This degree of elasticity is not a quality shared by the live body, but the foregrounded artifice of Greenberg's bodies demonstrates how our notions of ourselves as embodied entities are perpetually shaped and reshaped by our experiences.

Instances in which the inkblots remove their masks further destabilise the notion of embodied identity. For example, in one incidental 'backstage' episode, the Hamlet and Gertrude inkblots are passionately entwined and wearing each other's mask (Figure 162). The masks' interchangeability undermines the notion of a fixed or essential embodied identity and instead suggests that identities, like theatrical parts, are roles which are constructed through performance. Earlier in the adaptation, when Hamlet explains his plan to feign madness, he illustrates the concept by conjuring numerous masks identical to his own, juggling them to convey his manipulation of different personas, or his performance of a fractured self (Figure 163). These examples both challenge the model of a unified, cohesive, unique embodied identity. They may also tacitly reflect the commodification of the body in contemporary culture by presenting the inkblots' bodies – or at least, those of their stage personas – as replicable and fungible.

Greenberg's inkblots also exhibit hybridity in ways which blur distinctions between species. Most of the adaptation's bodies incorporate vaguely human characteristics – an upright posture, discernible legs and arms – with bestial features. Hamlet's head suggests the shape of a lion's mane; Claudius and Gertrude's elongated snouts are evocative of aardvarks; the Norwegians have birds' heads and wings. As with instances of hybridity found in other adaptations (particularly in Chapter 4), these forms question both the insularity and the primacy of the human body by foregrounding or suggesting points of permeability and cohesion with other life forms.

The adaptation also expands on the equations between women's bodies and the natural world observed by ecofeminism and articulated in adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where Titania's body segues into her environment. For example, at the end of Act 1 Scene 3 when Ophelia is attacked by the plants, the plants are initially fully colorised. However, on the following page and in their subsequent appearance in Act 3, the plants appear in silhouette. This makes their substance indistinguishable from the ink which makes up Ophelia's body and suggests an equivalence between the two. This idea of visualequivalence has been seen previously in the thesis, when discussing similarities between thebodies of Richard III and the Roman conspirators, blood, and ink. However, as the plants are shown devouring Ophelia, the Greenberg adaptation seems to imply that their aesthetic similarity is a result of permeability between their different bodies, once more questioning thelimits of the human. This is further evinced earlier in the scene, where Ophelia's description

of Laertes treading ‘the primrose path of dalliance’ is illustrated by a frame in which the siblings appear on a hillside (Figure 164). Laertes caresses a part of the landscape which segues into a headless female nude. The adaptation thus appears to recognise that the associations between women and nature are the product of how women have historically been conceptualised by men. Furthermore, it suggests that these associations are subject to the same anonymising, objectifying male gaze explored in Chapter 2.

Embodied Identity

The depictions of women described above form only part of the Greenberg adaptation’s commentary on how images of the play’s female characters are constructed by their male counterparts. Gertrude’s portrayal is particularly provocative in light of contemporary celebrations of female empowerment: she is a slouching figure with six breasts and almost permanently lowered eyes which create the impression of passivity. Shortly after her first appearance, Gertrude placidly complies when Claudius publicly fondles her breasts (Figure 165). The undulating shape of Claudius’s accompanying speech bubbles makes them resemble a dripping liquid, evoking – at best – saliva. The image recalls the drooling Malvolio of *Manga Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night*, with similar connotations of voyeurism and exploitation. Gertrude is thus reduced to her sexual functions as Claudius’s consort, but the adaptation goes further to suggest that her son’s attitude towards her is similarly reductive.

In Act 3 Scene 2, Hamlet’s line ‘we shall obey, were she ten times our mother’ appears alongside an illustration which resembles a Rorschach test, at the centre of which appear five pairs of breasts arranged in a similar fashion to Gertrude’s (Figure 166). The combination of an image borrowed from popular psychology and the increased number of breasts – ten in total – arguably suggests that Hamlet subconsciously reduces his mother to a breast (which, commensurate with his speech, is reproduced ten times) or, more symbolically, her reproductive and maternal functions. These functions – sexual and maternal – are uncomfortably combined in the two ‘backstage’ images showing the Hamlet and Gertrude inkblots together: in both, his attention is directed very specifically towards her breasts (Figures 162, 167). Ophelia is subjected to a similar reduction in Act 1 Scene 3, at the end of the sequence depicting her physical disintegration. The last parts of her body remaining visible, aside from her face, are her breasts and pubic area (Figure 168). The emphasis on these areas at this particular moment reflects Polonius’s simultaneous assessment of her ‘maiden presence’ and instruction to ‘set your entreatments at a higher rate’ – his daughter’s value is determined by her sexual purity.

Greenberg’s extreme, monstrous images of women exemplify how mediatised adaptations can foreground Shakespearean bodies in ways which challenge and enlighten

our readings of the plays, while simultaneously engaging with and reflecting contemporary concerns about body image, embodied experience, and selfhood. This thesis, this conclusion, and these images reveal the multitudinous ways in which academics, critics, and creative practitioners continue to use Shakespeare to produce provocative and insightful readings of bodies.



Figure 153: Hamlet in Front of the Stage Curtain, *Hamlet* front matter.



Figure 154: A Backstage Bricolage, *Hamlet*, pp.50-1.



Figure 155: Brushes as Weapons, *Hamlet*, p.6.



Figure 156: Pens as Weapons, *Hamlet*, p.10.



Figure 157: Hamlet's Narrative Production, *Hamlet*, p.252.



Figure 158: The Death of Hamlet, *Hamlet*, p.410.



Figure 159: Plants Attack Ophelia, *Hamlet*, pp.63-64.



Figure 160: Ophelia in Distress, *Hamlet*, p.189.



Figure 161: Ophelia Reformed, *Hamlet*, pp.66-7.

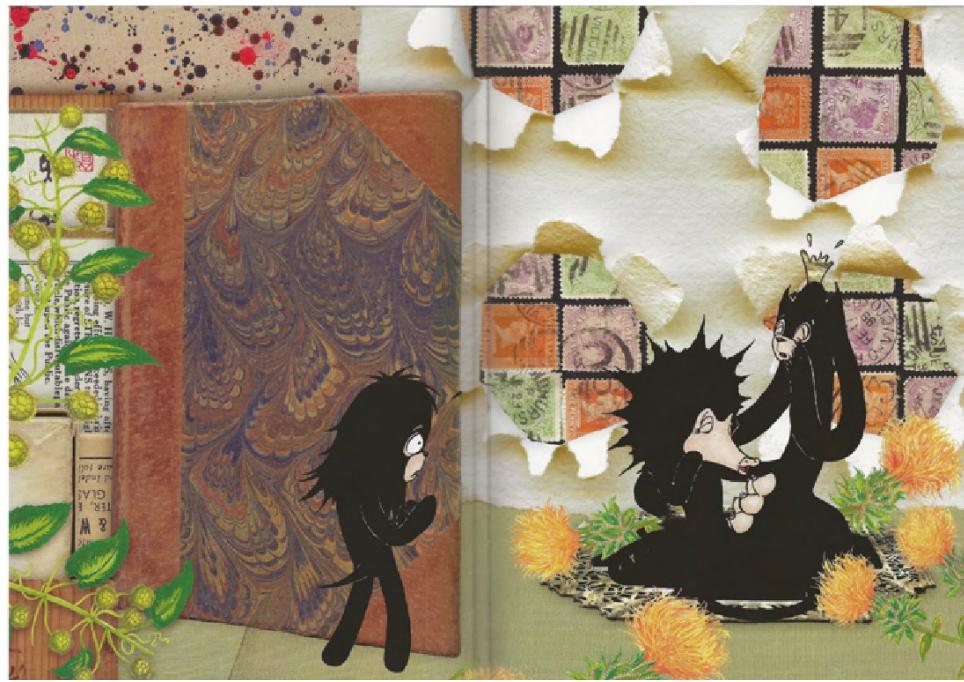


Figure 162: 'Hamlet' and 'Gertrude' Swap Masks, *Hamlet*, pp.270-1.



Figure 163: Hamlet Replicates His Mask, *Hamlet*, p.97.

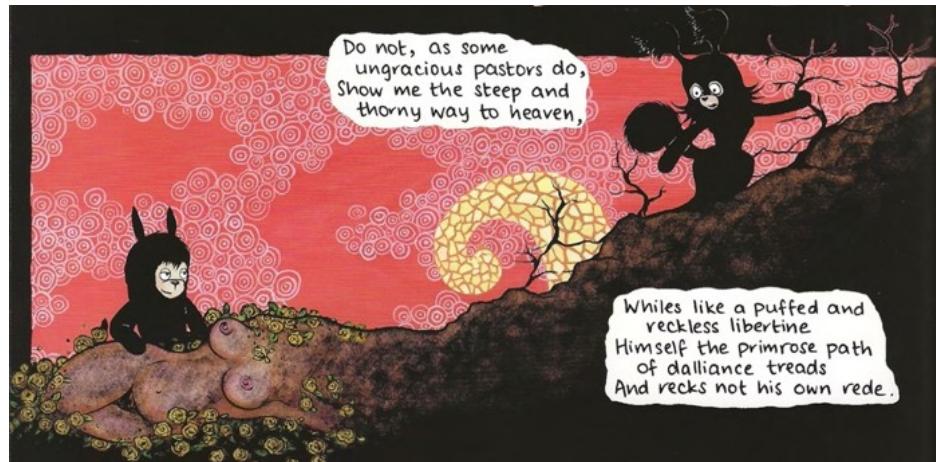


Figure 164: Laertes and a Feminised Landscape, *Hamlet*, p.58.



Figure 165: Gertrude Reduced to Sexual Functions, *Hamlet*, p.23.

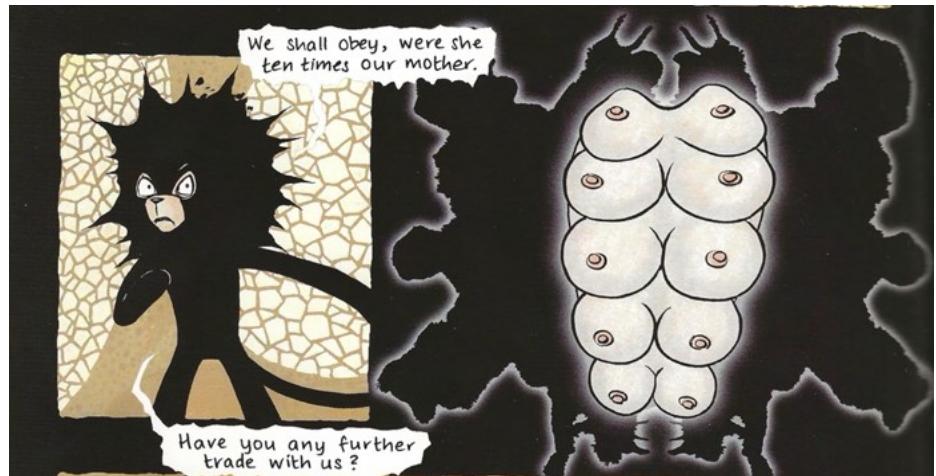


Figure 166: Gertrude Reduced to Maternal Functions, *Hamlet*, p.220.



Figure 167: Gertrude's Sexual and Maternal Functions Merge, *Hamlet*, pp.288-9.



Figure 168: Ophelia is Reduced to Sexual Functions, *Hamlet*, p.65.

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