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The early modern position of women in Atwood's, Winterson's and Tyler's adaptations of *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Taming of the Shrew*

Master's thesis

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the ages there have been many discussions about the role and position of women with a new chapter of discussion being added around 2014. This particular one erupted on the internet and since then movements like #metoo and #timesup can be found everywhere. The age of #metoo and #timesup is considered to be a feature of the fourth wave of feminism. According to Ealasaid Munro in her article "Feminism: A Fourth Wave," this fourth wave is particularly characterised by the power of the online communities: "It is increasingly clear that the internet has facilitated the creation of a global community of feminists who use the internet both for discussion and activism" (23). While feminists were spreading their views across the globe, modern times were being infused into Shakespeare's works by the Hogarth Shakespeare Project.

This project "aims to retell Shakespeare's plays by acclaimed and bestselling authors of today" according to their website. In this spirit three revered female writers (Margaret Atwood, Jeannette Winterson and Anne Tyler) were asked to participate. As a result they produced the adaptations *Hag-Seed* (Winterson, 2016), *The Gap of Time* (Winterson, 2015) and *Vinegar Girl* (Tyler, 2016) which are all set in modern Western society against the backdrop of #metoo and #timesup. This master thesis will investigate how these authors deal with the dominant notions regarding the position of women in daily Western society in their adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. Do we, as readers, recognise elements of the fourth-wave feminism which objects against sexual harassment and assault in the novels?

All three authors are well-known for their strong female protagonists and are even participants in discussions regarding feminism. Anne Tyler, winner of the Pulitzer prize in 1989, said, for example, that she feels confident as a woman and not hindered by theories that females are less worthwhile, as becomes clear in *Literary Women: The Great Writers*: "There is no room in these theories for the woman as mere individual… It's my personal feeling that

only a portion of my life—and almost none of my writing life—is affected by what sex I happen to be" (533). That she feels confident about her gender is also illustrated by the fact that she predominantly prefers to write from a strong female perspective, like for example her protagonist Maggie in the acclaimed *Breathing Lessons* (1988, winner of the Pulitzer Prize). As such, it can be expected that Tyler would seize the opportunity to create similar strong female characters in her adaptation. Margaret Atwood is more outspoken in her view, as is observed by Fiona Tolan: "An examination of both Atwood's novels and the contemporaneous progression of feminist discourse from the 1960s to the present day quickly reveals a sympathy of concern and a coincidence of enquiry" (2). Besides that, Atwood, too, is known for her powerful female characters in, for example, *The Blind Assassin* (2000, winner of the Booker Prize) and *Alias Grace* (1996). This suggests that Atwood would also create such women in her novel *Hag-Seed*. The third author, Jeanette Winterson, is celebrated for writing strong lesbian characters, with the most obvious example her autobiographic coming-of-age novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985). In the introduction to that book she reacts on the fact that she uses her own name, which reviewers greeted with critique even though male authors did the same: "This is understood by critics as playful meta-fiction. For a woman it is assumed to be confessional. Is this assumption about gender? Something to do with creative authority? Why shouldn't a woman be her own experiment?" (XIV). In other words, Winterson shows that she is well aware of gender issues and she is, like Atwood and Tyler, famed for her strong female characters in her novels.

Because Winterson, Tyler and Atwood have participated in discussions about feminism and gender issues, it is to be expected that they at the least address these topics in their adaptations of Shakespeare's work, for example by creating strong female characters especially since the fourth wave of feminism was at its peak during their writing process. This thesis,

however, shows that all three authors chose to keep the female characters in sync with how William Shakespeare once created them.

Women's rights have developed positively through the ages but in Shakespeare's era, there was still a long way to go. For example, there were concerns about the sexuality of women, but then from a male perspective about the uncontrollability of it. Shakespeare himself actually used these issues in his writing: "Witness the many plots concerning the need to prove female chastity, the threat of adultery, and, even when female fidelity is not a major theme of the play, there are many references to cuckoldry in songs and jokes" (Traub, 21). The temperament of females was regarded as especially problematic. This is also argued by Catherine Richardson in her article "Social Life":

> Women's temperament was seen as being in need of greater control than men's. In addition to their natural weakness, which led them both to fail to live up to high standards of behaviour on their own and to resist submission to their husband's wills, there was their inability to control their emotions in the interests of order. (296)

This quote shows that unruly women were undesirable in society. After all, after centuries of instable economies and fear of war, establishing order had the highest priority in early modern English society: "Because the household is the first place to begin to order society, it too has its own rigid hierarchy in theory – a representation of the nation in little. (…) Women were taken to be governed within the home, subject to the authority of their fathers until marriage and then their husbands after marriage" (Richardson, 295). Altogether, the view was that to create order, one had to begin at the very basics which was the household. When this was properly managed, the rest of society would follow. Therefore, because of their 'natural weakness,' establishing order could only start by keeping women in check.

Conduct books, or household manuals offering advice about marriage and the ordering of domestic relationships, helped to establish this order. They attained their greatest popularity

in early modern England between the late sixteenth century and the Civil War (Eales, 168). In her book, Richardson mentions for example, John Dod and Robert Cleaver who wrote *A Godly Form of Household Government* in 1598 in which they stated that: "Domestic insubordination was a central political concern, treated in a similar way to treason against a monarch. For as men should obey the laws of their cities, so women, the manners of their husbands" (296). Richardson continues with the fact that Dod and Cleaver also made a list of ideal female attributes: a wife should be "not angry, but mild; not bold, but bashful; not full of words, pouring out all in her mind and babbling of her household matters that were more fitter to be concealed, but speaking upon good occasion, and that with discretion" (297). This meant that women first had to obey their fathers and once they were married their spouses. What is more, she had to revere her husband, submit herself and be obedient to him (298). Richardson further points out that this is also acknowledged by contemporaries of Dod and Cleaver, like Juan Luis Vives who wrote a conduct book named *The Instruction of a Christen Woman* in 1529 in which he pointed out that a woman had: "to submit herself to her husband and to acknowledge and reverence him as her head in all things" (302). She continues with the fact that this opinion was shared by John Knox in his *The First Blast of the Trumpet* (1559): "Woman in her greatest perfection was made to serve and obey man, not to rule and command him" (303). Next to these authors, Richardson refers to Philip Stubbes who, in his devotional biography of his wife, Katherine Stubbes, entitled *A Crystal Glass for Christian Women* (1591), praised the feminine features of the perfect Renaissance wife: "Modesty, courtesy, gentleness, affability, good government; her reported delight in her husband questions at home, never leaving the house without his permission" (41). All in all, it can be concluded that despite all the economic progress which was achieved at that point in English history, the development of the position of women still had a long way to go, when we take in consideration that women even needed permission to go outdoors.

What is more, according to Adelaide Meira Serras in her article "Gender Relations And The Position of Women," women were regarded as inferior beings:

> Despite the humanists' interest in knowing Greek and Latin heritage, with its superior aesthetic achievements, the means to reach a partially forgotten and apparently lost knowledge, and the ideology of classical antiquity, the well-rooted Christian indoctrination was never discarded. On the contrary, the notion of women as inferior beings was reinforced by new arguments found in the texts of the classical magistri.
>
> Better living conditions in a relatively more peaceful era, paved the way for a new worldview regarding the Renaissance. However, as far as women were concerned, the change was not so clearly introduced. They were still considered in many aspects essential tools to build and keep a family, marriageable items who should abide their male tutors, either fathers or their legal substitutes. (643)

As women, at that point, were mainly considered as "marriageable items" who ought to be obedient it would be only logical that Atwood, Winterson and Tyler would seize the opportunity to feminize their female characters in their adaptations, especially since all three authors changed the setting to contemporary western worlds.

What is more, when Shakespeare adapted classical sources for his plays, he himself often updated the female characters in order to shape their roles in forms that made them recognisable in terms of his own contemporaries' expectations about women's behaviour (Rackin, 114). If Shakespeare already used this technique, it may even more be expected that the three authors followed his example. This thesis, however, demonstrates that Tyler, Atwood and Winterson outlined their female characters as Shakespeare once created them rather than model them according to the dominant notions of the position of women in modern Western society.

In order to demonstrate this, the modern adaptations will be compared to their original source plays: Atwood's *Hag-Seed* to *The Tempest*, Winterson's *A Gap of Time* to *The Winter's Tale* and Tyler's *Vinegar Girl* to *Taming of the Shrew*. To accomplish this, each chapter deals with one play and its original and give insight into the differences between the original female characters and their adaptations. The first about *Hag-Seed* and *The Tempest* will zoom in on patriarchal structures, explaining how Miranda conforms herself to Prospero's/ Felix's wishes. The second chapter about *The Gap of Time* and *The Winter's Tale* will show that the modern Hermione (MiMi) and Paulina (Pauline) are even less in line with feminist standards than the original characters they are based on. The third chapter about *Vinegar Girl* and *The Taming of the Shrew* will zoom in on Katherine and how her shrewdness appears to be lacking in the novel and therefore the modern Kate appears to be more tamed than Shakespeare's creation. I will compare the female characters and key passages, by means of a close-reading, in the adaptations to their originals. This shall lead to the, perhaps, surprising conclusion that the adaptations of Winterson, Tyler and Atwood, appear not to be as influenced by the #metoo discussion, as was initially expected. What is more, their reworkings each show less strong female characters than the original plays did. In the conclusion I will try to answer the question why the authors made these choices. Luckily, Atwood and Winterson have both written a sort of epilogue in their adaptions to explain how they regarded the project. Even Anne Tyler, who is known for her reluctance to give interviews, gave an extensive interview about *Vinegar Girl* which I will use in my conclusion. Unfortunately, the answer to question as to why the authors portrayed their female characters in such manner remains unanswered. I do, however, offer the theory that they preferred to zoom into certain themes and angles they liked about the original plays rather than feminizing the women.

1 ***THE TEMPEST AND HAG-SEED COMPARED: HOW THE MIRANDAS ARE USED AS PAWNS***

This first chapter compares William Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* (1623) to Margaret Atwood's adaptation *Hag-Seed* (2016). It contrasts the two texts and shows that the storyline of the female main character named Miranda narrowly follows the same path in the novel as it did in the play. There are other female characters to be found in Shakespeare's play next to Miranda, but they have no role of significance. Two of these ladies are given a name, Claribel and Sycorax, but the first one is barely mentioned and Sycorax is depicted as a witch. Next to those three ladies, there are only a few references made by the men to Prospero's wife and the goddesses who make their appearance in the masque. This chapter will deal only with Miranda because the play entails around her and her father.

The main focus of this chapter is on the dominant notions regarding the position of early modern English women in *The Tempest* and how these echo in Atwood's adaptation. Because she wrote her novel during the hay days of the fourth wave of feminism one would expect a modernised Miranda; however, it will be shown that the opposite is the case. The chapter demonstrates that the main female characters of *Hag-Seed*, the three Mirandas, are more in tune with the one from *The Tempest* than one may expect.

1.1 The Tempest: Miranda

Miranda, Prospero's daughter, has a particular purpose in *The Tempest*: that of restoring her father to his true place of Duke of Milan. She is the only female character who has dialogue as besides hers there are only male voices to be heard on the island. Miranda is introduced during a long dialogue between her and her father in which they reminisce about their past. Prospero appears to be the doting father: "O, a cherubin, thou was that did preserve me" (1.2.152). Yet, other than demonstrating his loving nature, this dialogue also serves to enlighten Miranda about her parentage and to convince her that Prospero has been maltreated and thus

has a rightful claim to his former position. That is the reason why her father asks her what she remembers about her past in the opening dialogue: “of any thing the image, tell me, that,/ hath kept with thy remembrance” (1.2.42-43). While Miranda is reminiscing about this (“Tis far off,/ And rather like a dream” (1.2.45)), she is constantly interrupted by Prospero’s exhortations to pay attention: “be attentive” (2.2.38), “Dost thou attend me?”(2.2.78), “Thou attend’st not?” (2.2.87), “mark me” (2.2.89), “Dost thou hear?” (2.2.105) (Harvey, 375). This is a sign that Miranda needs to be obedient and attentive to her father. This is vital for Prospero’s plan to restore his losses and these interruptions show that he is the one who pulls the strings.

The fact that Miranda serves as an obedient pawn on Prospero’s chess board, is also recognised by several critics. One of them is Jessica Slights: in “Rape and the Romanticization of Shakespeare’s Miranda”, she argues that throughout the ages Miranda has been regarded as “a figure important only for her unwitting role in helping to realize her father’s political aspirations” (361). Prospero’s perspective of the past is what gives him motivation to try and reclaim his position. As Gina Bloom argues in her “Time to Cheat”: “Prospero represents himself to Miranda and theatre spectators as a victim of history. He narrates the past in order to impose his own view on the present and thus shape the future” (425). This is precisely what the first dialogue between father and daughter does, Prospero leads the narrative and heads Miranda into the right direction. This is also recognised by Virginia and Alden Vaughan. In their introduction to *The Tempest* in *The Arden Shakespeare*, they interpret this treatment of his daughter as a way to reach “Prospero’s ultimate goals, the restoration of his rightful place and a proper marriage for his daughter” (15). As mentioned before, Miranda has a purpose to fulfil and vital in that role is her obedience to her father.

This virtue in particular was one of the highest qualities considered in a lady of noble birth in the early modern English era: “At the highest social levels, girls were thoroughly indoctrinated in the virtues of modesty, obedience and subordination to a future husband”

(Mendelson and Crawford, 391). That Miranda, too, has this character trait is illustrated by the following quote:

Prospero: The hour's now come
The very minute bids thee, open thine ear
Obey and be attentive. Canst thou remember
A time before we came unto this cell?
I do not think thou canst; for then thou wast
Out three years old.

Miranda: Certainly, sir, I can. (1.2.35-45)

Prospero tells his only daughter to be still and listen to him and she obeys without hesitation as is expected of her.

However, with the arrival of Ferdinand on the island after the storm Prospero's plans accelerate but it also brings a new side of Miranda to the surface: that of a mind of her own. She is immediately smitten by the looks of the prince of Naples. Prospero appears not to be impressed and even explicitly forbids her to speak to Ferdinand:

Silence! One word more
Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee. What,
An advocate for an impostor? Hush.
Thou think'st there is no more such shapes as he,
Having seen but him and Caliban. Foolish wench,
To th'most of men, this is a Caliban,
And they to him are angels. (1.2.477-482)

Miranda tries to stand up to her father and even disobeys him by ignoring his order. She tells the prince of Naples:

How features are abroad
I am skilles of; but by my modesty

(The jewel in my dower), I would not wish

Any companion in the world but you;

Nor can imagination form a shape,

Besides yourself, to like of. But I prattle

Something too wildly, and my father's precepts

I therein do forget. (3.1.52-59)

This is an act of defiance as Slights points out: "this also emphasizes her willingness to defy her father in search of own destiny since, for Prospero's daughter, heterosexual desire and marriage entail a measure of resistance rather than simple capitulation to patriarchy" (367). However, even though that Miranda defies her father here, she actually does exactly what he wants. By forbidding her to speak to Ferdinand, he entices her interest in the prince of Naples.

There are two other occasions where Miranda appears to show a mind of her own but still follows her father's agenda. The first when she utters language not entirely fitting with a lady of her rank. This is her infamous exclamation "Abhorred slave" (1.2.353) as a reply to Caliban. She continues with her stinging rebuke:

Which any print of goodness wilt not take,

Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,

Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour

One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,

Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like

A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes

With words that made them known. But thy vild race

(Though thou didst learn) had that in't which good natures

Could not abide to be with. (1.2.553-561)

According to Jessica Slights this is completely justified as it is a response to Caliban's attempt to rape her: "Thou didst prevent me,/ I had peopled else,/ This isle with Calibans" (1.2.349-351). She argues that many critics "dismiss Miranda's fury at Caliban's posturing as part of colonialist powerplay, and either ignore the attempted rape or imply that Miranda is responsible for it" (372). However, another way of interpreting this quote is that it also shows the significance of Miranda's chastity. Next to being obedient, it was of the utmost importance that Miranda remained chaste until she could be married off to a man of her father's choosing. This is also argued by Ann Thompson in her article "Miranda, where is your sister?": "Central to Prospero's 'obsession with themes of chastity and fertility,' Miranda is his *raison d'être*, her marriage and future children his promise of immortality" (47). Altogether, it can be concluded that this is another sign that Miranda is thoroughly indoctrinated by Prospero in preparation on her future task rather than an occasion of outspokenness.

The second occasion where Miranda displays this directness in speech but also again conforms herself to her father's wishes, is during a game of chess with Ferdinand. Rather than restraining herself she exclaims: "Sweet lord, you play me false" (5.1.72). To speak in such direct manner to a man of higher rank was not behaviour fitting to a lady of Miranda's rank. It can even be interpreted as a public challenge to his male authority (Slights, 371), but Bloom argues that this dialogue rather follows the rules of chivalric romanticism (427). After all, chess was the medieval and Renaissance symbol of courtly, aristocratic entertainment, and even of sexual equality (Poole, 51). Even though the fact that Miranda's remark can be regarded as a sign that she sees herself as Ferdinand's equal, this game of chess is also the occasion where she encounters the other marooned men which leads to her exclamation: "How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world, / That has such people in 't" (5.1.183). Prospero's reacts in a brusque manner: "Tis new to thee" (5.1.184), which again shows the balance of power between

them. What is more, by allowing Ferdinand to court her she comes closer to her father's goal to marry her off to the prince.

This becomes clear because after her last line, Miranda remains silent until the end of the play. She marries Ferdinand and thus fulfils her father's wishes. It may appear that Miranda and Ferdinand have fallen in love without Prospero's knowing, but this is not the case. He has been watching all along and wanted them to fall in love as is shown in the following quote:

> Miranda: I am a fool
>
> To weep at what I am glad of.
>
> Prospero (aside): Fair encounter
>
> Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace
>
> On that which breeds between 'em. (3.1.74-76)

Prospero hints on their possible future offspring; a child of Miranda and Ferdinand will become heir to both Naples and Milan which secures Prospero reconciliation and lineage as he will be its grandfather. Miranda has played her appointed part, even without realizing it. Strengthening one's positions by marrying off one's daughter was a fate which was shared by many other ladies of noble birth. In fact, in the play there is even a reference to such a story. Claribel was also sent away to marry for wealth. She is mentioned by Alonso: "Would I had never,/ married my daughter there" (2.1.109). Again, we are presented with a female character which is used as a pawn on her father's chessboard. As we have seen, this is the conclusion for Miranda as well. This is also argued by Virginia and Alden Vaughan: "Still, despite occasional disobedience and outspokenness, Miranda remains the chaste ideal of early modern womanhood" (27). Miranda conforms herself to Prospero's wishes and remains the obedient daughter to her father.

1.2 Hag-Seed

The following section will first point out what the most important differences and similarities are between *The Tempest* and *Hag-Seed*. It will then zoom in on the way how the male protagonist, like his predecessor, uses the female characters (the Mirandas) in the story to achieve his goals. Margaret Atwood's adaptation was published in 2016 and is set in an entirely different era than the original play. The author places her story in the modern Western world around the fictional Makeshiweg Festival in Canada. The main character in *Hag-Seed* is Felix Philips, the Prospero of the story and like his predecessor he has a daughter named Miranda. The novel is written from his perspective, which makes it easier for the reader to sympathize with him rather than with the women in the story.

Similar to the play, the protagonist wants to achieve two particular goals, which are vengeance and reconciliation. Felix is an accomplished director who is toppled from his position at the festival by Tony, who is the Antonio in this story. Ever since he is planning his revenge: "'There's work to be done, there are plots to be plotted, there are scams to be scammed, there are villains to be misled (…) He'll pull it off, despite all obstacles. Charm the pants off them at first, not that he'd relish the resulting sight. (…) Let's make magic! And let's shove it down the throat of that devious, twisted bastard, Tony'" (10). Vengeance is, however, just part of the plan of the fallen director. The ultimate goal is that of reconciliation, which was also one of Prospero's most important motivators in the play. As Charles Moseley points out in his "The Literary and Dramatic Contexts of the Last Plays": "*The Tempest* points through the tragic to the reconciliation, healing, calm after the storm, but never without recognition that the suffering was genuine" (50). Felix suffers losing his job after he had already lost his beloved daughter Miranda. Felix reflects also constantly on the past and in that way *Hag-Seed* can be considered a 'tour de force', just like *The Tempest* was: "It is a play of delicate patterns, full of echoes and resonances exploring its main themes" (Vaughan, 59). Altogether, it is only logical that Felix

has every reason to seek revenge. An opportunity to reach his first goal, vengeance, arises when he has the chance to stage Shakespeare's *Tempest* at the Fletcher County Correctional Institute while his arch enemies are coming to visit the prison.

One of the major differences between the novel and the play is that Atwood created no less than three different Mirandas in her adaptation. The first can be categorized as the 'real' Miranda, the second as the 'spirit' Miranda with a strong resemblance to Ariel as well, and the third can be found in Anne-Marie Greenland who plays Miranda in the production of *The Tempest* Felix is staging. Even though the author places her characters in the here and now, she still models them conform the original play. Like in *The Tempest,* the female characters all follow the lead of the main male character. This way we can still hear the echo of the dominant notions towards the position of early modern English women. Even though Atwood's female characters may not be silent, chaste or remain in the household, they are all positioned into places which aid Felix in achieving his goals.

The first Miranda is already dead at the beginning of the novel but she is still able to help the grieving Felix to continue his work. His only child died while he was in the process of directing *The Tempest* for the Makeshiweg Festival. He was already a widower and is heartbroken after the loss of his only child at the age of three:

> But nothing worked, and then she was gone. Carried off, as they used to say. But carried off where? She couldn't have simply vanished from the universe. He'd refused to believe that. Lavinia, Juliet, Cordelia, Perdita, Marina. All the lost daughters. But some of them had been found again. Why not his Miranda? (15)

After her death Felix is determined to finish his project at the Festival; it became a sort of shrine for his lost daughter. She became his *raison d'être*, just like Miranda was to Prospero in *The Tempest*: "Miranda would become the daughter who had not been lost; who had been protecting cherub, cheering her exiled father as they'd drifted in their leaking boat over the dark sea; who

hadn't died, but had grown into a lovely girl" (15). In this last quote we find the word 'cherub' which directly connects the novel to the play. It is used in the first dialogue between Prospero and Miranda: "O, a cherubin. Thou was that did preserve me" (1.2.152). Over the centuries the meaning of this word has changed. When Shakespeare wrote 'cherubin,' he meant: "obsolete form of cherub (angel); spoken to a beautiful or beloved woman" (OED). Nowadays, this reference to a woman no longer exists. The Cambridge dictionary describes the word like: "an angel that is represented in art as a beautiful, fat, naked child with small wings." That is exactly how Felix regards his lost daughter, as an angel watching over him from her "glass coffin" (41), her framed picture on his nightstand. Every time when he sees her portrait, he is reminded of his grief and that is how Miranda helps him to carry on.

The second Miranda enters Felix's life to enable him to overcome his losses and start realising his vengeance. He retreated to the countryside and was living in a shanty house under the alias of Mr. Duke. While he is trying to deal with the losses he had suffered, a spirit enters his world:

> It began when he was counting time by how old Miranda would, had she lived. She'd be five, then six; she'd losing her baby teeth; she'd be learning to write. That sort of thing. Wistful daydreaming at first. But it was only a short distance from wistful daydreaming to the half-belief that she was still there with him, only invisible. (45)

One might wonder why Atwood chose to do this, why she created a ghost instead of a young daughter, like Prospero has in the original play. The explanation is purely practical as she explains in a column in *The Guardian* of 24 September, 2016: "What was the modern-day equivalent of a magician marooned on an island for twelve years with a now adolescent daughter? You couldn't write that straight: all the islands are known, there are satellites now, they would have been rescued by a helicopter in no time flat." In that same interview Atwood

explains that it would be only natural for Felix to start hearing voices because he was living such a secluded life in the remote cottage.

The first Miranda was the reason for Felix to carry on with his work, the second Miranda also serves a particular purpose, that of achieving reconciliation. The difference with *The Tempest* is that Atwood suggests that this desire for reconciliation comes forth out of a feeling of guilt towards the daughter:

> There's no harm done, he says. And there won't be, I promise. I will do nothing but in care of thee. But what has his care amounted to? He's protected her, true, but hasn't he overdone it? There are so many things he should be able to offer her. (109)

This is an echo of Prospero's words in his first dialogue with Miranda in the play: "There's no harm done" (1.2.12) and "I have done nothing but in care of thee / Of thee, my dear one, thee my daughter" (1.2.16-17). At that point in *Hag-Seed,* Felix realizes on a rational level that Miranda is not real but nevertheless sees her everywhere and even hears her voice:

> She never asked him how they came to be there together, living in the shanty, apart from everyone else. He never told her. It would have been a shock to her, to learn that she did not exist. Or not in the usual way. (47)

When Felix starts directing *The Tempest* at Fletcher Correctional, the spirit Miranda demands to play the part of Miranda and when he tells her that she cannot, she still accompanies him to the prison to be the understudy of Ariel. At that point, the character of this Miranda starts to undergo a transition, she starts to transform from Felix's daughter to the spirit Ariel:

> All this time Miranda has been hovering behind him- a shadow, a wavering of the light- though she's been silent: there haven't been any lines she's needed to prompt. But now she whispers, I would, sir, were I human. She's such a tender-hearted girl. (231)

The "I would, sir, were I human," comes directly from the play: "mine would, sir, were I human" (5.1.19). This is the first hint that Atwood starts to mingle the two characters of

Miranda and Ariel. As Ariel, Felix's daughter's ghost is able to help him achieve his goals. Again, we can see that the male main character in a way uses the Mirandas as sort of pawn. Ariel is the servant of Prospero in the play and by transforming the spirit Miranda into Ariel, she too becomes a servant, obedient to her master. Like in the play, the female characters are all positioned to aid the male main character. The spotlight is aimed at Felix and definitely not on the Mirandas.

The same applies to the third Miranda in the novel who is the one with the closest resemblance to the original Miranda from the play. This is Anne-Marie Greenland, an actress hired by Felix to play the part of Miranda in his version of *The Tempest*. She becomes a vital element in his plan to have his vengeance on his arch enemies Tony and Sal. They are the ones who were responsible for the loss of Felix's position at the Makeskiweg Festival and now they are going to visit the Fletcher Correctional where he works as a drama teacher. Felix needs help in staging his play and thinks Anne-Marie could be the right person for the job with her experience as an actress and choreographer. She is the first 'Miranda' who actually has dialogue in *Hag-Seed* and she has a very outspoken character. Something Felix has get to get used to: "'Like new-laid shit," she said and he blinked. That foul mouth of hers had always startled him. He was never ready when a slice of filth came of her child-like mouth'" (97). This outspokenness can be considered as an echo of Miranda in *The Tempest.* She too startled her surroundings with her exclamations: "abhorr'd slave" (1.2.353) and "You play me false, dear sir" (5.1.72). This trait in Miranda's character has been enlarged by Atwood because Anne-Marie constantly speaks her mind.

Even though this trait in Anne-Marie's character is not consistent with the desired virtues of early modern English ladies, she does rapidly conform herself to the early modern notions of a father-daughter relationship. For example, Felix tells her what to do with men, just

like a father from the early modern era would do with his high born daughter whose purpose it is to marry someone of her his choosing:

> Felix: "Just don't get involved. He's probably already married. To more than one woman," he adds for greater effect.
>
> "You think I'll fall in love with him, right" says Anne-Marie. "You think I'm that easy?" she clenches her jaw.
>
> "No, no," says Felix. "Heaven forefend. But you'll need your wits about you once you're in character. Even a hard-shelled nut like you."
>
> "You're in character already," says Anne-Marie, grinning. "Playing my overprotective dad." (141)

This appears to be an act out of overprotectiveness but like Prospero in the play, Felix has his own plans for Miranda. He needs her after all to achieve his goals. His remark that "she needs her wits," is therefore to be interpreted as a way to lead her in the right direction, his direction. In *The Tempest*, Prospero's way out of his situation is through his daughter's marriage. He arranges the settings so that his daughter meets Ferdinand, son of Alonso, one of Prospero's enemies. As Gina Bloom argues: "Prospero plays something like a game of imperfect information with theatre spectators and with inhabitants of and visitors of the island, keeping knowledge to himself: for example, he hides Ferdinand from his father and Ferdinand's identity from Miranda" (427). This is comparable to Felix's actions in the novel; he puts everything and everyone in place to have his revenge.

Like in the play, the opinion of the daughter is not important in the matter. Anne-Marie's doubts are cast aside: "'We discussed this," says Felix. "He won't be injured. Remember, it's partly his dad who crapped up your career twelve years ago'" (201). Like in the play, Anne-Marie and Freddie fall in love and Felix is pleased about this outcome. He perhaps even calculated on this to happen, like Prospero did in *The Tempest*. Felix tells Freddie's father:

"True romance," he says. "You can't fight it. Anyway, it's the best outcome" (236). He had hoped that Freddie's love for Anne-Marie would anger Sal, the father, but this is not the case. In this, we can find another parallel to the play: that of Miranda as a reward. Freddie is going to be Felix's apprentice and gets the daughter. Even though love cannot be forced this budding romance remains remarkable because the reality is that it is all according to Felix's plan. He has gotten his revenge and secured the position of his Miranda/ Anne-Marie, just like Prospero in the play.

1.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that all the women in *Hag-Seed* follow exactly the path that Felix has outlined for them. Each of them serve, in one way or another, as a way to reach his goal. First there is his deceased daughter, whose death becomes the reason for Felix to continue his work as stage director. Then there is the spirit Miranda/ Ariel who helps him to keep him focused on his task: to have his revenge. Anne-Marie is the one who helps Felix to proceed with his plans. Therefore, it can be concluded that despite the fact that *Hag-Seed* is written by a modern female writer and set in the modern world, all the Mirandas in the novel still conform themselves to the dominant notions regarding women in the English early modern era. They all follow the lead of a man, Felix, just like Miranda in *The Tempest* did with Prospero. Even foul-mouthed Anne-Marie, who may come across as independent, does exactly what he asks her to do, as she obeys her "father", as she calls him.

2 *THE WINTER'S TALE* AND *THE GAP OF TIME* COMPARED: HOW WOMEN HAVE THE LEAD

This second chapter compares William Shakespeare's play *The Winter's Tale* (1610) to Jeanette Winterson's adaptation *The Gap of Time* (2015). It contrasts the two texts and shows that the female main characters named MiMi (Hermione), Pauline (Paulina) and Perdita are less strong minded than their predecessors in the play. In *The Winter's Tale* they, especially Paulina, dare to be outspoken and stand up against the unjust behaviour of king Leontes, whereas in *The Gap Of Time* they predominantly display early modern virtues such as silence and obedience. This is remarkable because Winterson wrote her novel while the #metoo movement was sweeping across western civilisation, and, as is explained in the introduction, the author is known for her strong leading ladies. Altogether, the chapter demonstrates that the female characters of *The Gap Of Time* conform themselves more to the early modern standard of women than to our modern day western world standard.

2.1 The Winter's Tale – Hermione

In the very beginning of the play Queen Hermione, wife to King Leontes, comes across as confident in her relationship with her husband. She is heavily pregnant with their second child when she playfully tries to persuade her spouse's best friend Polixenes to stay a while longer at their palace. There are, however, also early signs that all is not that well in their marriage. This is shown when Leontes rather rudely orders his wife to speak up: "Tongue-tied, our queen? Speak you" (1.2.28). Hermione obeys his command but immediately shows her wit during her first speech in the play: "I had thought, sir, to have held my peace until you had drawn oaths from him not to stay. You, sir, charge him too coldly" (1.2.29-30). What is more, she dares to respond with a command of her own:

> Tell him you are sure
>
> All in Bohemia's well; this satisfaction

The bygone day proclaimed. Say this to him,

He's beat from his best ward[.] (1.2.30-32)

As one can see, Hermione uses an imperative no less than two times against her husband ("Tell him," "Say this to him"), which gives the impression that the spouses have a marriage based on equality or even that she is in charge. This is even emphasized by the fact that Leontes answers his Queen with: "Well said, Hermione" (1.2.33). However, even though the couple seems to have a loving relationship, these seemingly playful orders to each other turn out to be a foreshadowing of the events that occur soon after Hermione's speech.

This is shown when in the same conversation, Leontes suddenly erupts in an outburst of jealousy. The direct cause appears to be an innocent gesture of a hand. At that point Hermione and Polixenes were still having their conversation when the Queen reaches out her hand to her husband's best friend:

Hermione: Tis grace indeed,

Why, lo you now, I have spoke to th' purpose twice.

The one for ever earned a royal husband;

Th'other for some while a friend.

(gives her hand to Polixenes.) (1.2.105-108)

This causes Leontes, who stands aside, to exclaim the following outcry: "Too hot, too hot!" (1.2.109). The question is of course why he does this. In an effort to answer this question the editor John Pincher points at a line from *Othello,* "As hot as monkeys" (3.3.406). He suggests that 'hot' stands for sexually aroused and even lustful, in other words that Polixenes and Hermione are behaving like lovers (158- n.108). Apparently, Leontes interprets the physical intimacy between his wife and his best friend as too intimate. He is jealous and even draws a parallel to sexual intimacy: "But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers" (1.2.115). After all, touching each other's hands and fingers can be deemed as intimate affectionate gestures of

lovers. Meanwhile, Hermione and Polixenes have no clue that Leontes is having these suspicions.

The unexpected eruption of jealousy could be caused by the English early modern standards of patriarchy. Related to these standards was the ancient anxiety of not knowing for sure who the father of a child is, because only the mothers could know for sure. This is pointed out by Jean E. Howards in her introduction to the play in *The Norton Shakespeare*: "Men theoretically had dominion over their wives, but as Leontes says, "No barricade for a belly" (1.2.203) that is, no absolute defence of a woman's chastity but her own honour, and that lies in her control, not her husband's" (1646). The pregnant belly of Hermione could therefore be interpreted as a visual symbol of Leontes' doubt. After all, as Stanley Cavell points out in his *Reading of The Winter's Tale*: "How well do you know your significant other? There is always a private mind that you cannot access, even that of your own spouse" (193). If Leontes was indeed already having his doubts, it could be suggested that this moment, when Hermione reaches out her hand to Polixenes, added more fuel to his inner smouldering fire of jealousy. This leads to the point where the king publicly accuses his Queen of adultery. He even goes as far as throwing his wife in prison where she delivers her daughter Perdita. At that point Hermione insists on her right of "child-bed privilege," as David Cressy names it in his *Birth, Marriage and Death*. Unfortunately, Leontes shows his cruelty: "by denying her the childbed privilege of seclusion, dragging her from her chamber and subjecting her to public examination and humiliation while she was still green" (205). One would expect that Hermione would break but the opposite is true.

After showing her wit during the first conversations in the play, Hermione displays another character trait during these accusations: she dares to stand up against her husband and King. When it dawns on Hermione that Leontes is accusing her of adultery, she remains calm

and dignified whereas her spouse comes across as incoherent as he displays a growing amount of madness in his speech:

> Leontes: She's an adulteress
>
> Hermione: Should a villain say so,
>
> The most replenished villain in the world,
>
> He were as much more villain- you, my lord,
>
> Do but mistake. (2.1.78-81)

She defends herself and during her defence she continues to demonstrate her strong mindedness and cleverness. For example, she points out her virtues of chastity and fertility. She is, she argues: "A fellow of the royal bed which owe a moiety of the throne; a great king's daughter, the mother to a hopeful prince," who nevertheless finds herself forced to defend herself: "here standing / To prate and talk for life and honour" (3.2.36-9). Susan Frye draws a parallel to history, in her "Spectres of Female Sovereignty in Shakespeare's Plays": "Hermione's defence, like that of the queens Katherine and Mary, rests on the early modern defence of female sovereignty as not only chaste, but also well-born and fertile" (16). Hermione has indeed proven herself to be fertile and is of noble birth and points that out during her defence, a clear sign of her strong mindedness.

This outspokenness of Hermione suggested that her relationship to Leontes was based on equality but unfortunately this belief is proven to be wrong. During her defence at the trial Hermione voices her disbelief about what is happening: "Sir, you speak a language that I understand not" (3.2.78). She is also a woman who dares to stand for her rights as her appeal to her child-bed privilege shows. However, as Peter Erickson argues in his "Patriarchal Structures in Shakespeare's Drama:" "The informal, domestic power granted to women in this play does not work to their advantage as much as it might appear" (167). Indeed, King Leontes is not moved by Hermione's plea and condemns his wife during the trial and even refuses to

acknowledge his own daughter. After all, he is still the husband and, according to the dominant notions regarding the position of women in the English early modern era, women (even Queens) have to obey their husband. Or as Cristina Leon Alfar puts it in her *Women and Shakespeare's Cuckoldry Plays*: "Like the King's subjects, women are subject to their husbands' authority, and their duty is to obey" (171). Hermione's defence of herself is therefore interpreted by Leontes as a rebellion against his authority and only justifies his rage in his point of view.

Even after her alleged death, Hermione keeps her strength. In the aftermath of her trial, the birth of her daughter Perdita and the death of her son Mamillus, she appears to die too. At the end of the play, however, it turns out that Paulina has been hiding the Queen all these years while Leontes was trying to repent. When Perdita has returned, Paulina shows Hermione's statue to her and a remorseful Leontes. Then it is revealed that this is not a statue but Hermione who is still alive. Leontes falls onto his knees at the sight of her but Hermione once again shows her strength by ignoring him. She only addresses her long-lost daughter:

> You gods, look down
> And from your sacred vials pour your graces
> Upon my daughter's head! Tell me, mine own,
> Where hast thou been preserved? Where lived?
> How found thy father's court? For thou shalt hear that I,
> Knowing by Paulina that the oracle
> Gave hope thou wast in being, have preserved
> Myself to see the issue. (5.3.122-128)

By doing this, Shakespeare honours the original source of the play, the Greek tale of Alcestis: "Throughout, Alcestis stays utterly silent: she says nothing about her husband's effort to believe that even death can be overcome (Pitcher, 13). There lies power in silence and by doing so it becomes clear that she is the one in lead. She does embrace Leontes: "She hangs about his

neck" (5.3.99), but does not speak to him. He will have to take the first step. With this, we can conclude that despite all the terrible ordeals Hermione has gone through, she continues to show her strength as she did on multiple occasions earlier in the play. She displays early modern virtues like chastity (as she points out during her defences at the trail), silence as a strength but her apparent disobedience is punished harshly by Leontes which shows that they still live in a patriarchy.

2.2 The Winter's Tale -- Paulina

The second female character in *The Winter's Tale* who displays a strong outspoken character, next to Hermione, is Antigonus's wife Paulina. After Hermione is sentenced and imprisoned, the queen gives birth prematurely to a healthy baby girl who is named Perdita. Paulina visits prison and shows the audience a first glimpse of her fierce personality when she promises Emilia that she will make an effort to make Leontes come to his senses as becomes clear from the following: "Tell her, Emilia,/ I'll use that tongue I have. If wit flow from't / As boldness from my bosom, let't not be doubted / I shall do good" (2.2.50-53). She then takes the infant Perdita and brings her to Leontes. By showing his child to him, Paulina hopes that the King will finally realise what he has done and accept that the baby is his own flesh and blood. To achieve this, Paulina points out the facial features and tiny hands of Perdita to Leontes:

> And might we lay th'old proverb to your charge,
> So like you, 'tis the worse. Behold, my lords,
> Although the print be little, the whole matter
> And copy of the father – eye, nose, lip,
> The trick of's frown, his forehead, nay, the valley,
> The pretty dimples of his chin and cheek, his smiles,
> The very mould and frame of hand, nail, finger. (2.3.94-101)

As Farah Karim-Cooper points out in her book *The Hand on the Shakespearean Stage*, it was an early modern belief that the form of hands was inherited from the parents, as modern society still believes nowadays. The reason that Paulina emphasizes this in her speech towards Leontes is to convince him of his paternity of Perdita (3). Besides that, there was another reason to point out the resemblance to Leontes. Because when children looked like their mother, it could be a sign of infidelity. In *Suffocating Mothers*, Janet Adelman refers to this belief: "As in *King Lear*, bastardy is the sign of the mother's presence in the child: only the pure lineage of the father, uncontaminated by the mother, would guarantee legitimacy" (212). Paulina, therefore, displays her intelligence by doing this even though it all goes terribly wrong when Leontes orders Antigonus to take the baby away from court.

One might wonder why Leontes does not banish Paulina for her outspokenness. After all, she dares to challenge her sovereign in his own court. The answer to this question is that Paulina informs Leontes about the apparent death of his wife Hermione. At that point, Leontes finally realises what he has done and asks Paulina to help him repent: "Go on, go on./ Thou canst not speak too much. I have deserved / All tongues to talk their bitterest" (3.2.211-213). Paulina is free to convince King of his crime and able to protect the Queen (Alfar, 174). This is exactly what she does: she hides Hermione for the next eighteen years. By doing this Shakespeare demonstrates that Paulina is the second female in the play who has a strong minded character. She could not save Hermione from Leontes's conviction, but Paulina could shield her from his wrath. In the meantime, Paulina reminds the King on a daily basis of his crimes: "To make a perfect woman, she you killed" (5.1.15). She even makes him swear not to marry again. Even though, Leontes is still the King and head of the household, Paulina is able to influence him and remind him daily of his awful deeds to make him repent. At the moment that it is revealed that Perdita is still alive, she takes Leontes to the statue of his dead wife which ultimately leads to the happy reconciliation in the end.

2.3 The Winter's Tale—Perdita

The third prominent female character in the play is Perdita, who conforms herself the most to the early modern standard of the ideal young woman. At the end of the first part of the play, she is an infant who is left at the shore of Bohemia. When the second part opens, she has reached the age of sixteen. One of the main themes of *The Winter's Tale* is regeneration, or that the youth has the future. This fits in with Perdita's romance with Florizel (Polixenes' son). After all, they are the ones who can undo their parents' faults. To highlight this idea, Shakespeare has staged their romance as an idyllic adventure, set in a wonderful world full of flowers. John Pitcher says the following about the elaborate descriptions: "The pastoral scene in *The Winter's Tale*, is one of Shakespeare's major additions to the source, *Pandosto*. Unusually, he wrote the scene around Perdita, with men as her foils" (50). Perdita is described as full of grace and obedient to her (step)father as one could expect of a girl her age in the early modern era as becomes clear from, for example, at the moment she meets Polixenes:

Perdita (to Polixenes): Sir, welcome.

It is my father's will I should take on me

The hostess-ship o'th' day. (4.4.70-73)

Here we can see that Perdita conforms herself to the virtue of obedience. Later in the play she is praised for her beauty and modesty by Polixenes:

This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever

Ran on the greensward. Nothing she does or seems

But smacks of something greater than herself. (4.4.156-158)

Even though Perdita comes across as the ideal early modern maiden, she does show a mind of her own by eloping with Florizel. This idea is, however, not conducted by the young couple but by Camillo, who suggests that they run away and go to Sicilia. They indeed end up at Leontes's court where it is soon revealed that Perdita is the King's long lost daughter. After that the play

speeds towards the end in which Hermione's statue comes to life. All in all, Perdita may have run away with Florizel but she remains the picture of the perfect young woman. Her fiancée turns out to be a prince and she a princess which makes the match fitting and approved by both their fathers.

2.4 Conclusion

The Winter's Tale thus has two strong female characters, who display features that are not entirely in line with how early women ought to behave. First there is Hermione who dares to challenge her King when he falsely accuses her of adultery. Then there is Paulina who also speaks up and just at the moment when one starts to wonder why Leontes tolerates such behaviour, she informs him with the sad news that Hermione has passed away. Leontes is remorseful and Paulina remains at court and constantly reminds him of what he has done but at the same time functions as a comfort to him. Leontes is forgiven but only at the mercy of the women surrounding him which makes their position clear: they are strong minded characters in a patriarchy. Perdita is the only female character who conforms herself the most with the early modern virtues of a young maiden, as she is chaste and obedient.

2.5 The Gap of Time

The following section compares the main female characters from *The Gap of Time* to the original ones from *The Winter's Tale*. Winterson's adaptation was published in 2015 and, just like Atwood's *Hag-Seed,* it is set in our present day modern western world. Like *The Winter's Play*, *The Gap of Time* is divided in two parts which both have their own genre. It also starts as a tragedy but the tone of voice completely changes to a more optimistic sound when the reader follows the life of Perdita. The first part concentrates on Leo, the modern equivalent of King Leontes who rules his company Sicilia with the aid of his right hand Paulina. He is married to MiMi, a French singer and they have a son named Milo. One of the most significant differences to the original play is that Winterson, like Atwood, decided to write the story from

the perspective of the male protagonist. The reader is informed into detail about Leo's inner world and it is revealed that he had a sexual relationship with his best friend Xeno, the Polixenes of the novel. This explains for a great part why Leontes reacts so jealously when he suspects his best friend of having an affair with his wife. Next to that, Leo displays in his mad ramblings that he has thoughts that were not very different from that of men during the English early modern era. As is explained in the introduction, he too thought that a man should be responsible for the income of the household while the woman tended to the domestic affairs: "For a year things had been difficult because MiMi had paid all their living costs. Leo hated that. It made him feel worse than being in debt" (78). All in all, it can be concluded that the main character of the novel is modelled conform the ideologies of early modern men.

The same is the case for the female main characters of *The Gap of Time* who turn out to be less strong and outspoken than their predecessors from *The Winter's Tale,* which is surprising as the novel is set in the modern Western society. The following section will demonstrate that MiMi does not have the wit or outspokenness of Hermione, that Pauline has entirely different reasons to help Leo repent for his sins and finally that Perdita, unlike the one from the play, takes matters in her own hands when it comes to meeting her real father.

2.6 The Gap of Time—MiMi

In Shakespeare's play Hermione dares to stand up against her husband when he accuses her of adultery whereas in the novel MiMi almost meekly accepts her fate. The tensions between MiMi and Leo are already palpable in the beginning of the novel. The book opens, after a foreshadowing in which Shepherd finds the infant Perdita, with Leo and his son Milo in Sicilia's headquarters where Leo marvels about his love for his child. When Milo has left his office, he calls Cameron, his head-of-security and demands him to install a webcam in his wife's bedroom because he suspects her of having an affair with his best friend Xeno:

Cameron: 'But you said yourself, you have no grounds for this suspicion.'

> Leo turned back into the room. 'It's not just women who have intuition Cameron. I've known Xeno all my life'[.] (26)

After this Leo reminisces about his past and it is revealed that Leo and Xeno had a sexual relationship in their puberty. It becomes apparent that Leo still loves Xeno as well as he loves his wife. This explains why his jealousy is not only directed to his wife but also to his best friend.

The scene that follows allows the reader an inside to Leo's thoughts when his sees his wife:

> MiMi entered the office. Before Leo could get round his desk to kiss her, Xeno was there. Leo saw the way his hand took the small of her back, the way MiMi leaned up towards him. She kissed his cheek and then she put her head in her neck while he hugged her. It was all over in a few seconds. (39)

In this scene we see, through the eyes of the jealous husband, a couple who are suspected of having an affair greet each other. A few moments later this happens:

> MiMi pushed Xeno down onto the white leather sofa and perched with pregnant difficulty on the edge. She took Xeno's hand, palm upwards. 'Xeno taught me to read palms,' she said to Leo. I'll bet he did …thought Leo; what he said, 'More New Age bat shit?' (….) Xeno turned MiMi's palm over. 'I see a beautiful baby,' he said. 'Coming soon.' (40)

Just like in the play, this intimacy and playfulness seem to ignite Leo's jealousy only more as the following quote illustrates: "They were both laughing. They were intimate, private. Leo, ghost-faced, his beating heart invisible, wondered if he was in the room" (40). At that point MiMi still barely has a voice. This can be explained by the fact that this piece of the novel is written from Leo's perspective in the third person. It is about his insecurity and his feelings instead of MiMi's. An explanation about why the author chose this path could be that she

decided to give insight into why Leo draws such radical conclusions. Unlike the play, where Leontes' eruption appears to come from out of nowhere, the book gives access to Leo's inner world.

In the play, we have seen that Hermione dares to stand up against her husband, which is not the case with MiMi in the novel. Whereas Hermione's silence towards Leontes at the end of the play comes across as powerful, MiMi's silence is a sign of her fear. This becomes even more clear at the night of her performance and its aftermath with its horrific events. When Leo confronts his wife with her supposed adultery, he tries to have sex with her. One would expect that MiMi is outraged by his accusations and by his uninvited sexual attentions but she does nothing of the sort:

> 'You're mine. Say you're mine.' MiMi said nothing. (…) Leo shook her. She was floppy like a just-dead person. She didn't move under him the way he liked, she didn't whisper to him in French; he loved that. She lay still like an animal being beaten. He couldn't come. (82)

MiMi does not react at all, she just undergoes the rape and when she afterwards goes into labour unexpectedly and delivers her baby Perdita, she still remains quiet. Leo keeps verbally abusing her and she barely answers, again probably because she is scared as the following quote makes clear: "MiMi was watching him the way you watch a dog that will spring. She was holding her baby against her, wrapped in a towel" (85). Later she does try to talk to Leo:

> MiMi was sitting up now. Leo was silent and still.
>
> 'I know you didn't want this baby.'
>
> 'I don't want Xeno's baby.'
>
> 'She's yours. Do you want to see her?'
>
> MiMi unwrapped the child and leaned forward to Leo. He was trembling. He couldn't lift his head. He couldn't look up. His body was not his. (87)

Despite the fact that MiMi makes an unsuccessful effort to persuade her husband to come to his senses, it is still a bleak contrast to Hermione's strong minded defence of herself. Another example is that just before MiMi divorces Leo she gives him a letter. This letter does not contain a powerful reproach, it has a rather sad tone that lacks the power to convince. This is caused by the fact that it is, after all, a written piece and, besides that, written from the third person perspective. It does not have the verbal strength that Hermione wields during her speeches in the play. Of course, one could argue that the effect is the same but the main difference is that MiMi disappears silently from the story until the ending in which she reappears. In that scene she too addresses her long lost daughter but this is only one line whilst Hermione delivers an entire speech which, again, highlights her strength whereas MiMi's short sentence misses that power. Hermione had no choice but to obey her husband because she lived in a patriarchal world whereas MiMi lives in a modern world in which feminism has achieved a great deal throughout the ages. Nevertheless, by remaining silent she comes more across as the modest and obedient early modern wife than Hermione ever did.

2.7 The Gap of Time --Pauline

The following section will shed a light on the second female character in *The Gap of Time*: Pauline. It will be shown that Pauline closely resembles her predecessor with one important difference: she is unmarried and remains faithful to her employer Leo out of pity where the Paulina from the play also works for Leontes but also uses her time with him to make sure he truly repents his deeds.

The first difference between the novel's Pauline and the one from the play is that she has a working relationship with Leo, as she is his partner in his firm. The second difference is that she is unmarried and therefore does not conform herself to patriarchal norms. She develops an interest in Tony Gonzales, the Antigonus from the play. When she first makes an appearance in *The Gap of Time* she immediately makes a strong impression:

Pauline opened the door. ‘I said I was busy,’ said Leo.

‘You’re not busy,’ said Pauline. ‘I’m busy.’

‘Bitch,’ said Leo

‘Grob,’ said Pauline[.] (34)

There is no denying that she definitely does not display the early modern virtues of silence or obedience: Pauline speaks her mind.

This is exactly what she does throughout the entire novel. She counter-balances her employer who, once again, voices his anti-feminist thoughts in a conversation with Xeno:

‘You’ll see him at the dinner tomorrow, fat-ass,’ yelled Leo as Pauline closed the door.

‘Is it because she’s a Jew or is it because she’s a woman?’

‘Is what?’ ‘Is the reason I can’t control her.’

‘Why would you want to control her? She’s great for the business and she’s great for you. You need someone who stands up to you.’ (35).

Standing up to Leo is precisely what Pauline does and while he constantly verbally abuses her, the question arises why she tolerates this. Unlike Paulina in the play, she does have a choice. There is no necessity to stay loyal to such a demanding and abusive boss. The reason that she stays is that she befriended the whole family and considers them as her own as the following dialogue between her and Xeno makes clear:

Xeno: ‘I have things to do. My son needs me. But, if I am honest, yeah, I feel like I’ve outstayed my welcome.’

Pauline: ‘You’re family.’

Xeno: ‘You’re Jewish.’

Pauline: ‘So indulge me and be one big, happy family. It’s a fantasy but it’s a good one.’ (59)

After the horrific events around Perdita's birth, Pauline dares to confront Leo with his deeds: "Known what? That you can't hold on to anything good? That you only know how to self-destruct? You've lost your wife and your closest friend on one night. Well done!" (88). Like Paulina in the play, she is not afraid to tell Leo the truth about his behaviour. She remains loyal to Leo: "thus, Paulina's role as healer, advisor and conscience—spanning more than a decade—makes her the most influential and commanding of the female friends" (Alfar, 175). However, in contrast to the play this comes forth out of love for her employer and his family rather than out of a necessity to protect Hermione.

2.8 The Gap of Time – Perdita

The lost daughter of Leo and Mimi is the one with the most modern traits, like her predecessor she represents the future but she does not display the same early modern virtues of modesty and obedience. She is outspoken, outgoing and dares to stand up for herself. Nevertheless, she also has a romance that can easily be placed in a pastoral, when she, like her predecessor in the play, falls in love with the son of her father's former best friend, Zel. In the scene where Zel proposes to Perdita, Winterson shows the reader clearly that Zel and Perdita represent the main theme regeneration:

> Zel: "What I said before- in either life, the one they ruined, or this one, the one they couldn't ruin, because they couldn't find it – we were going to be together."
>
> Perdita: "That's the Hollywood version."
>
> Zel: "Hollywood didn't invent fate"
>
> Perdita: "So am I fated to spend the rest of my life with you?"
>
> Zel: "No – that's where you get free will. You don't have to marry me." (275)

Zel points out that Perdita, unlike the young women in the early modern era, does have her own choice. What is more, they do not have to ask their fathers for their permission to marry each

other. That is the main difference between the novel and the play when it comes to the young couple.

As mentioned before, the difference between this Perdita and her predecessor from the play, is that she is outspoken and strongminded, almost the opposites from each other. In contrast to the play, she arranges the meeting with her real father and does the revelation in her own manner. At the moment, for example, that Leo is about to find out her true parentage the following happens: "'SHUT UP!' shouted Perdita. Leo looked surprised. He was the one who did the shouting" (253). Even though Perdita appears to differ from her predecessor, they do have something important in common. This is the fact that both girls are the binding factor that unites their families again. With that we see that she too impersonates the theme 'future' as Perdita from the play did as well. It could be concluded that the modern Perdita does not conform herself to the early modern standards.

2.9 The Gap of Time – Ending

Perhaps one of the most significant differences between the play and the novel is the ending. In the play Hermione's statue comes alive after Perdita has been found and Leontes has truly repented. In the novel Perdita also returns and Leo also shows immense remorse but MiMi does not die. She had become a recluse after Milo died and Perdita had been taken away from her. In the final scene MiMi shows herself again after all these years by giving a performance at the Roundhouse, a small intimate theatre which is symbolic because this is the venue where MiMi gave her last performance on the eve of Perdita's premature birth. Winterson ends her version of *The Winter's Tale* at that point and leaves it to the imagination of the reader if and how the reunion between mother, daughter and father will unfold.

Unlike the play, the reader knows that MiMi is still alive but their reconciliation still comes as a surprise. Here we can draw a parallel to the play's ending. According to Emma Smith in her guidebook *The Cambridge Shakespeare Guide,* the ending fitted the outline of the

entire play because it is a diegesis play, which means that in contrast to a mimesis play, it is all about showing and not telling (214). Here we find a similarity to Winterson's adaptation because the revealing of MiMi at the Roundhouse is also an example of showing and not telling:

> A woman is standing like a statue in the light. She's wearing a simple black dress and red lipstick, her heavy hair cut short.
>
> She doesn't move. Then she does.
>
> 'This song is for my daughter. It's called "Perdita".'
>
> Leo stood up, went into the aisle. From somewhere in the theatre Xeno came and stood beside him. He put his arm round Leo. Leo was crying now, long tears of rain.
>
> That which is lost is found. (284)

MiMi only has one line here but because of the whole description, the scene is powerful and intimate at the same time. It is written in such manner that the reader can envision the characters clearly, as if they are on stage. This makes it all the more clear that the women in the novel only play a supporting role. In contrast to the play, is the revelation not orchestrated by Pauline and MiMi has only one line compared with Hermione's lengthy speech. This end scene centers around Leo's reaction and his feelings. The author even closes the novel at that point.

2.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the women have limited power and are far less in the foreground than their predecessors. The focus is far more placed on the feelings Leo displays. *The Gap of Time* is about a man who does something terrible and who is reconciled in the end with his 'victims.' It is, all in all, more his story than that of the women which explains why they are portrayed the way as is described earlier in this chapter. MiMi does not dare to speak up against her dominating husband, she rather conforms herself to the role of an obedient, modest and silent wife. Pauline speaks her mind but nevertheless remains loyal and obedient to her rude employer even though she does have to do that. The only character who is modernised

is that of Perdita, however that is logical as she represents theme regeneration like her predecessor did too. Thus two out of the three female characters in *The Gap of Time* conform themselves to the dominant notions regarding the position of women in the early modern era, while they do have a choice in their modern environment whereas the original characters did not.

3 *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW* AND *VINEGAR GIRL* COMPARED: HOW KATE OBEYS HER FATHER IN BOTH WORKS

This third chapter compares William Shakespeare's play *The Taming of the Shrew* (1594) to Ann Tyler's adaptation *Vinegar Girl* (2016). It shows that the storyline of the female main character Katherine, nicknamed Kate in both works, narrowly follows the same path in the novel as it did in the play. This is remarkable as one would expect a feistier Kate, because the novel is set in our modern time where women have a choice when it comes to choosing a partner. She does not, unlike Shakespeare's Kate, have to obey her father. Another reason why one would expect a more modern Kate is that the original played caused a lot of controversy in its own time, as will be pointed out in the next section, and it has remained one of the most debated plays of Shakespeare throughout the centuries until this day. Altogether, there is ample reason to expect that Tyler would seize the opportunity to rewrite the play into a more women-friendly piece. However, as this chapter demonstrates, not only is this not the case, Tyler's Kate is even more 'tamed' than the original Kate from the play.

3.1 The Taming of the Shrew

To understand better why one would expect that Tyler indeed would rewrite a version with more feministic women, it is good to first have a look at the controversy the play caused in its own time. Written as a comedy around 1594, it follows the rules of commedia dell'arte combined with native English popular drama which deals with a 'shrewish' woman (Gay, 23). Especially the closing scene where Katherina delivers her famous speech in which she says: "And place your hands below your husband's foot:/ In token of which duty, if he please,/ My hand is ready, may it do him ease" (5.2.183-185) caused a lot of controversy. These lines suggest that Katherina has completely subjected herself to her husband Petruccio. As mentioned before, obedience and submissiveness were desired virtues in early modern English women.

Nevertheless, *The Taming of the Shrew* as a whole and the end speech in particular has led to mixed reactions from the audience throughout the ages. That this already started when the play was first staged, is also suggested by Robert Shaughnessy: "even the Elizabethans would have shifted uneasily on their benches while watching the play" (110). He continues:

> The first and most obvious question is the question of whether a play that appears to rely for laughs on the spectacle of an assertive woman, belittled as a kind of rodent by the entertainment's title and demonised as a 'hilding of a devilish spirit'(2.1.26) continues to deserve to be regarded as in any sense a comedy. (110)

Unfortunately, no written records of the reception of the play have survived but it is a fact that fellow playwright John Fletcher wrote a sequel. This was *The Tamer Tam'd* (1647), written during Shakespeare's own lifetime, although published several decades later. As Lynda Boose argues in her article 'Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds': "Fletcher's response may in itself suggest the kind of discomfort that *Shrew* characteristically provoked in men and why its many revisions since 1594 have repeatedly contrived ways of softening the edges" (179). In this play Kate has died and Petruccio is about to marry his second wife Maria. She, however, has her own ways of taming her husband, just as he himself forced his first wife into obedience. Therefore, Petruccio reaps what he has sown with his own behaviour, which can be interpreted as criticism on the original play.

The rest of the chapter about the *Shrew* will deal with why it was so controversial. It will shine a light on Katherina's character and how she is treated in the play. In the section after that, a parallel will be drawn to Tyler's Kate and how she differs from the original character.

3.2 The Taming of the Shrew – Katherina

Katherina is the titular *Shrew* who needs taming according to the title of the play and she indeed displays a feisty nature when she is first introduced. Her father Minola Baptista has conducted a plan to marry off both his daughters in one go. Before his youngest daughter, the

desirable Bianca, is allowed to wed, her elder sister Katherina must have gained a husband as well. This plan is composed without consulting his daughters who therefore have every reason to be cross with their father. During the conversation in which Baptista's eldest daughter, Katherina, has her first lines she immediately shows her annoyance. This could very well be caused by her father's decision and further intensified by the insults she has to endure from Gremio and Hortensio as is shown by the following lines:

> Baptista: If either of you both love Katherina,
>
> Because I know you well and love you well,
>
> Leave shall you have to court her at your pleasure.
>
> Gremio: To cart her, rather. She's too rough for me.
>
> There, there, Hortensio, will you any wife?
>
> Katherina: I pray you, sir, is it your will
>
> To make a stale of me amongst these matters?
>
> Hortensio: Mates, maid? How mean you that? No mates for you
>
> Unless you were of gentler, milder mould. (1.1.53-60)

As Barbara Hodgdon, the editor of the edition of the play in *The Arden Shakespeare*, remarks in her notes accompanying the text: "Katherina plays on several levels of meaning: stale as decoy, lower-class prostitute, laughing-stock and stalemate in chess" (163- n.58). When we consider that Katherina was indeed already hurt by her father's verdict and then hears the men's painful remarks, one would find it only logical that she reacts in such fiery manner.

It becomes very clear that Baptista's daughters have absolutely no say in the matter, as was the custom in houses of nobility in the English early modern era. What is more, the prospect of a marriage could be quite daunting as Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford argue in their *Women in Early Modern England*: "For women of higher ranks meant being married having to experience the sense of physical displacement, of being wrenched out of a sheltered

environment and being plunged into a hostile milieu" (348). Altogether, Katherina is portrayed as aggressive but that is understandable given the circumstances.

Her outspokenness becomes even more obvious later on in the same conversation. After having endured more insults from Tranio ("that wench is stark mad or wonderful forward" (1.1.69)), Katherina's younger sister Bianca is introduced. Immediately it becomes apparent that she is the very opposite of her elder sister, as is observed by Tranio: "but in the other's silence do I see/ Maid's mild behaviour and sobriety" (1.1.70-71). In the notes to the play is remarked that silence was considered as one of the virtues of the (masculine) ideal of femininity (Hodgdon, 164 – n.70). In contrast to her sister, Katherina again reacts as the "fiend of hell," (1.1.88) she is supposed to be: "A pretty peat. It is best put finger in the eye, an she knew why" (1.1.79). At first glance this comes indeed across as an envious remark. However, when one again considers the insults Katherina just had to endure and afterwards has to hear that she is the less desirable sister, one can perhaps understand her a bit better. This notion is emphasized a little later when Katherina's position in the household is confirmed when her father asks her to leave to room because: "I have more to commune with Bianca" (1.1.101). Katherina reacts jealously: "why, and I trust I may go too, may I not?/ What, shall I be appointed, as though, belike,/ I knew not what to take and what to leave? Ha!" (1.1.102-104). Of course, it is not a very kind thing to say and in the light of an Elizabethan comedy perhaps even comical. However, from the perspective that Baptista's eldest daughter is continuously maltreated during the conversation, Katherina's reactions can be considered as understandable.

There is another character trait, besides her anger, that Shakespeare highlights in Katherina: her witty outspokenness. When she first meets Petruccio, her unwanted suitor, he immediately provokes her by calling her Kate instead of Katherina. She dares to rebuke him as is shown by the following:

Good morrow, Kate, for that's your name, I hear

Katherina: Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing:

They call me Katherine that do talk of me.

Petruccio: You lie, in faith, for you are called plain Kate,

And bonny Kate, and sometimes 'Kate the Curst';

But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom,

Kate of Kate hall, my super-dainty Kate. (2.1.181-187)

Petruccio's wooing appears to be charming but he also directly tries to take control of Katherina by altering her name: "for you are called plain Kate" (2.1.183). This can be interpreted as a first sign that Petruccio is trying to control her, belittle her even. This was not something unheard of in that era. David Cressy points at a seventeenth century guidebook which advised young bachelors: "Mistresses are to be attacked like towns, according to their fortifications. Some are to be mined, some to be bombed, some won by storm, others to be starved into a surrender" (235). Nevertheless, Katherina is not impressed and tries her very best to outwit him. This is also recognised by Amy Smith in her "Performing Marriage with a Difference": "Kate neither rails nor remains silent and instead draws him into witty sexual banter. Indeed, their meeting does not follow the script of male dominance he has rehearsed nor the Petrarchan wooing he predicts, but it is instead derailed by Kate" (299). When we look at the wooing dialogue we can see that Katherina indeed constantly challenges Petruccio as the following excerpt makes clear:

Petruccio: Myself am moved to woo thee for my wife

Katherina: 'Moved'. In good time, let him that moved you hither

Re-move you hence. I knew you at the first

You were a moveable

Petruccio: Why, what's a movable? (2.1.193-197)

Katherina displays her wittiness and does not allow Petruccio to take the lead in the conversation. Hodgdon argues in her notes which accompany the text: "As lineated here, short

bursts of prose suggest moments where the game is up for grabs; the speaker who re-establishes a full line verse line has the opportunity to take control of the encounter" (204- n.194). Smith also recognises Katherina's outspokenness in the exchange: "By telling him to 'remove' himself and defining him as a 'moveable,' she emphasizes her role as one capable of rejecting his advances" (300). Such wit and outspokenness displayed by a woman was unheard of in the Elizabethan era and Shakespeare would wait for Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing* to write another character like Katherina. This lengthy dialogue is almost as if one watches a tennis match between equal opponents. It does, however, clearly shows that Katherina will not yield easily.

Despite the fact that Katherina is fierce and witty, she still has to conform to her father's wishes in the end. After all, the dominant notions regarding the position of ladies of noble birth still said that they had to obey their father and later their husband. This is also argued by Mendelson and Crawford: "At the highest social levels, girls were thoroughly indoctrinated in the virtues of modesty, obedience and subordination to a future husband" (391) as is also explained in the introduction of this thesis. Nevertheless, Katherina does dare to voice her objectives against her father:

> Call you me daughter? Now I promise you
> You have showed a tender fatherly regard
> To wish me wed to one half lunatic,
> A madcap ruffian and a swearing Jack
> That thinks with oaths to face the matter out[.] (2.1.288-292)

To emphasize her position, her father and Petruccio completely ignore her complaints and decide that the wedding will take place. What is more, Petruccio pretends that Katherina is in love with him: "how much she loves me, O, the kindest Kate,/ She hung about my neck, and kiss on kiss,/ She vied so fast, protesting oath on oath/ That in a wink she won me to her love"

(2.1.310-313). Baptista reacts with: "I know not what to say, but give me your hands" (2.1.322). At this point, a peculiar thing happens: Katherina does not protest anymore. This could mean that she has given up her defiance or rather, as Hodgdon suggests in the notes of *The Arden Shakespeare*:

> Performed before witnesses, the giving of hands constituted a 'pre-contract,' part of an Elizabethan marriage, after which neither party might marry another person. Ard, however, notes that such a pre-contract required the presence and verbal consent of both parties; since Katherina remains silent, the contract is not binding. (213-n.322)

Silent or not, the wedding does take place which again shows that Katherina has absolutely no say in the matter. Her father decides her fate and she has no other option than to obey as the customs of the early modern era required her to do.

The most (im)famous part of *The Taming of the Shrew* is the end speech which Katherina delivers. When one reads her lines, one will be convinced that Petruccio's wife has completely accepted her fate and is submissive and obedient. This seems, for example, to be apparent from the following lines: "Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,/ Thy head, thy sovereign: one that cares for thee" (5.2.152-153). At that time, Katherina has endured several attempts of taming her. She has been kept awake, starved and humiliated in various ways. Petruccio has treated her like a wild animal that needed to be tamed. Indeed, "The strategies Petruccio adopts, rather than aligning Katherina with her animal counterpart – a small, squeaking rodent- or with the bridled scold paraded through the streets like a horse, identify her with a haggard, or wild female hawk" (Hodgdon, 55). Therefore, it would be only logical to expect that Katherina has yielded herself to her husband in order to survive. But one might wonder if this is really the case since she uses 'thy' in her speech with which she distances herself from her words: "Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper" (5.2.146). By doing this she addresses other women and avoids talking about herself by using 'thy.' Or as Amy Smith

argues: “Another way Kate reshapes husbandly is by pairing it with an equally exaggerated conception of companionate roles” (314). It could even be questioned if her lengthy monologue is not meant to be parodical or even a clever way to appear to be ‘tamed.’ The play was after all intended to be a comedy. It leaves the audience and the reader with the main question whether Kate really is tamed. According to Emma Smith in her *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare* it depends entirely on how you interpret the text and how you see it performed (235). After all, the play can be interpreted in different ways.

When one considers this, it is also important to note that when Shakespeare wrote his play women were not allowed to perform on stage. A cross-dressed boy would therefore have played the role of Katherina. Phyllis Rackin argues in her *Shakespeare & Women* that:

> Although the marriage plot affirms the authority of patriarchy, the repressive implications of the action it represents are undermined by the initial reminder to the audience that what they are watching is a performance of theatrical shape-shifting. This effect would be intensified if the play were performed- as it probably was- as farce, for the action is replete with slapstick comedy, and the characters are portrayed in one-dimensional stereotypes. (55)

When one bears the above in mind, the end speech becomes ambiguous, as one could doubt whether Shakespeare seriously advocated the taming or that he intended the play to be a comedy and nothing more. Of course, through the ages women were no longer banned from the stage and when one watches the end speech being performed by a female actress, it could alter the entire effect depending on how it is staged. It remains a matter of interpretation as is also voiced by women who actually played the part. Carol Rutter has written a book about female actresses who played in Shakespeare’s plays. In this *Clamorous Voices* Fiona Shaw and Sinead Cusack both argue against the idea that Katherina is submissive to Petruccio in her final speech. Shaw

played Katherina in a Royal Shakespeare Company production in 1978 and says the following about it:

> Kate's last speech is a step forward to a new life. This man who is seen as her tormenter has given her or has allowed her to take the step that will save the rest of her life. That is why it is wrong to think the play is about dominance, it is about someone who is on the brink of saying yes without being compromised. (251)

This opinion is also shared by Sinead Cusack who too played the part of Kate in an RSC production: "It is a speech about how her spirit has been allowed to soar free. She had made her own rules that happen to coincide with his" (252). Altogether, it can be concluded that *The Taming of the Shrew* of course does deal with submission and obedience but it all depends on the manner of how Kate is portrayed.

3.3 Vinegar Girl

The following section will start with an overall analysis of *Vinegar Girl* and then dive deeper into the character of Kate, the Katherina of the story. It will show that the modern Kate still conforms herself to the early modern English standards and perhaps even more so than her predecessor.

At first glance Ann Tyler's adaptation does not seem to follow the storyline of *The Taming of the Shrew* narrowly. Written in 2016, the novel is set in our modern Western world and opens with Kate Battista gardening out back. The author has chosen to leave out the entire induction which was in the original play. By doing so, the novel becomes a story that stands on its own instead of a play-within-a-play like *The Taming of the Shrew* is. The induction of the play was meant to give the audience a preview of the play as Thelma Greenfield notes in her *The Transformation of Christopher Sly*: "the inductions tended to direct the audience's reaction to the play by concerning themselves in an explanatory way with its argument, theme, genre, structure, staging, or merit" (39). The Elizabethan audience thus knew that, after seeing the

induction, they were going to watch a comedy. Since Tyler chose to omit it entirely shows that the novel is a story on its own and not a play-in-a-play like the *Shrew* was. What is more, when one starts reading *Vinegar Girl* it becomes rapidly clear that it is not meant to be a comedy.

Kate and Bunny are the two daughters of an eccentric scientist (Battista, the modern equivalent of Baptista from the play) and where the youngest is portrayed as a rather light headed youngster, Kate comes across as rather dark, almost cynical. Their mother has passed away and Kate is working in a pre-school while tending the household. One of the major differences to the play is that Kate is unaware of her father's plan to have her married to Pyotr, the Petruccio in the story. In the play, Baptista's plan to marry both his daughters off at once is conducted out of interest for his children as becomes clear from the following: "Ay, when the special thing is well obtained – That is, her love, for that is all in all" (2.1.127-128). This could even suggest that he finds it important that Katherina finds love in her marriage. He also knows Bianca has more than one suitor and will be able to find love easily (Hodgdon, 199- n.128). Besides the fact that Kate is kept in the dark about her father's plan, dr. Battista conducts his plan in the first place out of his own interest instead of his daughter's. Because Pyotr is his brilliant assistant who he needs for his research. Pyotr is in the United Stated on a visa which is about to expire and a marriage to an American woman would allow him to stay. All in all, Battista's plan can be considered as narcissistic because he acts completely for his own gain.

3.4 Vinegar Girl – Kate

Kate is the vinegar girl from the novel's title and even though she comes across as moody, she lacks the fierceness of her predecessor of the *Shrew*. This becomes immediately apparent when the story opens with a phone call from her father in which he commands her to bring him his lunch. The story is written from her point of view and the reader can sense her annoyance but she does obey his order to deliver the lunch that she prepared for her father. The

tone is set; Kate conforms herself to the early modern standards of the hierarchy within the household.

Once Kate is in her father's laboratory, she meets Pyotr for the first time and an uneasy conversation enfolds. This is a bleak contrast with the first dialogue between Katherina and Petruccio which rapidly became a witty banter. Of course the main difference is that Kate is unaware of her father's plan to have her marry Pyotr whereas Katherina knows why she was introduced to Petruccio. The first conversation between Pyotr and Kate is very short, compared to the original one from the play:

> "Just like the girls in my country," he said, beaming. "So rude-spoken." "Just like the women," Kate said reprovingly. "Yes, they also. The grandmothers and the aunties." She gave up on him. (7)

The contrast with the play is that the dialogue is more funny because of the misunderstanding than because of its wittiness. Pyotr is foreign which not only causes troubles in understanding each other but also when it comes to manners. His communication is direct which affronts Kate and leads to even more communication errors. However, it remains a stark contrast with the first meeting between Petruccio and Katherina in the play where a long dialogue enfolds full with sexual innuendos and clever word jokes. Besides the language issues, the conversation also does not flow because of Kate. Tyler portrays her as strong-minded yet socially inept. In contrast to her predecessor she is not a shrew but instead does not know how to behave ladylike which is partly caused by being brought up by her father.

Her father may not have been strict on the development of female virtues he does lead a strict household in which in his daughters have to conform themselves to his wishes. What is more, Kate may appear to be independent, but there is a clear hierarchical situation in the Battista household, as she has to obey her father. The first example is, of course, the occasion when she has to bring her father his lunch, which she also had to prepare, in his laboratory

where she meets Pyotr. During that meeting her father is in a way selling his daughter: “Did I tell you she runs our whole house? She’s very domestic. Oh, I already said that. And she has a fulltime job besides. Did I tell you she teaches preschool? She’s wonderful with small children” (11). The emphasis on Kate’s domestic skills and her ability to handle children almost has an early modern ring to it, because these virtues were highly valued in women as is pointed out in the introduction of this thesis.

Another example of the hierarchy is that every day Kate has to cook a certain concoction that dr Battista has put together: “Her father was the own who invented it. He couldn’t understand why everybody didn’t follow the same system; it provided all the requisite nutrients and saved so much time and decision-making” (43). Despite the fact that both his daughters do not particularly like this recipe, they do not protest which again emphasizes the hierarchy. There are even more rules which show this: Bunny is not allowed to entertain boys unsupervised and even the dishwasher has to be loaded in a strict order. All in all, it becomes very clear that, even though Kate’s and Bunny’s father is an eccentric person, he still is very much in charge of the household and his daughters have to obey.

All this draws a parallel to the play because Katherina and Bianca, being ladies living in the early modern era, also had to obey their father. Katherina loudly voices her objections about this in the play but in the novel Kate does not seem to mind at all. This can be considered as peculiar since the position of women has evolved a great deal through the ages. However, the author does provide the reader with an answer as to why Kate is living her life like this. She paints a picture of the protagonist of *Vinegar Girl* as a young woman who finds it difficult to interact socially and is in search of herself. This becomes clear when Kate is at work. She likes to be with the toddlers but finds it hard to participate in adult conversations as she is painfully aware of her composure:

> Unlike most men, he stood noticeably taller than Kate, and yet somehow in his presence she always felt too big and too gangling. She longed all at once to be softer, daintier, more ladylike, and she was embarrassed by her own gracelessness. (33)

As mentioned earlier in the introduction, grace in women was considered as a desirable virtue in the early modern era and it is precisely this quality that is lacking in Kate.

The first occasion when we can draw a parallel to Katherina's feistiness is when Kate is informed by her father to his plan to have her married Pyotr. At first, like any modern woman would do, she does not take him seriously:

> "So could he marry a girl in the building?" Kate asked. She sat down at her place and shook out her napkin. "I don't think so," her father said. "He doesn't… the conversations never seem to develop any further, unfortunately."
>
> "Then who?"
>
> Her father sat down at the head of the table. He cleared his throat. He said, "You, maybe?"
>
> "Very funny," she told him[.] (47)

At that point Kate has no notion that her father is not joking. Dr Battista invites Pyotr over for dinner and afterwards asks his eldest daughter if she would like to marry his assistant: "Would you be willing to marry Poyder?" (69). This comes out of the blue because at that point Kate has only met Pyotr once at the laboratory. When Kate fully realises the seriousness of his question she shows the fierceness of Katherina of the play in her reaction: "You're saying you want me to marry someone I don't even know so that you can hang onto your research assistant" (70). Her father does not listen to her objections and again points out the advantages for himself. Kate reacts with righteous anger:

> "You've been hinting at this for day, haven't you?" she asked. It was humiliating to hear how her voice shook; she hoped he didn't notice. "You've been throwing him at me all

> along and I was too dumb to see it. I guess I just couldn't believe my own father would conceive of such a thing[.]" (70)

Dr Battista's answer could as well have been in *The Taming of the Shrew*: "Now, Kate, you're overreacting," her father said. "You'll have to marry someone sooner or later, right?" (70). Kate hurries away and runs into her younger sister and throws a pen into Bunny's astonished face which is also a recognisable scene from the play in which Katherina maltreats Bianca. Apparently, Kate has more of her predecessor in her than she has shown until that point in the novel.

This makes it even more surprising that despite Kate's anger, Pyotr starts to woo her and she allows him to do so. When Dr. Battista's assistant comes to the house, she accepts his apologies: "'Was a foolish notion anyhow," he said, speaking to the lawn in general. "It is evident you could choose any husband you want. You are very independent girl'" (99). They keep on talking for a while and when Pyotr leaves, the reader can find the first hint that Kate is warming to him: "She was still mad as hell at her father, but she took some faint comfort in telling herself that at least the man he'd tried to palm off on her was not a complete heel" (106). Of course, Pyotr was instructed by Kate's father to visit his daughter as later becomes clear. When she realizes this she becomes even more angry:

> Almost gently, she said, "Father. Face it. I will never agree to marry someone I'm not in love with." "In other cultures," he said, "arranged marriages are –" "We are not in another culture, and this is not an arranged marriage. This is human trafficking." (111)

Bearing in mind that the novel is an adaption to the play *The Taming of the Shrew*, one could easily replace 'in another culture,' for 'in the early modern era.' Nevertheless, at that point in the novel Kate is convincing as a true Katherina because she does dare to stand up against her father like Katherina did when she was first informed about the marriage plans. However, surprisingly enough, only a few pages further in the novel she, nevertheless, gives in to her

father. He has been trying to convince her that the marriage would be on a platonic basis only and that he is trying to help her: “Oh, I always put things so awkwardly, don’t I. I just mean you’re not out where you could meet a husband. You’re shut away at home” (118). At that point, Kate gives in when her father offers her an apology: “’You have every right to be cross with me, Kate. I owe you an apology.” “Oh, well,” Kate said. “I guess I can see your side of it’” (119). Naturally her father is overjoyed and even more when his eldest daughter actually agrees to go along with his plan: “’You really might do this for me?” She hesitated, and then she gave him a tentative nod’” (120). All in all, it can be concluded that Kate is more obedient than Katherina in the play. After all, the latter has no choice in the matter and loudly voices her objections and the question even arises whether she is really tamed at the end of the play. Kate also objects up to a certain point but then gives in, while she does not have to do that because she does have a choice whereas Katherina had none. However, Kate continues to obey her father as she has done throughout the entire novel from managing the household conform his wishes up to marrying his assistant

3.5 Vinegar Girl – Bunny

The character that is the most different from the play is that of Bunny, the youngest daughter. She represents the Bianca from the play. Portrayed as a young lightheaded maiden, she busies herself with finding ways to entertain boys and is loved for her bubbly personality by her father. When the wedding plans of Kate and Pyotr are revealed she, however, shows another side of her character. She is astonished that her sister agreed to the arrangement and confronts her with this:

> I know you think you’re doing a little something on paper to fool Immigration, Bunny said, but this guy is starting to act like he owns you. He’s telling you what last name to use and where to live and whether to go on working. I mean, I do think it would be if I

> could have a bigger room, but if the price for that is my only sister getting totally tamed and tamped down and changed in some whole nother person. (185)

Kate tries to calm her sister down by assuring her that she can handle her husband-to-be: “I’m not that easily squashed. Trust me: I can take him on with one hand tied behind me” (185). The concern that Bunny displays cannot be found in the play. What is more, the relationship between the two sisters in the play can be deemed as far from loving as Katherina ties Bianca up: “Is it for him you do envy me so?/ Nay then, you jest, and now I well perceive/ You have but jested with me all this while./ I prithee, sister Kate, untie my hands” (2.1.18-21). In this case ‘envy’ can be read as ‘hate’ (Hodgdon, 193- n.18). However, Katherina is jealous with her sibling as she tells her father: “What, will you not suffer me? Nay, now I see/ she is your treasure, she must have a husband/ I must dance barefoot on her wedding day” (2.1.31-32). Here we do find a direct parallel to the novel when an enraged Kate shouts at her father: “’You would never ask Bunny to do this,” Kate said bitterly. “Your precious treasure Bunny-poo’” (71). Therefore, it comes as a surprise that Bunny voices her opinion about Kate’s marriage so loudly. In the play, Bianca does not protest at all against her sister’s fate. Altogether, it can be concluded that despite the jealousy Kate displays towards her younger sister and Bunny’s adolescent behaviour, their bond is strong compared to that of Katherina and Bianca.

Later at the wedding, Bunny again tries to convince her older sister to not go ahead with the affair and even points out Pyotr’s dominant character. This becomes clear in the following:

> “Kate Battista!” Bunny said, “You are surely not going ahead with this!”
>
> “Well…”
>
> “Did you hear how he just talked to me?”
>
> “Well, he’s upset,” Kate told her.
>
> “I am *not* goddamned *upset*!” Pyotr bellowed.
>
> “You see what I mean,” Kate told Bunny.

> "Come here now!" Pyotr shouted. (208)

Nevertheless, Bunny is unable to stop the wedding from happening. Even though her character seems out of line with the Bianca from the play this is not entirely the case. After all, Bianca appears to fit the model of the virtuous early modern English lady perfectly but she is the one who elopes with Lucentio. Just like Bunny in the play she pretends to be perfect but she is far from it. The real difference between Bunny and Bianca is that Bunny voices her objections about Kate's marriage whereas Bianca remains quiet.

Kate's younger sister does have a point regarding Pyotr. Like the original character he tries to tame his bride or at least he shows hints of a dominant character. At the rehearsal dinner he exclaims that Kate is his responsibility now and that she does not need to work anymore. Even though Kate has her doubts, she still proceeds with the wedding preparations. She voices them in her mind:

> "Wait!" she wanted to tell them. "Don't you think I'm worth more than this? I shouldn't have to go through with this! I deserve to have a real romance, someone who loves me for myself and thinks I'm a treasure. (…) But she kept quiet[.] (173)

There is a reason why she goes on with the plan as she tells her sister Bunny during their row. She feels like Pyotr is giving her an opportunity to escape her current life: "This is my chance to turn my life around, Bunny! Just give it a good shaking up! Can you blame me for wanting to try?" (186). At their wedding reception Kate makes her speech, comparable to that of Katherina in the play. She does not, however, mention to place her hand under her husband's foot. Like in the play, she says that she pities men because they do not know how to show their feelings and women do: "They know how things work underneath, while the men have been stuck with the sports competitions and the wars and the fame and success. It's like men and women in two different countries!" (256). Pyotr reacts in the same manner as Petruccio did: "'Pyotr rose to his feet and placed an arm around Kate's shoulders. He smiled into her eyes and

said, “Kiss me, Katya’” (257). The difference, of course, to the play is that the author added the ‘smiled into her eyes,’ which Shakespeare did not.

3.6 Conclusion

Altogether, it can be concluded that Ann Tyler has made an effort to modernise the play but in the end her main female character Kate does still conform herself to the dominant notions of the early modern era. She conforms herself throughout the novel to the hierarchy in the Battista household and goes along with her father’s plan to marry her off to his assistant even though she beforehand had severe reservations about it. What is more, she does not have to do this, she has a free will whereas Katherina is bound to be obedient to her father. This makes it all the more surprising that the Kate that Tyler has created voluntarily agrees with her father’s plan and again shows that she is indeed more early modern than one would expect.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion to this thesis is that Tyler, Atwood and Winterson all chose to model their female characters according to how Shakespeare once portrayed them in his plays. Thus, this means that we still hear a strong echo of the dominant notions regarding the position of early modern women in their adaptations. This is remarkable because, as mentioned in the introduction, the three authors are known for their strong female characters. Therefore one would have expected that they would have seized the opportunity to model the main female characters according to the dominant notions of the position of women in modern Western society. Or at the least that we as readers would have recognised elements of the fourth-wave feminism which objects against sexual harassment and assault. This is to be expected because the novels *Hag-Seed* (Winterson, 2016), *The Gap of Time* (Winterson, 2015*)* and *Vinegar Girl* (Tyler, 2016) are set in modern Western society.

However, as we have seen throughout this thesis, this is not the case. First there is Margaret Atwood, the writer of the adaption of *The Tempest.* In her novel *Hag-Seed* she created three different Mirandas who all in a way help to achieve Felix reach his goals of revenge and reconciliation. When one reads her summary of the play in the back of the book about the writing process one can find the answer as to why she chose to do this. She zooms in on the loss of Felix's daughter Miranda and compares that to the moments that Alonso is grieving over the 'loss' of his son Ferdinand: "Alonso is still grieving the loss of Ferdinand. Prospero says he too has lost a child – a daughter" (289). In order to overcome his grief, Felix needed his revenge and his Mirandas to aid him. With the themes in mind, we are able to respect Atwood's choices a bit better.

Secondly, there is Winterson who recreated *The Winter's Tale* as Leo's story in which the women all play a less important role. MiMi does not have the outspokenness that Hermione displayed in the play but displays early modern virtues like silence, obedience and modesty.

Pauline does have a foul mouth but still obeys her employer and finally there is Perdita who is modernised but with the goal to represent the theme regeneration. Jeanette Winterson gave her view on the writing process at the end of her novel *The Gap of Time*. She tells the reader that for her the most important character was that of Perdita, because she embodies the promise of the future (286). This explains why MiMi has far less text than her predecessor Hermione as she simply is a less important character in the novel. To Winterson, the emphasis needed to be on Perdita.

Finally we have Tyler's *Vinegar Girl* in which she tries to soften her shrew and make her behaviour more understandable for the reader. However, although this might be the case, Kate still finds herself entangled in the rules of her father's strict household and conforms herself to his wishes by marrying his assistant. In a rare interview Ann Tyler gave to *The Washington Post* titled: "Anne Tyler loathes Shakespeare. So she decided to rewrite one of his plays," she admits that she hates Shakespeare and *The Taming* in particular:

> "'It's such a crazy story," Tyler says from her home in Baltimore. "People behave so inexplicably that you just know there's another side to it. Someone's exaggerating; somebody's putting his own spin on things. Let's just figure out what really happened.'"

The reader can indeed find Tyler's effort to give an explanation for Kate's behaviour. But nevertheless, she still does not convince as a shrew who is rightfully angry with her father and unwanted suitor. The adapted Kate still accepts her fate while she, in contrast to Katherina, does have a choice. Sweet ending or not, as Tyler calls it, it leaves a bit of bitter sweet taste behind and the conviction that the modern Kate conforms herself altogether to her father's wishes.

All in all, this thesis has demonstrated that all three adaptations have female characters in which we can still recognise the early modern virtues that women were supposed to have in Shakespeare's era.

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