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Moving through Time and Race: *Othello* and *The Tempest* adapted for New Millennials

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When I consider everything that grows

Holds in perfection but a little moment;

That this huge stage presenteth naught but shows

Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;

When I perceive that men as plants increase,

Cheered and checked even by the self-same sky,

Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,

And wear their brave state out of memory:

Then the conceit of this inconstant stay

Sets you, most rich in youth, before my sight,

Where wasteful time debateth with decay

To change your day of youth to sullied night:

And all in war with time for love of you

As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

(Sonnet 15)

Introduction

Four centuries after his death, William Shakespeare still haunts not only audiences, students, critics and teachers, but anyone who is (more or less consciously) exposed to some kind of advertisement, aphorism or word-play. As a matter of fact, it is recognised that Shakespeare widely contributed to the enrichment of the English dictionary and he persists as one of the most "recycled" pop icons in history. The term "haunt" is not a casual choice here: it relates to the French word "*hantise*" which, in Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx* (1993), "designates both haunting and the idea of an obsession, a constant fear, a fixed idea, or a nagging memory" (Zabus: 2002, 5). Generally speaking, the second half of the twentieth century has witnessed the re-evaluation of literary disputes such as the understanding of canon formation and the relationship between authorship and readership, which have also influenced the

allegedly stable condition of Shakespeare's tradition as a timeless and unparalleled playwright and poet. Nonetheless, his works continue to represent a significant source of anxiety, especially for younger generations; this fact may be explained as the consequence of "the romantic definition of Shakespeare as the repository of Western cultural and aesthetic value" (Marchitello in Miller: 2003, 185). At the turn of the New Millennium, a whole new amount of concerns, which chiefly concern the political and economic sphere, intensified this sense of de-stabilisation and required different strategies in order to face such challenges. Literature has always worked as a thought-provoking mirror of society and culture, so it also had to adjust to this "sea-change", which often happens through adaptation and Shakespeare makes no exception as one of the most adapted authors of all times. The problem with adaptations in general is that they are haunted by their sources. As Linda Hutcheon points out: "If we know that prior text, we always feel its presence shadowing the one we are experiencing directly. When we call a work an adaptation, we openly announce its overt relationship to another work or works" (Hutcheon: 2013, 6). In this sense, Shakespeare is often perceived as haunting because as a long-lasting literary institution he has deep roots in Western culture and a huge impact on the rest of the globe. So, given these circumstances, it comes as no surprise that any time a writer or a director tries to work on one of his plays each adaptation is severely scrutinised by the critics and the public, and sometimes discarded as something ridiculous or excessive. This research aims at demonstrating that, in fact, adaptations have a right to exist not as subordinates, but *beside* their sources, which they value and promote through references, echoes, quotations and, at the same time, revision so as to adjust texts to changing times.

The first chapter represents an introduction to the importance of adaptations of Shakespeare's works today, particularly those addressed to an audience of adolescents. After a brief summary on the history of Shakespearean adaptation for children, this section analyses how popular culture and Young Adult literature offer "Shakespeare" to New Millennials by (re)presenting his works as a relevant instrument of growth, collective awareness and self-commitment in the

literary panorama. For instance, fanfiction writing is explored since it proves to be a noteworthy practice of "performing" readers who appropriate the Shakespearean canon and give a personal contribution to its enhancement thanks to rewritings that can be shared within a community on dedicated websites. Fan work pays tribute to Shakespeare by re-introducing his works as more appealing stories for teenagers who are given the chance to test their own creative writing skills, which produces paramount benefits for their educational path. On one hand, applications of rewritings at school are indeed vast: from primary school onwards, learners are increasingly encouraged to approach Shakespeare in a more active and positive way, which is to say through performance, interaction with professional actors, new study methodologies through technological devices, creative writing and, of course, teamwork with schoolmates and teachers. On the other hand, implications of Shakespearean adaptations brought to school can also be troublesome: in an era of expanding multiculturalism, religious and racial oppression, inequalities and women/gender controversies, how can Shakespeare be pertinent to all? What can be done to safeguard the dialogue between different, even conflictual cultures and realities? What role do young adults and their educators play? Need educational methods and syllabuses be revised together with texts, as well?

The second chapter analyses three contemporary Shakespearean adaptations for teenagers: Tracy Chevalier's *New Boy* (2017), Grace Tiffany's *Ariel* (2005), and Jacqueline Carey's *Miranda and Caliban* (2017). These are particularly remarkable novels because of the way they deal with the concepts of identity, family conflicts and gender issues, which are close to adolescents' experience and, as such, key themes in YA literature. The choice of discussing one adaptation of *Othello* and two of *The Tempest* has been prompted by different critical approaches, which all pivot around the notions of unsettled selves and multidimensional others. First, the concepts of race and equality with Othello and Caliban as two archetypal Shakespearean "others" are discussed. These characters still inspire multiple interpretations as socio-cultural outcasts and "hybrids" stuck between two worlds, namely West and East, human and animal

(or subhuman) condition. The comparison between the meaning of "monstrosity" in the Early Modern period and what a "monster" is today is interesting, in particular if associated to adolescence as an in-between, "freakish" period that disquiets and shapes identity. This anxiety leads to the second relevant issue that this chapter examines: the potentially disturbing influence of adults on teenagers' life, which Chevalier's, Tiffany's and Carey's struggling young protagonists portray. Furthermore, the gender discourse is tackled through, firstly, a close analysis on the female figure in *The Tempest*, and secondly Miranda's and Ariel's socio-political significance both in the source play and in Tiffany's and Carey's novels. One of the novelties that can be seen in New Millennium approaches to *The Tempest* is the fact that scholars' and authors' attention is expanding from the postmodernist and postcolonial view of Caliban as Prospero's only victim to Miranda as the oppressed daughter of a despot. Moreover, the idea of female "absence" is also stressed, which includes the significance and influence of Claribel, Sycorax and Miranda's mother on recent feminist reviews of Shakespeare's "last" play that target patriarchal issues and power play between sexes.

Fictionalising Shakespeare's works means not only dealing with complex language, but also trying to cope with time and plot complications that feature most of them. For example, two of the most intricate problems that adaptors usually face are the creation of a narrator, whose task is to assist readers in interpreting the story, and the re-arrangement of key events so as to render the story as coherent as possible. Thus, the third chapter presents the changes and challenges that build the adaptation process "from acts to chapters" in Chevalier's, Tiffany's and Carey's novels. Their different rhetorics of narration and time management as a plot device are here discussed. There is a particular focus on *The Tempest* as a particularly disorienting play to adapt due to its problematic chronology and manifold plots. In general, the aim is to understand these authors' attempt to empathically engage their young readers in the characters' stories by freeing them from the fixed chronological and narrative schemes set by the canon.

Chapter 1. What is lost and gained in adaptation: Shakespeare and popular culture

1.1 Introducing Shakespeare to young adults

1.1.1 Adapting for the young: some preliminary considerations on canonicity

The meaning of "canon" is still complex to define in the field of literary studies. Especially since the second half of the twentieth century, it has become increasingly inaccurate to conceive canonicity as a universally acknowledged notion. It is generally recognised, as Yael Darr points out, as "a repertoire of texts, authors and literary models that enjoy a vast and enduring consensus with respect to their paradigmatic status and cultural significance […] perceived as relatively stable, that is, resistant to changes in taste" (Darr in Kümmerling-Meibauer and Müller: 2017, 23). Moreover, it appears to be connected to the concept of "cultural capital" developed by the French scholar Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002), who investigated the realm of culture beyond Marx's economics. Both Marx and Bourdieu seem to agree that the capital designs society and places the individual within the social structure; also, the more capital a person owns, the more influence he or she acquires in social life. Bourdieu's cultural capital, in particular, embodies the ensemble of symbols that represent the members of a certain social class. On one hand, it allows them to share the same tastes with other associates of their class, from literature to fashion; on the other hand, it produces, according to Bourdieu, social inequality and wealth disproportion. In other words:

> Cultural capital is the accumulation of knowledge, behaviours, and skills that one can tap into to demonstrate one's cultural competence, and thus one's social status or standing in society. […] [T]his accumulation was used to reinforce class differences, as historically

and very much still today, different groups of people have access to different sources and forms of knowledge, depending on other variables like race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and even age.[1]

It comes as a consequence that the deconstruction of this frame of mind provokes a clash against socio-cultural authorities such as educational institutions that support the principles on which nations were built. Not only does canon designate the identity of a whole country and fuel its didactic influence, but ultimately it often results in social discrimination.

Following these reflections, in the wake of innovative theories such as post-structuralism and post-modernism, the 1980s and 1990s ignited the so-called "canon wars" in the United States. Their aim was to revise and reconsider the canon and see it as unfixed and changeable. Though it still maintains its function as a collective landmark in the immense field of literary knowledge, the canon began to focus its attention, for example, on production, publication, criticism and education[2]. Equally, the concepts of readership and authorship were already researched in the 1960s with Roland Barthes's "Death of the Author" (1968) and Michel Foucault's "What is an Author?" (1969), who challenged structuralism and the dominant conceptualisations of "author" and "subjectivity" within society. Whereas Barthes gave more emphasis to the reader than the author, Foucault admitted the coexistence of multiple factors and actors whose subjective positions may be identified in any social class, including authorship as an aspect of textual meaning[3]. Nevertheless, he rejected the Romantic principle which saw the author as the only source of meaning, implicated in a system of personification and idealisation which focussed on the author's "intentions". In

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[1] See Nicki Lisa Cole's article "What Is Cultural Capital? Do I Have It? An Overview of the Concepton" on *ThoughtCo.* (April 8th 2018) https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-cultural-capital-do-i-have-it-3026374 accessed on September 24th 2018

[2] Kümmerling-Meibauer, B. and Müller A., "Introduction. Canon Studies and Children's Literature", in *Canon Constitution and Canon Change in Children's Literature*, ed. by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer and Anja Müller, London and New York: Routledge, 2017, pp. 1-3

[3] Hateley, E., *Shakespeare in Children's Literature. Gender and Cultural Capital*, London and New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 10

light of these studies, towards the end of the century, authors began to better discuss genre conventions, plot designs and character building despite cultural standards.

As far as young readership and, in particular, canonisation in children's and young adult literature are concerned, academic literary studies currently participate with schools and families in the delineation of which values may be taught. Socio-cultural constructs like race, gender and childhood itself are being revised. Nostalgia for past ideals and the awareness that these works are valuable for the perpetration of national culture seem to provide the reasons why texts in literary canons should be offered to children. As Etti Gordon Ginzburg underlines, after Rousseau's influence, the Romantics idealised children and located them in the pure and lyrical realm of nature as "the site of lost truth". Such intellectualisation mythologised childhood and caused a severe distance from real life experience. Gordon Ginzburg also refers to Kolodny's (1980) and Guillory's (1993) thoughts on validation and consecration of a text once it achieves canonisation. In association with scholars, youths are invited, as students, to produce additional interpretations and justify the canonical status of literary works[4]. It is also evident, though, that literature is now available on several platforms other than the printed paper or the screen. The standard modes of telling (novels, for example) and showing (performative arts) are now assisted by the interaction with, for instance, the computer[5]. Electronic devices for reading and audiobooks appear to be gradually altering the public perception of literature while promoting the accessibility to texts. Purchasing books online or through dedicated *apps*, and exchanging them with other reading community members often seem to be the most convenient choice, particularly for students.

In this climate of social restlessness and, consequently, literary inspiration, the very notion of the "classic" is challenged. Consequently, more than ever

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[4] Gordon Ginzburg, E., "Genre, Gender and Canon Formation. The Case of Laura Richards" in *Canon Constitution and Canon Change in Children's Literature*, ed. by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer and Anja Müller, London and New York: Routledge, 2017, pp. 143-144

[5] *A Theory of Adaptation*, ed. by Linda Hutcheon with Siobhan O'Flynn, London and New York: Routledge, 2013, xvi

adaptations are likely to find a fertile ground to grow and spread as both deconstructive and constructive counter-reactions to canonical texts. They are also motivated by cinema, pop music and videogames that are welcomed as cultural material for academic research[6]. Linda Hutcheon advocates "intertextuality", the relation between texts, against literary authority. She stresses laterality rather than verticality and encourages the comparison of multiple versions[7] of the "hypotext", a term employed by Gérard Genette[8] to refer to the source of the adaptation in relation to the "hypertext" as the adapted text. The idea is that no text is isolated in literature, which is conceived as a connected web of texts. All creation, from narrative to performative production, is above all interpretation of pre-existing works. This does not mean that the adaptation is dependent or inferior to its source but, as both a product and a process, it co-exists and co-operates in a lateral relation with the hypotext. The intention is to expand and even enrich it, not as a mere copy but rather as "repetition without replication" (Hutcheon: 2013, 7), "a derivation that is not derivative—a work that is second without being secondary" (9). As paradoxical as these associations may sound, they appear to echo psychoanalytic theories. "Das Unheimliche", translated into English as "the uncanny", is described by Sigmund Freud as "in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression" (Freud: 1919, 241). If adapting means to bring to the surface something familiar that had been repressed from memory, fear and scepticism against the "return of the dead" might appear justifiable, or at least comprehensible. Reviving long buried stories and characters triggers the shock for the blasphemous violation on the sacred text that is exhumed and exposed to the elements of revision. Laurie E. Osborne quotes Thomas Leitch (2011), who "shows that the parasitic, communicative, collaborative, and performative attributes of vampires inhere not only in adaptations but also in the texts that inspire them" (Osborne in Hartley:

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[6] Müller, A., *Adapting Canonical Texts in Children's Literature*, London, Oxford, New York, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013, p. 2

[7] *A Theory of Adaptation*, ed. by Linda Hutcheon with Siobhan O'Flynn, London and New York: Routledge, 2013, xv

[8] Genette, G., *Palimpsestes. La Littérature au second degré*, Paris: Seuil, 1982, pp. 11-12

2018, 213-227). As a result, in Leitch's and Osborne's view, the immortality of former works is granted. However, they seem to imply that these texts are lifeless and this is debatable. As Hutcheon (2013) argues:

> An adaptation is not vampiric: it does not draw the life-blood from its source and leave it dying or dead, nor is it paler than the adapted work. It may, on the contrary, keep that prior work alive, giving it an afterlife it would never have had otherwise. […] [A]daptation is how stories evolve and mutate to fit new times and different places. (176)

Hence, adaptation recuperates its original meaning as a subject of mutation rather than of sheer exploitation. In this context, Darwinian theories of evolution might be recalled:

> Stories also evolve by adaptation and are not immutable over time. Sometimes, like biological adaptation, cultural adaptation involves migration to favourable conditions: stories travel to different cultures and different media. In short, stories adapt as they are adapted. […] Adaptation, like evolution, is a transgenerational phenomenon. […] Stories do get retold in different ways in new material and cultural environments; like genes, they adapt to those new environments *by virtue* [original emphasis] of mutation—in their "offspring" or their adaptations. And the fittest do more than survive; they flourish. (31-32)

Accordingly, the endurance of literary culture springs as the natural and dynamic progeny of a timeless process of adjustment to altered circumstances that touches all living beings. Children are told and retold the same stories over and over again, so since infancy the audience is accustomed to find comfort in the monotonous rhythm of lullabies and nursery rhymes. Adaptations, as ritual repetitions of familiar narrative patterns, may stir ancient desires and instincts. This explains why children are more intensely affected by these subconscious processes, in spite of the fact that they are less bound to compare the texts with their sources with respects to adults. In other words, children and young adults are often introduced to a given author initially *thanks to* adaptations, which

become promoters and catalysts for their future re-reading of "the originals". Grown-ups develop expectations when they encounter their favourite stories retold or mediated, for instance, by film directors. The hermeneutical concept of the so-called "horizon of expectation", theorised by Hans Robert Jauss (1921-1997), and further developed in Wolfgang Iser's (1926-2007) and Umberto Eco's (1932-2016) work, explains this response by conceptualising a co-operative reader. Reader-response theory is thus integrated in post-structuralist convictions according to which the author does not work alone in the making of textual meaning. It is a common belief among scholars that adaptations bring pleasure from change and relief from echoes of the past (Hutcheon: 2013, 173). In this sense, adapting provides a universal sensory experience, a ritual formula in human history, a cognitive process of regression without recession, and a natural law.

1.1.2 The strategies of Shakespearean adaptations

The educational context in which Charles and Mary Lamb wrote *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), the first Shakespearean adaptations for children in England, was affected by John Locke's pedagogical principles, as prescribed in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693). Despite his support for a combination of education and entertainment, Locke rejected fairy tales as unsuitable for children and confined them to the dominion of irrationality and superstition while favouring Aesop's fables instead. In addition, puritanism did not wish fantastic stories to distract children from Christian duties and to taint a state of purity that would be, as mentioned before, also the strong point of Romanticism[9]. The idealisation of childhood in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century concerned Shakespeare's works as well. The Romantic assumption that the purity of children had to be preserved from any moral assault urged a sanitising manoeuvre of all reference to sex and violence in adapting Shakespeare for

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[9] Tosi, L., *Raccontare Shakespeare ai bambini. Adattamenti, riscritture, riduzioni dall'800 a oggi*, Milan: FrancoAngeli s.r.l., 2014, pp. 24-30

young readers. For example, *The Family Shakespeare* by Henrietta Maria and Thomas Bowdler (1807), from which the term "bowdlerisation" was coined, proposed expurgated versions of Shakespeare's plays. The Bowdlers deprived them of any sort of indecent allusion and ambiguity that they were afraid may corrupt a young reader. Conversely, the Lambs did not simply "torn the Bard into pieces", but rewrote some of the tragedies (Charles) and comedies (Mary) and adapted them for children. The psychological opacity left by Shakespeare in the majority of his tragedies, for example, was dealt with by polarising the characters between good and bad in the moralising style of fairy tales[10] so that for children it would be easier to make sense of them. In the Victorian Age, Shakespeare gained a huge reputation as an incontestable genius to be enjoyed especially through reading. Above all, the Bard helped the construction of the national identity and a vast extent of Shakespearean criticism was issued with a special concern not only about plot and language but particularly about characters' motivations for their actions. The work of Mary Cowden Clark's *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines* (1850-52) is noteworthy. Here, she offered prequels for Shakespearean women and invited her readers to consider their past in order to reconsider their future behaviour. Clark's work seems to prefigure what would be the "subversive" agenda of twentieth and twenty-first century adaptations which were going to restore Shakespeare's inspiring ambiguity of character representation with manifold plots, new characters and different interpretative approaches triggered by feminist, post-colonial, ecological and psychoanalytic inputs.

Contemporary adaptors of Shakespeare's plays resort to different strategies:

- *transmediation*: it implies a change of genre, of medium, but also of conventions, for example when a play is transmediated from the stage to cinema; *narrativisation* is one the most recurrent strategies of transmediation which converts, for example, a play into a novel;

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[10] *Ibid*, Milan: FrancoAngeli s.r.l., 2014, pp. 33-34

- *bowdlerisation*: it may still be employed to censor and cut some portions of the text as the Bowdlers did, together with the habit of simplifying, especially for rewritings intended for a very young readership. In Shakespeare's case, since the plays are often very long, the problem of adapting for children rises when the final draft appears to be too short due to an editing policy that frequently forces authors to summarise the story;

- *transfocalisation*: the focus is displaced from primary onto secondary characters; several young adult novelists have chosen to privilege Ophelia's point of view in their books, for instance[11]. Sometimes William Shakespeare himself features as one of the characters of the novels. The Bard embodies a parental figure for the young protagonist, usually a boy, who has travelled across time and space with the technique of *time-slip fiction*[12] and feels as lost as the reader would probably be if he or she had the opportunity to meet the great Shakespeare:

  When children's literature is Shakespeared it not only rewards cultural capital, but also inscribes gendered juvenile readers who are made subject to a literary culture within which the Bard functions as father figure to sons *or* daughters [original emphasis], rendering the expansion of "Shakespeare" an empathically political act. (Hateley: 2009, 1)

- *prequels and sequels*: twentieth-century neologisms indicating extended narrations of past and future events in literature or cinema, largely appreciated by young audiences and film directors who may be curious to know what happened before and after the text is over;

- *abridgement and expansion*: a shortage or an enlargement of the text;

- *updating of time and space*: the text is modernised to ease empathic feedbacks from the readers, who are thus enabled to identify with the characters and their stories.

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[11] See for example *Ophelia* (2006) by Lisa Klein
[12] *Ibid*, Milan: FrancoAngeli s.r.l., 2014, p. 97

As an adaptor of some Shakespeare's plays, among which *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*, in his essay "Nutshells and Infinite Space. Stages of Adaptation" Bruce Coville shares his own method of adapting plays for young adults[13]. He claims that selection is the very first step to take when he has to choose which play he will work on. As a matter of fact, empathy appears to be his main criterion: young readers focus at least on one character, possibly a peer in age, to whom they can easily relate. Furthermore, magic and gory elements are also appealing elements for Coville's readership, and this explains his choice of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*. These are indeed the most frequent plays adapted for young adults, together with *Romeo and Juliet*, despite the sensitive topic of teen suicide that, Coville admits, made him and his editor delay its publication. Then, immersion into and a careful analysis of the Shakespearean text are the second and third stage in which the author familiarises with the text and acquires further critical information on the chosen play. Lastly, Coville remarks, it is important to always keep in mind the format of the adaptation: during the re-visioning stage, a maximum number of words is required, which may cost several painful decisions before the final draft is accepted.

Graham Holderness regards Shakespearean appropriations as "creative collisions":

> I do believe we need to destroy "Shakespeare" in order to understand what "Shakespeare" really is. I believe we need to observe Shakespeare colliding with objects that are not Shakespeare, where both are driven by forces that can appear to be random but in their mutual impact generate an observable and meaningful pattern. (Holderness: 2014, 18)

Understanding the final product of adaptation "in scientific terms" is certainly fascinating, even though it would be preferable to view literary adaptation, rather than as a process of violent collision and destruction, as a more negotiating

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[13] In *Reimagining Shakespeare for Children and Young Adults*, ed. by Naomi J. Miller, London and New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 56-66

procedure. Shakespeare's canon does need to be first destabilised, of course, which does not suggest any damage, but rather a rearrangement of its socio-cultural system. Political and social anxieties reshape Shakespeare's cultural capital that is no longer assured. As well-renowned products of adaptation themselves, Shakespeare's works were born to be furtherly adapted, so his canon is at once still and moving due to the potentially shape-shifting nature of the texts. Holderness's comparison to metals crafting is revealing:

> The secret of Shakespeare's longevity and plurality lies in the "malleability" of the works. The word is common in contemporary Shakespeare studies, and is used to indicate the fact that the text is responsive to actions upon it, co-operates with adaptation, offers itself up to for conversion and transformation. […] The malleability of metals derives from their peculiar atomic structure, which consists of tightly packed groups of positive ions that are held in place by a strongly attractive but relatively mobile sea of free electrons. Force applied to the surface of a metal allows atoms to "slip" over one another without loss of density. So you can hammer iron into different shapes without changing the structure or properties of its crystals. "Ductility" also represents a change of shape that entails no change in the internal structure of atoms and molecules. (10)

Drawing a line between "adaptation" and "appropriation", often used interchangeably in Shakespearean studies, may also be appropriate. Erica Hateley differentiates between appropriation and adaptations which "tend to retell the plot, or story, of one or more plays in a simplified format within short prose narratives [whilst] appropriations of Shakespeare offer the implied reader not only an understanding of a playtext, but also a model for reading that playtext" (Hateley: 2009, 15). In appropriation, the writers' agenda is to present "Shakespeare" as a product of the ideological re-evaluation of an author who is relevant also outside Western cultural borders.

It is often argued that Shakespeare's works acquired their "universality" as instruments of the British imperialist plan[14]. In one of the several interviews to Shakespearean experts collected by John Elsom in *Is Shakespeare still our contemporary?* (1989), Peter von Becker, a German theatre critic and the editor of *Theater Heute*, raises an interesting question: is Shakespeare English at all? According to von Becker, Shakespeare's plays were written at a particular time for a particular audience and were supposed to be acted by particular actors at the Globe Theatre. Nevertheless, not only are Shakespeare's stories themselves mostly adaptations of novellas and historical accounts, but also the time and places they are set in, Ancient Rome and Greece, Venice or Verona, von Becker argues, "were never real geographical places. He had never been there. He invented them" (Elsom: 1989, 88). Von Becker does not mean that Shakespeare can be tossed and turned depending on the circumstances. As the German critic explains:

> We have to get back what Brecht called the sense of history. If you try to actualise Shakespeare as if he is living now and talking to us in our own terms, the "Shakespeare in blue jeans" approach, you lose that sense of historic distance. But if your approach is too much a historical one, or a traditional one, you end up with a kind of museum theatre, very rhetorical, but just based on beautiful sounding words. You have to find a style between the "historic" Shakespeare and "Shakespeare in blue jeans". (89)

In spite of his questionable view on the impossibility of casually reading Shakespeare "in a train or an airplane" as an author who "only lives when he is performed on the stage" (89), von Becker's insightful position on the sense of history appears to support the negotiating process that should be expected from adaptations and appropriations with special regard to those addressed to teenagers.

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[14] *Is Shakespeare still our contemporary?*, ed. by John Elsom, London and New York: Routledge, 1989, p. 7

1.1.3 Adopting and adapting Shakespeare for millennials: the role of Young Adult literature

> Unless we keep reimagining Shakespeare for a new audience, his works will be inaccessible to vast numbers of every new generation, and they will become the property of an academic elite. (Williams in Miller: 2003, 31)

Accessing Shakespeare for a juvenile audience is indeed fundamental, and it is faced by authors who rewrite for children and young adults from several perspectives. At this point, *how* and *what* to adapt emerge as impending questions in the awareness that Shakespeare needs to be no more imagined as a tedious, four-century-old ambassador of the English Renaissance whose language has nothing left to say to the rushing, visual New Millennials. The present trend of popular culture studies, which give high consideration to adaptations, seems to be willing to assimilate Shakespeare and to contribute to the strengthening of his cultural status. At the same time, with adaptations his works descend from the "ivory towers" where they were often confined and return to the general public, the public for whom the Bard wrote his plays.

Children and young adults are the preferred target of international literary and performative productions, which are usually prompted by school systems. However, Naomi J. Miller argues that they are also "the most likely to be misdirected or even disappointed by their initial encounters with the Bard" (Miller: 2003, 2). As the heirs of multimedia expansion in the twentieth and twenty-first century, it is evident that the majority of them experiences Shakespeare initially through the privileged means of cinema, graphic novels and comics (or their Japanese correspondent, the *manga*). Baz Luhrmann's film *Romeo+Juliet* (1996) is one of the most celebrated adaptations of Shakespeare's plays that is plainly aimed at adolescents: Verona Beach, enter two American

star-crossed lovers (played by teenage idols Leonardo Di Caprio and Claire Danes), pursued by bloodthirsty gangs, drug dealers, fast cars and police helicopters. The film represents an ideal example of how Shakespeare would have appropriated Arthur Brooke's poem *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet* (1562) if he had lived in the 1990s as a member of the frenetic and emotional MTV generation. Also, it is hilarious to observe several jaws dropping when teenagers realise that Disney's film *The Lion King* (1998) has more than something to do with Shakespeare than they would have ever expected. This is why parody, though still a kind of adaptation, may not be so accessible for children and young adults since it needs the source to be recognisable and thus fully comprehended and appreciated. Appropriations are often offered to the young audience *before* the original, so they do not rest on a direct relation with it[15]. Preserving the immortality of Shakespeare's texts also means to challenge their authority in order to make the Bard less remote from everyday life and employ his works for the creative and re-creative project once again so as to enhance young audiences' interest in his production.

Generally speaking, literature for adolescents adopts and adapts Shakespeare with the purpose of strengthening the relation between millennials and the Renaissance and offering alternative stimuli for their reading habits. Shakespeare in adaptation gives the impression of speaking to the very heart of YA literature: similarly to adaptation, the teenage phase looks like an unpredictable journey, a hallway connecting two rooms, and a stage (in the theatrical sense of the term) where children begin to question their role in a disenchanting world in which they shall eventually fit. Some critics[16] have also noticed a possible link between adolescence and abjection in Kristeva's sense of the word: "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (Kristeva: 1982, 4). Identity

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[15] Tosi, L., *Raccontare Shakespeare ai bambini. Adattamenti, riscritture, riduzioni dall'800 a oggi*, Milan: FrancoAngeli s.r.l., 2014, p. 15
[16] Osborne, L.E., "The Paranormal Bard: Shakespeare Is/As Undead" in *Shakespeare and Millennial Fiction*, ed. by Andrew James Hartley, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 214-224

fragmentation, emotional disorders and the disregard of rules are the quintessence of YA novels. It could be argued that also adaptations, as both process and product, do actually cross the borders of canonicity, resist literary authorities and display a composite nature. Therefore, adaptation could be metaphorically viewed, if not as a literary genre, as a sceptical, growing teenager bursting with questions about what he or she was initially told to be the truth.

At the turn of the New Millennium, YA literature became an outstanding literary phenomenon which endures today as a crossover (sub)genre. It attracts not only teenagers, but also several adults, including parents, who can better understand their children thanks to their favourite readings. A decreasing unease from the authors' part to face delicate issues such as race, psycho-physical abuse, environment, incest, transgression, politics and the homosexual and transgender discourse is observable. In characters' portrayal, most of the writers want to show realistic adolescents within realistic contexts and cover a varied range of situations, cultures and personalities in order to truthfully speak of contemporary society. Orphans, single parents, divorce, marital infidelity and abusive adults are some of the most recurring themes. Indeed, the biological family is seldom portrayed by YA novels as a benevolent and constructive milieu where young characters can find approval and personal fulfilment, which they are more likely to reach outdoors thanks to their own abilities and their friends' assistance. Amical bonds do sometimes replace parents and siblings as complementary and harmonising figures who fill the emotional holes left by loss and the lack of love from those who should offer it but fail. Feminist appropriations display young heroines who take the place of young heroes as leading figures. Even though they are often from underprivileged or unreliable families, these wayward girls are rich in courage and defiance of established social and gender rules, whilst boys may show the typical characteristics that are traditionally located in the female sphere. At the beginning of the first novel of the *Hunger Games* trilogy (2008-2010) by Susanne Collins, for example, the reader meets Peeta who works in his family's bakery while Katniss hunts in the woods to feed her depressed mother and little sister after their father's tragic death. The young tributes sent to the

arena must slaughter each other in order to win before the eyes of amused spectators and their powerless families who watch the Games on the TV. In these novels, teenagers are the victims of the violence and the weakness adults often become responsible for.

Recent years have witnessed a special interest for supernatural and dystopian fiction because of their depiction of in-between realities, post-human societies, hybrid creatures and paranormal events that excite teenagers and reflect their own existential duality. Survival is one of the key *topoi* of these literary categories that well relate to YA literature: their characters, as the victims of grown-ups' viciousness, seem to retain the same anger of their real life peers towards unsympathetic or even cruel adults, who are eventually punished. The YA reader can only hope to learn how to handle contrasting feelings such as betrayal and revenge, but above all to face the necessity to react and the chance to forgive in order to grow up and cultivate resilience. As Binnie Tate Wilkin puts it:

> "Survival" applies to those books which provide characters who struggle with matters of heart and circumstance, and who are involved in experiences which challenge young people to question. Seeking answers may be the most important exercise of childhood and adolescence. Books of fiction need not provide all the answers, but the best books directed to youth may provide the questions. (Tate Wilkin: 1993, 3)

In *Lady Macbeth's Daughter* (2009), for instance, Lisa Klein imagines an alternative ending for Macbeth's partner in crime, Grelach, who, as the reader finds out, was forced by her husband to abandon their daughter because of her sick leg. The baby, named Albia, is providentially rescued by three witches who heal and raise the girl. She soon gives proof of exceptional powers and great abilities: apart from her dexterity with the sword, which fascinates the young and arrogant Fleance, Albia has visions that will lead her to recollect the fragments of her dark past and find her origins. Magic, first love, identity quest and family

conflicts constitute the backbone of the story as a typical YA novel that appropriates the Scottish play and rearranges its murder plot and political tragedy into a remarkable family drama that is open to psychological introspection. In the end, Albia learns how to distinguish between her mother's bad actions, caused by her unfortunate and ill-treated life, and her father's wickedness, inspired by mere ambition. She also understands that parents' actions do not define their offspring: "The fact that I share Macbeth's and Grelach's blood does not force me to repeat their evil. My deeds are my own. As Macbeth's deeds were his" (Klein: 2009, 279). This passage shouts out a vital message to teenagers who are often hurt by their families' influence and the way they may undermine their self-worth and confidence. To Albia, even though understanding does not mean justification, mercy and acceptance of past mistakes can be the best choices in the tradition of Shakespearean happy endings for tragedies, started by Nahum Tate in 1681 for re-establishing poetic justice in *King Lear*.

YA literature typically updates the stories adapted by Shakespeare which are moved to the present time but also brought physically closer to the readership's familiar location. So, *Macbeth* travels from medieval Scotland to contemporary Hollywood in Michelle Ray's *Mac/Beth* (2015) where the two protagonists aspire to elevate their position in the competitive world of television, and Prospero (Felix) becomes the artistic director of the Canadian Makeshiweg Festival in Margaret Atwood's *Hag-seed* (2016). In other cases, YA authors keep the original time and setting of the plays. Yet, they still speculate on alternative plots, experiment on Shakespeare's distinctive language and scrutinise his characters' ambiguous representations. Thus, imagined past experiences that explain the reasons behind characters' behaviour are provided. Gaps in plot and the apparent incongruences of characters' behaviour left unsolved by Shakespeare offer a large scope of intervention. These writers can appropriate characters' biographies and enrich them with additional information in the "what if" world of science and dystopian fiction, which are so precious to YA literature. YA novels expose their characters, and by consequence their readers, to an assortment of political and religious issues that render this literary field highly

fertile for Shakespearean debates. As in the Early Modern period, which was notoriously haunted by religious discord and governmental instability, politics and faith nowadays represent a significant part and unresolved concern of audiences' life, especially for adolescents. Their conscience about the surrounding world grows up with them and they formulate more elaborate opinions that depend on a combination of education and personal experience. Plays such as *The Merchant of Venice* or *Othello* may be problematical to teach in a multiracial class, for instance. The recent terrorist attacks all over the planet, mass migrations from countries plagued by war and famine, plus several drastic measures operated by politicians who use fear as a tool for propaganda can affect youngsters, too. Sometimes, fictional characters can be compared to real, persecuted peers who may as well be relatives, friends, schoolmates or neighbours. As Solomon O. Iyasere states:

> [A] work of literature does not have an independent existence but functions only as it affects those who write and read it. For if a work of art cannot speak directly to our past experiences or present interests, it can offer us little insight into human nature. (Iyasere: 2008, 363)

It comes as no surprise that "the outsider", a loner who usually struggles as an individual but also as a nonconforming member of society, recurs as a leitmotif both in Shakespeare and YA literature. Shylock, Othello and Caliban, for example, suffer from loneliness and rejection caused by their divergence from social "norms" that lead them to succumb to a feeling of great frustration and to an existence of physical and emotional abuse. What occurs also in YA novels is that society does not understand people who do not conform to norms, so the characters either align with the mass or opt for insurgence. YA plots focus on severe social and psychological conflicts: isolation, jealousy, love, low self-esteem and rancorousness are indicative of teenagers' first anxieties. These feelings undoubtedly belong to childhood, too, but they tend to be intensified by adolescence in the relation with adults and authorities. While children might not

be completely aware of the social, environmental, religious and political implications of adults' conduct on their lives, adolescents perceive them more distinctly and can react to them.

Thanks to an increasing attentiveness on women's rights, non-white people's movements and LGBT+ rights, gender and race are handled by YA authors less superficially than former writers. Also first sex, homosexual and interracial relationships, teen pregnancies and venereal diseases are regularly represented. The obstinacy of Romeo's and Juliet's families, Miranda's solitude, Caliban's and Othello's racial subjection, Katharine's rough femininity and Desdemona's helplessness are more than ever susceptible to feminist, postcolonial, racial and psychoanalytical discussion. To give a couple of examples of recent Shakespearean YA adaptations, *Ronit & Jamil* (2017) by Pamela L. Laskin is similar to *Romeo and Juliet* as a work that stands in defence of pure love against any social barrier. It transports the two clandestine lovers of Verona into the current Israel-Palestine rivalry. Stephanie Kate Strohm's comedy tells the taming process of a coarse boy by the girl protagonist who eventually falls in love with him in *The Taming of the Drew* (2016). These young literary prototypes, with whom teen audiences can sympathise, may help youngsters look at themselves anew. As a result, the ethical, political, sentimental and unreservedly human problems raised by Shakespeare again appear to be particularly suitable for building a dialogue with the YA subgenre.

In the millennial age of visualisation and audiences' active participation in the making and remaking of cultural capital, one of the most captivating (and underestimated) media of adaptation for teenagers is the comic book. Comics, similarly to YA literature, may be classified as crossovers because they fascinate people of all ages. Such events as Comic-cons (short for comic convention) designate gatherings that host stands, conferences and competitions around themes and materials regarding literature, cinema, TV series, Western comics, Japanese manga or anime, etc. Aficionados can participate also in "cosplay", a very popular term that puts together the word "costume" and "play". People

show up dressed in their fictional idols' garments and enjoy impersonating them for a day, which kindles a close, theatrical collaboration between pop fiction and fans' self-commitment; cosplay competitions are often organised and the most accurate interpretation and costume are awarded. Yet, as Anja Müller observes, the status of comics contribution on culture is still contested on the premise that the word is perceived as superior to the image and popular art. She agrees with Wetmore's views (2009) on the connection between theatrical art and comics and stresses the importance of offering adaptations through comics to young readers not only because of their accessibility and charm, but also for their theatricality. Müller also underlines the significance of spatial and temporal elements in the sequential nature of the comic book genre that well suits the young audience's visual mind-set[17]. The particular graphical aptness of comic books for youngsters must not be confused with a limitation of their broad influence as a source for education and entertainment. As a matter of fact, like cosplayers, comic readers are more likely to identify with their favourite characters, who are usually drawn with dramatic close-ups, reaction-shots and realistic settings as far as the artist's talent permits. Dialogues and context descriptions can be read and reread several times, which is not possible at the theatre or the cinema. With regards to Shakespearean adaptations, numerous critics[18] now agree that the structure of comic books functions as an ideal platform for revision on the grounds that Shakespeare's plays were at first conceived for performance and therefore visualisation. With Marcia Williams's picture book *Mr. William Shakespeare's Plays* (1998) in mind, the Bard's language is appropriated and de-composed into multiple communicative channels. His traditional poetic flair goes together with a more mundane style, not necessarily simpler. For instance, authors provide explanations in prose or, as in Williams's work, show live reactions from a cheeky audience drawn side by side with characters among which the young reader can find a seat, too. As for the content of Shakespearean comics, the plot

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[17] *Adapting Canonical Texts in Children's Literature*, ed. by Anja Müller, London, Oxford, New York, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 95-96

[18] *Ibid*, ed. by Anja Müller, London, Oxford, New York, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 102-103

is basically the same with only some variations on the prevalence of a particular character and ambience. The story may be transported into a post-apocalyptic city, like in *Manga Shakespeare Macbeth* (2008), illustrated by Robert Deas, on which Müller comments:

> By defamiliarizing Shakespeare's play visually, Manga Shakespeare paradoxically makes it possible to re-familiarize, for instance, Macbeth for readers who have grown up in a cultural context where four-armed mutant warriors may be more familiar than characters from Scottish or English medieval history. (107)

Both modernist and postmodernist approaches seem to be applied while adapting and adopting drama for millennials. The modernist epistemological mode seeks to answer the question of how this world can be interpreted, what part the individual plays in it, who detains knowledge and which limits knowledge has. Conversely, the postmodernist ontological mode interrogates the very essence of the world (and of the text) and what is to be done with it. If these two modes are pushed far enough, they end up tipping one over the other in a "bidirectional and reversible" sequence (McHale: 1987, 10-11). In YA adaptations, the role of the "keepers" of knowledge and that of knowledge itself is analysed, and so is the contribution of each participant in the revision of cultural capital. A special consideration is paid to the essential features of the protean and composite literary world where authors, scholars, teachers, learners and audiences are moving. The blurring contour of literary boundaries embraced by postmodernist authors from the 1970s onwards has enabled "Shakespeare" (as a canonical author) to cross popular genres, from dystopian to crime fiction[19]. What Shakespeare's legacy can do is open and lead the way to a higher responsiveness to what shapes the self and the other with the cultural and technological instruments provided by modernity, not as opponents, but rather as fruitful allies.

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[19] Holderness, G., "Hamlet the Dane: 'Tell my Story'", in *Shakespeare and Millennial Fiction*, ed. by Andrew James Hartley, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 15

1.2 Rewording Shakespeare: fanfiction as an act of re-creation of performing readers

> Shakespeare has been taken down from the plinth, removed from the ivory tower, reformed and reused outside the expensive textbook. Both the author and his work have been (re)claimed by a collective that does not recognize the highbrow, academic dominance of Shakespeare, generating a twenty-first-century form of folk art that requires nothing more than computer access and an internet connection to be shared with other individuals of similar interest and inclination. (Yost in Hartley: 2018, 209)

1.2.1 Fantasies and fanfictions

Another central issue is *why* Shakespearean adaptations are written. If adaptations adjust the "original" text to contemporary circumstances and needs, appropriations promote an operation of criticism. Both adaptation and appropriation confront the source material (hypotext), the revised draft (hypertext), and their respective historical and cultural environments. These works are presented to the masses of cultural consumers, especially children and teenagers, through multiple media that cover literary, cinematic, theatrical and kinaesthetic fields. Apart from their priceless support to education and entertainment, the practical lucrative value of adaptations and appropriations is crystal clear and surely necessary as a part, however small, of the economic sustenance of the cultural system of a nation. In the era of the Internet, though, there is a sort of parallel reality, namely fanfiction, which hugely contributes to the diffusion of literature and popular culture. Fanfiction writers operate for free and are only inspired by a great personal commitment to their passion and rewarded by other members' approbation and participation. After Noël Carroll's distinction between folk and mass art, the former being "produced by the people

and for the people", the latter being instead "manufactured by industries bent upon making a profit" (Carroll: 1998, 17), Michelle K. Yost chooses the definition of "folk product of twenty-first-century popular culture" (Yost in Hartley: 2018, 193) for fanfiction online. Yost adds that "there is not – and legally cannot be – any profit or compensation to fanfiction beyond the praise of fellow fans when characters and worlds are proprietary products" (194). Thus, fanfiction may be defined as a non-profit, international community of web users who, through revision, debate and emulation, pay tribute to culturally significant materials that ignite their interest and fantasy.

Highbrow academic research is increasingly confronting with lowbrow critical involvement in literary examination. Scholars work in close relation with fans' works, and amateurs' opinions and speculations are taken into more serious account. As far as Shakespearean fanfictions are concerned, in her unpublished thesis "'An Improbable Fiction': How Fans Rewrite Shakespeare" (2008), Amelia Bitely compares scholars and fanfiction writers:

> [F]ic writers often have the imaginations of critics. […] [T]he process of crafting a critical analysis bears a distinct resemblance to the process of constructing fanfiction. In both cases, the writer must prove a working knowledge of the source material as well as an interest in discovering its outer limits; in both cases, the writer must understand cultural, interpersonal, and contingent causation as they function with canon. (Bitely: 2008, 39)

However, Bitely also detects some dissimilarities between these two approaches. She observes that fan writers do not usually employ secondary sources in preparation to their work or to support their thesis. Consequently, their concrete contribution to academic discourses may be restricted, even though this limitation does not imply the critical inferiority of fans' study of literary leitmotifs, context and characterisation: "[…] the fanfiction community's theses often break down into mainstream theoretical approaches. Also like the

scholastic community, fanfiction writers applaud or reject different critical approaches through a system of community dialogue and peer review" (53).

Fanfiction writers, mainly interested in TV shows and films, became more popular during the 1970s and the motives behind this phenomenon are manifold. The conception of prequels and sequels often comes from an uncontrollable curiosity when the "canonical" author leaves diachronic gaps in the plot or maintains silence upon certain events. The notorious practice of the "cliffhanger" pushes the amateur writer to produce theories and expand events which will constitute his or her own "headcanon". Disagreement or dissatisfaction with contents may occur, too, and thus urge for an overall or partial re-writing of the canon. Also, an overwhelming feeling of respect for the source could inspire the extension of a story that fans would like to continue as long as possible. One of the best-known cases of the impact of an enthusiastic "fandom" (fan dominion) on the author's decisions dates back to 1893, when Arthur Conan Doyle's choice to "kill" Sherlock Holmes cost him the uprising of 20,000 members of *The Strand*. In order to return to his historical novels, Conan Doyle wanted *The Final Problem* to be Holmes's last adventure, but this caused the indignant reaction of his readers. They sent him outraged letters and allegedly wore a black band on their arm in memory of Holmes's death. Eventually, Conan Doyle resolved to "resurrect" his detective in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902) and to explain how Holmes faked his death in *The Adventure of the Empty House* (1903). It may not be so far-fetched to presume that Sherlock Holmes's fans have been writing fanfiction since then. Anyway, several adaptations have revived the most beloved detective of all times so far: the fortunate BBC TV series *Sherlock* (2010) and CBS's *Elementary* (2012) have amazed the international public and upset Conan Doyle's strictest devotees. Moreover, they were responsible for an astonishing revival of Sherlock Holmes. In these two popular series, the most famous British detective and his inseparable colleague (in the case of *Elementary* Dr Watson is a woman of far eastern origins), who live in twenty-first century London and New York City respectively, solve crimes but also surf the Internet and catch planes. Similarly, in AU (alternate universe) fanfictions, a recurring "subgenre" of fans'

production, alternative time and space settings are chosen for characters whose original features may be modified. Additionally, in fanfiction crossovers lose their general meaning of a group of works that are directed to all ages. Instead, in fanfiction jargon, a "crossover" indicates a story trope in which two or more fandoms are combined and they interact by creating an intertextual network that liberates characters from their canonical boundaries. Furthermore, in the light of recent gender discourses and the overcoming of several sexual taboos, fanfiction authors may decide to either change the characters' gender or even not to impose any polarisation on their identity, which produces a fluidity that non-binary readers might find comforting. Alternative love affairs and pairings are extensively considered, including homosexual and polyamorous relationships which constitute "slash" fanfictions. The deconstruction of heteronormative habits and fixed gender distinctions appears to represent not only an option for fanfiction producers, but a responsibility towards themselves and the rest of the community.

Unlike most social networks, the users of fanfiction websites can pick any username and are not required to reveal their sex, gender or age. The fact that amateur writers' identity remains anonymous not only protects their privacy, but also encourages those who normally would not share their works to take the chance to publish them and receive feedback. As a matter of fact, these platforms are not just ordinary blogs. Fans can certainly exchange opinions and comment on other fans' works, give "likes", tag, fill in a list of favourite fanfictions and recommend them to their friends. However, hardly ever do authors disclose information about their real life, or if they do it is pertinent to their fandom or the fanfictions that they have uploaded. For example, if a user is studying *The Canterbury Tales* at school he or she may write a related fanfiction, maybe as a writing exercise, and ask for advice after specifying that it is homework. At any rate, like all social platforms, fanfiction websites inform their members of the applied safety policy and invite them to report any bad behaviour from other users and signal inappropriate contents in order to preserve the platform as a positive place of creation and recreation. Fans would like to be considered as

influent and reliable co-operators for literary criticism, so this additional element highlights the ethical values of the fanfiction community.

1.2.2 Shakespeare and his "Bardies"

Shakespeare's works have been the target of admirers' rewritings since Nahum Tate's *History of King Lear* (1681). Three centuries later, Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1990) was applauded as a faithful adaptation that, at the same time, made minor characters emerge from off scene. Thanks to the Organisation for Transformative Works (OTW)[20] and the fact that Shakespearean fanfiction has created a long-standing tradition of derivative works, fan writings can count on a sort of political immunity from accusations of copyright violation[21]. The controversial issue of intellectual property on contents that undergo parody, satire and creative appropriation (including fanfiction) on the Internet has been recently discussed. On July 5th 2018, the European Parliament rejected a reform that would have required major search engines and social media to install filters for posting copyrighted material. According to the opponents to the proposal, the freedom of expression would have been thus undermined. However, on September 12th 2018 the law was approved with 438 votes in favour, 226 against and 39 abstentions. Renowned video sharing platforms, social media users and even some artists protested against the possibility that Article 13 might affect the world of user-generated content, such as memes and parodies.

The question of the language that concerns any other adapting process cannot be overlooked in fanfiction studies either. Teenagers and blank verse: to adapt or not to adapt? Shakespeare's iambic pentameter may cause a lot of struggle when it is

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[20] The Organisation for Transformative Works, which was founded in 2007, is a non-profit organisation that preserves and encourages transformative "fanwork" by making it widely accessible.

[21] Bitely, A., "'An Improbable Fiction': How Fans Rewrite Shakespeare", Marietta College, Marietta, OH, (unpublished thesis), 2008, accessed on August 29th 2018, pp. 4-6 https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws_etd/document/get/marhonors1210350662/inline

introduced to young readers, let alone when the mediators are neither teachers nor authors of revisions but peers. The aim of the so-called "Bardies" (Shakespeare's fans) is paradoxically to de-familiarise "Shakespeare" so as to re-familiarise his language and works for the readers' comprehension. In order to do so, the amateur writer must become contextually and linguistically conversant with Shakespeare before expanding upon the text[22]. Generally speaking, the majority of those who write Shakespearean fanfiction seem to recognise that Shakespeare cannot be imitated, therefore they opt for "translating" his language into contemporary English prose; any exception to this rule is anyway inclined towards parody. Fanfiction length varies from "drabbles" and "outtakes", which indicate short-sized flashfictions, to short novels that enlarge the original plot structure of the play also by adding fans' OCs (original characters).

In "Stratford-Upon-Web: Shakespeare in Twenty-First-Century Fanfiction", Michelle K. Yost (2018) detects three basic forms of Shakespearean fanfiction:

- *Shakespeare as a character*: these works include Shakespeare as the character of a story. RPF (real person fiction) is a common tag in fanfiction websites: fans "move" renowned real people, dead or alive, and make them interrelate with other "VIPs" or, in famous authors' case, with their colleagues or even their own characters. It would be interesting to know what Romeo and Juliet would have to say to their "father" if they had the opportunity to talk to him: would Shakespeare apologise for condemning them to such an unfortunate youth? In *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), John Madden imagines young William falling in love with Lady Viola, who attends an audition for a male role in Shakespeare's company while he is writing *Romeo and Juliet*. Such fiction elicits a magnitude of fans' theories, which are exacerbated by historical gossips around Shakespeare's sexual orientation. The fetishism at the basis of this kind of fiction, which is often suitably rated for 18+ contents, appears to reflect a

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[22] Bitely, A., "Ibid", Marietta College, Marietta, OH, (unpublished thesis), 2008, accessed on August 29th 2018, p. 16 https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws_etd/document/get/marhonors1210350662/inline

particular yearning for the deconstruction of Shakespeare's standard image of a middle-age, almost bald Renaissance poet wrapped in a black cape whose only attractive feature is a single golden earring. On the contrary, RPF fanfiction that is set either in Early Modern or contemporary period tends to rejuvenate Shakespeare. He is often depicted as an unruly young adult, who may even be into crossdressing and make-up, all ink-dotted fingertips, louse white shirt and messy dark hair. Again, here empathy is the point. If the Bard is given an exciting background story beyond his well-known biography, together with a considerable amount of glamour and flaws, high school students will be more likely to find the man behind the icon much more alluring than they expected, and perhaps they will approach his works with a different mood. Teenagers may like to be reminded that also Shakespeare has been young and in love, thus prone to mistakes and heartbreaks as much as they are. He was an actor and a talented playwright, but also a drinking and gambling companion, a lover, a debtor, a parent. The message that Shakespearean RPF tries to convey is that, despite the value of his writings, Shakespeare was not detached from vulnerability but wholly cognisant of the human beauties and miseries that represented the foundation for his production.

- *Shakespeare's works reinterpreted or modernised*: the majority of Shakespearean fanfiction reimagines and modernises the Bard's works and characters with the above mentioned devices of AUs, crossovers, pairings' (also known as "ships") and gender swapping. Like TV series and cinema buffs, literary fans' response to extensive time gaps, cliffhangers and vague behaviours is usually very strong. They often release their frustration on social networks and then an irresistible necessity to fill in the gaps leads them to open their laptops and write. It is not surprising that minor characters' stories are often privileged, arguably because of their marginality in the source material which might mirror adolescents' own feeling of lack of consideration in real life. Moreover,

discourses on identity formation debated at school may spawn experimental writings that release characters from social impositions, including that on gender distinction[23]. As Viola's crossdressing questions her relation with Orsino and Olivia in *The Twelfth Night*, the recurrence of gender swapping is a thought-provoking option for both young fanfiction authors and their readership. Actually, sexual ambiguity and transgression to which several contemporary fanfictions pay tribute reflect more or less intentionally Elizabethan and Jacobean practices at the theatre. As a matter of fact, in plays boys often played female characters whose androgynous appearance was believed by the Puritans to provoke homoerotic drives in the audience. Multifaceted identities do retain a highly theatrical power which destabilises the fragile border between fiction and reality, what is shown versus what is true. Accordingly, Helen Hackett writes:

> In the playhouses, boy-heroine roles often involved cross-dressing in which the female character adopted male disguise, creating possibilities for the exploration not only of same-sex desire but also of the ambiguity of gender identity, *and even implying that it was merely a matter of performance rather than of an individual's essential being.* [emphasis added] (Hackett: 2013, 165)

Furthermore, writers of "slash" fanfiction fantasise on queer readings of Shakespeare's plays. In these predominantly male/male works, clandestine love affairs between major male characters and their closest acquaintances are imagined. Romeo/Mercutio, Hamlet/Horatio, Othello/Iago, Antonio/Bassanio, Brutus/Cassius are only some of the most cherished Shakespearean OTPs (one true pairing). More daring fanfiction authors might even imagine incestuous relationships or a secret erotic attraction between foes, which usually causes abstruse conjectures and never-ending disputes among over-analytical fans on forum platforms.

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[23] In the Italian film adaptation *Iago* (2009), Volfango De Biasi's Rodrigo is unreservedly introduced as a member of the LGBT+ community.

The marginality of characters, which stirs fanfiction writers' and readers' compassion, is not only measured by the number of times they appear or speak in the play or on stage. It is also a marginality that exists, above all, outside the text. Shakespeare is bound to postcolonial criticism for the racial conflicts in some of his works, but also for his importance as an author who was used for the colonial acculturation project (Bitely: 2008, 43). He has often been appropriated in response to the call of the oppressed against the oppressor, especially for plays such as *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello* and *The Tempest*. Shylock, Othello and Caliban have sadly acquired the state of religious, racial and social archetypes as outcasts who do not deserve to fit in because the hegemonic cultural standards will never suit them. They were not born doomed to maliciousness and moral corruption: their society made them the "monsters" they eventually become. To some extent, Caliban's miserable situation as a hybrid may remind the audience of Dr Frankenstein's creature, who was exposed to the public scorn and abandoned by the one who should have taken care of him: "You taught me language, and my profit on't/Is I know how to curse" (*Tempest*, 1.2.364-5). Reading an AU that sees Caliban as the vengeful Creature and Prospero as Victor Frankenstein would be interesting given the paramount fascination in Gothic literature and its post-human extensions of contemporary adaptations. Dexter Palmer's sci-fi novel, *The Dream of Perpetual Motion* (2011), appears to apply this notion on Prospero Taligent, who seeks to create the perfect race by building unintelligent robots in order to conquer the world. In Prospero's eugenic, narcissistic project, Caliban is indeed the result of a Frankenstein-ish process of patched body parts from different "donors"[24].

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[24] Desmet, C., "Posthuman Tempests in the Twenty-First Century" in *Shakespeare and Millennial Fiction*, ed. by Andrew James Hartley, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 187-189

Today, thanks to the Internet, fans from different countries can challenge one another in writing contests without leaving their houses. Roleplay also operates as one of the collaborative media for improving and cultivating interpersonal connections with other members of the fanfiction community together with literary requests for new stories that respond to specific tastes[25]. Similarly to cosplayers, roleplayers personify their favourite characters and move them in various contexts, where AUs and crossovers are largely employed, in relation to the characters played by other participants. Apart from socialisation, this performative technique helps fans integrate even better in their fandoms because they can confront themselves with other members' writing styles, dig into the psychology of the chosen character and familiarise with their own dramatic skills. It also happens that literary characters and long dead authors may be provided with a personal social network account through which they can interrelate.

- *Shakespeare as "incidental"* (Yost's term): here Shakespeare is the object rather than the subject of the fiction. "Incidental" Shakespeare is framed within authors' works as the structure for their original stories, with allusions, parallels or quotations from the original plays. Yost acknowledges the usefulness of this particular participative mode for educational purposes, which may as well summarise the central point of fanfiction more generally:

> If the best way to learn a subject is to teach it, then fanfiction writers are expanding their knowledge of Shakespeare by developing their own pedagogy, fictional or otherwise. Instruction in Shakespeare is a cultural ritual, whether consciously recognized by the writers or not; by writing it into their fanfictions, the authors perpetuate and normalize this ritual. (Yost: 2018, 209)

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[25] Bitely, A., "'An Improbable Fiction': How Fans Rewrite Shakespeare", Marietta College, Marietta, OH, (unpublished thesis), pp. 60-63

The study of popular influence on academic research brings to the surface several important aspects of the great potentialities of the receivers of highbrow culture, not as mere passive addressees of remote knowledge, but as dynamic contributors with critical and creative abilities. Readers can play a major role on the Shakespearean scene for they offer a different outlook on the canon. The transformative and cooperative essence of fanfiction needs to be taken into account because of its strong impact on literary awareness as a didactic and interactive tool.

1.3 Educational applications and implications of adapting Shakespeare

1.3.1 Shakespeare enters the classroom: adaptation as a didactic approach

Shakespeare at school is an intricate and potentially treacherous path to tread on. It represents, nonetheless, a unique opportunity to build an empathetic and constructive relationship of learners with the Bard. It is clear that adaptations retain a huge scope of applications and implications also in the teaching and learning process. Writers and directors reimagine Shakespeare's works in a precise context for their audience's understanding and the evolution of cultural capital. Similarly, when they teach Shakespeare, teachers need to reconsider not only the topics they shall present to their class, but above all their function of educators and the didactic tools they have access to. In a sense, teachers "function" as adaptors, too: they can operate in communion with academic Shakespearean studies and are equally responsible for their addressees' appreciation of Shakespeare's works. Moreover, the teacher's job is clearly performative[26] as much as that of the actor or the director. For these reasons, a lot of work of thinking and rethinking is required together with passion, patience and

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[26] Sutton, L., "Teaching Shakespeare in the Secondary English Classroom: Engaging the 'flat unraisèd spirits'", Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, 2016, accessed on September 3rd 2018, p. 23, see PDF https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/72294/1/Sutton_Leah_E_201606_MT_MTRP.pdf

humility on the teachers' part, whose profession promotes the circulation of knowledge and the elevation of critical reasoning.

However, as researcher and teaching beginner Leah Sutton observes, several scholars discuss the way Shakespeare should enter the classroom. They agree on fact that nowadays the general educational pattern of primary and secondary schools tends towards mere play reading, scene summarising and memorisation; final assessment is then organised on the traditional text analysis that was provided in class. Furthermore, numerous courses on Shakespeare appear to be still engaged with outdated Western ideals that may alienate teachers and students of socio-culturally diverse origins. According to a recent report, 30.4% of primary students and 26.6% of secondary students in state schools in the UK are from minority ethnic groups[27]. What relevance should four-hundred-year-old plays, written by a white man and exploited as imperialistic weapons, have nowadays for multi-ethnic classes?

> The legacy of studying Shakespeare is persistent; established as a critical acculturation educational practice in the nineteenth century, the discipline of "English" sought to instil Western values, tastes, and morals in attempt to "civilize" the colonial subjects. Shakespeare, the paragon of English literature, was revered, and the study of his works was mandated in colonial societies because they embodied "Englishness". (Balinska-Ourdeva, Johnston, Mangat, & McKeown: 2013, 334)

Also, how can Shakespeare help students obtain concrete information to find a remunerative job? It seems evident that learners may risk to develop negative attitudes towards the study of Shakespeare: a high percentage of them find his works tedious or even daunting and his characters dissociated from their real life

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[27] See *The Guardian* article (November 19th 2015) https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/nov/19/teaching-fails-reflect-multi-cultural-student-population accessed on September 6th 2018

experience[28]. International education departments are committed to the promotion of Shakespearean studies and performances. Nonetheless, considering the permeation of mass media and marketing into Shakespeare as a pop icon, at school he persists as a problematic author. A badly or insufficiently structured pedagogical method at primary school level may endanger individual approaches at higher educational levels. Therefore, the chance for teenagers to appreciate the Bard's works and recommend them is very low. It has also been noticed that a limited number of plays is chosen, namely *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet* (TES recent data furtherly include *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in this list). Mysteriously enough, history plays and the majority of comedies are not the most popular didactic selections. It is difficult to understand the reasons for this evidence and to investigate the criteria of most of high school teachers, who apparently prefer to analyse over-theorised plays perhaps in the conviction that they seem easier to students. So, "it is not Shakespeare's place on the curriculum that is detrimental to students: rather, it is outdated pedagogical practices that see students being lectured at from afar" (Purewal: 2017, 32). It is quite shocking that, for instance, in a society where sexism, xenophobia, prejudice and distrust towards interracial marriage still exist, plays such as *Othello* continue to be perceived as too hazardous to be taught to multiracial classes:

> To avoid teaching the play because of the emotionally charged, sensitive nature of its subject is to deny students the opportunity of experiencing one of Shakespeare's most memorable tragedies and of confronting, through the play, the difficulties of racism and interracial relationships which continue to trouble us today. (Iyasere: 2008, 358)

Unfortunately, stereotypes, racism and domestic violence are not outlandish issues in learners' reality, hence facing the problematic nature of these matters

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[28] Sutton, L., "Teaching Shakespeare in the Secondary English Classroom: Engaging the 'flat unraisèd spirits'", Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, 2016, accessed on September 3rd 2018, pp. 9-10, https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/72294/1/Sutton_Leah_E_201606_MT_MTRP. pdf

may be useful to them. Therefore, teachers should encourage their students to express their reflections. The class may bring in several concerns, drastic subjective views and moral principles while "evaluating the characters as if they were contemporaries" (359-360). Identification is the turning point and, after all, the aim of all adaptation, which pivots on critical provocation. Multiracial students' pain should not be hidden, but rather recognised and validated for what it is: a standpoint where frustration and anger can serve for a purposeful discussion side by side with honest teachers. As Iyasere suggests:

> [N]ote that we must feel; we must allow ourselves the full play of the powerful emotions great literature evokes in us. We must not deny or repress those emotions; to do so is to deny ourselves the opportunity to move on to see. At the same time we must not allow those emotional responses to overwhelm us with their power […] or again we will rob ourselves of the depth and range of the poet's vision. (364)

So, to teach Shakespeare well at any educational level appears to mean, first of all, to re-learn Shakespeare. In order to do so, it would be useful for teachers/re-learners to adopt Shakespeare's plays, poems and sonnets to be partly or fully reimagined and rely on the different circumstances and needs of the audience/students. This may encourage a mediating dialogue that must travel a bidirectional way. If "[a]ll readings of Shakespeare are appropriations" (Holderness: 2014, xii), it must be also true that all Shakespearean teachers (and learners) are adaptors, too, and thus participate in the adapting project. Teachers, like adaptors and actors, do not need to flatten the linguistic and thematic intricacy of the author. They should try out different strategies to understand their students, think like them and thus manage to imagine their reception. The learners/readers' expectations must be taken into account if the teacher wishes to awaken, and not numb, the students' appreciation. The outcome is a more engaged class who is ready to actively join in the discussion, unafraid to ask questions or even to disagree with the teacher and fellow students. According to Jean Piaget, since childhood the environment represents the interactive *locus* for

learning that is not internalised from the outside but assembled in the inside because "[l]earners are active in seeking and constructing meaning and in seeking communication with others" (Ensar: 2014, 35). If teachers must take up the role of mediators who renegotiate Shakespeare, learners represent the co-actors of such negotiation who regain control over their own learning: "[i]f the author is no longer the guarantor of meaning, then meaning derives from the interaction of reader with text, and the reader has taken control from the author. The reader is an appropriator, not a subject, of the writing" (Holderness: 2014, 3).

1.3.2 The challenges of teaching and learning Shakespeare in the New Millennium

In the last decade, the exponential growth of the Internet has made "communication and interaction increasingly adaptable, reflexive, immediate and personal" (Sullivan in Carson and Kirwan: 2014, 71). Web 2.0 provides didactic support for teachers and learners with exciting inputs that are offered to anyone who is looking for interactive guidance through the labyrinth of Shakespeare's world of performance and adaptation. Videos, podcasts, ideas for workshops and up-to-date materials are available to educators, students, researchers or simple aficionados in need of inspiration or extra motivation to learn more. However, the performative and engaging nature of Shakespearean culture seems to be at odds with a more private kind of interaction which is granted by the net. Audiences, for example, can attend a play without ever going to a theatre. In the words of Ryan Nelson (in Carson and Kirwan: 2014):

> The biggest challenge digital media poses for a performing arts venue, more than any other type of cultural institution, is the presentation or evocation of the live experience. Unlike museums, galleries or libraries where real-world content can often be adapted more

congruously for online life, the nature of live performance appears to demand the real-time presence of the individual. (204)

About the influence of the Globe theatre website and its activity on social networks, which he sees as "an act of appropriation in itself", Nelson does not believe that "watching the productions online [is] a secondary or lesser experience" (208). He then adds:

> For the most part […] the relationship is a symbiotic one that benefits audiences – the chance to participate in a community around Shakespeare and his theatre – and the Globe: in marketing terms, increased brand awareness and additional opportunities for promotion; in artistic and educational terms, a chance to provide added research and impact. (210)

Yet, Nelson observes that the audiences of the Globe effectively break the tradition of theatres where darkness and silence disrupt the participation of spectators who, on the contrary, were and still are free to stand, move around, comment and interact in daylight as an active part of the performance. The risk is that, in the era of the Internet, Shakespeare becomes detached from the personal and, above all, shared experience which his works were originally intended to cherish. Such issue, of course, concerns educational methods as well.

As one of the most important and influent centres for postgraduate learning and research, the Shakespeare Institute represents a substantial source of inspiration for primary and secondary schools. In order to respond to learners' new necessities, thanks to technology and digital teaching programmes, the Institute seeks the involvement of both on-site students and those who may not be able to be physically present at courses. Lectures are filmed live and then uploaded on the online platform to allow external students to attend with their on-site fellows. Though this practice has its drawbacks, such as technological faults and a possible lack of sense of presence in the classroom, it also gives learners the opportunity to view a lecture several times and to rewind key moments or

difficult passages of the explanation[29]. Generally speaking, the method of the Institute lays the emphasis on John Bigg's (2003) concept of "constructive alignment", a pedagogical system that is based on "the construction of knowledge through doing" (Sullivan in Carson and Kirwan: 2014, 65). The transfer of knowledge is not unidirectional: it has to be built through students' engagement, which is to say by active learning over time in a concerted effort with the teacher:

> The chief role of the instructor, in this model, is not to tell the student what s/he needs to know, but to develop a coherent pathway through the possible readings, lectures, discussions, essays and other activities that will help enable the construction of this knowledge. (66)

This approach may be relevant for primary and secondary schools on the grounds that the idea is to bring together and foster the teaching and learning community not only through theory, but also through practical work in synergy with technological tools, from online courses to blogs to video conferences. On the other hand, Katherine Rowe underlines some complications she encounters as a teacher of Shakespeare at university in the New Millennium, and one of these is coping with online editions of the plays. Apart from the trouble that working on several different editions might cause, Rowe regrets the fact that her students "cannot annotate [the] margins", which she values "as a place where thinking begins", and that "there will be no complete Shakespeare on their real-world bookshelves" (Rowe in Carson and Kirwan: 2014, 147). Moreover, she notes, digital learning exposes students to distraction, it does not encourage them to debate outside their posts on social networks and shows their "uneven fluency and sophistication about the uses of new media tools" (151). Although her classroom is allowed to use tablets, laptops and online dictionaries, Rowe recognises that "e-reading [...] changes the authority and role of the professor in subtle ways that may be more significant than questions of content quality"

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[29] Sullivan, E., "Internal and external Shakespeare. Constructing the twenty-first-century classroom" in *Shakespeare and the Digital World. Redefining Scholarship and Practice*, ed. by Christie Carson and Peter Kirwan, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 69

(153). Nonetheless, the flexibility and, paradoxically enough, the durability of digital approaches are plain and, after all, advantageous for teachers. Materials can be proposed year after year and theatrical clips and readings are accessed not only multiple times, but also simultaneously from different learning sites[30]. Access to information is the major impact of technology on education where the teacher operates as an instructor but also as a mentor for the student's "self-expression and articulation within a digital world" (Carson and Kirwan: 2014, 246).

Given these opening considerations on the role of technology in Shakespearean studies, another crucial key question is: which is the best age to introduce learners to Shakespeare? This question is a typical dilemma for both educational institutions and academics. Early exposure to Shakespeare is pondered upon by both researchers and educators, and it is also subject of study of the Royal Shakespeare Company which started an interesting inquiry in 2008. The "Stand Up for Shakespeare" manifesto was proposed to encourage primary schools, not to have their pupils analyse, but at least act Shakespearean texts out and see them performed, as RSC education director Jacqui O'Hanlon states[31]. It is not surprising that this idea has provoked the diffidence of some critics who are convinced of the supposed inadequacy of young children to appreciate seventeenth century language and to grasp adult issues such as sexual betrayal and murder. Conversely, "Stand Up for Shakespeare" has also aroused the enthusiasm of more open-minded scholars, teachers and artistic directors who support the so-called "page to stage" technique. As a matter of fact, since "to play" implies above all enjoyment in an engaging manner, this method is said to be highly beneficial for a more appealing and serene approach to the Bard. "Page to stage" practices encompass countless options, from simple restaging to more complex roleplay, from witty improvisation games to original artistic projects.

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[30] *Shakespeare and the Digital World. Redefining Scholarship and Practice*, ed. by Christie Carson and Peter Kirwan, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 244
[31] See *Independent* article (February 5th 2009) https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/schools/the-plays-the-thing-can-young-children-be-wowed-by-shakespeare-1545624.html accessed on September 5th 2018

As was previously observed for fanfictions, creative writing has emerged, already at young age, as a helpful tool to enhance self-esteem and introspection, familiarise learners with the text and evaluate their knowledge and comprehension in a stress-free atmosphere. The RSC also promotes the "rehearsal room" method to revive complex language for students who are invited to approach the Shakespearean text as RSC actors do. Findings show a germane improvement of linguistic skills and better test results; also, the vast majority of teachers are satisfied with their students' progress as concerns linguistic confidence and self-esteem (especially for those who were previously regarded as low-level learners)[32]. Thus, the text is not the end anymore, but rather it becomes the means through which students (and their educators) are innovatively (re)acquainted with the study of Shakespeare, a study that respects their rhythm. Indeed, "what becomes primary is the child's relation to Shakespeare and not Shakespeare as such: Shakespeare not as pedagogical object but rather as pedagogical site for the stories we would like to help others to tell" (Marchitello in Miller: 2003, 186).

As far as language is concerned, children are thought to be far more interested in the plots in comparison to the words in which they are told. However, it may be claimed that the story is actually the least Shakespearean part of Shakespeare, as Edith Nesbit pointed out in the preface of a collection of adaptations for children[33]. In fact, children and young adults can draw some pleasure from reading or listening to the original words because they convey emotions that are produced by melodic repetitive sounds which stimulate the subconscious self. A writer who was certainly mindful of the aesthetic power of nursery rhymes, which often owe their charm to apparently preposterous refrains, was Edgar Allan Poe. In his essay "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846), he remarked: "The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity – of repetition" (Poe:

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[32] For further information, visit https://www.rsc.org.uk/education/impact-and-research/ accessed on September 6th 2018

[33] Marchitello, H., "Descending Shakespeare. Toward a Theory of Adaptation for Children" in *Reimagining Shakespeare for Children and Young Adults*, ed. by Naomi J. Miller, London and New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 180-181

2003, 434). Pamela J. Benson, who teaches Shakespeare to future high school teachers, recommends the use of the OED to better perceive figurative language. Through "the power of words" her students are invited to consider multiple interpretations of a single passage, and to learn how "to make judgements and defend them" (Benson in Miller: 2003, 254). When students meet linguistic ambiguities, she observes, their doubts are not supressed anymore, and when they listen to others' presentations and ask questions their beliefs are exposed to constant renegotiation:

> My goal for them is that, when they are on their own preparing their lessons, they will have the confidence and ability to discover what it is that they want to teach about whatever work their district or department has chosen rather than simply attempting to recall the details of a single interpretation that they were taught. Everything I do in class is calculated to make them desire to make this discovery, to make them confident that they can make it, and to prepare them to discover significant and exciting aspects of the texts. (253)

Though audiences and socio-political conditions have enormously changed since Shakespeare's times, it is incontestable that "[his] plays were meant to be relatable to everyone" (Sutton: 2016, 12). Identification depends on how relevant Shakespeare's works are, so it may be useless to subtract *a priori* Shakespeare's poetry from young learners' attention and not give them the chance to play with it. In this way, they would be more bound to feel disadvantaged in their future educational path, especially when they are asked to examine and comment upon the text. Mark Powell regrets not seeing many students at the theatre, and he declares: "Most of Shakespeare's audiences were illiterate. His words were chosen to be spoken or heard, not to be read and deadened behind a desk – they wither when performance is removed"[34]. Intimidated learners might be the product of intimidated teachers who "dumb down" Shakespeare's language

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[34] See *The Guardian* article (March 17th 2014) https://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2014/mar/17/kill-bill-shakespeare-classroom-theatre accessed on September 6th 2018

(Sutton: 2016, 58) for the sake of their own comfort zone, or because of their anxiety to cover the whole play. This approach can only result in seeing students resign to the fact that Shakespeare is beyond their intellectual skills (67). If primary school children were taught not to fear Shakespearean language, which is "full of noises/Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not" (*Tempest*, 3.2.135-6), the study of the linguistic richness of the stories that the Bard rearranged for his public of monarchs and peasants would be definitely less distressing.

Chapter 2. Unsettled selves and multidimensional others in Tracy Chevalier's *New Boy*, Grace Tiffany's *Ariel* and Jacqueline Carey's *Miranda and Caliban*

As an era of deep uncertainty and extreme restlessness, the New Millennium reflects its social, political, economic and cultural anxieties on twenty-first century literary production, which can be aimed at a young readership. More than ever, Shakespearean plays represent ideal sources of inspiration for adaptors of YA literature because teenagers are particularly sensitive to and conscious of contemporary concerns, such as race, gender, politics and family relations. Among the works that deal with these delicate subjects, in this analysis *Othello* and *The Tempest* have been identified as two model instances for discussing these issues, in particular race, family and gender. To adapt these plays means to explore Othello's and Caliban's hybrid natures and their role as outcasts. Special attention will be paid to father/daughter relations and to the way these adaptations deal with the construction of gender. The YA novels under scrutiny include, for *Othello*, Tracy Chevalier's *New Boy* (2017) and, for *The Tempest*, Grace Tiffany's *Ariel* (2005) and Jacqueline Carey's *Miranda and Caliban* (2017).

2.1 Reforming and "reformatting" Othello and Caliban: the politics of equality

2.1.1 The black man's burden: Othello's and Caliban's political bodies

Why should a black man who is subordinated to white men's rules and an enslaved native stuck on a nameless island be relevant to millennials today? In order to try and answer this question, first of all this research examines the analogies and the dissimilarities between two controversial characters who have been variously interpreted in literary criticism and iconography: Othello and Caliban.

The disagreement on Othello's actual skin colour, for instance, is well-known. In the play, he is defined, among other less nice names, as a "Moor". Even though his actual origins are mysterious, critics suggest that the noun "Moor" may indicate a tawny Arab as well as a more generic African or even an "Indian", hence any dark-skinned person possibly from the New World. The term might also refer to not just the ethnicity but rather a religion, in particular Islam, therefore it would encompass an even broader human group[35]. Actually, Othello seems to be related to North Africa when he discusses the origins of the handkerchief that he inherited: he says that it was made from mummy ashes and passed to his mother by an Egyptian charmer who had previously received it from a Sybil. What is certain is that "as a subject, 'the Moor' does not have a single or pure, culturally or racially bounded identity" but "is first and foremost a figure of uncodified and uncodifiable diversity" and embodies "the intersection of European and non-European cultures" (Bartels: 2008, 5). Indeed, Othello occupies an in-between, precarious position that sees him as a foreign ally against the Turks in the Venetian court, where he is viewed as "the valiant Moor" (*Othello*, 1.3.48), the Moor *of* Venice as in the title of the play. Yet, he is denied a complete assimilation in a society where "[h]e is loved and feared for his warriorship, but hated and feared for his colour" (Cohen: 1993, 10). In fact, as Bartels notes:

> Othello's initial appearance is […] framed by and within a social world distinguished by its nasty penchant for prejudice. […] Almost anyone can be a target of derision on Venice's streets –a Florentine, an 'ensign,' an unwelcome suitor, a gondolier, a betrayed father, a senator, a revolting daughter, as well as a Moor. […] [W]hat prevents the immediate alienation of Moor here is not the state but a set of players with conflicting biases and suspicions, who are significantly more preoccupied with defending and securing their own positions than they are with undoing his. (Bartels: 2008, 166-167)

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[35] Bartels, E. C., *Speaking of the Moor. From Alcazar to Othello*, USA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008, p. 4

Othello eventually admits the impossibility to integrate on the wrong grounds of a supposed communicative deficiency that is caused by his ethnicity: "[…] I am black,/And have not those soft parts of conversation/That chamberers have" (*Othello*, 3.3.263-5). Consequently, the first similarity between Caliban and Othello might be detected in their isolation (which is psychological for Othello and also physical for Caliban) from Western civilisation. They are confined to loneliness even when they enter into a relationship with other characters who, anyway, tend to torment, mock and deceive them when they can. As a matter of fact, such "blackness" denotes not only Othello's dark skin, whichever its shade is. It is a mark, above all, of his alienation from the "white" Europe that "remains out of the reach of [his] actions, if not also of [his] desires" (Bartels: 2008, 15), the same Europe that would coin the concepts of race and racism in the nineteenth century. In fact, the Moor himself exacerbates his "otherness" from the very beginning of the play when he eschews Brabantio's accusations for witchcraft by claiming that the only magic that "bewitched" Desdemona was the recounting of his perilous adventures. Although Othello "embeds the 'great world' within Venice as part of its own symbolic economy" (178) through his anecdotes, he is inevitably identified with the sensational and exotic realm of "the Cannibals that each other eat,/The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads/Do grow beneath their shoulders" (*Othello*, 1.3.145-7) who, together with other foul creatures, crowded Middle Age bestiaries and the imagination of Shakespeare's contemporaries.

Hence, the second analogy with Caliban, whose name echoes the word "cannibal", is that both are seen as "thing[s] of darkness" (*Tempest*, 5.1.275), the offspring of a barbarian world. In other words, their identities are irremediably compromised, Othello as a circumcised former slave whose "blackness perforates the edges of the 'black' arts" (Bartels: 2008, 163), and Caliban as a malformed son of a witch. Apart from the colour of his complexion, Othello's darkness will always be perceived as the darkness of hell and deception that led to a union "[a]gainst all rules of nature" (*Othello*, 1.3.99) with a white Venetian maiden who loves "what she fear'd to look on" (1.3.96). He is the victim of three main

types of discrimination: the first is sexual (against Desdemona); the second concerns class (according to Iago); the third is racial[36]. Othello's tragedy is that he ends up believing the prejudices against him and projecting on his wife his own assumed darkness when she is unjustly suspected of adultery: "[…] her name, that was as fresh/As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black/As mine own face" (3.3.384-6). In doing so, he endorses the stereotype that links physical blackness to monstrosity and depravity, which is (more or less subtly) fuelled by racist characters like Brabantio, Roderigo and Iago throughout the whole play. In fact, Shakespeare complicates the stereotype of the good Christian and the bad "Turk" since the hero of the play is Othello, a moor, whilst Iago, a Venetian, retains a Spanish name that may symbolise the evil Spaniards that fought against the Muslims. As G.K. Hunter argues,

> the supposed outcast turns out to be the true Christian, while the nominal Christian with the white skin appears as the devil's representative [because] Othello appears not only as noble, gracious, courtly, Christian, loving, but he is even the leader of Christendom […] in the Crusade against the Turks. (Hunter in Alexander and Wells: 2000, 57)

This seems to be a clear reference to Iago as the devilish counterpart, but perchance also to Roderigo (another Spanish name) as his accomplice. Othello's clever mind, which assisted him in the formulation of speeches so refined to win Desdemona's and the Duke's fascination, is corrupted by jealousy and rage to such an extent that in Cyprus he barely manages to speak and debases himself to sheer bestiality both in language and, ultimately, in action. In this sense, he may have reminded Victorian audiences of Stocker's Count Dracula and Stevenson's Mr. Hyde as two icons of monstrosity who hide their bestial nature behind a

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[36] Bassi, S., *Le metamorfosi di Otello. Storia di un'etnicità immaginaria*, Bari: Graphiservice s.r.l., 2000, p. 13

mask of decorum to harass white respectable women and thus corrupt the Western race[37].

Magic appears to be the *fil rouge* that connects *Othello* and *The Tempest*. Both plays face it as an issue that is as important as, for instance, political topics like race and usurpation, family and marriage. When *Othello* and *The Tempest* were conceived, magic was indeed a political matter: King James's *Daemonology* (1597), a treaty that encompassed all the common ideas on witchcraft of that time, was widely known. Furthermore, 1604 was particularly significant, and not just for the first performance of *Othello* at Whitehall Palace in London: John Dee wrote a petition to the new monarch, who in that same year had issued a statute on witchcraft, so as to clear himself from an accusation for black magic. Therefore, magic had fundamental socio-political repercussions: it is important to underline that demons, spirits and magic practitioners belonged not only to the superstitious world of folklore, but also to the learned high levels of society for their culture was based on a complex, interdisciplinary knowledge of alchemy, Neoplatonism, astronomy, physics, maths, numerology and so forth. It comes as no surprise that Early Modern drama assimilated magic, particularly dark magic, to show it on stage. So, Doctor Dee's doings may have inspired Marlowe for his Doctor Faustus and Shakespeare for Prospero, even though "Prospero is not […] subject to hellish threats and torments. His soul is at stake purely by virtue of the irony that in seeking to know what he cannot know he has betrayed himself to ignorance" (Fernie in Bigliazzi and Calvi: 2014, 263). This may also be applied to the trial that Othello endures in Venice due to his supposed dealings with black arts. In Reginald Scott's *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584) it is said that a moor may be the embodiment of the devil: "A damned soule may and dooth take the shape of a blacke moore"[38]. James I was famous for taking part in several prosecutions for witchcraft, and he himself used to interrogate the suspects; in the end, they were often discharged because of the absence of evidence for their

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[37] Bassi, S., *Le metamorfosi di Otello. Storia di un'etnicità immaginaria*, Bari: Graphiservice s.r.l., 2000, pp. 113-114
[38] *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), p. 535

"crime". Like James, the Venetian duke prefers justice over the superstition Brabantio's complaints seem to be influenced by: "To vouch this, is no proof,/Without more wider and more overt test/Than these thin habits an poor likelihoods/Of modern seeming do prefer against him" (*Othello*, 1.3.105-8). Equivocation and treachery, which were searched for in witches' trials, recur in the play. Othello, for example, is certainly the victim of Iago's verbal charm and controlling behaviour. However, the Moor also relies on a magical device, the handkerchief, which allows him to manipulate his wife. Similarly, Desdemona, who is initially portrayed as the target of Othello's "enchantment", is accused of deceiving her father with her marriage so as to hide her promiscuity. As for *The Tempest*, it is a play about magic tricks and their (potentially) destructive consequences: due to an excessive involvement in the magical arts, Prospero has lost his dukedom; Ariel, the spirit of the island, was imprisoned inside a tree by the witch Sycorax, who was known to worship a deity called Setebos; Miranda and Caliban know the pain that Prospero's magic is able to inflict as punishment; a masque of pagan gods and nymphs is conjured to mastermind Ferdinand, which only makes Prospero almost forget about a new plot against him in a repetition of what happened in Milan long before. In other words, the danger of delusion that can be found in *Othello* is intensified in *The Tempest*, in which the manipulating potentials of magic in the imitation of reality are displayed. Prospero and Iago are the ones in control: they employ a wide range of artifices by impersonating the playwright's role, that of a stage director who organises each detail and instructs the actors. And yet their powers end up turning against them when all illusion fades "into thin air" (*Tempest*, 4.1.150). Eventually, both renounce the weapons they had learnt how to wield in order to destroy others: Prospero breaks his staff and buries his books, hence his "rough magic" (5.1.50) and wish for vengeance; Iago does the same with his linguistic abilities by withdrawing to silence: "Demand me nothing: what you know, you know:/From this time forth I never will speak word" (*Othello*, 5.2.304-5).

Besides, like Othello's, Caliban's origins are indistinct. Prospero affirms that his mother Sycorax came from Algiers to the island he has occupied and there she

gave birth to her son, who has now become a threat for "European purity" that despises interracial relations because of their "unnaturalness":

> The enforcement of the prohibition is contingent upon the success or failure of the doctrine of the natural. If the subject can be convinced of the validity of the definition of what is natural behaviour and desire, then the possibility of retaining racial purity is strengthened. As the conviction of the subject is weakened, the social consequences become more serious and the purity of the dominant culture or enforcing agencies – government, church, family – becomes endangered. (Cohen: 1993, 40)

Also in *The Tempest* a mixed marriage is mentioned: the ship that arrives on the island is returning to Naples from Tunis after the wedding of Claribel, Alonso's daughter, to the king there, so the shipwreck is feared to be a sort of divine punishment for giving her "to an African" (*Tempest*, 2.1.126). Brabantio and Prospero wish "a white European man with the correct social pedigree" (Cohen: 1993, 39) for their daughters, who are vulnerable (Desdemona more gladly than Miranda) to racial "corruption". In the eyes of white characters, Othello's and Caliban's "defective" natures legitimise European aims of control over other peoples. Their physical features appear to intensify their "unnatural" impulses, a "primitivity [that] is an evidence of the inferiority of [their] species" (43). As a result, they are caught, Caliban more deeply than Othello, in a limbo between the human and the non-human:

> Perhaps the most significant political fact about Caliban's body is that it is the site of violence. […] He, far more than Othello […], challenges the whole humanist project by being an actual monster, by possessing features and characteristics that are actual deformations of what is human. Hence the crucial importance of his body as an object that the European structures of political logic make it reasonable to loathe and subdue. (48)

As mentioned before, emotional and physical confinement is an aspect they share. However, while Othello does not seek independence from Venice, which has provided him with an important place in the army and, after all, a beautiful bride, Caliban's desire for freedom is frantic and clear. This difference may be due to the fact that Othello chose to displace himself to Europe and become "a willing instrument of white domination" (10), whereas Caliban surely did not expect Europe to displace itself to the land he claims as *his*: "This island's mine by Sycorax, my mother,/Which thou tak'st from me" (*Tempest*, 1.2.332-3). Under the authority of the Venetian state, Othello can move from Venice to Cyprus, and anyhow he is portrayed as a traveller who has seen a lot. His shift happens to be from the public domain to the private sphere. Contrariwise, Caliban is a slave who is confined to the only place he has seen in his whole life, and he undergoes a change from his tranquil private existence before Prospero's arrival to an involvement in Italian dukes' public affairs. The irony is that, where Othello's brain does not seem to be as dynamic as his body, at least not quick enough to foresee Iago's trickeries, Caliban's physical captivity is balanced by an extremely calculating mind which enables him, for instance, to gather accomplices and plot against his master's life. However, his sense of what freedom really is appears to be as limited as his life experience, for he would accept to be released from Prospero's power to become the slave of new masters: "I'll kiss thy foot. I'll swear myself thy subject" (2.2.149), he promises. Caliban welcomes Stephano and Trinculo with the same enthusiasm he has shown Prospero at his coming on the island: "I'll show thee every fertile inch o'th' island" (2.2.145), "I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries;/I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough" (2.2.167-8) and so on. He cannot contemplate any alternatives to slavery, so he concludes that freedom must mean subjugation to a more benign master. Caliban is aware that society, at least in the sense that is imposed on him by Prospero's and Miranda's cultural authority, is necessarily built on the co-presence of dominators and dominated. And so is Sebastian, who rationalises upon Gonzalo's utopian project for a society that may be free of all sovereignty, and "[y]et he would be king on't" (2.1.158). Like the

community in Venice and then in Cyprus, both "islands", the "society" of *The Tempest* is governed by a policy of violence and hatred, fear and manipulation. In the case of *Othello*, these "weapons" are mastered by Iago and by Prospero's magic in *The Tempest*. These two characters' charming abilities influence the love relations within their respective plays: Iago poisons Othello's mind in order to turn him against his wife, and Prospero manoeuvres Ferdinand so as to make him fall in love with his daughter. In both plays, love represents a problematic issue for Othello and Caliban. In effect, their conception of this feeling appears to stand on a similar basis, which is to say mere possession and, again, a master/servant relation, as if to love meant to own and defend the "loved" one from theft. Othello tragically associates marriage with confinement and kills Desdemona with the excuse that "else she'll betray more men" (*Othello*, 5.2.6); Caliban, supposing he is able to feel love at all, only wishes to possess Miranda as a part herself of the island in order to populate it with their progeny.

To return to the physical significance of these characters, obviously Caliban's appearance, and his anatomy in particular, has been the subject of long debates as well. Though he lives like a beast, he can speak as he has well demonstrated to Prospero and Miranda by learning their language, so he is certainly humanoid. Nonetheless, Caliban is inevitably seen as the heir of the sea-monsters of Othello's tales[39], an apish hybrid between man and animal that would amuse spectators if Trinculo managed to capture and show him at town fairs:

> What have we here, a man or a fish? Dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish, a very ancient and fish-like smell, a kind of – not of the newest – poor-John. A strange fish! Were I in England now (as once I was) and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver. (*Tempest*, 2.2.24-9)

Caliban sadly embodies the victims of the first colonisers, who imported violence, diseases and alcohol in the New World, and of what later on would be the notorious "freak shows" in the Victorian Age. Here, deformed people who

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[39] Cohen. D., *The Politics of Shakespeare*, UK: The MacMillan Press, 1993, p. 41

were brought to England from the remotest corners of the world were exhibited before the eyes of a both fascinated and scared public. Victorians were worried about the first insurgences in the colonies and the so-called "reverse colonisation"[40], hence the risk of degenerating into the simian state from which mankind had evolved, as several interpretations of Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1870) suggested, was felt as a real menace. In the wake of evolution theories and pseudo-scientific approaches, from criminal anthropology to atavism, what some critics called "the missing link" was desperately investigated in the conviction that the gap between man and his ancestors could be detected. It is likely that Caliban would have represented a possible solution for the Victorian public as well as for Shakespeare's:

> The body of an animal is easier to love than the body of a monster or an alien "other". The animal is *not* the self; the "other" *is* the self. Caliban's body as a concept occupies a curious place in the imagination of his European tormentors as a nightmarish distortion of themselves. They are attracted and repelled by him. Closing in upon him, they seem, like Stephano and Trinculo, to be seeking in him a validation of their difference and superiority. […] Caliban is merely a white person's version of that aspect of the self which is acceptable to hate. [original emphasis] (Cohen: 1993, 50)

At any rate, associations to animals and crossbreeds implicate noble Othello, too. From the very first scene, Iago awakens Brabantio's wrath, and probably a good part of half-asleep Venice, too, by shouting that "an old black ram/Is tupping your white ewe" (*Othello*, 1.1.87-8) and that "[…] you'll have your daughter cover'd with a Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have coursers for cousins, and gennets for germans" (1.1.111-13). These connotations newly confirm his halfway condition that, through the "treason of the blood" (1.1.168), threatens Western integrity. Hybridity is socio-cultural: Othello stands with one foot in the political East and with the other in Europe and

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[40] Arata, S., "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the anxiety of reverse colonisation" (1990)

Caliban is the archetype of the colonised native; but it is also physical since both of them are depicted, if not as devils, as unworldly beasts.

To view their condition in a more optimistic way, as much as Caliban, Othello might also be understood "as the mediator, not the sign, of difference" (Bartels: 2008, 179), which could be accurate if there was any difference to mediate. An interesting meaning of "to mediate" is "to interpose between parties in order *to reconcile*" [added emphasis] (Merriam-Webster). Since in both plays any intercession is usually biased by Western governments, which do not show much sympathy in whatever defence a black man or a savage may provide, the reconciliation remains unidirectional, hence invalid because uneven. Even at the end of *The Tempest*, when Prospero gives up his magic and forgives his past offenders, reconciliation does not appear to include Caliban, or at least not in the terms that are reserved to others:

> PROSPERO: […] This misshapen knave,/His mother was a witch, and one so strong/That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,/And deal in her command without her power./These three have robbed me, and this demi-devil/(For he's a bastard one) had plotted with them/To take my life. Two of these fellows you/Must know and own; this thing of darkness I/Acknowledge as mine.
>
> CALIBAN: I shall be pinched to death. (*Tempest*, 5.1.268-77)

Even though they are the representatives of an evident cross-cultural process between the Old and the New World, Othello and Caliban will always be outsiders, at least in Shakespeare's plays. Despite the sad capitulation of the Moor of Venice and Caliban's miserable treatment, there is no doubt that *Othello* and *The Tempest* remain very interesting plays for study and adaptation. As for *Othello*, this may be due to "Shakespeare's bold and perhaps too daring innovation of making a black man the hero […] in a white society where blacks were regarded in set negative ways: as bestial, monstrous, treacherous, evil, barbarous, untrustworthy, and lascivious" (Solomon Iyasere & Marla Iyasere: 2008, 2). As for *The Tempest*, Shakespeare's use of "stock incidents of

Renaissance narrative romance" such as sea adventures, brotherly rivalry, magicians, court plots and love affairs[41] may explain the success of the last play that Shakespeare allegedly wrote on his own. As mentioned before, magic is indeed a powerful stimulus for young readers, who are generally attracted to fantasy and sci-fi books rather than to more "realistic" genres. For this reason, *The Tempest*, together with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is often adapted for children and young adults. However, this research will focus on how the issue of race is dealt with in some adaptations not only of *Othello*, but also of *The Tempest*. Here magic is indeed topical, but it is not the only relevant question for an audience of adolescents who start to leave the enchanted realm of childhood to dive into more down-to-earth concerns. So, if as children readers may approach *The Tempest* for its marvels, once they grow up they are likely to be more interested in the figure of Caliban and Ariel, not only for their supernatural characteristics but especially for their socio-political implications as "others". This is why two YA adaptations from *The Tempest* have been selected for this analysis against only one from *Othello*, whose revision by Tracy Chevalier still represents a remarkable recent version worthy to be examined.

2.1.2 Plays and playgrounds: the "outcast" in Chevalier's *New Boy*

New Boy was published in 2017 as a part of the Hogarth Shakespeare Project, which was announced in 2014 by Hogarth Press. Rewritings in narrative prose of some of the most famous Shakespeare's plays were commissioned to contemporary authors with the aim, firstly, of raising the public's awareness of Shakespeare during the anniversary years 2014 and 2016 and, secondly, of consolidating Hogarth's brand. With this ambitious project, the press supports "the penchant for updating Shakespeare's works and substituting a modern idiom for Shakespeare's" (Lanier in Hartley: 2018, 230) as a recent phenomenon by seeking a balance between tradition and contemporaneity, thematic significance

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[41] Russell Brown, J., *Shakespeare. The Tempest*, London: Edward Arnold, 1969, p. 14

and mass market entertainment[42]. The importance of the Hogarth series also relies on the fact that:

> It […] suggests something of lasting quality and stature, a work that bears both the mark of the contemporary author's originality ("transformation") and also palpable continuity with the literary past, as distinguished from derivative pop ephemera that repeat Shakespeare in new guises rather than transforming him. In short, the series provides a "literary" alternative to Shakespeare adaptation in mass media. (231)

Like the other novels of the series (Jeanette Winterson's *The Gap of Time*, Howard Jacobson's *My Name is Shylock*, Anne Tyler's *Vinegar Girl*, Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed*, Jo Nesbø's *Macbeth*, Edward St. Aubyn's *Dunbar* and Gillian Flynn's retelling of *Hamlet* that is still to come), Tracy Chevalier's *New Boy* sets Shakespeare in the contemporary era. After considering *Romeo and Juliet* for a brief moment, what determined Chevalier's final choice of rewriting *Othello* for young adults was the criterion of relatability of her personal experience with the play: "I too have been an outsider all my adult life, moving from the United States to Britain over thirty years ago but retaining my American accent and corn-fed look"[43]. Moreover, as a white pupil in a 90% black primary school, Chevalier "had the mostly benign but sometimes difficult experience of being a minority". Accordingly, she eventually chose *Othello* and a school playground in Washington D.C. as the stage of, as Chevalier states, "[n]ascent passion, bullying, jealousy, violence [where] [k]ids learn their prejudices from teachers and parents, and take it out on one another". The main characters' age, of course, has been pondered upon carefully: they are all eleven years old, "that awkward age between childhood and full-blown adolescence, when you are trying out grown-up attitudes without really understanding them". This halfway

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[42] Lanier, D. M., "The Hogarth Shakespeare Series: Redeeming Shakespeare's Literariness" in *Shakespeare and Millennial Fiction*, ed. by Andrew James Hartley, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 230
[43] See the interview to Tracy Chevalier on http://hogarthshakespeare.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/newboy_bookclubkit.pdf

condition that concerns the protagonists of Chevalier's novel, who are soon going to attend junior high, is obviously aimed at drawing the attention of an audience of teenagers. After reading the book, they will hopefully return to the original play, perchance with a different perspective. Like her "colleagues" whose works are included in the Hogarth series, Chevalier seems to be willing to promote the change of focus of "the literary 'essence' of Shakespeare [that] was once located in his language, [but] now, under the pressure of postmodern practice, it is being located in his narratives, which can float free of specifically Shakespearean language and readily cross cultural boundaries" (Lanier in Hartley: 2018, 237). Chevalier recalls that today, as much as in the 1970s when her retelling is set, racism is still present and widespread in the United States, where the so-called "Black Power" movement, which she hints at in the book, has evolved into the current "Black Lives Matter" demonstrations. Nonetheless, for Chevalier it is not a question of race alone: she mostly appeals to the general condition of the outsider that at least once in a lifetime everyone has identified in, whether for skin colour, accent, body shape or religion. It appears therefore necessary to revive a story such as that of *Othello* and, above all, to direct it to a young audience who may experience xenophobia, discrimination, rivalry, alienation and jealousy as every day issues.

The school playground, in particular, is charged with political implications and is thought by Chevalier to be the ideal place where children can gain some control over their lives because it is here that they do their first "experiments". In effect, Chevalier employs the metaphor of a laboratory to explain their interactions as adult wannabes: "Kids test out romance, switch friends, fight, make allegiances, and start wars—all in the course of a day". What an external observer may judge to be a childish game, for the teens in *New Boy* it seems to be literally a matter of life and death. The playground exists as an in-between reality that is located neither outside nor inside the school building. The fence and the school doors delimit a grey area made of asphalt, a rough material that emphasises the potential danger of this place, a "scene of many a scraped knee"; as a matter of fact, at a certain point Osei (Othello) wonders "why playgrounds [are not]

covered with more forgiving grass" (Chevalier, 161). Despite changing several schools, this is a space that the protagonist knows quite well:

> Osei surveyed the playground with a practised eye. He had looked over new playgrounds three times before, and knew how to read them. Every playground had the same elements […]. This one had two unusual features: a pirate ship with poles and rigging that could be climbed; and a sandpit edged by a clump of trees.
>
> Then there were the kids you always saw doing the same things: the boys, running chaotically, burning up the energy that otherwise made them restless in class; or playing with a ball, always something with a ball. The girls, playing hopscotch or jacks or jump rope. The loners, reading or sitting on top of the monkey bars or tucked away in a corner or standing close to the teacher where it was safe. The bullies, patrolling and dominating. And himself, the new boy, standing still in the midst of these well-known grooves, *playing his part too*. [added emphasis] (35-36)

The pirate ship and the sandpit are the only new playground components for Osei: the former could perhaps represent the ship Othello travels on to go to Cyprus, whilst the latter might stand for the beach in a Cypriot port. Anyhow, the schoolyard in *New Boy* mirrors the stage of a theatre, a world of dissimulation and disguise that is situated between the backstage and the audience. Here the different characters of the play are exposed to several threats and those who attend the performance can only watch them move and suffer on stage without the chance to inform them of their fate. It is probable that Chevalier's young readers may feel helpless when they begin to understand what awaits the protagonist. It is impossible for a spectator to break the fourth wall and stop the villain, and so is it for the reader to enter the book and warn the hero against his enemies. For a teenager, to be powerless is inconceivable, and Chevalier seems to take advantage of the frustration that *Othello* usually provokes so as to engage her young readership in the drama. The analogy between the playground and the stage is reinforced by the fact that several times in the novel Osei's schoolmates

comment on what they see, like the loud spectators of the Globe would normally do during a performance:

> "Where'd *he* come from?"
>
> "The jungle!"
>
> "Hoo-hoo-hoo… Ow, that hurt!"
>
> "Don't be so immature." [original emphasis] (Chevalier, 15)

Or when they notice Dee (Desdemona) hugging him after a successful kickball match:

> "I wouldn't do that—would you?"
>
> "Do you think they're going together?"
>
> "They must be."
>
> "She could have any boy she wants and she chooses *him*?"
>
> "Is Dee crazy or something?"
>
> "I don't know—he *is* kind of cute."
>
> "Are you kidding? He's—you know!"
>
> "Not only that—he's *new*. She doesn't even know him." [original emphasis] (75)

In the playground, unlike the actors on stage, children are the directors of themselves; adults have a nominal role here, so pupils regain the power over their time by organising themselves in a system of unspoken rules. There is a specific hierarchy that maintains the stability of this school microcosm, which is obviously meant to recall the socio-political milieu in Venice and Cyprus of *Othello*. It might also recall the community of lost children in Golding's *The Lord of the Flies* (1954) where, in order to survive, it is essential to choose allies well. As Mark Matheson observes on the politics in *Othello*: "The play is a powerful illustration of [Shakespeare's] ability to perceive and represent different

forms of political organization, and to situate personal relationships and issues of individual subjectivity in a specific institutional context" (Matheson in Alexander: 2004, 169). This is a fragile equilibrium that is broken when Osei enters the scene and unconsciously threatens the role of Ian (Iago) within this long-established social structure as playground leader, which now he must defend at all costs.

In an interview where she was asked how, in her opinion, *Othello* succeeded in passing the test of time, Chevalier answered:

> [W]e are fascinated by a good person turning bad so easily. Iago's manipulation of Othello is appalling, and it's like a car crash we cover our eyes from but then peek through our fingers because it's so mesmerising and irresistible. And because all of us have felt like outsiders at some point, we wonder if we are that vulnerable and easily manipulated.

It could be argued that whoever attends a performance of *Othello* may feel like a voyeur, a spectator of an upcoming catastrophe which he or she has no power to stop, like the majority of Iago's victims. The only difference is that the audience shares with Iago the whole perspective on his evil plan and can easily foresee what is soon going to happen. As a matter of fact, through several aside comments, he clarifies his feelings from the beginning: "[…] I hate the Moor; […] He holds me well;/The better shall my purpose work on him" (*Othello*, 1.3.377-82); or after seeing Othello and Desdemona share a kiss: "O, you are well tuned now!/But I'll set down the pegs that make this music/As honest as I am" (2.1.251-253). Similarly, Chevalier's readers are straightforwardly made aware of Ian's devious character, which is however explored more deeply through the omniscient third-person narrator. He is described in detail apparently as nothing more than a bully:

> Ian would always notice anyone new who stepped into his territory. For the playground was his. It had been all year, since he had started sixth grade and there were no older boys to rule it. He'd had months to

relish this domination. Any new boy posed a challenge. And *this* new boy, well…

Ian was not the tallest boy in the year, nor the fastest. He did not kick balls the farthest, or jump the highest when shooting baskets, or do the most chin-ups on the monkey bars. He did not speak much in class, never had gold stars pasted on his artwork, did not win certificates at the end of the year for best mathematician or best handwriting or best citizenship. Definitely not best citizenship. He was not the most popular with the girls […]. [original emphasis] (Chevalier, 21)

In fact, despite Ian's averageness as a schoolboy that normally would guarantee him some invisibility, his reputation is notorious:

Ian was the shrewdest. The most calculating. The quickest to respond to a new situation and turn it to his advantage. […] Ian was always looking for the angle that would benefit him.

He did not always get it right. (21-22)

If Iago is the first character to be introduced in Shakespeare's play, Ian is paradoxically the first outcast of Chevalier's novel:

"Popular" was not a word that would ever be attached to Ian. No one chatted and laughed with him. They hadn't for a long time. He wasn't sure exactly how it happened, but he had become the boy they feared but didn't respect. He hadn't planned it that way, but when he'd started fourth grade and moved up to the older-class playground, his brother had gone on to junior high and Ian found himself inheriting a position of power that few questioned. (89)

When he went out into the neighborhood, to shoot hoops or throw a baseball or play kick the can, he'd noticed that after his arrival the other kids would find excuses to leave, saying that they had homework or their mothers needed them to go to the store. One time Ian had ridden his bike around and discovered the same boys who'd left the local park ten minutes before had reconvened in a vacant lot to

> continue their softball game without him. He had hidden, too
> humiliated to let them see him. (182)

As far as Osei is concerned, Chevalier remains quite faithful to Shakespeare in the portrayal of her Othello, but she also adds some information about his past which is only quickly mentioned in the original play. Osei, whose name means "noble", is a diplomat's son and his origins, differently from Othello's, are clearly specified: he comes from Ghana and, due to his father's job, he has travelled Europe and the United States with his family. For this reason, Osei had to change several schools, which causes him not only to always be the new boy, but also not to be able to consolidate any relationship. He does not even bother to learn his teachers' names because at any rate he would soon leave for another school. So, when he meets Dee, the first person who seems to be sincerely interested in his story and not in judging him for his ethnicity, Osei is taken aback, and not just for her friendliness. Like Shakespeare's Desdemona, Dee is identified with bright colours: she is a beautiful blonde girl of Italian origins who likes jumping the rope with "her white Converse sneakers, which she kept as clean as she could" (12). Dee is fascinated by Osei because, conversely, she "had always lived in the same house, gone to the same school and had the same friends, and was accustomed to a comfortable family underpinning everything she did" (17). "What an exotic life, to need a taxi!" (78) is her comment when Osei tells her about his life in New York. Dee is hurt by the racism against him and she wants to know everything about his country and its culture, probably because she feels guilty for white people's behaviour and for her own preconceptions that come from her strict education: "'You can tell me anything.' It was almost a plea, this desire to know him better" (77). Moreover, like Desdemona, she is captivated by Osei's refined language: "His full sentences and lack of contractions, the lilt in his speech, the rich exaggeration of his vowels, all made Dee want to smile" (19). Desdemona/Dee's supposed ability to see beyond appearances, because "[s]he loved me for the dangers I had passed,/And I loved her that she did pity them" (*Othello*, 1.3.181-2), and her genuine concern for Othello/Osei as a person and not as a freak is what makes him fancy her:

> She managed to balance curiosity about the things that made O different from her with an acceptance of him that was flattering and made him want to put his arms around her and hold her, feeling the warmth of her body and blotting out the rest of the school, the rest of the world. (Chevalier, 108)

When Osei and Dee touch each other in public for the first time, they sit under some cypresses, which represent Cyprus as the mythological birthplace of Venus but also the tree of mourning and concealment that was found in Mediterranean graveyards and used for coffins thanks to the durability of its wood. Cyprus is "a liminal and contested zone", an island that stands "between east and west, between Turk and Venetian [where] the relationship between love and that primordial darkness or chaos which Orphic thought held to be concealed behind or beneath love becomes increasingly clear" (Berry: 1999, 96-97); similarly, the school playground is a liminal space of brawls and secret love affairs. Dee pets Osei's head: "'You have a beautiful head,' she said", though her compliment may refer both to "his perfect skull" and his mind. "'And you a beautiful face'" (Chevalier, 82), Osei replies while caressing her cheek. The moment when they realise they are a couple tragically echoes the illusion of love that dooms Desdemona, who falls in love with the Moor's charm, and Othello, who is attracted by her white beauty that is so strange to him. Alienation, the sense of not fitting in, links and curses both of them:

> She had lived her life on the playground, laughed and cried and had crushes and formed friendships and made few enemies. It was her world, so familiar she took it for granted. In a month she would be leaving it for junior high.
>
> Now someone new and different had entered the territory, and this made Dee look at the space anew and suddenly find it shabby, and herself an alien in it. Like him. (9-10)

Chevalier's book shares with Shakespeare's *Othello* the series of comparisons of Osei with wild animals, and it is Dee who, before anyone else, instinctively

makes one when she notices him at first: "[I]t was his skin that stood out, its color reminding Dee of bears she'd seen at the zoo a few months before, on a school field trip" (8). When she observes Osei walking, Dee continues to think of him as an animal, though "[n]ot like a bear, with its bulky, lumbering gait. More like a wolf, or—Dee tried to think of dark animals—a panther" (10). Apart from the political reference to the Black Panther Party, an Afro-American revolutionary organisation founded in the 1960s that fought for blacks' civil rights, these are all wild beasts that usually inspire fear but also admiration and respect. Unfortunately, other children do not employ Dee's benevolent associations. For example, Dee's best friend Mimi (Emilia) is afraid that she will be mocked for "[g]oing with a monkey, they'll say" (58). Osei's sister Sisi herself ends up comparing him to an animal. However, while other associations are with predators, she says that his brother looks "like a sheep when it has been shorn" (45) when he undergoes what is likely to be the first act of injustice against his culture, which paradoxically comes from his parents who force him to shave his Afro haircut. Probably, this is the first time when Osei feels like a prey that needs to conform with the rest of the herd in order to survive.

For Osei, racism is mostly expressed through a wide range of commonplaces about black people; he has learnt how to laugh about his schoolmates' silly questions:

> "How do you wash hair like that?"
>
> It was the sort of question O knew well. White people liked to ask a lot about hair care. Also, did black people ever get tanned or sunburned? Were they naturally better at sports and if so, why? Were they better dancers? Did they have better rhythm? Why didn't black people have wrinkles? (112)

The first "trial scene" at the Venetian duke's court in *Othello* seems to be reimagined by Chevalier by making Osei speak in front of the class, Mr. Brabant (the teacher) and Mrs. Duke (the school principal) who invites him to introduce the main characteristics of Ghana. Unlike Othello's fantastical stories about far-

away lands, Osei sticks to a realistic, summarised presentation of this African country, which anyways appears to satisfy Mrs. Duke:

> "I always welcome the opportunity for a new student in this school to teach something to others about the world." She turned to the class. "I hope you will welcome Oss-I so that he will feel at home for the month he is here."
>
> If only she had stopped there.
>
> "He may not have had the opportunities that you all enjoy at our school, so I hope you will give him every chance to take part in all we have to offer to less fortunate students."
>
> The last three words made Osei grit his teeth. (65)

Mrs. Duke's discriminatory comment seems to annoy Osei more than his misspelt name, as if all Africans were underprivileged by nature when in fact Osei's family is quite wealthy. The spiteful hypocrisy, which is clearly stressed in *New Boy*, is that contemporary society, like Shakespeare's, seems to accept blacks on one level and reject them on the other. At the turn of the sixteenth century, England was facing "a new globally oriented environment" (Bartels: 2008, 17) where geographic borders and cultural identities were challenged by socio-economic exchanges. In a sense, the globalisation of the last decades is relatively less "innovative" in comparison to the globalisation of the Early Modern era because "we are writing our evolving multicultural geographies *against* a long history of cultural differentiation that the early moderns were just beginning to write *in*" [original emphasis] (18). In actual fact, as the chief port of Europe, the Mediterranean has always represented both a source of prosperity and of anxiety due to possible foreign incursions which Shakespeare's England was not exonerated from. In the second half of the sixteenth century, immigration increased considerably and in 1596 Queen Elizabeth issued the well-known letter to the Lord Mayor of London that reported the presence of "divers blackmoores […] of which kinde of people there are allready here to manie". As Chevalier's

novel underlines, racism is still common nowadays, and not only in Europe. In all the cities Osei has lived in, from London to New York, his reaction to prejudice, at least initially, is less radical than his sister's, an angry teenager who becomes increasingly obsessed with the Black Power movement, the slogan of which is "Black is beautiful". Her political involvement makes their relationship weaker and weaker and their lack of communication eventually leads Osei to feel completely estranged from his own family as well: "*What if I need someone to talk to? Aren't I as important as pan-Africanism or Black Power?* […] Was black beautiful? He did not even want to think about such questions" [original emphasis] (Chevalier, 114-115). Osei seems to be aware that hatred only produces more hatred, and Sisi's behaviour is an instance for this. However, the diplomacy that his father has tried to teach him and the temperance he has taken from his mother begin to falter due to Ian's machinations, which progressively undermine Osei's trust in others:

> […] O himself was slow to anger, he thought. As his father liked to remind him, anger was the easy option. It was much harder to keep your temper and sort out a problem with measured words and deeds. That was what a diplomat was trained to do […]. So O was surprised with himself when the anger began to well up in him like water rising steadily in a river. For a while it was hard to see, then suddenly the water was in places it wasn't meant to be—fields, roads, houses, schools, playgrounds. It was there and you couldn't get rid of it or make it change direction (156-157)

Paradoxically, Osei emerges, like Othello, as the most conservative character whilst Dee, like Desdemona, is more radical despite her uninteresting existence. Osei shows Othello's same great sense of justice that leads him to take revenge on Desdemona/Dee simply because they conceive this relationship in terms of duty and absolute respect, which she has allegedly damaged. Othello's and Osei's behaviour is the result of their hierarchical understanding of institutions[44]

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[44] Matheson, M., "Venetian culture and the politics of *Othello*" in *Shakespeare and Politics*, ed. by Catherine M.S. Alexander, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 175

which in *New Boy*, for instance, makes Osei address his teachers with old-fashioned "Sir" and "Miss" like Othello does with his "[m]ost potent, grave, and reverend signors" (*Othello*, 1.3.76).

Towards the end of the novel, the atmosphere becomes gradually gloomier. Osei blacks out when he sees the pencil case (the handkerchief) he had given to Dee in the hands of Blanca (Bianca) who, according to Ian, has received it as a gift from Casper (Michael Cassio), the most popular boy of the school. With Ian's intercession, Osei convinces himself that Dee has been cheating on him with Casper, so he resigns to his suppressed wrath that is as black as his skin, the same blackness that makes his life and that of his people hell on earth. He cannot even stand the sight of Dee anymore, and one the reasons for this may be that she reminds him of a whiteness from which he will always be excluded:

> He did not want to have to confront her, to have her get in his face, talking to him, telling more lies, treating him like her boyfriend and then like *the black boy in the white playground*. The black sheep, with a black mark against his name. Blackballed. Blackmailed. Blacklisted. Blackhearted. It was a black day. [added emphasis] (Chevalier, 158)

Despite his vast knowledge of the world and his sophisticated manners, society cannot forgive Osei's blackness because, as in sixteenth century England and Venice, in twentieth century America "*fair* is beautiful and virtuous; *black* is ugly and evil" (Adler in Solomon Iyasere & Marla Iyasere: 2008, 74), and he knows that. At first, Dee justifies Osei's impulsive violence on the grounds of his ill treatment:

> She should be angry—she had a right to be. He had pushed her, hurt her unfairly. He should be saying he was sorry. […] Yet Dee did not feel angry, but guilty—like she should be apologizing to him rather than the other way around. He had a right to be angry at her, she felt, to shout and push her away. He was black, and all day they had treated him that way, differently from how they would treat another new student. Dee knew she herself found him interesting *because he was*

black, and that was not necessarily a good reason—to like someone
for their skin color. [added emphasis] (Chevalier, 174-175)

This passage raises a key question, which is to say Dee's intrinsic racism. Osei often needs to bring down several Dee's misconceptions about his culture, for example when he reminds her that cannibals do not exist in Ghana: "'You are thinking of Papua New *Guinea*. Not Ghana. Papua New Guinea is near Australia'" [original emphasis] (79). In Shakespeare's *Othello*, it is quite clear that Desdemona did not fall in love with Othello's true self, but rather with the wonders that his skin is a mark of and that will never be accessible to her. When her delusion fades, Desdemona returns to her stereotypes and sees Othello for what he really is: an irrational, jealous and aggressive moor. Dee's patience lasts until when, in an outburst of jealousy, Osei renounces his polished language and calls her "whore" in front of everyone (193). Together with "strumpet", "harlot" and many other synonyms, this insult is found several times in Shakespeare's plays; to be exact, it appears fourteen times in *Othello* in all its variations (whorish, whoring, whored and bewhored). However, while the others may be considered outdated today, "whore" endures as "the term with the most abusive punch" and "functions in hegemonic use in a roughly similar way as the word 'nigger' does for blacks and the word 'queer' does for homosexuals: to keep troubling individuals grouped in their marginalized place and to insist that the place is a vulgar, degraded one from which they can never escape" (Stanton in Callaghan: 2000, 2001, 81). In this sense, Osei behaves like Othello who, in the end, projects his own blackness on Desdemona. Therefore, by calling Dee a whore, he seems to be willing to inflict the marginalisation of blacks on his girlfriend and to make her understand how discrimination for belonging to a minority or, in case of women, a sexualised part of society feels like. At this point, Dee is so outraged that she runs home; by doing so, she is spared the upcoming disaster which, unlike less fortunate Desdemona, does not involve her directly. A series of falls occur in the last pages of the novel: Mimi is violently pulled down the monkey bars by Ian and she lands on her neck; once Osei realises what has happened, he throws himself from the highest bar, but it is not

clear whether he dies or not. At any rate, the reasons that push him to hurt himself are completely different from Othello's. Shakespeare's Moor kills himself because he abhors not only what he has done, but above all what he has become:

> Soft you, a word or two:
> I have done the state some service, and they know't;
> No more of that: I pray you in your letters,
> When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
> Speak of them as they are; nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
> Of one that lov'd not wisely, but too well:
> Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,
> Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,
> Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away,
> Richer than all his tribe: of one whose subdued eyes,
> Albeit unused to the melting mood,
> Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees
> Their medicinal gum; set you down this,
> And say besides that in Aleppo once,
> Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
> Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state,
> I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
> And smote him thus. (*Othello*, 5.2.339-57)

All reference to the East in Othello's famous last speech, from "the base Indian" to "the Arabian trees", functions as a reminder of the exotic world of his childhood, which he has betrayed to serve the West. However, by murdering Desdemona, Othello's betrayal is also against Venice, so his only solution is to eliminate himself as he did with the Turk who harmed a Venetian. Hence:

> The dominant culture triumphs most potently in the idea of the civilized black man destroying his barbaric Other, demonstrating, incidentally, that the civilized black man is a contradiction in terms.

> […] Othello *becomes* the Turk, the alien, the circumcised enemy to the state because of his blackness which enables him to close the gap between himself and the turbanned Turk. […] In the steady progression towards his suicide, Othello reveals a vestigial pride in the memory of his former self. That pride […] is slowly eroded and transformed into shame. [original emphasis] (Cohen: 1993, 13-15)

While Othello does not seem to show "Aaron's understanding of black as beautiful" (Stanton in Callaghan: 2000, 2001, 95) in *Titus Andronicus*, Osei holds his pride till the end: while he is precariously standing on the monkey bars, he is ambiguously portrayed like the "*[k]ing of the jungle* [though] *a miserable king*" [original emphasis] (Chevalier, 199) and, before jumping, he pronounces the Black Power motto: "Black is beautiful!" (203). Osei's extreme behaviour gives the impression that his only way out is a dramatic rebellion against the social entrapment that the monkey bars symbolise as the most dangerous element of the playground, "which had turned into a battleground, with many enemies" (192). In *New Boy*, freedom seems to require a huge sacrifice, which applies to Mimi as well who accepts to be Ian's accomplice in the pencil case affair only when he agrees to break up with her and leave her alone. The consequences of her "Mephistophelian" pact with her ex-boyfriend are terrible and eventually fall upon her, too. The numbness of her paralysed body at the end of the book is opposed to her high-functioning brain which, nonetheless, has always cost her the epithet of "strange" and the label of the outcast with witchy inclinations. She plays a fairy in a *Midsummer Night's Dream* performance, she has visions that show up as strong headaches and reads tarot cards, which she has used with Dee once "and said things would soon change drastically for her" (81). Hence, Mimi may be seen as the "magical" character who could have predicted (and maybe stopped) the course of the tragedy had she not been so psychologically fragile. In spite of the fact that when Mimi confesses her collusion with Ian it is already too late for her, her final revelation reflects Emilia's revolt before she is murdered by her husband, who orders her to hold her tongue and then insults her for disclosing

his plan: "No, I will speak as liberal as the north:/Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,/All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak" (*Othello*, 5.2.220-2).

> Ian was […] shaking his head. "Don't," he mouthed at Mimi.
>
> Mimi ignored him. He had already hurt her. What more could he do?
>
> […]
>
> "Do you want to know what Mimi did?" Ian began. "She's a real little bitch." (Chevalier, 200)
>
> EMILIA: O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief thou speak'st of
> I found by fortune, and did give my husband;
> For often, with a solemn earnestness—
> More than, indeed, belong'd to such a trifle—
> He begg'd of me to steal it.
>
> IAGO: Villanous whore! (*Othello*, 5.2.226-31)
>
> "I gave the case to Ian because he wanted it," Mimi said, speaking only to Osei, "and used it to get him to break up with me. Otherwise I would always be under his power, and I couldn't stand that. I'm sorry," she added. "I didn't know he would use it against you." (Chevalier, 200-201)

Like Iago, Ian does not seem to have any particular reason to behave like he did; when Iago/Ian's motivations are not clearly stated, they remain ambiguous. His actions "are dominated by this attempt to make others […] believe that he is motivated by all the reasons why normally nasty people ever do normally nasty things at any time or place: power, money, women" (McCanles: 1988, 1991, 200). This is not the case: Ian's wickedness appears to find its foundation and meaning only in itself, evil for evil's sake or, as Coleridge's note goes, "motive-hunting of motiveless malignity". This notion is eventually established by his answer when Osei asks him the reasons for his conduct: "Because I can" (Chevalier, 201).

As Chevalier has demonstrated, it is clear that the concept of the "outcast" is highly relatable for it concerns not only race but also gender and all those "unconventional" features or behaviours that often cause marginalisation and humiliation. In the scholastic microcosm, children start to emphasise the differences that they usually continue to focus on as adults, because "humans [cannot] help but compare" (67). In the book, this is mostly evident, for instance, when at recess the captains need to pick up the players for their kickball teams and Osei must "stand there as boys [are] chosen, bodies thinned from either side of him till he [stands] with just one or two others—the weak, the sick, the friendless. The black" (68), who are eventually taken as last resorts; or in the confinement of "the weak, the stupid, the smelly, or those who are disliked for some mysterious reason that no one understands" (104) at the canteen. Anyone is exposed to judgement, even Dee's apparent flawlessness which Mr. Brabant always keeps an eye on as if he were her bossy mother's *alter ego* at school, for example when Dee is reprimanded for her messy hair. So, a young readership is likely to sympathise with these characters because adolescents, unfortunately, know the feeling of being not beautiful enough, not smart enough, not white enough, not good enough very well, which often causes them to live their life as insecure adults or, in several cases, to end it prematurely. Teens' fragility is dealt with by Chevalier in an insightful and poignant way which is aimed at the heart of youths but also at those adults who should safeguard their growth.

2.1.3 Adolescence and monstrosity: Tiffany's and Carey's Caliban*s*

It would now be useful to return to Kristeva's definition of abjection for a moment: "What disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (Kristeva: 1982, 4). As was previously stated, some critics have detected a connection between the abject and adolescence. Adolescence, "like abjection, breaches and challenges boundaries [as] an in-between time, a time where what we know and believe about children is challenged, and what we hope and value about maturity is also

challenged" (Coats: 2000, 292). Caliban is the Shakespearean abject *par excellence* even though Thornton Burnett (2002) has called him "a creature of becoming who is notable eventually for failing to accord with any one 'monstrous' designation", whilst Prospero is both "the producer of wonders and [...] an instrument of the apocalypse" (126-127). Thus, Grace Tiffany's and Jacqueline Carey's choice to rewrite *The Tempest* for teenagers with Caliban as one of the central characters, representing Prospero as a potential "monstrous" figure, is certainly not by chance. Though, in *Miranda and Caliban* (2017), unlike Tiffany's *Ariel* (2005) that focusses more on a different Shakespearean "other" of *The Tempest*, Carey offers an original outlook on Prospero's daughter and the monster of the island by giving a voice to their inner selves, which Shakespeare may have disregarded. The multi-chaptered structure of the novel is also "multi-vocal" in the sense that it is presented like some kind of shared diary that combines both Miranda's and Caliban's viewpoints, expressed in first person. The stress on the background story and the introspection of two characters who are not allowed much space in the original play with respect to other male *and* white characters is interesting. The reader realises that Miranda is a sad, lonely girl who finds the relation with her father increasingly difficult to tolerate as she grows up. Caliban is brought up by Prospero and Miranda who teach him their language, even though Prospero never really acknowledges him as a son. Caliban is only a servant in Prospero's house and a casual playmate for Miranda: they keep each other company while Prospero is planning his revenge. Everything suddenly changes when both Miranda and Caliban reach puberty and they realise that their friendship has evolved into a strong attraction, which Prospero despises. In this sense, Miranda and Caliban may be two representatives of the Kristevan abject: Miranda, as an exuberant and curious girl by nature, crosses the boundaries that her despotic father has imposed on her since her birth; moreover, her adolescence marks the moment when her rebellion against the patriarchal "borders, positions, rules" reaches its climax; Caliban, as a wild orphan "boy" who worships the pagan god of his mother, who was probably an Algerian witch, embodies the "in-between, the ambiguous, the composite".

Hence, somehow they disturb the notions of "identity, system, order" that Western society dictates both at home and in the colonies.

Like *The Tempest*, *Miranda and Caliban* starts in *medias res*, though some years before the actual storm from which the original play begins. The novel mainly focusses on Miranda's and Caliban's childhood and adolescence on the island and their troubled love story. Miranda first sees Caliban by afar as "a tiny hunched figure clambering over distant rocks" (Carey, 17). When he finally approaches Prospero and Miranda, a rough darkness is Caliban's main feature according to Miranda's first detailed description of him. He looks more like a wary, dirty animal who has just peeped out of the jungle than an actual human being, which again reinforces the idea of his hybrid nature:

> Step by creeping step, he comes. It is hard, still, to make out his face, which is hidden by a ragged shock of coarse black hair that falls across his features. I catch a glimmer of dark eyes peering beneath the curtain of hair, wide and shining and moon-mazed. […] His skin is dark with grime and the nails of his fingers and toes are ragged and black. Even standing several paces away, I can smell the rank odor of him. (25-26)

Prospero is suspicious and orders the boy not to come too near. However, Miranda has the chance to look at him better. She notices that "his face is human. I can see enough of it now to be sure. His features are broader than Papa's and mine and the thrust of his jaw is stronger, but he's a boy; not a beast" (26). Caliban does not know it yet but, whilst Miranda wants him to be her friend, her father only wishes to teach him things in order to own him as a further trophy of the taming project of Western culture: "'Here is your new home,' he says. 'Here you may eat and drink, sleep deeply and be refreshed. Here we shall begin the great work of civilization'" is Prospero's announcement to Caliban before he pronounces the enchantment that will enslave the boy: "'By the grace and favor of the blessed Moon, by the strength of mine art and the very hairs of thine head,

I bind thee! Never shalt thou do aught to harm me or mine daughter Miranda, lest thee suffer torments untold'" (28).

In this novel, Prospero is full of contradictions: despite his Christian faith, he is portrayed as a powerful magician and an ambiguous scientist. His fault seems to dwell in his *hubris*, the consuming hunger for knowledge and the desperate longing to change what cannot be changed, to make nature work better, to dispose of human boundaries and go even beyond the supernatural so as to have a little taste of what merely God can touch: the unnatural. The liminality of science also belongs to witches' culture at Shakespeare's times. They were not monsters, though, but members of a community who believed in their existence however indefinite their nature was conceived to be. As far as witchcraft was concerned, the limits between magic and religion, human and supernatural, superstition and science, reality and imagination were difficult to determine. As the reader finds out later on in Carey's book, as a magician and a scientist Prospero "plays" with his arts that blur the border between magic and science in a disturbing way. He studies anatomy, for instance when he observes Caliban's sleeping body like a doctor would do on a corpse:

> He arranges the wild boy on his back, straightening his limbs. "Ah. We behold here is no actual deformity of the spine, which suggests his bestial crouch is born of habit, not necessity." He examines the wild boy's hands. "The layers of calloused flesh on his knuckles and palms suggest it is a habit of long standing. Why, one wonders?" He is talking mostly to himself. "There are no apes or monkeys on this isle where he might have learned such a habit." […] "By the height of the lad and allowing for the effect of deprivation on the natural process of maturation, I should gauge his age within the range of nine to twelve years." […] "Although by the breadth of his skull, it may be that he suffers from a form of dwarfism, and we might reckon him older."
> (Carey, 29-30)

Moreover, Prospero is keen on astronomy and astrology; he worships "Lady Moon" and uses a mirror, which easily recalls Dr John Dee's notorious black

looking-glass where he claimed he could see angels. One day, Caliban manages to spy on Prospero and see that on the mirror "[t]here are *faces* […]! Not Master's own face, no, but the faces of other men like him, old men with beards, and their lips move as though they are talking to each other" (219). When Miranda has her first period, Prospero asks his daughter to give him her blood to use it as a component for his spells, which may as well be included among the ingredients for the witches' cauldron in *Macbeth*. Prospero also wants her to paint the walls of his sanctum with the allegories of the planets, which will help him in his plan. Still, Prospero does not disclose its details to Miranda; he keeps a terrible secret which she uncovers by breaking the rule that does not allow her to enter her father's study without him. Prospero's room is depicted like a Bluebeard-ish chamber, where revolting stuff is concealed, or a sort of cabinet of curiosities where "[h]e deploys demonstration and accumulation to manage the 'strangeness' (V.i.247) of his island world, finding in these practices both opportunities for his psychological repair and the establishment of a magisterial authority" (Thornton Burnett: 2002, 129). Here Miranda finds an homunculus that her father has made out of his dead wife who, as Ariel tells Caliban, had died after giving birth to their daughter: "[O]ur dear master thought to use his arts to grow himself a homunculus to replace her. Poor deformed creature! It should never have been made" (Carey, 143). This hideous creature is kept in a glass jar that is filled with a liquid to preserve it like a dead animal, but it is alive and human:

> The thing floating in the jar is a tiny misshapen person. Its skin is as white and sickly as the gills of a mushroom. Its features are unformed blobs, but as I stare in sick fascination, its lids open to reveal pale, milky blue eyes. Its mouth opens and closes, and its limbs stir. […] It bobs as the liquid sloshes a bit. There is a thin braid of hair tied around one ankle like a tether, golden hair a shade darker than mine, the stray ends of strands floating in the liquid. (139-140)

Miranda accidently drops the jar which breaks and the homunculus dies "amid the shards […], its mouth opening and closing, gasping like a fish. Bubbles rise

from its lips. Its soft, narrow chest rises and falls; quickly at first, and then slower and slower". Prospero is enraged and punishes Miranda not only by inflicting excruciating pain on her, but also by making her feel guilty for her mother's first and second death: "'You've killed your mother all over again, Miranda,' he says in that soft, terrible voice, and his fist tightens on the amulet" (140). After her macabre discovery, the girl wonders whether her father's intentions are legitimate after all:

> Is that why Papa made the homunculus? Because he loved my mother too much to let her go, so much so that he sought to restore her in defiance of the Lord God's divine order? If that is so, then I cannot be sure that whatever great working Papa undertakes now is truly in the service of all that is good and holy. (232)

The unnatural deeds of her father, who once was the respectable duke of Milan, clarify his position which remains ambiguous in Shakespeare's play: what Prospero vaguely defines as "rough magic" (*Tempest*, 5.1.50) in *Miranda and Caliban* is plainly displayed as black magic that reaches the point of necromancy and is only "good for making servants and punishing them; yes, and for punishing his own daughter, too, punishing her almost to death" (Carey, 215). So, two different types of abjection are presented: while Caliban's "monstrosity" may only affect his external appearance, at least to Miranda's father, the "civilised" Prospero is utterly rotten on the inside, consumed by sorrow and anger that made him physically and psychologically misuse Caliban and even Miranda who are treated like any other instrument for his revenge. As Thornton Burnett (2002) argues concerning *Othello*, which may also be applied to *The Tempest*:

> [A] viewer can be easily deceived in the detection of 'monstrosity' and […] its ultimate locations are never self-evident. […] But the play […] reveals that 'monstrosity' enjoys a loose and even indeterminate habitation: it is not represented as generated by biology alone; it is not

only apprehended aesthetically; and it does not limit itself to accepted

national groupings. (122-123)

Interestingly, also language can be a weapon of psychological manipulation to obtain submission. Without an identity and some sort of communicative channel to articulate thoughts, the self cannot be expressed. As the story proceeds, Caliban learns how to master his linguistic skills, hence the chapters that give space to his increasingly high self-conscience are longer and longer. The first chapter in which he speaks represents the moment when Caliban acknowledges he has an identity and starts to provide his own point of view on the events. At first, he obsessively repeats his name, which sounds more like the cry of a parrot: "Caliban, Caliban, Ca-ca-ca-caliban!" (Carey, 45), or the song of a drunkard, like in the passage of *The Tempest* where he drinks the alcohol that Trinculo and Stephano offer him: "Ban' Ban' Ca-caliban" (*Tempest*, 2.2.179). Afterwards, he learns how other things are called and to count them; the following step concerns the moral division between good and bad; in the end, questions come. His learning progress reflects the natural cognitive development of children who, first of all, have to learn how to speak and associate names to what they see of the tangible world. Then, they develop critical thinking and, as a consequence of this, they begin to interrogate themselves about the reasons why things are what they are. Linguistic proficiency seems to be the turning point for legitimising Caliban's humanity; but, as Miranda fairly observes,

> Speech alone does not serve to make us civilized, nor clothing, nor
> courtesies; nay, not even reason. It is a matter of virtues—the virtues
> of honesty, of loyalty, of integrity, of obedience to a higher order.
> (Carey, 77)

It is clear that, if "civilisation" is understood in Miranda's terms, Caliban appears certainly much more civilised than her father, who employs reason not for the sake of virtue but for his benefit alone. Caliban is aware that "there is magic in words. There is magic in *knowing*" [original emphasis] (120), but knowing is not enough if it serves no virtuous purpose. For instance, despite his ignorance,

Caliban is respectful of nature and life for he kills only when it is necessary. As Daniel Wilson observes on Shakespeare's Caliban:

> […] Caliban is in perfect harmony with the rhythm of the breezes and the tides. His thoughts are essentially poetical, within the range of his lower nature; and so his speech is, for the most part, in verse. He has that poetry of the senses which seems natural to his companionship with the creatures of the forest and the seashore. Even his growl, as he retorts impotent curses on the power that has enslaved him, is rhythmical. (Wilson in Murphy: 2001, 138)

Conversely, Carey's Prospero exploits the island and everyone on it through his vast intelligence: he forces Miranda to help him sacrifice her favourite pets to please the heavens and enslaves Caliban who ends up loathing himself, or rather the monster Prospero has convinced him to be: "A monster he has *named* me and a monster he has shown me to myself, so it is a monster I will be" [added emphasis] (Carey, 193). It is evident that names are fundamental for Caliban and he adapts his conduct accordingly. The fact that he is told he is different from Miranda and that nonetheless he is attracted to her provokes shame in him because of his inner conflict that is both linguistic and, therefore, ethical. He has been educated with the dichotomies of good and bad, black and white, beautiful and ugly as principles that are not to be confused or mixed up. Caliban realises that Miranda is inaccessible to him, not because she does not care (in fact, she returns his love), but "because you are good and innocent and everything that I am not. […] One day you will hate me for what I am, as I have learned to hate myself for it" (203). For Caliban, whose mind has been manipulated both by Prospero and Ariel, two opposites must stay apart because that is how the world is supposed to work.

In Grace Tiffany's rewriting of *The Tempest*, Caliban's deformity is caused by Ariel who, conversely, is portrayed as a beautiful, winged she-spirit, but with no human feelings. Her graceful features recall an aerial nymph while her name may well belong to a seraph: in effect, "Ariel" means "the Lion of God" in Hebrew

and she often takes the shape of an angel with rainbow wings. As a supernatural, cold-hearted creature, Ariel does not understand humanity and only enjoys ephemeral shows and games which her fellow spirits, Acrazia, Nous and Fantasia, help her arrange. Sycorax is kidnapped by Vikings who have burned her village; she claims that she managed to arrive safe and sound to Ariel's island thanks to her prayers to Setebos, the goddess who protects pregnant women, but now she needs Ariel's collaboration. However, their relationship degenerates when Sycorax starts to get sick and tired of the spirits' absurd tales and dances: "In the beginning Sycorax enjoyed the spirits' company, but in time she grew angry at the four of them. […] And when she realized that the spirits would not work for her, that they did nothing but sing and dance and tell tales, she told them they were worthless" (Tiffany, 29). This is a blow for Ariel's immense pride and she grows increasingly disappointed in Sycorax and her inability to recognise her value. When Sycorax is ready to give birth to her son, Ariel refuses to assist her, and thus she provokes Caliban's disability:

> […] Sycorax cried with rage and cursed Ariel for her false friendship. Ariel did not recognize her bravery or understand her curses. She was made for beauty and fancy, and she did not know what courage or friendship was. What *she* saw was a mat-haired girl spattered with mud and yelling in agony.
>
> […]
>
> Helping hands could have guided his passage from the womb into the world, but his mother had had no helping hands, and so on the way out his leg had caught and now was bent in a way it should not have been. [original emphasis] (41)

The third-person narrator provides further explanation about the reason why Sycorax has entrapped Ariel, which is not specified in Shakespeare's original play. The spirit manipulates young Caliban from the inside of her wooden prison by trying to set him against his mother:

> *"She hates you because she is white and you are black. […] She was*
> *raised as a princess in the east, but she was a changeling. An evil elf*
> *baby, put in place of the real one. Her royal parents set her afloat*
> *because as she grew, she cast terrible spells on the land. She made*
> *crops fail and poisoned wells and spread plagues."* [original
> emphasis] (52)

Ariel's accusations echo the same charges that were usually raised against witches, who were thought to corrupt the crop, poison waters, kill the cattle and cause diseases. From the very first line of the novel, the reader is made aware that Ariel "is a liar [whose] work is not to tell the truth but to play" (1). Like Iago, Ariel is the real foe, not Sycorax: she contaminates minds for her own advantage. First, she deceives Caliban and succeeds in making him murder his own mother. Then, she does the same with Prospero once he arrives on the island with Miranda so as to set him against Caliban, who continues to warn Prospero against the devious spirit, and obtain freedom. There is a difference to be highlighted between this novel and Carey's, though: while in *Miranda and Caliban* Prospero seems to despise Caliban *a priori*, in *Ariel* the magus's inner conflict is more evident. He does not really know if he can trust the boy, so it is Ariel who, by poisoning Prospero's mind like Iago does with Othello, persuades him of Caliban's monstrosity, which is inevitably linked to his external appearance:

> Reaching into Prospero's mind, Ariel turned Caliban's pictured leer
> into a frightening snarl. "Not human," she whispered, almost below
> the level of Prospero's hearing. "Island animal."
>
> […]
>
> He nodded slowly. "Yee-e-es. You are beautiful. He is not. I have
> always been disinclined to believe his tales. […] No one so ugly and
> beastlike could tell the truth," he concluded. (124)

Again, the majority of characters connect physical ugliness, or rather a simple black face, to immorality, while a white face appears to be the synonym of

trustfulness and kindness. In Carey's rewriting, Ariel is also portrayed as an ethereal being, with the only difference that the spirit will be referred to with the pronoun "he" despite its androgynous look:

> The spirit is more substantial in appearance than the airy sylphs or the transparent undines, but less so than the earthy gnomes, and altogether more singular. It is fair to look upon, bearing the semblance of a slender youth with skin as white as the churning crests of waves, drifting hair as pale as fog, and eyes as changeable as the sea; one moment lucid and clear, the next dark and stormy with hidden depths. (Carey, 115)

In fact, Ariel's "beautiful smile" has "something cold and cutting in it" (115), which is a clear indication of a wicked nature that he cannot completely hide. Both authors seem to convey the message that, as happens in *Othello*, a white face can hide the blackest deception whilst the colour black becomes the mark of the deceived victim. In *Ariel*, Caliban is truly helpful to Prospero and his daughter because he assists them with practical matters; on the contrary, Ariel can only entertain them with made up stories and fireworks which do not support Sycorax during her labour and will not help Prospero with his plan of revenge either. So, the only way Ariel can convince Prospero once and for all that Caliban is not to be trusted is to make the magus believe that the boy wants to harm Miranda. So, Ariel seizes the opportunity of an innocent kiss that the two teenagers share to wake Prospero up and let him see the scene as she wants him to see it, which is to say as the attempted rape that is reported in *The Tempest*:

> *Bestial*, she whispered in Prospero's ear. *Twisted, stooped, and dark.*
>
> And suddenly Prospero saw a monstrous, ravening, half-naked beast, seizing his darling fourteen-year-old daughter with the clear intent to ravish her. [original emphasis] (Tiffany, 137)

Would Prospero have reacted less brutally to Miranda's and Caliban's love affair had he not been manipulated by Ariel? Anyhow, both in Carey's and Tiffany's

novels Caliban is not guilty for sexually harassing Miranda since, in both cases, she seems to give her consent to be touched:

> "Knave! Villain! Did I not forbid you to lay so much as a finger on my daughter?" [Prospero] asks grimly. "And instead you attack her and seek to *violate* her innocence?"
>
> "Papa, *no*!" I cry. "It's not his fault!" [original emphasis] (Carey, 255)

At this point, it might be necessary to go back to Miranda's understanding of speech and furtherly explore it. Speech is not enough in the sense that language is not enough because it does define neither a person nor a thing for real. It is just a conventional code that humans have invented to refer to things; furthermore, its use is bound to subjectivity. Hence, it cannot actually tell what things really are because, as Ferdinand de Saussure argues in *General Linguistics* (1916), "the bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary". In addition, de Saussure makes a difference between speech and language, respectively *langage* and *langue*:

> [W]hat is language [langue]? It is not to be confused with human speech [langage], of which it is only a definite part, though certainly an essential one. It is both *a social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty*. Taken as a whole, speech is many-sided and heterogeneous; straddling several areas simultaneously physical, physiological, and psychological it belongs both to the individual and to society; we cannot put it into any category of human facts, for we cannot discover its unity. *Language, on the contrary, is a self-contained whole and a principle of classification.* As soon as we give language first place among the facts

of speech, we introduce a natural order into a mass that lends itself to no other classification.[45] [added emphasis]

The injustice that emerges both in *Ariel* and in *Miranda and Caliban* is basically that *langue* decides what a monster is, a definition that is consequently bound to subjectivity. Moreover, love is governed by linguistic deception and magic, as in *Othello*. Ferdinand falls in love with Miranda merely thanks to some sort of magic trick:

> Ariel hovered a foot from Ferdinand's face, quickly beating her purple gossamer wings so that a perfumed breeze blew directly into the young man's eyes. The she rose, flew close to Miranda, and repeated the action. The hair of the lovers blew back from their faces as though pushed by a soft island breeze. They could not see Ariel or her wings, could see only each other. (Tiffany, 171)

> Of course, it is no harmless tisane of herbs and bark [Ferdinand] drinks, but a love potion wrought from my menstruum, the blood of my woman's courses which Papa has collected, reduced, and refined by his arts.

> The snare has been sprung. Behind my eyes, I see the image of Venus leering forth from the wall of Papa's sanctum. (Carey, 304)

At the end of *Miranda and Caliban*, Caliban is left alone on the island, which he finally regains as his but without Miranda at his side; in *Ariel*, on the contrary, Prospero decides to take Caliban with him to Italy where the boy will find a splendid house even though it is likely that in Milan he will suffer Othello's same treatment in Venice as the "black" outcast in "a world in which Caliban could never be seen as aught but monstrous" (343). The Western clothes he wears represent the achievement of his "domestication": "Caliban stood by the shore, looking resplendent but uncomfortable in silks and lace borrowed from Alonso's trunk, which had also survived the storm. He tugged at his collar and darted

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[45] De Saussure, F., *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, 1916, http://home.wlu.edu/~levys/courses/anth252f2006/saussure.pdf accessed on October 10th 2018

many surprised looks at his feet, which were now encased in velvet slippers" (Tiffany, 220).

Thus, while natural desires are suppressed, unnatural practices are carried out with no obstacles. Those who should not feel ashamed for who they are and how they feel are oppressed, when Ariel's and Prospero's treachery and brutality are left unpunished. Not only is monstrosity "inevitably socially and culturally determined" (Thornton Burnett: 2002, 152), but it is also linguistically manipulated in order to cause harm.

2.2 Adults' weakness and cruelty in *New Boy* and *Miranda and Caliban*

What often emerges in YA novels is adults failing as the "guardians" of teenagers' growth. Grown-ups are usually presented as negative figures who undermine adolescents' dignity and repress, rather than encourage, their development and search for identity. The trend of YA literature of recent years represents, for instance, distracted and self-centred parents who often struggle with divorce, addiction, job frustration and mental health issues[46]. Their problems usually degenerate in abusive behaviours or indifference towards their children who, like the protagonists of fairy tales, need to find their own way to rise "from rags to riches". However, in YA literature a happy ending is not always assured.

In Chevalier's *New Boy*, adults' failure is particularly evident in teachers and parents. The first adult to be introduced is Mr. Brabant who, despite his name, is not Dee's father but one of her teachers. He is portrayed as a tough man with control manias, probably misogynist and plainly racist as his opening sentence confirms when he sees Osei for the first time: "'Well, well,' Mr. Brabant remarked. 'I think I hear drums'" (Chevalier, 10). His features and behaviour

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[46] See Julie Just's article "The Parent Problem in Young Adult Lit" for *The New York Times* https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/04/books/review/Just-t.html (April 1st 2010), accessed on October 26th 2018

recall an officer who is used to giving orders: "[He] had a short, angled haircut that squared his head, and stood very straight. Someone told Dee he had fought in Vietnam" (8). Vietnam is also the first hint in the novel to the time when it is set: the 1970s represented a crucial historical moment when the United States had to face the horrors of a war that, even if it was fought in Asia, ignited several protests and demonstrations for peace all over the country. Dee's father is barely mentioned throughout the novel, so Mr. Brabant seems to replace him as her "parental guide" whom she wants to please, and for this reason she is sometimes called the "teacher's pet":

> He was one of the few male teachers in the school, and though it shouldn't have mattered, to Dee it made him the kind of teacher you always obeyed, the teacher you impressed if you could—the way she felt about her own father, whom she wanted to please when he came home from work. (11)

Decorum and reputation are fundamental for Mr. Brabant who constantly checks upon his students' moral conduct and, in particular, makes sure that Dee's long hair is always braided. His colleague Miss Lode, Lodovico's *alter ego*, is a typical middle-class, white, American woman with no particular attitude who appears to follow the rules rigidly: "She kept her appearance neat, except for her short blond hair that puffed out in a curly bob. Today she wore a lime green shirt, a yellow blouse, and green disks clipped to her ears. Her shoes were also green, with low square heels" (10). Despite the bright colours of her clothes, she is neither a brilliant teacher nor a cheerful person. The terms "squared" and "square" are used in Mr. Brabant's and Miss Lode's description as if to highlight their compliancy to the rigid social system that Osei, whose nickname is "O", challenges not only by being black, but also with the very different geometric figure that features the first letter of his name. Moreover, Miss Lode teaches geometry and she is currently explaining the figure of the isosceles triangle, which portends the Osei/Dee/Casper affair. The triangle recurs also when Ian suggests helping Mimi take down the American flag before the rain wets it. Like

Iago who, as Othello's ensign, takes advantage of his position to manipulate Emilia, Ian uses the excuse of the flag to get closer to Mimi in order to use her later on:

> Mimi […] folded her end on a diagonal so that it made a triangle, then folded it again and again, getting closer with each fold. Ian held the end close to his chest so that she had to come right up to him. When she was about a foot away, ready to make the last fold, Ian tugged the flag so that she fell into him, the triangle squashed between them as he lunged for her mouth. (25)

Miss Lode is the insecure and weak teacher who relies on Mr. Brabant for almost everything, admires his experience and thus never contradicts him:

> Miss Lode kept her wide blue eyes fixed on her colleague as if not wanting to miss any morsel of wisdom that might help her become a better teacher. […] Mimi had told Dee that once or twice her teacher actually cried in class. Behind her back her students called her Cry Baby Lody. (11)

However, it is not fair to state that Miss Lode is a completely negative character: she lacks confidence and assertiveness but, in the end, she is the only adult who manages to be courageous enough to oppose Mr. Brabant's racist treatment of Osei, which is plainly due to his presumptions and personal frustration:

> "[…] I wonder if we're being a little hard on him."
>
> "Hard on him? He just knocked a girl over!"
>
> "Yes, but… this can't be easy for him, being all alone in the school."
>
> "Life is not easy for anyone. If anything, he has it *too* easy. He'll grow up and walk right into a good job, thanks to affirmative action. A good job that someone more qualified should have done."
>
> "Did that happen to—Never mind." Miss Lode sighed. [original emphasis] (161-162)

She is probably right in assuming that Mr. Brabant was denied a better job position that was eventually assigned to a non-white American citizen thanks to affirmative action, namely a political instrument that countries employ to promote equity and social justice also through ethnic integration and assistance. Mr. Brabant's rage and consequent discrimination may echo Iago's frustration towards Othello's leading role in the army, which Iago expected to be given instead.

In the midst of the students' frenzy after the revealing of Ian's conundrum at the end of the novel, which mirrors the final trial in *Othello*, Miss Lode seems to be overwhelmed with anxiety and, for a moment, she freaks out: "'Stop it, all of you! Oh, where is Richard? Where is Mrs. Duke? I don't know what to do!' Miss Lode was crying now" (200). Despite her first hysterical reaction, she finally succeeds in recollecting herself and overtly rebelling against Mr. Brabant's violent xenophobia when he orders Osei to come down from the jungle gym:

> "Did you hear me, boy?" Mr. Brabant was incandescent, like a light bulb popping. "Get down from there, nigger!"
>
> Mimi jerked her head—the only part of her that she could move. Her parents had taught her that you never used that word. Never. Ever. You did not even think of it.
>
> The rest of the students were still and silent, rigid with the shock of hearing the word aloud—except for Ian, who continued to back away from the scene.
>
> "Stop that!" Miss Lode cried. She had turned bright red. […] "Stop that right now! You do *not* use that language, Richard. You do *not*." [original emphasis] (202)

The school principal is the last one to intervene and, in spite of her commanding position, she cannot convince Osei not to throw himself from the monkey bars, which confirms her lack of authority and empathy. Mrs. Duke does not share only the name with the Venetian duke in *Othello*; as a matter of fact, hypocrisy

seems to be their common feature since both tolerate the presence of a black boy in their respective domains even though their well camouflaged prejudice remains: "He may not be used to behaving in the ways we expect of *our* children" [added emphasis] (179) is Mrs. Duke's *gaffe* on the phone with Osei's mother to whom the principal reports her son's bad behaviour with Dee. Mrs. Duke is portrayed as a middle-aged woman whose presence is foretold by her strong perfume. She is ridiculed by students for her fake pearl necklaces and eccentric brooches with spider or snowflake shapes that she wears according to the season of the year: "Dee and her friends called her 'Spidey,' 'Flakey,' or 'Pearly,' depending on which she was wearing" (181). Also the Art teacher, Mrs. Randolph, is secretly mocked by her class for her bohemian style and pompous habit to use French words to boast about her trips to Paris. Despite her weirdness, Mrs. Randolph is very different from Mr. Brabant, Miss Lode and Mrs. Duke: she is a very enthusiastic teacher who encourages students to express themselves freely during her course: "There is no hierarchy here. There never is in art. There is just expression" (175), she claims. Nevertheless, none of these adults seem to gain and be worthy of the respect of their students, whom they cannot control: Mr. Brabant only strikes fear, while Miss Lode, Mrs. Randolph and Mrs. Duke are either too weak or superficial, hence they are often scorned because children do not recognise their authority. Actually, no adult is depicted in a positive way in Chevalier's novel: parents are almost invisible and their absence in the novel is a clear symptom of their non-participation in their children's life. Osei's father is indifferent: "If his father wanted to know any specifics about his son's day, he would ask. And since he never did, O kept quiet" (37), while Ian's is said to use violence to educate his son; Dee's mother is cold and austere: "Mimi had gone home with [Dee] after school a few times to play, and noted Dee's mother's thin mouth that never smiled, the pointed looks at her watch, the lack of a snack, the liver served for dinner, the heightened tension when the father arrived home and frowned at discovering an unexpected guest" (96-97); Osei's mother is fragile and too apprehensive. In any case, the majority of grown-ups appear to end up being toxic for children, especially teachers who do not behave much differently

from the bullies Osei has been confronting all his life: "When he made mistakes, Osei sensed the teachers nodding to themselves, secretly pleased. *This* was what they expected—a black boy messing up" [original emphasis] (63). Therefore, in this novel educators do not embody the good models that they should provide, as one of the canteen ladies comments about Osei's situation: "Teachers are as bad as the kids. Worse, 'cause they oughta know better" (99).

In both adaptations of *The Tempest* which this paper analyses, Prospero is not only a bad leader but also a failed father who definitely has priority issues: he has abandoned his dukedom for his books; similarly, his behaviour on the island leads him to take no notice of what is really important, which is to say his daughter's needs and desires as a teenager: "I wish Papa cared half as much for me as he does for this Ariel" (Carey, 79). However, with respects to Tiffany's Prospero, who is depicted more like an old man who is easily misled by forever young and sexy Ariel, Carey's is portrayed as a particularly dark character whose main feature is physical and verbal aggressiveness. He thinks of himself as superior to anyone else, a sort of demiurgic being who "sees the entire world as a game-board; and all of us lesser beings merely pieces upon it" (Carey, 319), as Miranda claims by echoing her chess match with Ferdinand. As a matter of fact, one of the most relevant issues in *Miranda and Caliban* is adolescents' undermined self-worth. As the emblem of the abusive adult who frequently appears as a stock character in YA novels, Prospero controls both Caliban and his daughter with his amulets, which he also uses to punish them through torture. He debases Caliban for obvious racist reasons, and Miranda for his chauvinism and, probably, an excess of protectiveness after the loss of his wife. Anyway, the result is that both teenagers grow up with problems of self-esteem and several insecurities: they are self-conscious orphans of at least one parent; their past is inaccessible to them and their future remains uncertain; above all, they both suffer from utter loneliness when they are not together. Caliban is mortified not only for his body, but also for his feelings for Miranda as he clearly states while gathering mussels:

> This work is suited to my hands, my monster's hands, rough and ugly
> with half-healed scrapes on the knuckles and sharp, ragged nails good
> for prying loose stubborn shells.
>
> These are not hands that should touch anything so fine as Miranda's
> skin, I think to myself; no, Caliban, they are not. (189)

Ariel is Prospero's assistant also for humiliating Caliban. The spirit has been causing him trouble even before it was freed from the pine tree where his mother had entrapped it. Caliban has revealed the name of Setebos under Prospero's threat in order to let his master set Ariel free; from this moment on, the spirit does not miss a chance to vilify Caliban to take revenge for Sycorax's deeds:

> "The sailors who brought thy cursed witch of a mother to this isle,
> bound in chains and gravid with child, did gossip amongst themselves
> […]. Some did claim that thy father was an imp from the pits of hell,
> and some did claim that he was the fiercest of Barbary pirates, black
> of hide and heart. But others… ah!" Ariel drops his voice to a
> whisper. "Others claimed that thy mother mated with a great ape, a
> dumb, hairy beast from the deepest, darkest jungles." (124-125)

When Miranda tries to defend Caliban and reports Ariel's calumnies to her father, Prospero quickly dismisses the matter as "no fit topic for a lass of your tender years" (126). He even minimises Ariel's bullying to confirm his own prejudices against Caliban and his parents:

> "Yet I will say that while whatever deviltry Sycorax practiced may
> have affected Caliban ere his birth, having examined the lad at length,
> I am quite certain that his father was a mere mortal and human. […]
> What *manner* of human, I cannot say; and indeed, we may never
> know. No one wholesome of a character, of that you may be sure."
> [original emphasis] (127)

Caliban's self-hatred is increasingly fuelled by Ariel, who compares him to the good match whom Prospero shall eventually choose for his daughter:

"He shall not be swart and stooped, with hunched shoulders and bowed legs," he says, and his appearance shifts. "Nor shall he have a villain's low brow and out-thrust jaw."

I recognize myself take shape before me.

"He'll not have hair as coarse as a pony's mane, nor sullen eyes that glower beneath it," Ariel continues, and now his voice is as rough and harsh as my own. A sprinkling of darker moles emerges to dot the brown skin of his face and throat and shoulders. "He'll not be speckled like a toad."

I see myself.

I am ugly and misshapen.

It is a thing which Ariel has told me before, but today he has *shown* me. Now I understand it truly in my bones, an understanding that sinks into me like a heavy stone into those dark tides.

Beside Miranda, I am a monster. [original emphasis] (175)

In this adaptation, young bodies are insulted and humiliated; Caliban is convinced that his desire for Miranda is illicit and he soon develops a feeling of self-annihilation: "I pray to Setebos to take the wanting away, but Setebos only laughs at the stars, laughs and laughs as though to say, no, this is what you are, Caliban, not even I can change it". Sexual drive is experienced by Caliban not as a human trait, but rather as a torment: "[I]t is cruel that a thing that is bad should feel so good" (236). Also Miranda's growing body is the target of Prospero's absurd theories: "It is Eve's punishment you endure, child", he says concerning her menstruation, which makes Miranda feel guilty of being a woman "weak in body and will" (167) who must accept her subjugated condition and atone for any act of disobedience. Prospero hides behind religion to legitimise his god-like position; in actual fact, "Christian religion is marginalized, for Prospero as theurgist on his island is the controller and worker of miracles" (Foakes: 2003, 203). By demeaning innocents, the magus may be projecting on them his own

moral corruption; like some disturbed parents do with their children, he unconsciously takes his sufferings out on Miranda and Caliban. By doing so, he hopes to clear himself from guilt, but he only produces more traumas. The fact that Prospero is Miranda's father and Caliban's tutor does not give him the right to oppress them just because they diverge from their pre-ordered paths. Prospero uses gratitude as a weapon to control both teenagers and make them feel guilty if they disrespect him: "For Prospero […] Caliban is 'monster' because he fails to respect the gift of an accommodating paternal protection" (Thornton Burnett: 2002, 133). For example, when Caliban seems to be unwilling to say the name of his mother's deity, Prospero roars:

> "Did I not bring you into our home? Have I not bathed and clothed you, fed and sheltered you? Have my daughter and I not taught you the rudiments of language? Have we not transformed you from a filthy, savage beast crawling on all fours to something that bears the semblance of a man, walking upright and capable of rational thought?" (Carey, 75)

Miranda is not treated very differently; Prospero decides not to punish his daughter further after catching her in Caliban's arms only because he thinks her rebellion is the "just penance" (262) for his own past sins:

> "Shall I thank you for it?"
>
> Papa frowns. "You should give thanks to the good Lord God in His mercy and wisdom that His servant Ariel alerted me before your honor was wholly despoiled," he says in a curt voice. "If you would give thanks to me, I will take it in the form of your unquestioning obedience." (263)

In *The Tempest*, the "proneness to violence is a feature of the hierarchical society from which Prospero has been exiled" (Foakes: 2003, 196); one of his several disturbing creations is that of "a ghostly family: the witch Sycorax and her monster child, Caliban (himself, as becomes apparent, a surrogate for the other wicked child, the usurping younger brother), the good child/wife Miranda, the

obedient Ariel, the violently libidinized adolescent Ferdinand" (Orgel in Murphy: 2001, 232). What is also disquieting is that "Prospero's magic power is exemplified, on the whole, as power over children: his daughter Miranda, the bad child Caliban, the obedient but impatient Ariel, the adolescent Ferdinand, the wicked younger brother Antonio" (239). This is a play of orphans of at least one parent, namely the mother, so "[t]he family paradigm that emerges from Shakespeare's imagination is a distinctly unstable one" (237), which is a concept that may equally be applied to families and teachers in *New Boy*.

These plays and their adaptations demonstrate that a hierarchical society retains violence as one of its main features. If this kind of society is seen as a body, power relations represent the backbone that supports its head and weighs on its feet. When it is not verbal or physical, violence can be psychological, for instance when Prospero forces Miranda to watch the shipwreck; even though he assures her that "There's no harm done" (*Tempest*, 1.2.15), she cries at the "direful spectacle" (1.2.26) "exemplifying his powers as a magician, and also the potential for violence in him. It is an appropriate beginning for a play in which a barely suppressed violence threatens always to break through the veneer of civilization" (Foakes: 2003, 196). Subjection and discrimination are carried out against "the other" who is used as a scapegoat for exorcising the darkness within the violent through a "destructive urge in the exercise of power" (202), as in Mr. Brabant's and Prospero's cases. At this point, the key word for both Chevalier's and Carey's novels may be "abuse", a term which does not forcibly entail sexual harassment. Adults can abuse children in several ways, for example by being too weak or too aggressive, either too absent (like Osei's father) or too intruding (like Prospero) in their children's lives, which at any rate causes dysfunctional and toxic relationships.

2.3 Feminist tempests: unruly Miranda*s* and Ariel*s*

> For "woman" is never an already accomplished, cold, hard, self-
> evident fact or category, but always a malleable cultural idea as well
> as a lived reality that, to use a Derridean formulation, *always already*
> *has a history*. [original emphasis] (Callaghan: 2000, 2001: xii)

The Tempest has inspired multiple postcolonial readings since the 1960s when
critics' attention moved from Prospero as a peacemaker to Caliban as the
oppressed native. While in Shakespearean studies Postmodernism mostly
analysed *The Tempest* in the light of colonial issues, with Caliban as the main
victim of imperialist oppression, it has been noticed that, over the last thirty years
of twentieth century, Miranda has been frequently neglected as the daughter of a
patriarch who uses her for his own purposes[47]. In actual fact, the play is also open
to feminist and gender reflections upon not only Miranda's, but also Ariel's
character. In Tiffany's and Carey's adaptations, both Miranda and Ariel represent
two figures of transgression and rebellion in different ways. Shakespeare's "last"
play also raises the question of the legitimacy of power and the ruler's worth to
detain it. Prospero's accident in Milan echoes the dethronement of Rudolf II who
was forced to renounce his dominion upon Austria, Hungary and Moravia to his
brother Mathias in 1608 due to an excessive commitment to his studies, which
distracted him from his duties. Thus, the theme of usurpation is also fundamental
in the play, which Grace Tiffany's *Ariel* largely explores. Apart from the title of
the book, which immediately defines who the main character is, the prologue
opens with the heading "She begins": the reader is straightforwardly informed
that here the focus is set on a minor female character who, in a sense, already
"usurps" a male role by being at the core of a story which is originally centred on
men, "an absolutely male realm" (Callaghan: 2000, 120). As a matter of fact, not
so many women appear in *The Tempest*: apart from Miranda, only Ferdinand's
sister Claribel and Sycorax are mentioned, together with a brief hint at Prospero's

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[47] Muñoz Valdivieso, S., *Double Erasure in The Tempest: Miranda in Postmodern Critical*
Discourse, Universidad de Málaga, 1998, pp. 299-301, see PDF
https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/1984428.pdf

wife. In this play, mothers are physically absent but psychologically significant: they represent "the repressed alternative to Prospero's resolutely patriarchal history"; besides, as *The Tempest* is a play of missing or defective memories, these women "are not well remembered" (119-120), so, except Claribel, they are alive only in Prospero's perspective of their story, which seemingly divides them between good mothers (Miranda's) and bad mothers (Caliban's). Despite the fact that, especially in Shakespearean tragedy, "women […] seem to split into […] victims or monsters, 'good' or 'evil'" (Berggren in Swift Lenz, Greene and Neely: 1980, 18), *The Tempest* as a tragicomedy may in fact offer various instances of female empowerment, too. It could be argued that in this particular play, as Juliet Dusinberre observes about masculinity and femininity in Shakespeare,

> [m]en and women perform on stage the gender roles which they are required to perform in society, thus highlighting the theatricality inherent in social behaviour. In doing so they unsettle those social roles by demonstrating that they play parts which have been learnt, rather than determined by innate characteristics. (Dusinberre: 1996, xxi-xxii)

Both Claribel and Sycorax are linked to North Africa: the former has become the queen of Tunis and the latter is an Algerian woman who is accused of witchcraft. Sycorax is also the only non-white Shakespearean female character apart from Cleopatra[48] who is usually linked to the exotic and erotic realm of the East. Generally speaking, "Shakespeare's female characters strive to express their sexuality as an integral element of their identities and potential happiness, [and] these women typically find that patriarchal culture […] is determined to thwart them in their desires" (Stanton: 2014, 9). In particular, in *The Tempest* women are feared (by men) to be either sexually corrupted or unworldly. Miranda is

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[48] Sachdev, R., "Sycorax in Algiers: Cultural Politics and Gynecology in Early Modern England" in *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. by Dympna Callaghan, UK and USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000, 2001, pp. 208-209

mistaken by Ferdinand to be a goddess, for example, thus her Western purity highly contrasts with Sycorax's Eastern, hence vicious, nature that she shares with other well-known enchantresses such as Circe, Medea and Dido[49]. Stephen Orgel compares Sycorax to Medea, also known as the "Scythian raven", by reconstructing the Greek roots of Caliban's mother's name and isolating *Sy* (Scythia, an area than nowadays would cover Kazakhstan, Southern Russia and a portion of Eastern Europe) and *korax* (raven)[50]. There may be a reference to another Greek word, *sus,* which means "sow" (another animal associated with witchcraft and, in particular, to Circe's "pets")[51]. In Greek mythology, ravens were sacred to Apollo, the god of prophecy, and it is said that the he used them as messengers. In *The Tempest*, Sycorax is indeed linked to this animal by her son as well, who curses Prospero and Miranda upon his entrance on the scene: "As wicked dew as e'er my mother brushed/With raven's feather from unwholesome fen/Drop on you both. A southwest blow on ye/And blister you all o'er" (*Tempest*, 1.2.322-4). As a bird of omen, a raven is also heard by Lady Macbeth immediately before she makes the speech which will conjure the hellish spirits that must drain all feminine weakness from her:

> The raven himself is hoarse
>
> That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
>
> Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
>
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
>
> And fill me from the crown to the toe, top-full
>
> Of direst cruelty. (*Macbeth*, 1.5.37-42)

As a matter of fact, Sycorax and Lady Macbeth may share the impossibility of giving birth to anything but evil creatures due to "a sexuality so out of tune with its procreative potential that it breeds villainy rather than children" and "[w]hen

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[49] Purkiss, D., "The Witch on the Margins of 'Race': Sycorax and Others", in *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations*, New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 250-275

[50] Orgel, S., "Introduction" to *The Tempest*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, pp. 19-20

[51] Shakespeare, W., *The Tempest*, ed. by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, London and New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2011, p. 189, footnote 258

female lechery is not actually sterile, its progeny is malignant" (Berggren in Swift Lenz, Greene and Neely: 1980, 24). Accordingly, like Lady Macbeth, Sycorax is charged with mystical practices, but it is also connected to an ill-omened fate. Moreover, Sycorax's origins mark her appearance and morals and vice versa: "The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy/Was grown into a hoop" (*Tempest*, 1.2.258-9). This passage throws light on the Renaissance stereotypes of witches who, as Gareth Roberts observes[52], were generally described as ugly, old and sullen[53]. Nonetheless, these labels do not really suit Sycorax since, as a non-European witch, for instance, she "dominates and 'emasculates' Ariel by keeping him in servile bondage, and thus can be seen to fit the role of the sexually voracious and dominating older woman" (Sachdev in Callaghan: 2000, 2001, 223). Also, in a sense, Sycorax may recall the legendary Amazons who, "while not physically monstrous, offend against the laws of kind by excluding men and propagating promiscuously outside of marriage" (Gillies: 1994, 14) and "are located in Scythia, exactly where the Greeks had located them" (37). Sycorax's empowerment over male characters is not only represented by her possible complicity with "potent ministers" (*Tempest*, 1.2.275), which may recall the spirits summoned by Macbeth's witches, but also by a certain amount of fascination.

According to Prospero's story, it is possible that also Miranda's mother was suspected of sexual immorality. This may be deduced by the fact that she felt it necessary to specify who her little girl's father was: "Thy mother was a piece of virtue and/*She said* thou wast my daughter" [added emphasis] (1.2.56-7). As Orgel observes, "Prospero's wife is identified as Miranda's mother, in a context implying that though she was virtuous, women as a class are not, and that were it not for her word, Miranda's legitimacy would be in doubt" (Orgel in Murphy: 2001, 231). Prospero's chief concern, which reaches the limits of obsession, is to

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[52] Roberts, G., "The Descendants of Circe: Witches and Renaissance Fictions" in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief*, ed. by Jonathan Berry, Marianne Hester and Gareth Roberts, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 184

[53] Sachdev, R., "Sycorax in Algiers: Cultural Politics and Gynecology in Early Modern England" in *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. by Dympna Callaghan, UK and USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000, 2001, p. 220

preserve Miranda's virginity intact because, in a "brave new world" (*Tempest*, 5.1.183) of carnal temptations, the continuity of his lineage depends on her successful marriage. Besides, Ferdinand clearly states which characteristics he requires from his future bride: "O, if a virgin,/And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you/The queen of Naples" (1.2.450-2)[54]. As Miranda's name suggests, being herself "a wonderer", she seems to exist "to be wondered at rather than understood" (Berggren in Swift Lenz, Greene and Neely: 1980, 29). Robert F. Willson, Jr. argues that "[n]ot only does Miranda symbolically embody the emotion of wonder […], she also describes the 'brave new world' that Shakespeare envisions as the state in which humanity has finally recovered from the Fall" (Willson, Jr. in Hunt: 1992, 47). In "The Miranda Trap. Sexism and Racism in Shakespeare's *Tempest*", Lorie Jerrell Leininger observes that 1613 was the year of James I's daughter's marriage to Frederick the Elector Palatine and also the year of the second performance of *The Tempest*, which was organised at court for the occasion. The analogies between Elizabeth and Miranda are several: they are both very young (Elizabeth got married at sixteen), beautiful, obedient and chaste girls. However, the dependency of Elizabeth and Frederick upon King James exacerbated their military and political failures; also, Elizabeth's life was stricken by tragedy, first of all her husband's death to the plague, and later on the loss of two of her sons who drowned[55]. So, despite being subdued to males' authority, like unfortunate Elizabeth, Miranda is "a key element in the dynamics of power" even though "it is clear that [she] will remain a property that has passed from father to husband [and] no more than a foot in a family structure in which the controlling head is Prospero" (Muñoz Valdivieso: 1998, 302).

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[54] Sachdev, R., "Ibid", in *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. by Dympna Callaghan, UK and USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000, 2001, p. 214

[55] Jerrell Leininger, L., "The Miranda Trap. Sexism and Racism in Shakespeare's *Tempest*" in *The Tempest. Critical Essays*, ed. by Patrick M. Murphy, London and New York: Routledge, 2001, pp. 223-224, (originally published in *The Woman's Part. Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. by Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely, Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1980)

As a supernatural creature, Shakespearean Ariel's gender represents a dilemma. The spirit seems indeed to be an androgynous, aerial creature whom Prospero often addresses with affection as "my spirit" (*Tempest*, 1.2.215), "fine spirit" (1.2.421), "my Ariel" (3.3.84), "my delicate Ariel" (4.1.49), "my bird" (4.1.184), "my diligence" (5.1.241), "chick" (5.1.317). The repetition of the possessive adjective "my" and of pet names is probably used by Prospero to remind Ariel of his superior hierarchical position together with the recounting once a month of what happened with Sycorax, a repetition that may possibly "serve to reinscribe Ariel's memory with Prospero's version of events" (Callaghan: 2000, 105). The spirit often asks the magician for recognition and confirmation of its worth. By doing so, the master/slave dynamics are reinforced: "Do you love me, master? No?" (*Tempest*, 4.1.48), "Was't well done?" (5.1.240). Prospero's relationship with Ariel seems to diverge from the one he has with Caliban, even though they are both his servants. They obey in fear of punishment or imprisonment but, apart from the birthplace they share, they are very different creatures. Unlike Ariel, who is as ethereal as hypocrite, Caliban, who is brutal but sincere, never flatters Prospero. In fact, he holds a grudge against a man who could have become his foster father:

> Thou strok'st me and made much of me; wouldst give
> Water with berries in't; and teach me how
> To name the bigger light, and how the less,
> That burn by day and night. And then I loved thee […]
> (*Tempest*, 1.2.332-6)

This passage suggests that there might have been a time when Prospero has treated Caliban like a son, acknowledged Caliban's "humanity" and agreed that he could live by his side with Miranda. It has been also suggested that "[t]he intensity of Prospero's colonial desire for the unrepresentable Sycorax and his venomous paternalism in relation to Caliban expose the possibility that Caliban might be the misshapen progeny of Prospero himself" (Callaghan: 2000, 134). In this case, Prospero's animosity towards Caliban would correspond to his disgust

for what John Gillies calls "misgeneration", a characteristic that mythological monsters share as "the offspring of literally 'promiscuous' unions between creatures of different kinds" (Gillies: 1994, 13). The same concept may be applied to Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda: if she was his "stepsister", with his crime Caliban would have failed as a human being and confirmed his status of a "barbarian [as] a transgressor of bounds and a violator of prohibitions: notably the prohibition on incest upon which rests the institution of the family and ultimately that of the state" (14). On the contrary, even when Prospero insults Ariel as he would do with Caliban by calling it "malignant thing" (*Tempest*, 1.2.258) when it insists to obtain freedom, the spirit always addresses him enthusiastically and submissively: "All hail, great master; grave sir, hail!" (1.2.189), "I thank thee, master" (1.2.294), "That's my noble master" (1.2.300). Of course, despite Prospero's endearing names and yet abusive behaviour, Ariel's utterly servile attitude lasts until the magician eventually dismisses the sylph. At this point, the spirit vanishes without saying a word, as happens in Carey's *Miranda and Caliban*: "There is no great thunderclap this time, no great rush of wind; only a sound like a sigh, and then Ariel is gone" (Carey, 329).

From the very beginning, Tiffany's female Ariel is presented as a selfish creature and the reader is straightforwardly warned against her tendency to lie: "The first thing you should know about Ariel is that she's a liar. Dreams lie, and she is both dream and the maker of dreams. *Her work is not to tell the truth but to play*" [added emphasis] (Tiffany, 1). The fact that Ariel is a dream that has been given a shape resonates with Prospero's most famous line, which hints at the illusion of reality at the theatre where actors do not tell the truth but merely play a part: "We are such stuff/As dreams are made on, and our little life/Is rounded with a sleep" (*Tempest*, 4.1.156-8). If Ariel were human, she would be a selfish, vain and mischievous woman, but as she is a spirit issued from a dying man's imagination, "a dream [with] no heart" (Tiffany, 4), she should transcend all human emotions. She looks more like an angel with "colored wings" (5), a gorgeous, supernatural, immortal creature with no feelings. In fact, Ariel can feel something that resembles joy, anger, frustration, satisfaction: in order to fight boredom, for

instance, she creates new spirits to play with until one day, several centuries later, she meets another human being, Sycorax, who is expecting a child. Ariel cannot understand this rough woman's feelings and needs, and only focusses on the trivial fact that Sycorax does not greet her with the same reverence that Ariel thinks she deserves. So, she is actually a spirit who is not totally immune to emotions, but what she lacks is compassion (from the Latin word *compassio*, which means "suffer with") because she is unable to recognise her own feelings in others, as Shakespeare's Ariel points out about showing mercy towards the Neapolitans: "Mine would, sir, were I human" (*Tempest*, 5.1.20). Ariel is nothing like Miranda whose main feature is pity for others, and "[h]ers is the immediate, unreflective response to tragedy: compassion for the sufferers" (McGrail: 2001, 119). This is clear since the very first scene in the play where she cries for the ship crew's fate, but also towards Caliban before his rape attempt against her: "I pitied thee,/Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour/One thing or other" (*Tempest*, 1.2.354-56). Unlike Miranda, Tiffany's Ariel's self-absorption leads her to concentrate only on personal desires and use people in order to achieve her goals. However, Ariel is not very powerful: she needs a "champion", someone who can help her conquer the rest of the island that is still inaccessible and occupied by some local tribes. The spirit's dominion on the island appears to be under threat: Ariel's "aesthetic offices, in contrast to the brute material labors of Caliban, do not seem to endow him with a sufficient material solidity to inhabit the earth let alone stake a territorial claim on it" (Callaghan: 2000, 101). When Prospero and Miranda arrive, despite the magician's dissatisfying appearance, Ariel realises that he is not a common human being, so he could be of some use to her: "It was her province to read thoughts. No human had ever before read hers! And yet her knowledge of humans was not great. […] What *was* this man? […] Was he, after all, a fellow spirit? Though how could a spirit look so… *unpromising?*" [original emphasis] (Tiffany, 91). As a calculating creature, Ariel controls Prospero's mind and agrees to become his assistant in exchange for freedom from the tree where she was encaged. In fact, also Prospero tempts Ariel's narcissism by promising that she will be given several

people to charm in Europe and that they will share the power over the world from west to east. They both take advantage of each other's magical tools, Ariel for her plan of conquest and Prospero for his revenge. Like Iago, Ariel may be compared to the allegoric stock character of Vice who, in Medieval morality plays and Renaissance masques, sought to control Everyman's soul through temptation. This notion is mostly evident every time Ariel tries to set Prospero against Caliban, but also as regards Ferdinand:

> At his first sight of the pale youth, [Prospero] started and looked dubious, as though a sudden memory had told him his plan might not, after all, be the best one. Ariel raced to him and kissed his ear. "Dear master, it works!" she whispered. "What a glorious young man, and *so* wealthy! He will make your daughter a queen!" [original emphasis] (168)

Prospero vaguely remembers that the boy was "a spoiled and whining child […] Always stuffing himself with sugarsops" (170). So, unlike Shakespeare's Prospero, Tiffany's magus is not so sure that Ferdinand may be the best catch for his daughter, who is portrayed as a more mundane girl than the delicate Milanese maiden of the original play:

> She was square faced […] and her nose was blunt. Her form was muscular and solid and a little bit plump. But as Ariel danced before Ferdinand's eyes, throwing clouds into them, she grew to him as slender as a reed, and her skin blanched and became as lily-white as the skin of certain Neapolitan ladies he had been told were the loveliest of their kind. Her green eyes shone like the emeralds old Gonzalo hoped to find growing on the island's palm trees. (169)

Tiffany also explores Ferdinand's personality by adding some details that do not emerge in the play in order to "normalise" his character for her young adult readership and thus provoke empathy: he is quite a shallow, peevish boy who constantly worries about his attire and whose mind is literally clouded by the false image of Miranda that Ariel conjures up. At the end of the novel, when the

dukes' company embarks to return home and all enchantment ends, the two teenagers again reveal themselves for who they really are: Miranda a tomboy who calls Alonso's son a "fool", and Ferdinand a girlish, superficial brat who does not like Miranda because he is told that she rapped him on the head with a box of sweets when they were children:

> Shoes had also been found for Miranda, among the sailors – her feet were rather large – and Antonio had given his niece a cape of sea-green satin, which set her eyes off well. She stood near her father, her reddish hair blowing wild about her face. Whenever her eyes met Ferdinand's, both of them looked away in embarrassment.
>
> […]
>
> [Ferdinand] had twisted his hair around pinecones that morning, and his locks were once more curly. […] "Oh, I wish I had not lost my velvet cap in the storm! *When* will we be back in Italy?" [original emphasis] (221)

As a matter of fact, Tiffany seems to recognise the danger of idealised relationships, such as Othello's and Desdemona's, so she breaks the enchantment set on Ferdinand and Miranda so as to make them look at each other for real. Also, this novel appears to convey the idea that men are not the smartest creatures on earth and they can be easily manipulated by women. For this reason, Tiffany may have chosen the female gender for Ariel, who might thus echo the she-devils of folklore, a *femme fatale* or, thanks to her connection to the sea and her wings, a seductive siren or a harpy (which is the shape that Ariel takes in *The Tempest*). Besides, what would Shakespeare's contemporaries have thought about a servant *and* a woman enabled to manipulate her master and instruct him on what he needs to do? A darker reading of this character may also see her as Satan hidden in the tree of knowledge in the garden of Eden, which Prospero hints at upon his arrival on the flourishing island: "'Surely this is the welcoming parlor of Paradise! And yet, and yet… there might be dragons. Or snakes'" (80).

Carey's more recent adaptation revisits Shakespeare's island as a potentially dangerous place full of temptations for a young, innocent girl like Miranda who is, nonetheless, curious by nature. Despite being a quite erudite girl, she knows almost nothing of her Milanese past since Prospero never disclosed a single detail about her origins. So, she grew up in constant search for answers, which conforms to the complicated identity quest as a fundamental *topos* of YA literature. As a teenager, Miranda's willing to know more of the world increases and Ariel (who is here given a male gender) takes advantage of her naïveté by tempting her to cross the boundaries that her father has imposed on her. After the accident with the homunculus in the sanctum, Prospero tries to repress more severely any deviant behaviour that his daughter may display by means of religious oppression. He uses the excuse of Miranda's first period, which is particularly painful, to warn her against the consequences of women's insubordination:

> "[God] said unto Eve, *I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.* It is Eve's punishment you endure, child."

> "But I am not guilty of Eve's sin," I protest in a low whisper; yet even as the words leave my mouth, I know that they are untrue. I succumbed to Ariel's temptation even as Eve succumbed to that of the serpent in the garden. I disobeyed Papa as surely as Eve disobeyed God." [original emphasis] (Carey, 167)

At first, Miranda appears to rebel against her father's superstition and bigotry, who would want her to be a subdued daughter and a modest wife-to-be, but eventually she resigns to her cruel reality:

> Contemplating the price of disobedience as Papa bade me, I come to see that the trust that I lost when I disobeyed him can never be regained, no more than Adam and Eve can hope to regain the lost paradise of Eden after disobeying God. Like Eve, I sought knowledge

forbidden to me; and like Eve, I have only myself to blame for my sin.
(176-177)

On the day of the storm that brings the ship onto the island, Miranda realises that her whole life has been prearranged in view of this event and that her fate has always depended on Prospero's design, which also implies that she will have to marry Ferdinand and, by consequence, part from Caliban. What she resents the most is the fact that her father has excluded her from his machinations just because she is a woman (*and* his daughter) because he could not allow any interference to ruin "the undertaking of a lifetime" (310). More or less consciously, Prospero continues to make mistakes and let his paranoias overwhelm him: due to Miranda's influence upon him and to the trauma of losing his wife, whom he erroneously suspected of betrayal, Prospero seems to reject the chance to be hurt by feelings again, and so he finds refuge in cold reason. His studies and stubbornness made him fail as a leader and a husband in the past, and now he fails as a parent as well: "Papa, I think, does not like to be wrong. I do not think he understands how a world can exist in which he is wrong and I am right" (292). He takes his daughter's free will away in order to spare her the suffering that Eve had to undergo. As he did with his dukedom in Milan, he again manages to destroy what he cares about the most. Like Hermia's father who, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, makes her see herself "but as a form in wax/By him imprinted, and within his power/To leave the figure or disfigure it" (*MND*, 1.1.47-51), Prospero is that "deified father-figure [who] is to be regarded as solely creating the female and holding the power to imprint upon her as he sees fit, even if he disfigures her in the process" (Stanton: 2014, 4). And Miranda is indeed "disfigured". Even after her past has been revealed at last, her shattered identity cannot be recomposed because she is not permitted to live or love as she wishes: "I am a stranger to myself" (Carey, 301). Prospero is willing to sacrifice Miranda's happiness for the ceasefire with his brother Antonio and, possibly, his return on the throne. Through the marriage of his daughter to the Neapolitan duke's son, "giving away Miranda is a means of preserving his authority, not of relinquishing it" (Orgel in Murphy: 2001, 242) because, with Prospero's death,

Antonio will lose all rights to the dukedom of Milan. As far as father-daughter relationships are concerned in Shakespeare, however, in early comedies like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* "these relationships are mostly superficial, serving as the occasions for rebellious or defiant daughters to satisfy their wills" (Willson, Jr. in Hunt: 1992, 38). On the contrary, in late romances like *The Tempest* "daughters […] are the victims of more destructive forces in nature and humankind" and the fathers' "separations and reunitings with estranged daughters seem to mark the recovery of fallen humanity in general" (48). In Carey's novel, though, there is no such thing as "a return of paradisiacal happiness for individuals and society" (47) that marriage could mend. Hence, Prospero's retrieval of his power position implies the sacrifice of a possible regeneration of Miranda's fragmented identity. Like Caliban, she is the victim of "civilised" white men against whom she cannot rebel, and this is not because she is a weak girl: she has never met other men except her father and Caliban, so she has not the slightest idea about how to behave and handle the male presence, which is too menacing for her. After all, she has been taught that men are not to be trusted:

> There are things, so many things, I should like to say.
>
> […]
>
> But I say nothing. There are too many men; their presence stifles me, their voices crash over me like the waves of the ocean. Dear God, how shall I endure on a ship filled with dozens of such men in close quarters? How shall I endure in a *city* filled with hundreds or even thousands? I fear I shall go mad. [original emphasis] (Carey, 326)

Miranda's only criterion of comparison to describe the effect of men on her is the ocean, which she knows very well, with its frightening strength and depth. So, Miranda's confinement causes her exclusion, not only from the male world, but from society altogether.

The family structure in *The Tempest* is pyramidal with Miranda as

> the foot in the family organization of which Prospero is the head. Hers
> not to reason why, hers but to follow directions: indeed, what kind of
> body would one have (Prospero, or the play, asks) if one's foot could
> think for itself, could go wherever it pleased, independent of the head?
> (Jerrell Leininger in Murphy: 2001, 225)

Any form of insurgence is immediately and violently repressed and Prospero makes no difference between Miranda, Caliban or Ariel. He gets mad at Miranda at the slightest sign of protest in spite of the fact that she is his only daughter, for example when she tries to defend Ferdinand in the play: "What, I say,/My foot my tutor?" (*Tempest*, 1.2.469-70); "Silence! One word more/Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee" (1.2.476-77). The same ambiguous relationship characterises Prospero's relationship with Ariel, who is generally addressed with kindness unless the spirit questions Prospero's orders, in which case Ariel is debased at Caliban's level.

Hence, it seems evident that "slavery [is] the ultimate extension of the concept of hierarchy", which does not only involve Caliban and Ariel but also Miranda as one of Prospero's several instruments to maintain his control over the "black and white" world he has crafted to suit his needs. Not only does he build up stories and magical performances, but also gender roles and race, which appear to be only constructions useful for his purposes. Miranda's (and Ferdinand's) chastity "symbolizes all human virtue [...] while Caliban's lust symbolizes all human vice" (Jerrell Leininger in Murphy: 2001, 227). Prospero seems to take revenge for his usurpation in Milan by becoming an usurper himself. Not only has he "usurped the lordship of nature, and subdued to his will the spirits of the elements, by presumptuous, if not altogether sinful arts" (Wilson in Murphy: 2001, 132); he has also violated the natural bonds of familial love by appropriating his daughter's life and negating her freedom: "She need only *be* chaste—to exist as a walking emblem of chastity" [original emphasis] (Leininger in Murphy: 2001, 228). As Miranda is also the embodiment of wonder,

"Prospero's project is to preserve wonder and to permit it continuously to renew itself" (McGrail: 2001, 142). For this reason, Prospero tyrannises over Caliban when he is accused of attempting rape on Miranda since violence against her means violence against wonder. Despite this, Prospero is somehow the first "rapist" of the play, firstly against nature and its elements, and secondly against human beings regardless of their gender and race. Moreover, as was previously highlighted, speech is used as one of the magician's several tools of tyranny: "Speech is the first level of compulsion Prospero exercises against Ariel and Caliban. Language gives material form to Prospero's power" (128). In fact, he does not manipulate Ariel and Caliban only, but also Miranda by making her believe that the tempest has been organised just for her own good. However, Prospero's plan partly fails because the eventual rejection of his instruments of magic and his desire for vengeance does not secure his daughter's happiness. As a consequence, Prospero's words "I have done nothing but in care of thee/Of thee, my dear one, thee my daughter" (*Tempest*, 1.2.16-7) appear to be presented as lies in Carey's novel: "'Everything I have done, I have done for you, Miranda!' he says in a low, fierce voice. 'For *us*!'" [original emphasis] (Carey, 309). Also, his appeal on the audience whom he addresses in the epilogue, where he says his aim was "to please" (*Tempest*, Epilogue, 13), sounds contradictory at this point. Prospero "is, after all, a slave-keeper" (McGrail: 2001, 122) who "appeals to the desires and fears" of each creature he controls to whom "he provides an explanation of why they must serve him" (123). In this sense, Prospero's violent, sexual, patriarchal politics seem to be, paradoxically enough, more disconcerting than Caliban's brutality. The idea that both Tiffany and Carey appear to have analysed and developed for their young readers seems to coincide with Dusinberre's comprehensive notion of feminism, which "is about having a voice; it is about women's voices, but also about voices with whom women have always been able to claim allegiance across the divide of gender: the voices of the dispossessed […]" (Dusinberre: 1996, xxxiv).

Chapter 3. Time and plot: from Shakespeare.0 to contemporary novels

The time is out of joint. (*Hamlet*, 1.5.190)

3.1 From acts to chapters: the rhetorics of narration in rewriting Shakespeare for children and young adults

In his introduction to *OuterSpeares: Shakespeare, Intermedia, and the Limits of Adaptation*, Daniel Fischlin observes that "the place of Shakespeare in the general cultural economy shifts in relation to *the prestige and power* of the media through which his presence is diffused" [added emphasis] (Fischlin: 2014, 5). In the field of Shakespearean adaptation for children and young adults today, novelisation seems to maintain its status as both a prestigious and powerful medium of diffusion of the Bard's works. Besides, as previously discussed, novels often represent the "springboard" from which children and adolescents plunge into Shakespeare's world on the grounds that reading may still be perceived as a more personal experience than, for example, performance. Adaptors have always had to make complex choices regarding both content and language, which usually imply abridgements, paraphrases, expansions, and additions. These processes depend on the idea writers wish to convey about the text, which often includes "sanitizing, and standardizing the illicit content, making it safe for popular distribution, mass consumption, and academic indoctrination for a budding literary public" (Andreas in Miller: 2003, 99). For instance, as far as the language is concerned, where the Lambs cautiously mixed Renaissance and Victorian English for their *Tales*, Leon Garfield "recycled" the original vocabulary for his collection of adaptations, *Shakespeare Stories* (1982). Nowadays, other authors may prefer to let the so-called "Shakespeare in blue

jeans"[56] speak like teenagers, as Tracy Chevalier did for *New Boy*. Anyhow, as Amy E. Mathur points out, the issue of Shakespearean language in adaptation must not be underrated:

> The question of how to incorporate the playwright's original language into an adaptation pertains to any of his plays. Shakespeare's language remains one of the major barriers that deters readers and audiences from approaching his work. […] Yet for those who perform, watch, or study Shakespeare's plays, his unique and poetic use of language constitutes one of his dramatic accomplishments. For the author who desires to introduce Shakespeare to a young child before cultural perceptions discourage him from discovering the playwright's genius, deciding on the amount of original language to include shapes an entire adaptation. The use of Shakespeare's own language within an adaptation can either dispel or reinforce the popular cultural perceptions of his work the young reader will one day encounter. (Mathur in Miller: 2003, 150-151)

The problem with several Shakespearean plays lies not only in their elevated language, but also in their lack of mediation. These works are often constituted of "troublesome chronology" (147), manifold subplots and sophisticated dramatic sequences. Therefore, "[m]oving from a play to a story […] compels complex decisions to be made about plot. It also forces the creation of a narrator's voice, and this voice is a crucial part for the interpretation of the story for readers" (Prindle in Miller: 2003, 140). Thus, the story, which is understood as *fabula* (the story told), is inevitably summarised and it must be made as linear as possible so that the eventual *sjužet* (how a story is arranged) may be comprehensible for its young readers. Through this specific terminology, Russian formalists hence appeared to support the notion that "any one story could be re-told with any number of variations in the arrangement of its particular events; each one re-telling would then constitute a different plot, but all of them would nevertheless

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[56] *Is Shakespeare still our contemporary?*, ed. by John Elsom, London and New York: Routledge, 1989, p. 89

narrate the same story" (Marchitello in Miller: 2003, 183). The aim is always the same: to safeguard Shakespeare's authority and authenticity while promoting the readers' education and understanding of his works in an engaging manner.

Othello and *The Tempest* are two particularly interesting plays to narrativise. Iago and Prospero, due to their masterminding strategies, can be described as "leaders" in the sense that, through treachery, they mislead their victims who usually fall in their traps. Since they seem to "write" everyone's destiny in order to make them do what they want, Iago and Prospero may be seen not only as potential playwrights because of their desire for control, but also as the narrators that the original plays, for obvious reasons, do not display. For instance, almost every piece of information about the past in *The Tempest* comes from Prospero, who may be seen as a biased Shakespearean "narrator". As Ewan Fernie underlines, "[t]he plot of *The Tempest* is Prospero's plot" (Fernie in Bigliazzi and Calvi: 2014, 260), a view which seems to be shared by Brinda Charry: "Because Prospero engineers all events, the play is essentially his plot, with Caliban reduced to the status of subplot" (Charry in Vaughan and Vaughan: 2014, 71). Besides, *The Tempest* is particularly apt to be narrated because

> […] events are less important than the way they are felt: how they are received by the characters, how they appear to us, and how they are related to the arts of theatrical illusion in general. It is the characters who tell us (and tell the director) what life on Prospero's island feels like. (Goldman: 1972, 137)

Unlike Nicole Galland's *I, Iago* (2012), where it is the Shakespearean villain's version of the story to be favoured, Chevalier, Carey and Tiffany have chosen neither Iago nor Prospero as their narrators. In *Ariel*, at some point, the narrative becomes metanarrative; ironically, Prospero is actually quite upset with the miserable destiny his daughter and he happen to face:

> "Cry not, Miranda. Yes, we'll find water! Yes! Yet how…
> *embarrassing*, to be saved from death at sea only to succumb to the

> jaws of a lion or tiger! Not the right end to our story, not the ending *I*
> would write." He chuckled weakly. [original emphasis] (Tiffany, 78)

Anyhow, these authors seem to marginalise these two "troublemakers" while privileging their victims' viewpoints, who become the actual narrators in Carey's case. As a consequence, Othello, Miranda, Caliban and even Ariel are somehow redeemed in the eyes of the readers. In *New Boy*, unlike in *Othello*, the scene does not move from the school area; plus, the original five-act division is "translated" by Chevalier into a five-chapter novel with a heterodiegetic narrator. Each part, which refers to the different moments of the day ("Before School", "Morning Recess", "Lunch", "Afternoon Recess" and "After School"), opens with some sort of song in rhyme that is usually sung by girls while jumping the rope. These verses are supposed to continue till the feet of the girl in the middle get stuck in the rope. The repetition of a song that appeals to children may represent the very nature of rewritings. Indeed, Hansen and Wetmore Jr. have noticed a similarity between adaptations and the phenomenon of echo. With particular reference to how echoes were perceived in the Early Modern period, they are said to "do 'strange' things to sounds and those making and hearing them: amplifying, distorting, modulating, mutating, dispersing, agitating, disquieting and disorienting" (Hansen and Wetmore Jr.: 2015, 4). Like adaptations,

> [e]choes give and take away; they enhance and diminish; they prolong
> and distort. Echoes validate and protect their originating sources but
> also negate and unsettle those sources. So acute is this unsettling and
> negation that they become a form of displacement. Does the echo
> succeed and overdub the source? Who *is* the source, then, and who the
> echo? [original emphasis] (8)

The fact that the echo as an acoustic phenomenon is characterised by partiality since it replicates only the last part of a sentence or a word may weaken Hansen's and Wetmore Jr.'s argument. These critics, though, observe that even

Shakespeare's works are the result of "echoes" from previous stories, and they admit that

> [t]he echo is not the voice, but bears a resemblance to it [and] a Shakespearean echo doubles the canon in every sense of the word. It increases the number of texts that engage Shakespeare, it resembles the 'original' voice, but is not the same thing, and it serves as a dopplegänger that not only doubles the original, but informs us about something concerning the original. […] [Shakespeare] is an echo of an echo, which we then echo. (20)

Whether the "echo metaphor" is acceptable or not, it is nonetheless remarkable that the words "unsettling" and "displacement" seem to recur in criticism about Shakespearean adaptation. What is even more interesting is the fact that these concepts are at the core of YA literature for they perfectly reflect the young characters' unsettled and displaced situations. So, it may not be a coincidence that "echoes of Shakespeare have their uses in dystopian fiction" (17) and sci-fi. Adolescents' search for answers, which often come from the past, appears to mirror the never-ending communication and renegotiation of rewritings with their sources, which is inevitably linked to the comprehension and re-evaluation of adaptors. Thus, it comes as no surprise that

> contemporary authors use Shakespeare to explore identity and issues of relevance to teens. […] [W]hat is offered the reader is a concurrent narrative to the plays that explains 'what *really* happened'. Quotations and characters are disconnected from the plays and structures they inhabited 'originally' […] and are reframed in a different narrative to new purposes. [original emphasis] (14)

For their adaptations of *The Tempest*, both prequels, Tiffany and Carey have opted for multi-chaptered narratives which, unlike Chevalier's rewriting, do not follow the division in five acts of the original play. Carey's novel employs two homodiegetic narrators, who are also autodiegetic: Miranda and Caliban. Their different viewpoints on the events that they both experience are expressed

through an alternating sequence of chapters which are titled after the character who is going to speak. Here, neither Prospero nor Ariel nor other secondary character have the chance to express themselves outside Miranda's and Caliban's perspective. This might be explained by the author's desire to give voice to two powerless characters who, in Shakespeare's play, are silenced or even enslaved. Even though in the end neither of the protagonists obtain true freedom, which is one of the central topics of *The Tempest*, Miranda's and Caliban's narratives are the magic spell that partly releases these characters not only from Prospero's grip, but also from the play where Shakespeare has confined them. Unlike the original play in which Prospero asks for "indulgence" to set him free (*Tempest*, Epilogue, 20), here it is Caliban who has the last word and, as Goldman states for Shakespeare's Prospero, "[h]e is strictly governed by human limitation; he has only his own strength to rely on" (Goldman: 1972, 148). However, Caliban does not apologise and still hopes that one day Miranda will send for him. Eventually, the book looks like a joint diary, which is an appealing and liberating writing technique for teenagers who often use it to make sense of their thoughts and make confessions that are hidden from their parents. The secret diary thus becomes a tool to build a private place, more or less fictional, which adolescents become responsible for and belongs to no one else but them.

Moreover, novelisation allows authors to expand upon descriptions of characters, as well as places. In the case of *The Tempest*, where sight is essential and, for this reason, often deceived, the island is described only through Caliban's and Gonzalo's words. The latter is particularly excited about the land where he would love to found his utopian "commonwealth", whilst Antonio and Sebastian are more sceptical and realistic:

> GONZALO: Here is everything advantageous to live.
>
> ANTONIO: True, save means to live.
>
> SEBASTIAN: Of that there's none, or little.
>
> GONZALO: How lush and lusty the grass looks! How green!

ANTONIO: The ground indeed is tawny.

SEBASTIAN: With an eye of green in't.

(*Tempest*, 2.1.52-7)

Whilst the reader of the play can only put together these characters' unclear reports and get an idea about what the island might look like, the reader of the novel feels he or she can count on the extradiegetic narrator's description since this type of narration is usually reliable. Tiffany's adaptation even gives the precise site of the island, which in Shakespeare seems to be somewhere in the Mediterranean. In *Ariel*, it is located in the Caribbean Sea as a part of the Bermuda Triangle, the rim of which divides the island in half, so Ariel cannot reach the other part. However, within the magic border, she can go wherever she wants: "Ariel sailed far north, then south, east, and west, skirting the edges of islands that had no names. More than a thousand years hence they would be christened Bermudas, Cuba, Bahamas" (Tiffany, 5-6). Unlike in *New Boy*, in *Ariel* the heterodiegetic narrator is obtrusive, which is evident since the very first line: "The first thing *you* should know about Ariel is that she's a liar" [added emphasis] (1). By providing an opinion and by addressing the reader directly, Tiffany's narrator empowers him or her with respects to the characters in the novel, who are thus disadvantaged because they are not aware of Ariel's maliciousness.

Accordingly, it seems plain that the narrativisation of Shakespearean works can function as a potent instrument of liberation and empowerment, both for characters and for young readers who may also identify in them. The play is "freed" from what Hansen and Wetmore Jr. call "[u]nthinking, ignorant, excessive devotion" (Hansen and Wetmore Jr.: 2015, 9) to Shakespeare as an unattainable author. Hence, the work acquires the strength to "speak" with different words, beyond the historical and cultural context of its birth; as New Historicism claims, "[t]he literary text is in dynamic conversation with history, participates in it, is marked by and influences it" (Charry in Vaughan and

Vaughan: 2014, 63). Teenagers are thus encouraged to approach the story retold in the novel not as an imposing source of old knowledge which must be studied because they need to know their Shakespeare; but rather as one of the several means available for their active commitment in the reinforcement and renovation of the canon, because "Shakespeare" never belonged to Shakespeare alone.

3.2 "Narrative licence": time management as a plot strategy in adaptations

The Tempest represents indeed a challenging play to adapt with its complex language and subplots that seemingly create a change of time whilst, in fact, the majority of events happen simultaneously. Moreover, Shakespeare's strategy to imagine individual characters who give background information allows the audience to put events in order, which otherwise would be very problematic to do[57]. An author who wants to adapt *The Tempest* for young readers needs to commit both to the original play and to the way it can be received by the readers. Nonetheless, despite conforming to the Aristotelian unities of time, place and action, *The Tempest* can be confusing, perhaps because it differs from the majority of Shakespeare's plays. What is certain is that, for example, the events take place between 2PM and 6PM (*Tempest*, 1.2.240; 5.1.4-5)[58]. Paradoxically enough, though, the storm is not the most crucial action in the story, which actually hinges on Antonio's usurpation of his brother Prospero in Milan twelve years before, which then parallels Antonio and Sebastian's plan to murder Alonso in act 2, and Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo's plot against Prospero in act 3. *The Tempest* begins in *medias res* and it is only in act 1, scene 2 that Prospero finally tells his daughter who they are and how he has lost his dukedom to her "false uncle" (1.2.77). This is quite a long story which, as Miranda

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[57] Mathur, A. E., "Promoting the Original. Perspectives on Balancing Authenticity And Creativity in Adaptations of *The Tempest*" in *Reimagining Shakespeare for Children and Young Adults*, ed. by Naomi J. Miller, London and New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 148

[58] Introduction to *The Tempest*, ed. by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, London and New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2011, p. 14

complains, he has postponed several times: "You have often/Begun to tell me what I am, but stopped/And left me to a bootless inquisition,/Concluding, 'Stay, not yet'" (1.2.34-6). In the play, like a theatre director, Prospero is a crafter of magic tricks and stories, but his narrative appears to be always distorted, even defective now and then. Unlike Caliban's clear memories, Prospero leaves the audience to speculate about what the truth is[59]. His recounting keeps on jumping back and forth in time and gives a blurred perspective on events, which are hard to believe as if the audience (and other characters) had to look through a shattered or opaque windowpane. Thus, Prospero suspends the narration not only for Miranda, but also for the spectators who, at this point, need to put together the separate bits of a conflicting narrative about the past. In the middle of scene 2, Ariel is introduced together with Sycorax's story, to which the spirit is miserably connected. Here the narrative again travels back in time, several years before Prospero's and Miranda's arrival on the island that Sycorax and his son had occupied. The reiteration of Prospero's narrative includes also the fact that, once a month, he needs to remind Ariel of the tree the magician has freed the sylph from. When Caliban enters the scene, the narration newly moves to the present moment when he is accused of attempting rape against Miranda and threatened of terrible punishments by Prospero. Afterwards, Ariel is sent to enchant Ferdinand who, in the meantime, has safely reached the shore. The boy meets Miranda and is put to the test by Prospero. At the same time, at the beginning of act 2, the focus is displaced on the party composed of Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo and other courtesans, who are lost on another side of the island. Alonso is saved by Ariel's song and the duke awakens before he is murdered; at this point, he orders his suitors to continue their search for Ferdinand. Act 3 is about the second plot, this time against Prospero, which is organised by Caliban who has allied with the fools Trinculo and Stephano while Ariel is fooling Alonso, Antonio and their court by summoning a musical banquet and bizarre dancing shapes whom Gonzalo thinks to be strange islanders. In act 4, an antimasque is prepared with personations of Ceres, Iris and

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[59] Ibid, p. 15

Juno who wish plenty and fertility to Miranda and Ferdinand's future wedding. However, it is Prospero who breaks the "majestic vision" (4.1.118) when he remembers the conspiracy against his life. Hence, with Ariel's help, he chases away the conspirators who are hunted by spirits in the shape of hounds. Act 5 opens with an insightful scene of revelation and clarification where Prospero, on Ariel's suggestion, reflects upon compassion and ends up deciding to reject his resentful desires and renounce his powers. Once he meets Alonso's and Antonio's party, Prospero forgives his offenders, even if Antonio does not seem repentant. Also, Alonso, who feared his son to have drowned at sea, is escorted to see Ferdinand who is playing chess with Miranda. The play ends with reconciliation, Ariel obtains freedom and Caliban is acknowledged by Prospero as his "thing of darkness" (5.1.275). Prospero then invites his guests to his cell where again he shall narrate "the story of my life,/And the particular accidents gone by/Since I came to this isle" (5.1.305-7), his only wish being "to see the nuptial/Of these our dear-beloved solemnized;/And thence retire me to my Milan, where/Every third thought shall be my grave" (5.1.309-12). It seems clear that "[t]his sense of continual movement contributes to *The Tempest*'s elusiveness" (Vaughan and Vaughan: 2011, 17), which is both fascinating and demanding to refashion in an adaptation.

In Tiffany's prequel *Ariel*, not only is the chronology of events hugely expanded with respect to the four-hour original play, but the plot is also partially modified for here Prospero is not a duke, but a homesick, castaway farmer who is desperately searched for by his family. The narrator provides a detailed account of the passing of time, beginning with a shipwreck that brings Jasper, one of Saint Paul's followers, onto the island where Ariel was born, hundreds of years before Sycorax's arrival. Immortal Ariel is as immaterial as her conception of time: "Time was nothing to Ariel. One day—five hundred years later? or six?—it came to her that she could make other spirits, just the way she made the fish" (Tiffany, 7). The passing of time begins to worry Ariel from the moment when she is entrapped in the tree by Sycorax: "This counting of time was the worst torment of all" (71). Since Ariel's liberation from the tree by Prospero, eleven

years have passed and only from chapter 13 ("The Tempest") onwards the novel starts to conform to the events in the original play with the upcoming conjuring of the storm. If in Shakespeare's play Prospero's memories seem to be imprecise and arbitrary, in Tiffany's adaptation they are completely wrong. He is convinced that he has been dethroned by his wicked brother, so he must take revenge:

> "[And] I have kept a perfect record of the days that have passed since my crown was stolen and I was so inhumanely put in a rotten boat and set adrift, out of the port of Lisbon. I know the calendar of the east, and I know that on the twenty-fourth day of the coming August, on the Feast of Saint Bartholomew, six months from this night, *in the Year of Our Lord eight hundred ninety-two*, my brother and the evil king who assisted his treachery will again set sail from northern Italy to Lisbon, which is the westernmost point of the European continent." [added emphasis] (126-127)

This passage shows how this novel conceives time as a paramount issue: not only does Tiffany expand the original plot from one day to hundreds of years of story for her prequel, but also the precise year in which the main events take place is specified. On the contrary, in Shakespeare's play the precise year is never mentioned, most likely because events are assumed to be contemporary to the Bard who, amid other sources such as travel narratives, was probably inspired by the account of a shipwreck occurred in the Bermuda Islands in 1609. However, in *Ariel* Prospero soon realises he has been tricked by his servant spirit, who has been indulging her master's suspicions about his brother's bad intentions all along. After overhearing Antonio's laments about the loss of his "poor lost brother" and little niece, Prospero seems abashed:

> "Ah, how Althea still mourns him! Sailing from Lisbon, scanting work, with a baby girl stowed in the prow, to be lessoned, no doubt, in Greek poetry! Sheer folly! And overloaded with books, as usual."
>
> Prospero stiffened behind his tree. "*What?*" he whispered. [original emphasis] (181)

Once he realises he is being exploited by Ariel for her own colonial aims, Prospero interrupts the spirit's betrothal song for his daughter and Ferdinand; by doing so, he marks his rejection of his previous revenge plan:

> With a strange, hollow, and confused noise, the spirit vanished. The grass mirage under the young folk shrank, then disappeared entirely. Miranda and Ferdinand looked at Prospero and then at each other in amazement, as though they had just been awoken from a wondrous dream and were not sure where they were.
>
> Prospero put a hand to his brow and leaned on his staff. "I should have known," he said angrily. "I should have known."
>
> […]
>
> Prospero walked out of the trees, trailed by Ariel, who was well out of sorts. "Master!" she called to him. "Why did you stop my brave last song? They were thrilled with it! Their eyes shone! And I saw your own eyes glitter."
>
> "Yes!" Prospero turned on her in fury. "And that is why I stopped it! You feed us with airy dreams of power, and you never reckon the cost! I don't want to stay here and rule 'lesser folk.' I don't want to rule Milan! All I want is to go back to my farm, to see Althea and beg her forgiveness, though no doubt she's married again. And to see *Antonio* and beg *his*—Good God! Antonio! Where is he?" [original emphasis] (200-201)

More similarly to *The Comedy of Errors* than *The Tempest*, Tiffany's novel, which seems to remove all tragedy from the original tragicomedy, ends with the two Italian brothers' reunion and the whole party, Caliban included, returning home. Ariel is left on the island, still waiting for her "champion", who will sail on her shores six centuries later with three ships: *Niña*, *Pinta* and *Santa María*. The only hint to tragedy in the book is represented by this open ending, which foretells a sequel of violent conquests and the imminent settlement in the West Indies, initially accomplished by Spanish *conquistadores* and then by other

European invaders. This is an instance of how a different time management in Shakespearean adaptation can prompt several plot strategies that may help adaptors enlarge their narratives and get inspiration for possible spin-offs.

Here follows the comparative chronological structure of *The Tempest* with Tiffany's and Carey's adaptations:

The Tempest by William Shakespeare (1611)
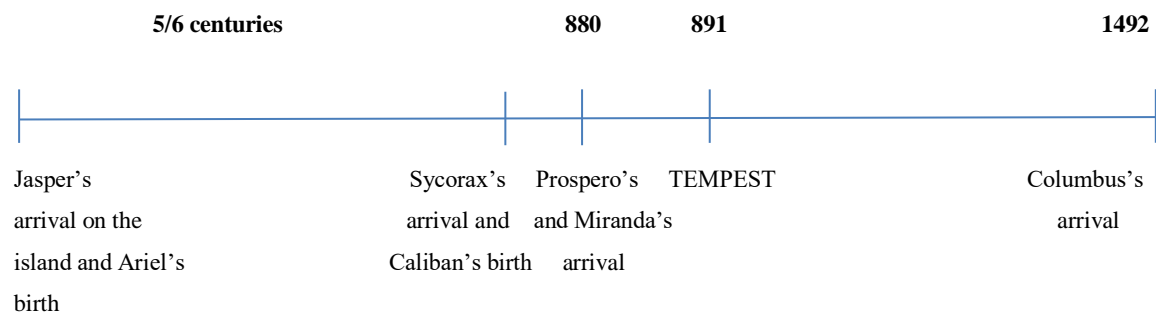
1.1 1.2   **3.1**   **4.1**   **5.1**

Enter Prospero   Exit Caliban   Alonso
and Miranda   Enter Ferdinand   meets his son

TEMPEST   Enter Ariel   Enter Caliban   Ferdinand   Ferdinand is "enslaved"   Masque for
                                                              and Miranda   by Prospero   Ferdinand and
                                                                 meet   Miranda

        Prospero's   Prospero's
        flashback to   flashback to the time
    12 years before   when Sycorax ruled the island

2.1   **2.2**   **3.2**   **4.1**

                                          Caliban meets   Second murder plot   The plot
                                     Trinculo and Stephano   (against Prospero)   fails

        Alonso's and Antonio's party explores the island
          + first attempted murder plot (against Alonso)

                                                3.3   **5.1**

                                                                                              Epilogue

                                     Silent masque for the party   Prospero meets the party

Ariel by Grace Tiffany (2005)

5/6 centuries		**880**	**891**		**1492**

Jasper's arrival on the island and Ariel's birth

Sycorax's arrival and Caliban's birth

Prospero's and Miranda's arrival

TEMPEST

Columbus's arrival

Miranda and Caliban by Jacqueline Carey (2017)

Ariel is freed Miranda's first period

Miranda's and Caliban's childhood

Miranda's and Caliban's adolescence TEMPEST
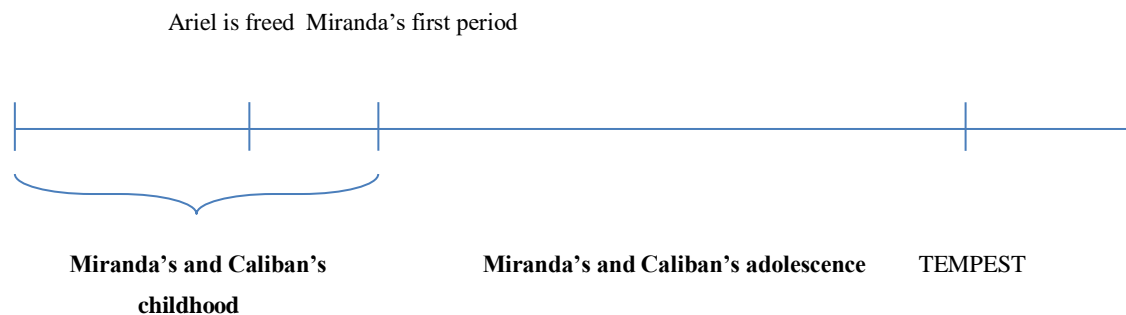
These time schemes show that while events last four hours within the same day in Shakespeare's *Tempest*, in Tiffany's and Carey's novels time becomes historical. Despite this chronological extension, if the narrative structure of *Ariel* and *Miranda and Caliban* is visualised through a timeline, the simplification employed by Tiffany and Carey with respect to the Shakespearean canon becomes even clearer: the original plot has been condensed, if not cut in some of its parts, in order to expand the narrative about the characters' past and, therefore, their psychological development. As a consequence, this practice also allows readers to reflect upon characters' motivations for their actions. Besides, certain questions, which the play may have only hinted at, are analysed more in depth in the books; in the case of *The Tempest*, the relativity of the concept of civilisation, environmental and feminist issues, the conflict between generations, the legitimacy of power and forgiveness are broadly considered.

Time may be worked on also in order to condense the plot, as in Chevalier's *New Boy*. Unlike what happens with *Ariel* and *Miranda and Caliban*, where adaptors enlarge the original work by rewriting a story that lasts several years, if not centuries, Chevalier concentrates the plot of a play where events are originally distributed throughout some days in one single school day, from morning till afternoon. There is no journey to Cyprus, actually not much displacement at all: the scene does not move from the playground and the school building of an American suburb where everything happens very rapidly. By condensing time so, in *New Boy* the development of characters' thoughts and actions must be quicker than in *Othello*: Ian conceives and completes his evil plan in a few hours, Osei and Dee fall in love with each other in a minute and, before the teachers and the principal realise what is going on, the tragedy has already befallen. The comments about the past are scarce and most of them come from Osei, who sometimes recalls his hardships in different schools and reflects upon his childhood in Ghana and the change of his relationship with his elder sister. This is an original strategy for an adaptation of *Othello*, which is a play that stresses the potential destructiveness of "violent delights" that indeed may "have violent ends" (*Romeo and Juliet*, 2.5.9). In particular, Chevalier demonstrates the fragility of adolescence and how the rise and the fall of a person can happen very suddenly, like Osei's schoolmates who often fall in and out of love within half an hour. Here adults appear to be always late and, at any rate, unable to keep up with the fast pace of children's growth, which can produce terrible consequences. For this reason, "anxiety" may symbolise a key word for this adaptation: despite the static nature of the scene, the reader perceives that time is rushing towards a catastrophe the magnitude of which no one of the characters can really foresee. In the attempt to reduce *angst* (the German word for "fear" and "anxiety") through psychoanalysis, Freud presented his theory on this matter in "Fear and Anxiety", published in *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1917). He considered three types of anxiety, which is generally described as a feeling of impending danger, an "evolution of fear":

- *objective anxiety*: it is the result of a real threat coming from the physical world;

- *neurotic anxiety*: it concerns the Ego that feels endangered by the irrational Id;

- *moral anxiety*: it afflicts those who fear that their internalised values are about to be compromised.

Unconsciously, anxiety employs mechanisms of self-defence that are able to distort or deny reality, and this is what essentially happens to Othello/Osei. First, he denies the possibility of Desdemona/Dee's cheating on him, then he ends up not only believing, but also appropriating Iago/Ian's distorted version of reality. The offense on his partner's reputation epitomises his disgrace as the black man who has been used by a white woman whose alleged disloyalty has exposed and confirmed his own physical *and* moral blackness. Like Othello, Osei seems to experience all three kinds of Freudian anxiety: Mr. Brabant and Ian embody the reason of objective anxiety as the real sources of danger from outside; Osei's Ego is menaced by the irrational thoughts of his Id, which is "the dark, inaccessible part of our personality […] a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitements" (Freud: 1933, 105), fuelled by the external threat; finally, his values of justice and diplomacy, which he thought he had internalised, are irremediably compromised by a feral response to Ian's triggers. According to Charry, anxiety features also *The Tempest* where

> Prospero arouses and manipulates his opponents' fears and anxieties. The play begins with Miranda's anxiety, which is an important prelude to the revelation of her life story and even to shaping her identity. […] Anxiety is thus aroused and then transformed by Prospero into love, gratitude and, most importantly, obedience. (Charry in Vaughan and Vaughan: 2014, 64)

Additionally, Chevalier preserves Shakespeare's convention of a troubled love story that apparently disquiets only the characters' private world but in fact consumes itself within momentous events, which are contemporary (hence

relevant) to the authors and their audience. The Turk-Venetian war in the second half of sixteenth century in *Othello* mirrors the last ditch effort of the Vietnam War and the Black Panthers' movement during mid 1970s in the United States in *New Boy*. This technique was also used for *Othello* (2001), a British film adaptation created by Andrew Davies and directed by Geoffrey Sax, where the Shakespearean plot pivots on the racist discourse and the neo-Nazi threat in 1980s London. As Celia R. Daileader observes in her introduction "Othellophilia", our culture still faces darkness: "from the Cold War to the 'War on Drugs' to the 'War on Terrorism' our demons are increasingly ideological – or, at least, more overtly so" (Daileader: 2005, 6). This may explain why "*Othello* is not a vaguely timeless story of jealousy, but a modern instance of a black man's love for a white woman" (G. M. Matthews in Kettle: 1964, 124) where "[t]he emotional innocence of the hero and the heroine […] reflects both their protest against the social environment and their ultimate helplessness before it" (129). More than this, due to its concerns with domestic violence, discrimination and the political against the private, it still represents an up-to-the-minute and germane play that is likely to be adapted again and again.

Consequently, the sort of time management applied by contemporary adaptors represents an efficient strategy that not only rearranges the original *sjužet* but, sometimes, even operates on the *fabula* and the setting. The result is that, like in *New Boy*, the galvanisation of a precise type of emotion in young readers, such as identification, is prompted. After all, "*Othello* is not a play for making consciences comfortable" (139). The same concept may be valid for Shakespeare: he is not a playwright for making audiences comfortable.

The "Old Millennium" was about to end when the Vaughans outlined Caliban as "a symbol that can be endlessly transformed yet is always recognisable" (Vaughan and Vaughan: 1991, 3). Despite the fact that Shakespeare is usually compared to Prospero rather than to his almost ignorant native slave, it is actually hard to think of a more suitable definition for the Bard. More than ever, nowadays his immortality is reinforced by a relentless process of transformation that his works undergo, which makes them recognisable before a broad age range of audiences in several cultural, social and even technological fields. Due to his composite nature as an eclectic dramatist who wrote about various topics, from tyranny to teen love, from marriage to magic, like the humanoid creature from *The Tempest* "Shakespeare" persists as an enigma and still inspires myriads of different interpretations. In particular, this research has tried to emphasise the utmost relevance of this playwright as an actual literary and cultural symbol, which New Millennium literature, cinema, theatre and TV treasure and challenge. Moreover, the analysis of controversial characters such as Caliban and Othello, but also Miranda and Ariel, as some of the most fascinating and multifaceted Shakespearean figures has been attempted. Because of their physical condition, psychological impact and the increasingly insightful attention that critics and authors pay to these characters, they seem to be very engaging for young adults who tend to be particularly susceptible to the topic of troubled youth. Chronological expansions feature *Ariel* and *Miranda and Caliban*, while time contraction distinguishes *New Boy*, where also the setting has been moved from Europe to the USA. It may be argued, though, that these novels show a displacement not only in time and space, but also in race: non-white characters prove to be morally better, or at least more justifiable in their bad actions, than white characters. Miranda represents the exception as one of the most revalued Shakespearean women in the last twenty years whom Charry calls "the most solitary of Shakespeare's heroines" (Charry in Vaughan and Vaughan: 2014, 73). Tiffany's and Carey's novels seem to acknowledge her status as the epitome of nature and the New World, which is not embodied by Caliban only but also by this lonely girl who exists "like nature […] to be wondered at and admired but

ultimately used and exploited" (80). She is lost to her native country but also to her father, who sacrifices her happiness for his personal goals. By rewriting *Othello* and *The Tempest* with teenagers as protagonists who retain typical teenagers' dreams, struggles and flaws, Chevalier, Carey and Tiffany "borrow" these heroes and antiheroes from the original plays so as to (re)introduce them to those adolescents who approach Shakespeare. However, novelising his works, especially for children, might be problematic since the performative nature of plays is unavoidably turned into a univocal relationship, from author to reader. In novels, the "collaborative" form of drama, which involves audiences' interaction with actors and actors'/directors' interpretation of the text, is absent:

> As plays, Shakespeare's texts have an openness that requires interaction. No narrator guides the through-line. As plays, Shakespeare's texts offer multiple entry points—all the characters as well as several, varying plot lines. As plays, Shakespeare's texts say you must join in this project before it can come alive: this is collaborative. Our cultural choice of narrative as the form in which Shakespeare should be presented to children has many reasons and justifications. One of these is that we are uncertain of children's capacities to understand his work. We translate his language and his "adult" themes today, much as the Lambs and Nesbit did for previous centuries. I suspect we need to do less translation than we think. But we are also faced with a culture that privileges narrative and that does not easily provide children with the opportunity to see how the theater works. (Prindle in Miller: 2003, 143)

In fact, novelisation does stimulate some sort of collaboration between writers and readers, and even among readers as well: literature teachers usually welcome creative writing as a part of their courses, and the Internet is an ideal interactive platform which provides users the opportunity to share fanfiction within numerous web communities.

Adapting *Othello* and *The Tempest* in the twenty-first century is a great responsibility: racial, gender and family issues have concerned every human

being in every era, especially the young who are vulnerable to negative teachings, psychophysical abuse and dangerous indoctrination. Providing a narrator to these plays means to offer readers someone with "a point of view and great power to leap through time and space and sometimes to venture inside the minds of characters" (Hutcheon: 2013, 13). Osei, Miranda and Caliban personify the difficulty of growing up in a xenophobic and sexist society that continues to threat social harmony but also prompts indignation and constructive rebellion. The adaptors whose books have been discussed in this thesis all seem inclined to become their readers' guides through the Shakespearean "rich and strange" universe; the aim is to persuade them that the Bard can represent a profuse source of meaning and inspiration for younger generations. It is paramount that adolescents recognise the relevance of canon literature in their lives and the possibility for them to give a personal contribution for its enrichment, which is beneficial for their self-esteem. This can be achieved by authors who, in cooperation with families and educators, need to understand teenagers' sensibilities and value their diverse experiences, abilities and identities.

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