Reviving Shakespeare's Women: Adaptations of Shakespearean Heroines in Young Adult Fiction

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Introduction: In Defense of Shakespeare's Women

A Tradition of Reinvention

> I had been my father's rowdy daughter, then the queen's favored lady-in-waiting. Later, a shepherd girl in a homespun frock, weaving garlands for her lover. Then a secret wife. Too soon a grieving one, wearing rags like a madwoman. For a time, a free young man striding in breeches and traveling alone. These were but roles I acted. Who was the true Ophelia? (Klein 241)

While the passage above offers us the voice of the version of Ophelia found in Lisa Klein's novel *Ophelia* (2006), it ultimately is emblematic of a much larger phenomenon: the myriad of ways in which one can reinvent Shakespeare's female characters. One could consider that the "true" versions are the very first versions of them, present in histories like the *Saxo Grammaticum* and Holinshed's *Chronicles* or in fictions including Italian novellas and English prose romance, and that all reinventions that have come after them, including Shakespeare's, are "but roles [they] acted." However, if Shakespeare's adaptations of these women are the most influential versions of themselves, characters such as Ophelia and Miranda become extremely problematic for modern female readers of the play, most notably for their silences and perceived lack of agency within their respective plays' events. Additionally, Shakespeare's adaptations are just that, adaptations; they are the products of one man's imagination in dialogue with his sources and as such cannot be perceived as the only authority on these characters and the roles they play within their play texts and source texts. They are also embodied differently in every staged production of a given play text. Because of this, regardless of the perceived authority of the source text, as the play texts are constantly reinvented and reinterpreted, so too are the characters within them.

For the purposes of this thesis, the branch of this tradition of reinvention that I am most interested in is that which deals with the commentary on and the desire to expand the agency and

interiority of Shakespeare's female characters, namely Ophelia from *Hamlet* (1603) and Miranda from *The Tempest* (1623). This branch of adaptation came into prominence during the 19th century, with the publication of works such as Anna Jameson's *Characters of Women: Moral, Poetical, and Historical* (1832) and Mary Cowden Clarke's *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines* (1851). Each of these collections functions as a foray into subjectivity for Shakespeare's female characters as they are all given personal histories. This allows each character to become the center of her own story regardless of the role she plays in her respective Shakespearean text. As a result of this revisionary focus, Clarke and Jameson are able to construct richer, if still imaginary, interior lives for characters like Ophelia and Miranda who are not granted soliloquies in their play texts. While the characters themselves are not the narrators of their personal histories, the third person narrator in each collection is still able to let readers into the characters' heads in order to observe their thought processes, primarily when questions of love or duty are concerned. Unfortunately, neither Clarke nor Jameson goes so far as to reinterpret the events of the play texts in such a way that it provides Shakespeare's female characters with more agency within those texts. Clarke and Jameson's collections only serve as an explanation for why each character's actions over the course of her play text occur as they do.

Clarke and Jameson's reinterpretations of Shakespeare's female characters are simultaneously used as examples for Victorian female readers as each character demonstrates traits that the authors feel their female readers should either emulate or avoid. Alda, Jameson's narrator, explicitly intends to "illustrate the various modifications of which the female character is susceptible, with their causes and results," as she believes that women's education as it stands in the 1830s is "founded in mistaken principles" which increase women's misery (Jameson 13-14). These "principles" include the belief that overuse of sentiment is productive, belief that

women can be men's intellectual equals, and not valuing personal moral goodness over flights of fancy.[1] She chooses to use Shakespeare's female characters as her models rather than contemporary women or mythical figures because they "combine history and real life" (Jameson 23); in other words, they already feel more like real people than characters and granting them fuller personal histories will only increase that feeling of humanity. Using real women as her models, Jameson's narrator elaborates, will inevitably lead to satire, a literary form she has no intent on pursuing. The semi-humanity Shakespeare's female characters possess then allows Victorian female readers to identify with Jameson's construction of those characters more easily, therefore also allowing greater ease of readers using these characters as models for their own behavior. However, the models for appropriate behavior stay well within social norms for upper-class Victorian women. They discourage independence and encourage basing one's life in morality and a self-regulated amount of sentiment rather than in intellect or reason.

Mary Cowden Clarke's collection functions in a similar manner to Jameson's. She provides most of Shakespeare's female characters with personal narratives which occur prior to the events of their play texts in an attempt to explain their actions over the course of those plays. While Clarke does not explicitly state that her versions of Shakespeare's female characters are to be admired, she does expound upon the virtues of the characters as they exist in their play texts in an 1887 piece entitled "Shakespeare as the Girl's Friend:" "Through [Shakespeare's] feminine portraits [a woman] may see, as in a faithful glass, vivid pictures of what she has to evitate [avoid], or what she has to imitate, in order to become a worthy and admirable woman"

[1] Alda proposes that while women do have the same intellectual faculties as men and are allowed to cultivate their wit, they should not use these intellectual faculties to consider questions of philosophy or politics, as they will not understand them as well as men can and so cannot be their complete intellectual equals.

(Thompson 101).[2] The measure of how well a young woman had molded her own character to fit the admirable traits of Shakespeare's female characters would be proved by her success in being a good wife and mother. Clarke's own images of Shakespeare's female characters are not full of the virtues she believes them to have in their play texts yet, as they are still in their girlhoods. However, her collection can still be used as a learning tool; since the personal histories she gives Shakespeare's female characters reveal how these characters metamorphosed into the "vivid pictures" Shakespeare constructed them into within their play texts, Clarke's stories are a road map towards becoming either "a worthy and admirable woman" or her opposite.

Through their reinterpretations of Shakespeare's female characters, critics like Mary Cowden Clarke and Anna Jameson transform Shakespeare's women into paragons of Victorian virtues. In doing so, they both create richer internal lives for the characters they reinvent and employ those characters as vessels with which to teach their female readers. The idea of creating connections between Shakespeare's female characters and modern female readers then pioneers a triangular engagement between the female author, female characters, and female readers: a structure of engagement intensified by authors of young adult fiction.

Why YA?

The type of adaptation I have chosen to focus on is the reinvention of Shakespeare's heroines as is found in young adult fiction[3]. YA fiction is a generic form most often written "for young people and marketed specifically for teenage readers" and often "encodes an ideological discourse about adolescence through a number of narrative conventions" such as plots which foreground the protagonists' independence, identity formation, and engagement with parents and peers (Crew 6-7). While such conventions are present in Lisa Klein's novel *Ophelia* (2006) and

[2] The traits to imitate include artlessness, modesty, candor, moral courage, meekness, noble conduct, devoted tenderness, and sentiment, among other things.
[3] Hereafter, "young adult" fiction or novels will be denoted "YA"

Katherine Duckett's novel *Miranda in Milan* (2019), these authors and others of the specific subgenre of YA adaptations of Shakespeare are equally as focused on writing back against a popular trend in 20th century criticism of viewing Shakespeare's works as an occasion for a large amount of academic analysis and on writing to dismantle dominant "cultural scripts" instigated by adolescent psychologists with the aid of third wave feminism.

Even though the 20th century gave rise to a multitude of experimental and revisionary Shakespeare adaptations on the stage,[4] there was simultaneously a conviction from scholars, critics, and other members of the cultural elite that Shakespeare addressed his best works only to them.[5] Shakespeare's works were cemented in the category of "Real Literature," as the literary merits of his plays and poems had been extolled for centuries. However, in the 20th century, the cultural elite that had defined "Real Literature" in the first place insisted that this category could only be explicated on and curated by themselves (Taylor 245). Shakespeare's plays had become a "collection of problems," and critics and scholars were the problem solvers (Taylor 245). Rather than considering the "inexhaustible plurality of meaning" Shakespeare's works provide as a single category that all interpretations of those works could fall under, new readings of Shakespeare presumed a disjunction between more straightforward textual meanings perceived and appreciated by average readers and spectators and the "Real" meanings perceptible only to scholars and critics (Taylor 311). YA authors like Klein and Duckett actively write against this disjunction, as they reinvent Shakespeare's female characters in such a way to specifically appeal

[4] Such plays include Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête* (1969) and Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966)

[5] Writing in 1907, Robert Bridges suggests that Shakespeare created some of his most dramatic effects by "taking advantage of [the audience's] stupidity" in order to exploit logical inconsistencies they would be too stupid or lax to notice. Q.D. Levis adds that "most" of Shakespeare's audience could not have understood *Hamlet*, and so implicitly only "a few" could have. In order to join that few, one could take advantage of I. A. Richards' *A Practical Criticism*, an instruction manual on how to become an "adequate reader" who would then "join with other adequate readers to form a cultural vanguard" (Taylor 247, 245)

to their 21st century adolescent target audiences, therefore including a larger number of people in the making of meanings. They also create a space in which to critique both their source play texts and more modern issues such as questions of sexuality, feminism, and sexual violence. In doing so, they take advantage of Shakespeare's "promise" of "an inexhaustible plurality of meaning" in order to become the inheritors and expanders of Jameson and Clarke's projects of creating more interiority and more agency for Shakespeare's female characters while simultaneously generating criticism of 17th and 21st century social norms.

Klein and Duckett's novels also function as responses to and products of third-wave feminism, as they disrupt traditional "cultural scripts" set in place by theorists of adolescent psychology such as Peter Blos and Erik Erikson (Crew 57). One of the most influential of these "cultural scripts" is Blos' model of "separation-individuation" in which the adolescent must relinquish emotional attachment towards their parent in order to become a distinct, separate, and independent self (Crew 56). This can be accomplished by the adolescent creating stronger bonds with peers and, eventually, sexual partners. Because of this, adolescent "cultural scripts" also lay down parameters for understanding adolescent issues such as gender roles and relationships, parameters which typically align with stereotypical notions of gender. After being set in place, these "cultural scripts" have been able to trickle down into popular culture for decades, to the point where those consequences for gender politics are observed in YA fiction. In trying to embrace the notion of an adolescent protagonist's need to become their own person, YA novels with a young, female protagonist often place her voice at the center at the expense of other female voices such as the protagonist's mother.[6] Additionally, in her 1998 study "Teaching Girls

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[6] Examples include Leslie M. M. Blume's *Cornelia and the Audacious Escapades of the Somerset Sisters* (2006), Tanith Lee's *Black Unicorn* (1993), and Holly Black's *A Modern Tale of Faerie* series (2002-2007)

to be Girls: Young Adult Series Fiction," Julia Motes notes that books with teenage girls as their target audience are dominated by and continue to promote an obsession with appearance as well as with linkage of that appearance to the achievement of prestige and personal success, including success with men.

If YA authors are simply reinforcing prescribed "cultural scripts" in their novels, then they are re-emphasizing stereotypical gender roles of the period when they are writing, just in a different medium. This strengthens the "cultural script," as young female readers become unable to see alternative ways of expressing themselves as women and as sexual beings. However, instead of writing into "cultural scripts," feminist authors of YA like Klein and Duckett work to disrupt dominant narratives by rupturing expected narrative order. This can occur simply by introducing a plurality of subjects and/or narrators rather than maintaining a central focus on a single character. It also occurs as authors bring down patriarchal myths relating to gender roles and substitute truths based in female power and empowerment. That Klein and Duckett each choose Shakespeare as the source text for their queer and feminist rewritings speaks to the degree to which these patriarchal myths are embedded in the English literary canon. By disrupting the dominant narratives of androcentricity found in *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, these authors are able to make their readers reflect on such narratives not only in the immediate source texts, but in Shakespeare's canon and the English literary canon as a whole. Both Klein and Duckett accomplish this disruption specifically by building gynocentric communities around their titular protagonists, Ophelia and Miranda, respectively. They also grant a greater degree of agency to these characters by placing their voices at the center of their stories rather than leaving them on the periphery of the action as they exist in their source texts.

Each of the following two chapters will center on one of the two characters stated above and the YA novel in which she appears. Both chapters will begin with a brief overview of the character's role in her respective play text and some of the criticism surrounding her. I will then move into an analysis of each character's position in their respective novels, with particular focus on the ways in which subjecthood is generated and gynocentric communities are formed. Observations on the formation of gynocentric communities will also include commentary on the reclamation of motherhood in Klein and Duckett's novels.

From Archetype to Agent: Admiring Miranda

Shakespeare's Miranda

While Miranda can be defined as the female protagonist of *The Tempest*, this may be primarily due to the fact that she is the only physical female presence in the play (the spirits Prospero conjures for his masque nonwithstanding). As a heroine, she leaves a lot to be desired, as she only appears in four scenes (1.2, 3.1, 4.1, and 5.1) and has fewer than five lines in two of those four (4.1 and 5.1). Her time during her first appearance in Act 1.2, is primarily spent listening to her father, Prospero, explain their back-story. However, she misses both Prospero's discussion of his plans regarding the Italian nobles he has just shipwrecked and his reinstation as the Duke of Milan because Prospero puts her to sleep with his magic from lines 187-306.

In her latter appearances, besides her scene with Ferdinand in Act 3.1, she participates even less. In Act 4.1, Miranda does not speak until line 144, then exits at line 163 and does not return, even though the scene continues for another hundred lines after her exit. Similarly, in the closing scene of the play, 5.1, she does not appear until line 172. Her final lines in the play are lines 181-184, while the play itself ends on line 318 before moving to a short epilogue. While these lines may be her most famous, as they contain the often quoted phrases "How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world/ That has such people in't," the fact that she is silenced immediately following takes focus away from her and moves back to the island's androcentric world. Both the final lines of the play proper and the entire epilogue are reserved for Prospero, suggesting that both the island setting and the play as a whole are Prospero's world, with Miranda simply along for the ride. Even though Prospero remarks to Miranda that he has "done nothing but in care of thee" (1.2, 16), the betterment of her position ultimately leads to the betterment of his. Prospero's decision to bring Ferdinand and Miranda together does grant

Miranda love and a position as the future queen of Naples, but it also indebts the current king, Alonso, to Prospero. Prospero then takes advantage of this debt in order to reinstate himself as the Duke of Milan.

At only fifteen, one of Miranda's most defining characteristics is her naiveté. Since she has lived most of her life on the unidentified island setting of *The Tempest*, she is ignorant of the ways of the world. She has had little to no experience with outside artifice or deception, and as such, is reliant on Prospero to teach her everything. This reliance gives him immense power over her and allows him to manipulate her easily with his magic, as shown by the sleeping spell he places on her in Act 1.2 which keeps her in ignorance about the full extent of his plans. Up until Act 1.2, she is also ignorant about her origins, as she notes to her father:

> MIRANDA: You have often
>
> Begun to tell me what I am, but stopped
>
> And left me to a bootless inquisition,
>
> Concluding, "Stay: not yet." (1.2, 33-36)

Prospero, being the more knowledgeable of the two regarding how they came to be on the island, has chosen to withhold the information from his daughter until this moment, despite previous "inquisitions" on her part. He is the sole source of information on Miranda's past, allowing him to bequeath it when and to whom he wishes. This power is exacerbated due to the fact that Miranda has no alternate source of information from a second parent, as her mother has presumably died and, as such, does not appear during the course of the play. Miranda remembers her faintly, and, over the course of revealing his former life as Duke of Milan, Prospero tells Miranda, "Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and/ She said thou wast my daughter" (1.2, 56-57). Here, Miranda's mother only exists to confirm Prospero's story by affirming Miranda's lineage.

However, this confirmation of lineage does represent a modicum of power. Prospero cannot confirm Miranda is his daughter because he did not give birth to her; only her unnamed mother's word can serve as that vindication. However, the existence of this female power that may compete with Prospero's own is quickly blotted out, as this is the only time Miranda's mother is mentioned. This power may resurface via the haunting memory of the witch, Sycorax, from whom Prospero took control of the island, though the memory of Sycorax's power serves more so to validate Caliban's desire for power than to validate female power as a whole.[7]

In addition to her origins, Miranda is particularly ignorant regarding love and courtship, perhaps because she is unable to ask her mother about Prospero's courtship of her. This ignorance can be seen as a positive trait, a view which will be more fully discussed in the following section, as, since she is ignorant of the conventions governing courtship and the behavior of young, 17th century women, she can more freely express her desires to Ferdinand and ask him about his intentions regarding their relationship. However, though it is clear that she is able to express her own feelings, it is unclear if Miranda reaps any personal benefits from Ferdinand's courtship of her. This courtship is primarily situated in Act 3.1, as the two lovers converse freely even as Prospero watches from the shadows. Tellingly, Ferdinand admits he has eyed "full many a lady" with "best regard, and many a time/ Th' harmony of their tongues hath into bondage/ Brought my too diligent ear" (3.1, 39-42). While he seemingly endows these unnamed ladies with the power to bring him "into bondage," he could just as easily be moving the responsibility for his actions away from himself and onto the ladies; that is, it is not his fault he has been attracted to so many women because they are the ones who drew him "into

[7] Additionally, while Prospero's description of his magic in lines 33-57 of Act 5.1 echoes the magical acts performed by the powerful sorceress Medea in Euripedes' *Medea*, the fact that he is renouncing these kinds of magic suggests that he is also renouncing the connotations of feminine power that come with them.

bondage." Ferdinand also never tells Miranda she will be his wife, choosing only to call her his "mistress" (3.1, 86). While Ferdinand could be using that title to elevate Miranda into a position of power over him because he loves her, he could also be using its more modern definition of a woman with whom a man has a sexual relationship with outside the bonds of marriage. Miranda though is unable to consider that Ferdinand could potentially possess any less than desirable qualities or motives, as she assumes that, because he is handsome, all of his inner qualities must match this outer beauty: "There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple./ If the ill spirit have so fair a house,/ Good things will strive to dwell with't" (1.2, 455-457).

Pledging herself to Ferdinand when he is the third man she has ever seen also closes off Miranda from exploring her sexuality. The conventions of 17th century society reassert themselves here, as Miranda becomes one of the mass of aristocratic virgins discouraged from exploring or understanding their own sexuality. She is obviously attracted to men, as Ferdinand's appearance is what originally piques her interest, but she is not allowed that exploratory period common in modern day adolescence to discover what kind of men she likes. Miranda also responds to Ferdinand's comment about the myriad of women he has been attracted to with, "I do not know/ One of my sex; no woman's face remember,/ Save, from my glass, mine own" (3.1, 48-50). Since she will not see a woman besides the spirits impersonating female goddesses Prospero conjures for the wedding masque until she presumably returns to Italy after the events of the play come to a close, she also does not get the chance to determine whether or not she finds women attractive. While I do not believe Shakespeare even considered attraction to women as an option for Miranda or the vast majority of his female characters[8], this lapse in consideration

[8] Notable exceptions include plays in which cross-dressing complicates gender presentation, such *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*

allows for and creates space for modern authors like Katherine Duckett to explore alternative possibilities for Miranda's sexuality.

Criticizing Miranda

In her 2001 article "Rape and the Romanticization of Shakespeare's Miranda," Jessica Slights defines the three ways she perceives critics, and in particular critics from the Victorian period, have handled Miranda. Slights suggests that they have either ignored her entirely, constructed her as an "archetype of pliant womanhood," or as an "allegorical, sentimentalized figure for the tender and fecund aspect of untamed nature" (Slights 360). That Miranda is ignored can be confirmed almost immediately, as she is conspicuously absent in Mary Cowden Clarke's collection *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines: A Series of Fifteen Tales*, an early effort to reinvent Shakespeare's heroines by providing them with back-stories and motives for their actions over the course of their respective plays. She is, however, present in Anna Jameson's 1832 work *Shakespeare's Heroines: Characteristics of Women, Moral, Poetical, and Historical*. Here, the titular heroines are divided into four categories: "Characters of Intellect," "Characters of Passion and Imagination," "Characters of the Affections," and "Historical Characters" (Jameson, Table of Contents). Miranda is designated a "Character of Passion and Imagination" with Ophelia as her foil, as Jameson sees the two women as having near identical personalities. For Jameson, the only difference between them is that Miranda is placed in a play that Jameson deems a comedy and Ophelia in one which Jameson deems a tragedy, a factor which ultimately leads to vastly different outcomes for the two in their respective source texts.

In particular, Miranda is defined as "beautiful, modest, and tender, and she is these only; they comprise her whole being" (Jameson 208). In other words, Miranda is unable to attain subjecthood as her "whole being" is contained in her beauty, modesty, and tenderness rather than

traits such as intelligence or self-awareness. However, rather than criticizing Miranda for her lack of subjecthood, Victorian writers such as Jameson celebrated Miranda's simplicity and ignorance, seeing her as woman in her most natural state. It is not that she is ignorant of social graces and structures, but that she is utterly free of them. She cannot comprehend artifice and therefore nothing about her is artificial, a direct contrast to the Victorian women readers forcing their bodies into corsets. Her beauty is unaugmented because it needs no augmentation; it is refined enough in its natural simplicity to exist as a paragon. Jessica Slights goes so far as to suggest that Victorian portrayals of Miranda associate her with "nature as a means of showing up the destructiveness of misguided social pressures on women" (Slights 361). Why be associated with artifice and the deceptive qualities that come with it when one can be Miranda, unencumbered by the pressures of society on an island in the middle of the sea? Maybe because, in embodying Miranda's positive qualities, one is also stuck with her negative ones.

Seeing Miranda as an archetype of purity or as a non-agent in the events of *The Tempest* continues through to modern day criticism as well, as feminist readings of Miranda are often ignored in favor of Prospero and Caliban's relationship, especially as it relates to post-colonial readings of the play as a whole.[9] However, Miranda is not completely ignored even now, as critics such as Jessica Slights and Lorie Jennell Leininger work to reclaim her as an agent of third wave feminism using the very traits she has been admired for since the Victorian era. If she is tender, then there is agency in that tenderness, especially as it relates towards her relationship with Ferdinand. Jessica Slights argues that Miranda's romance with and marriage to Ferdinand constitute a "crucial" opportunity for Miranda to derive a sense of herself as an agent, as

[9] See Judith Holland Sarnecki's "Mastering the Masters: Aimé Césaire's Creolization of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*," Alden T. Vaughan's "Caliban in the 'Third World': Shakespeare's Savage as Sociopolitical Symbol," and Boaventura de Sousa Santos' "Between Prospero and Caliban: Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Interidentity"

"heterosexual desire and marriage entail a measure of resistance rather than simple capitulation to patriarchy" (Slights 367). Through the courtship, Miranda recognizes her capability for erotic desire and wields that desire to achieve her desired outcome; Ferdinand's hand in marriage. I personally disagree with this conception of the courtship scene (3.1), as while Prospero does not expect Miranda's defiance of his supposed wishes, Miranda and Ferdinand meeting and ultimately ending up together were plans generated by Prospero. However, the fact that Miranda is in the process of being reclaimed in a feminist way aids in the creation of reconfigurations of Prospero and Miranda's relationship, such as the film version directed by Julie Taymor in which Helen Mirren plays a female Prospero, as well as the version of Miranda present in Katherine Duckett's novel, *Miranda in Milan*

Movement into Subjecthood: *Miranda in Milan*

While modern productions of *The Tempest* are often interested in interpreting Miranda in such as way as to discover spaces of agency for her both within and around the play text, author Katherine Duckett aids in Miranda's transition from archetype of innocence to fully constituted subject through the publication of her YA novel, *Miranda in Milan*. She is able to do so first by centering the novel almost fully around Miranda's point of view even though Miranda herself is not functioning as a first person narrator. This is accomplished via the technique of "focalization," also defined as "the spatial relationship between the agency of narration and the perspective from which story is told" (Crew 16). Traditionally, this relationship is conceived of as that between the narrating agent (who speaks), the focalizer (who sees), and the focalized (what is being seen). While the narrating agent in *Miranda in Milan* is never given a name or physical form, it is very clear that Miranda's position in this novel is that of the focalizer. The focalized events, characters, thoughts, and feelings are all being filtered through her. This

already grants her a fuller measure of subjecthood than can be witnessed in her source text, as readers are privy to Miranda's inner thoughts, something denied to them in *The Tempest* due to the absence of any major monologues or soliloquies.

Another way in which Miranda is granted subjecthood is by nature of the novel being a sequel to, rather than a retelling of, *The Tempest*. In collections like Jameson's *Shakespeare's Heroines* and in criticism, Miranda is trapped within the events of the play and the androcentric community it generates. She cannot expand her role within the source text because she is surrounded by male plots, confusion, and desire. There is no place for her to explore her agency as a pawn in Prospero's schemes, and so Duckett removes her from that world. While an inhabitant in her father's castle in Milan, Miranda does still have to deal with mysteries surrounding her life prior to her time on the island in addition to remedying her ignorance regarding social practices at court, but she is able to do so on her own time and in a more gynocentric space, a space in which female-female relationships are not only present, but valued, whether they be familial, platonic, or romantic. Ferdinand is only present on the fringes of the text, as he is at his seat in Naples for the duration of the novel, and though Prospero does make several appearances and serves as an evil character drawn to necromancy and despotism, the focus is placed on Miranda thwarting his plans and recovering from the mental abuse Duckett assumes must have occurred during Miranda's life on the island rather than on Prospero's schemes. Far from being the reclusive intellectual betrayed by his brother Shakespeare's Prospero claims to be, Duckett's Prospero studies magic to the point of obsession. Antonio's seizure of the dukedom is reconceptualized as an action which saves the people of Milan from a ruler more interested in playing God than ruling. The ultimate triumph for Duckett's Prospero is the fulfillment of a statement Shakespeare's Prospero makes during his renunciation of magic:

"Graves at my command/ Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth/ By my so potent art" (5.1, 48-50). Rather than a master of spirits, Duckett's Prospero becomes a creator of monsters and exposes his own monstrosity in the process.

As mentioned above, one of the primary ways in which Duckett shifts focus to a more gynocentric narrative is through the introduction of a female-female romantic subplot rather than the romance between Miranda and Ferdinand. This allows Duckett to reshape both *The Tempest* and Miranda herself through contemporary definitions and categories. Miranda is still half of the romantic pair, but standing in for Ferdinand is her maid, friend, and eventual lover, Dorothea. A heroine's sexual awakening is a common trope in YA fiction, as since the 1970s more YA literature has started emphasizing female bodily and sexual awareness as a path to empowerment, a direct effect from second-wave feminism: the thought being that sexually aware YA literature would do for daughters what consciousness-raising groups were doing for their mothers. Amy Bowles-Reyer defines three phases common to YA fiction over which female protagonists' sexual awareness and agency develops. The first, common to largely realist novels, contains "novels of awakening," in which the heroines go through the process of learning about their bodies and their sexualities (Bowles-Reyer 23). The second, coming in the prominence in the mid-1970s, contains heroines with "fully constituted" awareness that allows them to be "agent[s] of change" in their lives (Bowles-Reyer 23). The awareness these heroines have over their own bodies transfers into awareness about the world they live in and the inequalities within it. The third phase of sexual awareness is initiated once the heroines move from simply noting inequalities to fighting against them.

While *Miranda in Milan* was published in 2019 and is a product of third-wave feminism, it is important to note that Bowles-Reyer's phases of sexual awareness in YA fiction pertain only

to heterosexual awareness. Only in the last decade or so has it become more common to even have an LGBTQ+ protagonist in YA novels, and the most common portrayals of an LGBTQ+ protagonist are usually a gay male or a lesbian female. Therefore, I would categorize Miranda's bisexual awakening (as she is still attracted to Ferdinand even as she falls in love with Dorothea) as sitting firmly in the first phase of sexual awareness. She does not learn enough about bisexuality as a concept or her attraction to Dorothea over the course of the novel to observe and critique any inequalities resulting from that attraction. This novel is less concerned with how bisexuality is stereotyped or erased in modern culture and more concerned with using it as a way to grant Miranda self-agency and self-awareness. The very nature of Miranda being bisexual is of itself a powerful act, however, as it combats the bisexual erasure so prevalent not only in YA fiction, but in the LGBTQ+ community as a whole.

Miranda's need for discovery is not only reflected in her sexual awakening. It is instituted almost immediately in the novel as a method of counteracting the ignorance she has experienced before and during the events of *The Tempest*:

> [Miranda] knew nothing of law, or of marriage, or of the nuances of love, though she did her best to grasp their meanings. Her father had never spoken to her of these matters in any depth, and now, in her rightful homeland, she began to realize how much she did not know, how much she could not ask. (Duckett 14).

The ignorance and innocence which Miranda has formerly been praised for are now at a disadvantage, as her lack of knowledge makes her an outsider in the Milanese court. While Prospero may have "made [her] more profit/ Than other princes can" as her "schoolmaster" on the island, Duckett acknowledges that, as Prospero chose to keep his position as the deposed Duke of Milan a secret, there were lessons that he chose not to or could not teach her (1.2, 172-

173). However, it ultimately does not matter that Miranda feels as if she cannot ask Prospero about love, marriage, law, or courtly social structures, as she is given instruction in these areas both by Dorothea and another woman, Agata, who is eventually revealed to be Miranda's maternal aunt. Both women endeavor to teach her the intricacies of court life, from dress to decorum, though Agata is a much stricter teacher. But with Ferdinand off in Naples, only Dorothea is able to teach Miranda about the "nuances of love." Without Ferdinand serving as her only romantic option, Miranda is able to learn not only about alternative forms of sexuality, but that she herself would like to follow one of those forms. The "nuances of love" do not start and end with romantic love, however, as Dorothea, with Agata's unwilling help, is also able to expose the true fate of another woman who loves Miranda dearly, and thereby grant her new subjecthood as well: Miranda's mother.

Reclaiming Motherhood, Reclaiming Miranda

As mentioned previously, Miranda's mother is basically a non-entity during the events of *The Tempest*, as she is only spoken about once and is only brought up so that Prospero can use her to verify his own relationship to Miranda. The only other mother discussed on the island is its previous mistress, the witch Sycorax, who at some point came to inhabit the island and give birth to her son, Caliban. But like Miranda's mother, Sycorax is never granted a physical presence; the reader or audience is only made privy to information about her through other characters, as she dies sometime before the play begins, a fate one can assume befell Miranda's mother as well. While Caliban places stock in the fact that he should have inherited the island from Sycorax, being her son, Prospero ignores this motherly tie in favor of his own power. As Stephen Orgel puts it, the space of *The Tempest* is filled with wifely and motherly references rather than with actual people, a situation which requires Prospero to take on the roles of both mother and father

to Miranda.[10] Prospero does use this increased state of power to give Miranda a much fuller education than she would have received in Italy but simultaneously chooses to keep more personal information from her, knowing that, since he is Miranda's primary source of knowledge, she will be forced to learn things only when he wants her to.

Miranda's mother, called Beatrice or Bice in *Miranda in Milan,* is still largely absent from the events of the novel. However, the memory of her and Miranda's quest to discover what happened to her are most certainly not. This allows Duckett to play with the "absent mother" trope common to both YA novels and Shakespearean comedies and tragedies while simultaneously creating space for Bice to return, first in Agata's memories, and then physically in the final chapters of the novel. Having the mother absent or present but in a diminished role appears frequently in YA fiction, particularly in novels in which the protagonist is female. The suggestion inherent in the use of this trope is that the mother's voice is suppressed or not included because it is not her story. The target age range of readers of YA fiction encourages them to identify with the young protagonist rather than with her parents, and because of this, "it would seem that it is an acceptable social and literary practice to imagine that a mother's voice and subjectivity are erased in order for the daughter to take up her own life" (Crew 87). Mothers who are actively present in YA fiction are prone to sliding to the other end of the spectrum: the overbearing or helicopter parent. Regardless of the category, there is an implication in YA fiction that mothers can be a road block in the protagonists' development. Facing an overbearing mother or coming to terms with the absence of one are emotional developments of equal importance when it comes to a protagonist's maturation into a functional adult.

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[10] Stephen Orgel. "Prospero's Wife." *The Tempest: Contemporary Critical Essays*. Ed. R.S. White. New York: St. Martin's, 1999, pp. 15-31.

Miranda in Milan deals with the "absent mother" trope slightly differently, as rather than continuing to suppress Bice's story, it is the discovery of it that furthers Miranda's own. Through the process of learning about Bice, Miranda is able to remedy her ignorance both about the social graces of the court that Bice should have taught her and her ignorance about Bice herself. To further the gynocentricity of this novel, Miranda is granted that knowledge with the help of two women, the aforementioned Dorothea and Agata. With the help of Dorothea's knowledge of magic, Miranda is able to enter into Agata's mind while she sleeps. This act moves Agata into the "focalizer" position for a few chapters as Miranda and the reader see from Agata's point of view the events leading up to Prospero and Miranda's forced exile from Milan. Allowing Agata to exist as focalizer, even for these few brief chapters, also grants the reader a different view of Prospero, a view that exposes just how dangerous of a person he is, as it is suggested that he himself had a hand in Bice's untimely death. While Miranda never does determine a solid answer to that suggestion, she does discover through Agata's memories that, after Bice's death, Prospero engaged in necromancy in order to bring Bice back as a zombie-like creature who lived beneath the castle for several months prior to escaping. Agata sees this as a blasphemous attempt by Prospero to play God, and is instantly concerned with what Prospero's influence could do to the infant Miranda.

Agata also directly sees how dangerous Prospero's influence as a single parent can be, as she witnesses "everything of Prospero's temperament" slowly being transferred to the infant Miranda after Bice has died (Duckett 125). Additionally, even though Miranda has always resembled Bice, to the point that, at the beginning of the novel, she is forced to wear a veil in order to prevent rumors that Bice's spirit has returned, Agata is always "certain" that "Prospero's corruption ha[s] already crept into Miranda's character," to the point where she only recognizes

Prospero in Miranda's looks: "Everyone else said Miranda had Bice's eyes, her ears, but Agata could only see Prospero in her face, in the defiant jut of the lip, her hooded eyes" (Duckett 155, 119).

In addition to discovering the truth about her mother's death and Prospero's subsequent success at resurrecting her into a zombie-like figure, Miranda only fully understands her position as a high-born lady of an Italian court after her trip into Agata's subconscious:

> She would be expected to join the court and manage the household, and surely [Ferdinand] would want children. She understood now, from being in Agata's head, how important that was, the bearing of an heir. She understood so much more now. She understood what her life in Naples was to be, what the life of a woman within castle walls looked like. (Duckett 171)

By being able to view her mother's downfall, Miranda cements the confined feeling that has been present with her ever since she left the island of *The Tempest.* In doing so, she harkens back to Jessica Slights' conception of Shakespeare's Miranda: that she is able to show the destructiveness of social pressures on women because she has existed in a state without those conventions for so long. Once free of her father, Miranda is able to fully consider every option for her future including the one *The Tempest* insinuates: that she marries Ferdinand and the two of them rule in Naples together. Rather than following that prescribed path, however, Miranda rejects convention and does not marry Ferdinand, as she is now a fully developed subject and can recognize her own desires, which ultimately do not include becoming princess of Naples. Through this re-writing, Miranda slips off the last vestiges of *The Tempest* and chooses a future with Dorothea.

The future Miranda chooses in the closing pages of the novel also includes her mother, as Bice returns to Milan undead, but a powerful magician in her own right to take on Prospero and reclaim Miranda as her daughter. After choking Prospero so that he can no longer "weave [his] lies" and leaving him to the justice of other men (implied to be his death), Bice is able to be reintegrated into the novel's gynocentric community as she, Miranda, and Dorothea flee to Naples and ultimately make plans to return to *The Tempest*'s island: "[Miranda] could see it in her mind. A distant jetty beneath gray skies. A thatched cottage on a rocky coast, with smoke rising from the rustic chimney. Three women at the end of everything, holding fast to the edge of the earth, in thunder, lightning, and in rain" (Duckett 197). This triad brings to mind another group of powerful Shakespearean beings together "in thunder, lightning, and in rain": the "weird sisters" of *Macbeth*. They too have gone back to nature, as it were, living in the woods rather than in court or even in a little town in the wilds of Scotland. The suggestion present in both of these groups of women's return to a more untamed setting is that the gynocentric communities that they have created have no space in places dominated by societal artifices including patriarchy. The only place in which they will be able to exist as the powerful agents of change they have become is at the "edge of the earth." While this novel's solution to dealing with patriarchal social structures stays within the limits of possibility of its putative historical moment, readers do not necessarily have to follow such a solution. The larger goal of YA authors like Duckett is to have readers make connections with the protagonist in order to consider the similarities and differences between the world of the novel and the world in which the reader lives. Here, the reader is made aware of patriarchal structures of power which still exist in the 21st century and so can come up with 21st century solutions. Rather than retreating from society, the reader and a cooperative sisterhood can work together to dismantle patriarchal norms.

While Duckett is consciously using contemporary categories to create her version of Miranda and her radical push-back against *The Tempest*, this is not simply a case of an author pulling a Shakespearean source from the 17th century into the 21st and using it to advance a contemporary agenda. Miranda's sexuality and her ultimate decision to be with Dorothea rather than Ferdinand serve as a contrast both to 17th century conventions in which a royal woman such as Miranda would never have been allowed to oppose her marriage and to Miranda's lack of presence in the original source text. Witnessing both her and Bice's actions over the course of *Miranda in Milan* makes the reader reconsider their absence in *The Tempest.* In addition, removing not only most of the male characters from the source text from the majority of the action in *Miranda in Milan* but also interactions with men in general brings the androcentricity of *The Tempest* and of Shakespeare's plays as a whole into clearer focus, allowing the reader to engage in more conscious observations and critiques of it.

Making Meaning from Silence: Reviving Ophelia

Shakespeare's Ophelia

As with the version of Miranda created in the source text, Shakespeare's original iteration of Ophelia is a fairly silent one. She only has lines in five scenes (Act 1.3, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, and 4.5), and dies offstage presumably sometime before or during Act 4.7. In the five scenes where she speaks, she never once has a soliloquy. The closest she comes to having one is in Act 3.1, lines 149-160, but even then it is not a true soliloquy, as Claudius and Polonius have been concealed and secretly watching the exchange she has just finished having with Hamlet. So, presumably, they witness her "soliloquy" as well. This monologue can also not be counted as a true soliloquy due to its primary focus on Hamlet and the ways in which he has changed rather than Ophelia's own interiority, choices, or moral dilemmas. Due to her lack of stage time and of any soliloquies, the reader or audience is granted few, if any, chances to see Ophelia's interiority, making it easier to view her as less of a fully functioning subject, especially when she appears next to the near constantly soliloquizing Hamlet.

Ophelia's familial situation also mirrors Miranda's in two very important ways: namely that her mother is absent and has presumably died sometime before the events of *Hamlet* and that her father is overbearing to the point of using his daughter as an object to further his own plans. While Polonius does seem to care for Ophelia, this does not stop him from using her as bait to prove his own point about the origin of Hamlet's madness and make him look good in front of Claudius. He may care about her sexual "honor," but it is only because if she goes against social norms then it reflects poorly on his abilities as a teacher and a father to inculcate his daughter with proper character. Some of this burden could have fallen on Ophelia's mother, but she is even more absent than Miranda's, as she is never even mentioned at any point in the source text.

This absence, along with Polonius' confusion regarding Hamlet's romantic intentions and Hamlet's own actions while feigning madness, contributes greatly to Ophelia's own uncertainty about the nature of Hamlet's love for her: an uncertainty she is never able to resolve. This is due to Shakespeare's artistic choices in not giving Ophelia the kind of speeches which suggest an extended exploration of one's own inner conflicts and keeping the reader/audience's sense of what Ophelia and Hamlet's prior relationship has been deliberately muddled.

The artistic choice of having silence be a defining characteristic of Ophelia leads to the ambiguity which surrounds her on a number of matters. One of these is the nature of her relationship with Hamlet. There are no stage directions for Ophelia's reaction to Laertes lecturing her on her feelings towards Hamlet, particularly the lines "Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open/ To [Hamlet's] unmastered importunity" (1.3, 30-31). This means that both the director and the actress playing Ophelia have to decide how subtly or violently she reacts to the mention of the potential loss of her virginity, especially since the question of whether or not Hamlet's "tenders" have involved a sexual relationship is never answered (1.3, 98). Though Ophelia tells Polonius that Hamlet "has importuned [her] with love/ In honorable fashion," since neither she nor Hamlet is granted any sort of soliloquy on the subject and since Shakespeare offers no scenes in which the two are alone together before Hamlet sees his father's ghost, she cannot necessarily be assumed to be telling the truth (1.3, 109-110). The decision on behalf of the actress and the director regarding Ophelia's response to Laertes and Polonius' cautions about Hamlet's behavior then impacts her interactions with Hamlet for the rest of the play.

Another ambiguous detail about Ophelia is whether or not she is putting on an "antic disposition" during her madness. While she never explicitly states the answer to this question in the play text, Hamlet announces his own intent to do so in Act 1.5. Since Hamlet's decision sets

up an environment in which at least one person is actively feigning madness, it does not seem like a stretch to consider that Ophelia could be performing her madness as well. In her essay, "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism," Elaine Showalter writes, "The mad Ophelia's bawdy songs and verbal license… seem to be her one sanctioned form of self-assertion as a woman, quickly followed, as if in retribution, by her death" (Showalter 286). Showalter here believes that Ophelia's madness is not performed; that this is a real mental condition in which Ophelia's repressed emotions and opinions finally come to the surface. The other option in this scene is that Ophelia's opinions are not actually repressed, but she fears repercussions for stating them in her normal frame of mind, so she uses madness as a mask in order to shield herself from such repercussions. However, no other character in the play that reacts to or comments on Ophelia's madness ever speaks of her as being anything other than insane. So if she is indeed putting on an "antic disposition" and trying to communicate subversive opinions, the only people to register them are audience members or readers outside the world of *Hamlet*.

Contemplating Ophelia's madness then brings up perhaps the largest ambiguity surrounding Ophelia: the manner of her death. The play text offers two prominent ways of interpreting Ophelia's death: accident or suicide. The former explanation is propagated by Gertrude during her elegy (4.7, 165-182), but even there her speech contains ambiguities regarding the circumstances of Ophelia's death.[11] The latter explanation is discussed both by the gravediggers and the priest officiating at Ophelia's funeral in Act 5.1. Yet another explanation

[11] At times during this speech, Gertrude seems to place the blame on inanimate objects for Ophelia's death: she only fell because "an envious sliver broke," and once in the water, "her garments, heavy with their drink/Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay/ To muddy death." However, Ophelia also makes no effort to get out of the water after she falls in. Additionally, the reader/audience is unaware how much of Gertrude's elegy is true, as Ophelia dies offstage. Gertrude may be attempting to soften the blow of Ophelia's death to Laertes by framing her death as an accident rather than a suicide.

comes through a re-reading of the above quotation from Showalter, who appears to attribute Ophelia's death to a greater, outside force acting as a revenger specifically because of Ophelia's outspokenness during her madness. As a reinventor, Lisa Klein and others like her need to take these ambiguities and silences into account when reconstructing Ophelia. Klein in particular chooses to dispel these ambiguities and fill the silences in her adaptation of Ophelia within and beyond the *Hamlet* narrative.

Criticizing "The Rose of Elsinore"

Like Miranda, Ophelia has often been constructed into an archetype of innocence and purity. However, through her death, she also becomes an image of unrecognized potential, and, eventually, mental illness. Some of the earliest reimaginings of Ophelia, such as Mary Cowden Clarke's *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*, make the effort to bridge the gap between these two sides of Ophelia by creating a person history for her. Such histories endeavor to construct experiences in her past that can explain her thoughts and (lack of) actions during the events of *Hamlet* that ultimately lead to her suicide. In Cowden Clarke's telling, Ophelia spends most of her formative years with a foster family in the Danish countryside away from both the social scene of the court and her mother, Aoudra. During these years, Ophelia witnesses her foster-sister and "girl-mother," Jutha, become seduced and impregnated by a young lord (199). Both Jutha and the baby die in childbirth, after which Ophelia is taken back to court by her mother. She finds new companionship with the Lady Thyra, who is also ultimately ravished and abandoned by the same lord who caused Jutha's death. After this abandonment, Thyra commits suicide, followed soon after by the sickening of Ophelia's mother. As she feels herself getting weaker, Aoudra attempts to inculcate her daughter with techniques for seeing through the artifices of the Danish court to people's true intentions, particularly intentions regarding Ophelia.

With no “female guidance” to guide her, Aoudra fears that Ophelia will be forced to rely on her heart as her main source of knowledge: “And how was this heart to counsel her, were it not previously fortified and instructed by an understanding of its probable hazards, and of its best sources of defense against them?”(Clarke 257) Clarke suggests that ultimately, Ophelia is unable to retain her mother’s teachings and that her heart does lead her astray in her relationship with Hamlet. Additionally, since her childhood experiences have taught her to associate heartbreak with death, whether that death be a suicide or not, her own suicide is a logical conclusion to Hamlet’s betrayal.

Anna Jameson also determines that it is Ophelia’s heart that ultimately leads to her madness and death, though for Jameson, it is less that Ophelia is listening to its guidance incorrectly and more so that she is too young and inexperienced to understand what it is trying to tell her. For “Characters of Passion and Imagination” like Ophelia and Miranda, all intellectual energy is latent; their feminine character is resolved into elementary principles such as grace, modesty, and tenderness. Because of this, Jameson does not see Ophelia’s lack of agency and later impaired mental state as the products of a weak will. She is simply too innocent and immature to do anything of substance: “She is not aware of the nature of her own feelings [regarding Hamlet]; they are prematurely developed in their full force before she has strength to bear them; and love and grief together end and shatter the frail texture of her existence” (Jameson 192). What makes Ophelia exceptional is her ability to feel intensely, unfortunately, it is the inability to constructively deal with this excess of feeling that ultimately leads to her undoing. Like Miranda, she is a beacon of unspoiled innocence, a paragon of female virtue, and also like Miranda, that is not necessarily beneficial for her position as a subject.

As criticism on Ophelia moved away from attempting to explain her actions during the events of *Hamlet* to analyzing the actions themselves, her status as the ideal version of feminine innocence came into question. Women were discouraged from identifying with Ophelia as her innocence became ignorance and blind obedience, traits which ultimately contributed to her downfall. In her 1897 article, "Ophelia," published in *The American Shakespeare Magazine*, critic Jessie F. O'Donnell reads Ophelia's allowance of the use of herself as bait to prove the source of Hamlet's madness as less about the sense of filial duty she feels towards Polonius and more that she simply does not love Hamlet enough to go against Polonius' wishes. Ophelia does love Hamlet, O'Donnell continues, however, it is only because he was the first suitor to come along. Her madness then is re-established as a product of a weak will or underlying mental illness triggered by Hamlet's rejection and the death of her father. According to O'Donnell, upon close analysis of Ophelia's actions within the play, "she will be found a simple, shallow girl, pure and delicate as a snowflake, but utterly unfit to mate with that marvellous intellect of Hamlet's or to run a kingdom" (Thompson 241). In other words, Ophelia is incapable of being conceptualized as the "New Woman" of the late 19th century and as such should not be idealized.[12]

In the opposite camp, some women, such as actress Helena Faucit, continued to defend Ophelia's character. In her 1885 work, *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters, By One Who Has Personated Them,* Faucit despairs, "It hurts me to hear [Ophelia] spoken of, as she often is, as a weak creature, wanting in truthfulness, in purpose, in force of character, and only interesting, when she loses the little wits she had…" (Thompson 186). Faucit, as well as the unknown author of the 1914 work *The True Ophelia,* attribute Ophelia's "insipidness" as a

[12] According to historian Ruth Bordin, the "New Woman" exercised control over her personal, social, and economic life. She worked outside the home, acquired higher education, and exercised personal choice in romantic partners (see *Alice Freeman Palmer: The Evolution of a New Woman*)

creation of critics such as O'Donnell, and advocate a strong, intelligent woman unfortunately destroyed by Hamlet's heartlessness.

With the advent of psychoanalysis in the 20th century, the focus on Ophelia shifted from her lack of action to her madness in Act 4.5. Freud reads Ophelia's madness as a product of erotomania or her suppression of problematic desires for an incestuous relationship either with her brother or her father. However, as mental illness became more medicalized, another shift occurred around the 1960s within the criticism: this time taking her madness away from sexual frustration and towards schizophrenia (Showalter 295). By the end of the 20th century, Ophelia had been claimed by psychologists as the quintessential symbol of specifically teenage female dysfunction. Since the publication of Dr. Mary Pipher's book *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* in 1994, Ophelia has been identified with contradictory pressures that shape contemporary adolescent femininity including sexual violence, dysfunctional family life, mental illness, and peer pressure. Though these pressures are sometimes considered in terms of their creation by and existence in a patriarchal society (these are problems particular to women), Pipher instead chooses to place her focus more centrally on these pressures in terms of her participants' age demographic (these are problems adolescent women in particular struggle with more so than other demographics). Once these qualities among others had been identified in the young women Pipher spoke to in her therapy sessions, she attempted to counsel them in such a way as to provide them with a greater sense of agency and self-worth; a process she chronicles in the book. While the medicalization of Ophelia does little for her subjectivity, as it essentially moves her from an archetype of innocence and purity to an archetype of teenage dysfunction and mental illness, it does pave the way for her to be claimed by YA fiction authors like Lisa Klein. By making Ophelia the subject of her novel, Klein both reclaims Ophelia from the place of little

agency she has in the source text and makes her more of a role model for adolescent girls rather than a manifestation of their dysfunction.

Creating Identity and Community: Klein's Ophelia

While written in 2006, Lisa Klein's novel, *Ophelia*, does not transpose the source text into a 21st century setting. Instead, Klein uses Shakespeare's construction of the Danish court but writes with modern sensibilities in mind. The novel begins with Ophelia's life prior to her arrival at Elsinore but quickly moves into her education as a court lady. During her time in the Danish court and leading up to the first events of *Hamlet*, she becomes a lady-in-waiting to Queen Gertrude and begins a relationship with Prince Hamlet, a relationship that ultimately culminates in a secret marriage between the two. Due to the increased level of intimacy between Hamlet and Ophelia, Hamlet both tells her that Claudius murdered his father and lets her in on his plans to pretend he is mad with lovesickness for her. However, having knowledge about Claudius' murderous actions puts Ophelia's own life in danger, and she fakes her own madness and death with the help of Horatio. She then flees to a French convent where she, and ultimately her son, another Hamlet, are allowed to live in peace.

Since Klein not only re-imagines the plot of *Hamlet*, but also invents scenes of Ophelia's life before and after those events, she creates her version of Ophelia specifically as a YA heroine, meaning that she does not exist simply as a vessel for characteristics which Shakespeare's version of her lacks. She exists to criticize the social norms found both in the time period in which *Hamlet* and *Ophelia* are set and the time period in which the novel was composed. A YA Ophelia does not necessarily have to follow any of those norms. Instead, she offers alternate realities as solutions.

Like Katherine Duckett's *Miranda in Milan*, Klein's novel does not map directly onto Shakespeare's source text. Klein both expands the narrative and puts Ophelia at its center as the narrator/focalizer. This re-centering of Ophelia as narrator in and of itself gives her more of a voice, as she both presents herself as a more central actor in the events of *Hamlet* and removes herself from the source text. Hamlet and Ophelia's relationship is explicitly intimate in this novel, though that fact and their subsequent marriage is kept a secret from the rest of the court, as is Ophelia's pregnancy later in the novel. However, because of this intimacy, Klein is able to construct private conversations between the lovers. These conversations make the reader privy to Ophelia's larger role in the *Hamlet* narrative, as some well known quotations from the play text are originated by Ophelia in Klein's novel. For example, when Ophelia is trying to comfort Hamlet after his father's death, she says, "'I wish I had a glass where you could see yourself'" (Klein 101). Though Ophelia wants Hamlet to see the wonderful qualities in himself that she herself sees, the quotation also brings to mind Hamlet's confrontation with Gertrude in Act 3.4, during which he desires to "set [Gertrude] up in a glass/ where you may see the inmost part of you," the "inmost part" here being the depths to which she has sunk (3.4, 18-19). During the same conversation in Klein's novel, Ophelia names Hamlet "'a piece of God's work,'" to which he replies that she, in fact, is "'the marvelous work so noble in [her] reason'" (Klein 101). The inclusion of these lines almost verbatim from Hamlet's "What a piece of work is a man" speech in Act 2.2 makes it appear as if this specific conversation was the origin of that speech and that Hamlet is only able to make that speech because the framework of it was conceived by him and Ophelia first. Ophelia is also fully aware of Hamlet's encounter with the ghost and actually makes the suggestion that he feign lovesickness for her to hide their marriage from the rest of the

court, though Hamlet himself is the one who expands this plan to include the "antic disposition" he puts on for the sake of his revenge on Claudius (Klein 120, 131).

Despite Ophelia's increased role in the events of the play being made clear to readers, to the other characters Klein adapts directly from *Hamlet*, Ophelia acts specifically in the role Shakespeare ascribes to her. As mentioned previously, even though she is aware that Hamlet is feigning lovesickness as the reason for his madness, she allows Polonius and Claudius to use her as bait to determine the cause for themselves, leading to her questioning just how much of his madness Hamlet is faking. Additionally, while she responds to Hamlet making "a lewd joke about fair thoughts lying between a maid's legs"[13] with "'I am fair, and I am honest. A maid no more, but your honorable wife,'" she is drowned out by the surrounding applause (Klein 160). It seems as if her agency within the adapted events of *Hamlet* specifically is still encroached on, at least in part, by her Shakespearean predecessor.

However, in this novel, Ophelia is not only involved with the events of *Hamlet*. Klein expands Ophelia's personal plotline and the environment surrounding her spatially and temporally so that the reader sees her life before, during, and after the plot contained in the source text as well as her interactions with characters originally and not originally present in Shakespeare's work. This expansion allows Klein to question Ophelia's place as a victim of the patriarchy as well as the reduction of her to a symbol of teenage dysfunction in the late 20th and early 21st century.

One of the ways in which Klein re-interprets Ophelia's role as a victim of Renaissance and contemporary patriarchy is by exploring the sexual danger Ophelia faces in her particular historical setting and using that exploration to comment on the 21st century discussion of a "rape

[13] In response to Ophelia saying she thinks nothing, as Hamlet lies in her lap he says "A fair thought to lie between maids' legs" (3.2, 109)

culture" (Farmer 146). In *Ophelia*, the most direct threat to Ophelia is Edmund, the son of a nobleman and eventually one of Claudius' guards. He begins sexually harassing her when she is around ten years old by saying lewd things to her, but he quickly escalates his harassment, as Ophelia says, "Another day he pulled me behind a tree and offered me a coin if I would lift my skirts for him… he boldly pushed himself against me and tried to kiss me" (Klein 20). Edmund and the threat he poses to Ophelia are present right up until the moment she fakes her death, as Claudius sends Edmund after her to the riverside and Ophelia believes he means to kill her before she can enact her plan (Klein 203). Klein is very specific in making sure that Ophelia's tormentor is not a character from the original source text. His originality links him more to this specific YA version of *Hamlet* than to *Hamlet* itself as well as to Mary Cowden Clarke's version of Ophelia's girlhood in which one of her foster brothers is presented as a near-constant sexual threat and in which the reader sees a young lord, Eric, sexually "ruin" two of Ophelia's closest friends. It is important that the primary sexual threat to Ophelia be a part of the tradition of adaptation rather than come from the source text because YA literature is particularly helpful in making comparisons between the culture of its setting and the culture of its readers due to the close proximity in age of the assumed readership and the protagonist themselves. This is a baseline for identification between the reader and the protagonist which can lead to other identifications on a deeper level, such as how the protagonist feels about certain relationships (familiar, platonic, and romantic) and the protagonist's struggle to form an identity. If enough similarities are found, the reader can be made to think about how the entire culture of the novel is similar to that of their own (Farmer 149). In reading Klein's novel, identifying with Ophelia's thirst for knowledge and feelings towards her largely absent father can ultimately lead to the

consideration of the almost omnipresent threat of Edmund and what he means for Ophelia and readers who identify themselves with her in the 21st century.

Edmund's sexual advances towards Ophelia also bring to mind again Amy Bowles-Reyer's three phases of increased sexual agency for female protagonists in YA fiction.[14] As Klein's Ophelia has "fully constituted" sexual awareness that allows her to notice, comment upon, and fight back against inequalities in the world that she lives in, she is designated a "third-wave heroine." Her constant, sometimes physical, refusals of Edmund while she is simultaneously engaging in a sexual relationship with Hamlet emphasize questions of consent, questions more likely to be discussed at length today. Klein accepts that popular culture is a viable space in which the personal can indeed be political and allows Ophelia to negotiate those questions both for herself as a character and for Klein's female adolescent readership.

Another way in which Klein deconstructs the image of Ophelia as an archetype of purity or teenage dysfunction is by granting her more agency. This agency partially arises through Klein's depiction of Ophelia as an avid reader. Through this identity, Ophelia's silences are reconstructed, as she says, "I spoke little, not because I found silence to be a superior virtue, but because I satisfied my curiosity by listening, observing, and reading," (Klein 49). One of the first books she reads avidly after coming to Elsinore is *The Herball or General History of Plants*, which describes "the virtues and uses of plants," all of which Ophelia commits to memory (Klein 37). Her scholarly pursuits then allow her to be of use as an amateur healer for the community of court ladies serving Gertrude in Elsinore. It even seems as if she could use this knowledge to aid the rest of the court as well, especially as the novel closes in on the events of *Hamlet*, as she specifically notices that the *Herball* contains remedies for madness, poisoning, nightmares, and

[14] For a fuller description, see the subsection "Movement into Subjecthood: *Miranda in Milan"* under the chapter heading "From Archetype to Agent, Admiring Miranda"

melancholy (Klein 37). However, as Victoria Farmer notes, "[Ophelia's] simultaneously elevated and degraded social position- she is a woman in service of the queen, but she is still merely a woman- prevents her from combining that theoretical power with the active agency she would need to affect such change" (Farmer 86).

More Mothers, More Femininities

Since Ophelia's social stature prevents her from participating in a more active form of agency, Klein instead gives her a less autonomous form of agency through her connection with other women and a gynocentric community. Ophelia's biological mother has died sometime before the events of the novel and is barely mentioned during its course. Because of this, Ophelia is presented with a succession of surrogate mother figures, all of whom exist to broaden ideas about traditional femininity. The first of these mothers is Lady Elnora, the woman in charge of teaching Ophelia courtly graces when she comes to Elsinore. While Ophelia dislikes the lessons befitting a young lady of the court that Elnora gives her, such as needlework and proper conduct, when Ophelia gets her first period, it is ultimately Elnora who "calmed me and wiped my tears. She brought me clean rags and explained how generation occurs" (Klein 39). It is also Elnora who allows Ophelia to study the *Herball*, and, in doing so, to learn how to care for others.

Ophelia finds a second surrogate mother in Queen Gertrude, who fosters her love of reading and teaches her to "read freely" (Klein 43). While Gertrude asks Ophelia to read devotional texts aloud to herself and her ladies, she also spends an hour and so alone with Ophelia every night as the two read romances together from Margaret of Navarre's *Heptameron* (Klein 42). Gertrude acknowledges that one of the reasons she wants Ophelia specifically to read these romances with her is because "'It is necessary to learn the ways of the world and the wiles of men, so that you may resist them'" (Klein 43). In other words, she is doing the exact same

thing Ophelia's mother was trying to do before her death in Cowden Clarke's version of Ophelia's story. Gertrude also hopes to teach Ophelia that lessons and pleasure should occur simultaneously and be of equal value to the reader when they do so. As such, her encouragement to "read freely," extends well past the romances which Ophelia feels "completed her courtly education" (Klein 43). In her essay, "Girlhood and Autonomy in YA Shakespeares," Victoria Farmer postulates that Ophelia's position as a "third-wave heroine" is at work here also, as she "receives freedom from the act of reading, since she is exposing herself to a wider variety of ideas about appropriate femininity, and hence may question who gets to define such standards, and why" (Farmer 88). Even so, this act of reading freely appears strictly to broaden her mind, not her actions. She still feels the need to read books such as *The Art of Love* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in secret, and feels as if she has no opportunity to use the witty courtly discourse she admires in the heroines she reads about (Klein 50). Based on her status as a court lady, she is still unable to enact a great change in her agency in the physical sense even as Gertrude as a surrogate mother advocates for the expansion of Ophelia's mind.

The last of Ophelia's surrogate mothers is Mother Ermentrude, the abbess in the convent in St. Emilon, France, where Ophelia takes refuge after she fakes her death. Instead of lessons of the body, Mother Ermentrude requires Ophelia to have a deeper understanding of piety and charity as she explores her relationship with God. Ultimately Ophelia discovers that it is in this gynocentric community she can have the more active form of agency denied to her in the Danish court. Her course of study in the convent along with Mother Ermentrude's assurance that God has called her to such a task leads Ophelia to again take up the mantle of healer, this time for the sisters of St. Emilon (Klein 275). Ophelia is able to forge bonds between the two separate gynocentric communities she has been a part of by using the knowledge gained from the *Herball*

in Elsinore to provide aid to the nuns in the convent. While Ophelia never formally takes vows to become a nun herself, she is ultimately embraced by this new family of sisters. Drawing on the history of medieval and Renaissance convents, Klein creates a gynocentric community supportive of Ophelia's ambitions and able to provide her with the agency and self-sufficiency she craves for the majority of the novel. Medieval and Renaissance convents were centers of learning, particularly for their well born residents. In order to be able to comprehend biblical teachings, nuns could learn how to read and write in Latin, as well as grammar, mathematics, music, and rhetoric. Ophelia uses this place of study to eventually become a healer and apothecary for the people of the surrounding village and countryside. Though she arrives at the convent towards the middle of her pregnancy, she is able to devote years to studying philosophy and medicine after the birth of her son (Klein 320).

The convent also serves as the place in which Ophelia moves from becoming a reader to becoming an author. She begins with writing down her own story, and then moves on to documenting the lives of other women in the convent. In doing so, she moves from simply being an observer of alternate versions of femininity to an actor in one. She presumably still holds aspects of traditional femininity that she learned at Elsinore, but by the end of the novel she has also been reinvented as a single mother who is able to support her son entirely on her own through her successful career as an apothecary and as a voice through which other women are able to tell their own stories.

It is important to note that, while Klein playfully takes up Hamlet's suggestion to "Get [Ophelia] to a nunnery" (3.1, 122), neither of the gynocentric communities in which Ophelia is finally able to exhibit a greater degree of agency are physically present in *Hamlet*. While Gertrude is a character from the source text, there is no scene there which revolves around her

and the ladies of her court. The community in which Ophelia is able to exhibit a more physical kind of agency, the convent of St. Emilon, only exists in Klein's novel. It is also important to realize that, in addition to the description given at the end of the above paragraph, the last image of Ophelia in Klein's novel is that of a reinscribed love interest, as Horatio suddenly appears to confess his love for her and presumably take up residence with her and baby Hamlet in France. Erica Hately suggests that this normative family structure has been reinstated very purposefully. She believes that Klein is dealing with two "seemingly contrary impulses of romance and feminism," but is in fact not trying to juxtapose the two. Rather, she is allowing the reader to consider them both and hold them in tandem and at equal value with one another (Hateley 442). As "young women who recognize and resist gendered inequities are 'rewarded' with romance," Ophelia, by resisting Edmund's sexual advances and delving into the world of academia, is rewarded with a good potential husband in Horatio.

In contrast to Hateley's point in which the romance at the end is a reward for Ophelia's perseverance in her agency, Victoria Farmer suggests that this normative family structure present at the end is an afterthought. I consider Farmer's view slightly problematic. Even after the last third of the novel has been devoid of almost any men and any characters present in the *Hamlet* narrative besides Ophelia, the final image of her is that of a mother, a love interest, and a potential wife specifically to a character from the original source text. There is no evidence in the novel that she has been pining for Horatio or that she was ever upset at her inability to be with him romantically. It is as if his reappearance ultimately confines her once again to the roles she should have played at Elsinore and in the *Hamlet* narrative in general. Ophelia does have much more independence and self-sufficiency than she did at Elsinore, and so does not need Horatio to maintain the life she was leading before he came to France, so she could potentially hold more

power in their relationship. One can hope that even if Ophelia chose to pursue a relationship with Horatio, she would continue her work as an apothecary and an author, though since Klein neglects to include any details of their life together, the reader cannot know for certain. Perhaps Klein is trying to give Ophelia the "happily ever after" she was unable to achieve with Hamlet, but the inclusion of Horatio or of any other potential male love interest in the closing pages of the novel suggests the inability to have a happy ending without a heterosexual relationship, a suggestion Ophelia's time at the convent has been directly contradicting.

A more positive reading of *Ophelia*'s final pages rests on Horatio's reappearance as an interpretive commentary by Klein on her source text. Most of the critics cited in the criticism subsection of this chapter agree that Ophelia's fall into madness and potential suicide stems from an issue with love: either she does not love Hamlet enough or Hamlet does not love her enough. Klein's vision places more blame on Hamlet, as once his father's ghost speaks to him, he never loves Ophelia as much as he wants revenge. Though Hamlet does let Ophelia know that lovesickness will be the base of his "antic disposition," he is so focused on playing the madman that even Ophelia cannot tell if the lewd jokes and accusations he makes against her honor are true or are part of his charade. She never receives clarity on the subject, as Klein does not include a scene between Ophelia and Hamlet in which he either apologizes for his actions or breaks off their relationship. He utterly ignores her except in the scenes Klein adapts directly from *Hamlet*, namely Acts 3.1 and 3.2, and as such, is not privy to her plan to fake her own death.

However, none of the critics even come close to considering alternative suitors for Ophelia. Klein's insertion of Horatio back into Ophelia's narrative makes the reader reconsider his place in *Hamlet* and whether or not his character traits would contribute to a more or less productive relationship with Ophelia than Hamlet has. Shakespeare names Horatio a "just" man

as well as a "scholar," and Hamlet believes he is faithful enough not only to be trusted with Hamlet's plan to put on an "antic disposition," but also to tell Hamlet's story truthfully after he dies (3.2, 47, 1.1, 44). Through his devotion to Hamlet, Horatio also serves as a foil to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as they care more about being in service to the king than about Hamlet's well being. Horatio, on the other hand, offers to help delay Hamlet's final duel with Laertes if Hamlet feels any suspicion about the circumstances surrounding it (5.2, 187-188). Additionally, while Horatio does not personally interact with the maddened Ophelia, he is the one who originally allows her to enter and speak to Gertrude (4.5, 14-16).

Klein's Horatio is also an intellectual, and is the only person Ophelia trusts with her plan to fake her death as well as her travels to the convent of St. Emilon. By creating scenes between Horatio and Ophelia, Klein suggests that it is this trustworthiness that saves Ophelia's life. This increased intimacy also makes it clear that the respect and devotion Horatio affords Hamlet throughout the play text is easily extended to Ophelia, first as Hamlet's wife and then as someone Horatio cares for independently from Hamlet. However, in the play text, Horatio makes little to no mention of Ophelia and the two never appear in dialogue with each other. Without any sort of interaction between Horatio and Ophelia and with little allusion to the state of Ophelia and Hamlet's relationship prior to the events of *Hamlet,* it is difficult to determine whether or not Horatio would have been a better romantic partner for Ophelia within the play text. However, I believe that Klein is suggesting that, had that option been considered in *Hamlet,* Horatio would have been the better match.

Conclusions

Why Shakespeare?

In her article, "Becoming the Third Wave," Rebecca Walker, daughter of second-wave author and activist Alice Walker, determines what it means to her personally to be involved in the new "third wave" of feminism:[15]

> To be a feminist is to integrate an ideology of equality and female empowerment into the very fiber of my life. It is to search for personal clarity in the midst of systemic destruction, to join in sisterhood with women when often we are divided, to understand power structures with the intention of challenging them. (Walker 40)

Based on the above statement, Klein, Duckett, and other authors writing within the YA Shakespeares subgenre could create their feminist projects without using Shakespeare as a source text. "Understand[ing] power structures" and "join[ing] in sisterhood" do not necessitate looking back to the Bard, especially since his plays primarily focus more on the androcentric world in which he lived and from which he drew his own source texts rather than on the bonds between women.[16] However, it is this very androcentricity that makes Shakespeare's plays a vessel for reinterpretations that place his female characters at the center of the action instead: reinterpretations that can then explore the tenets of third wave feminism as expressed by Rebecca Walker.

While Klein and Duckett could have transposed Shakespeare's characters into a 21st century setting in order to mount an obvious critique of modern society and third wave

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[15] The 1992 article, appearing in *Ms.* magazine, is the first recorded use of "third wave" as a term to describe a particular iteration of feminism.

[16] Notable exceptions include *As You Like It, A Midsummer Night's Dream, All's Well that Ends Well, Much Ado About Nothing,* and *The Winter's Tale*.

feminism's place within it[17], they both choose to set their novels in the same time period in which their respective play texts are set. By staying within the time periods Shakespeare chose for his characters, Klein and Duckett are better able to critique both early modern and 21st-century social norms and make connections between them; in other words, rather than pulling Shakespeare into modernity, Klein and Duckett are choosing to go to Shakespeare and use modern lenses to critique modern and early modern issues. This integrates them into a tradition of reinvention brought into prominence by Anna Jameson and Mary Cowden Clarke: women who each used their own reinventions of Shakespeare's female characters to express values that they hoped would lead to the formation of the admirable and ideal Victorian woman.

Rather than express a particular set of values that a 21st-century female reader should aim to possess, Klein and Duckett provide a variety of examples of womanhood across their novels, therefore writing against a particular ideal. Women in these two novels are queens, servants, doctors, intellectuals, writers, mothers, daughters, magicians, naïve, multilingual, teachers, nuns, gay, straight, young, old, white, and brown, among other things. The sheer mass of female characters in these novels taken from their play texts and invented by the YA authors makes the androcentriciy of the source texts incredibly visible, especially two source texts like *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* which each only have one or two major female characters. This androcentricity occurs primarily due to the low availability of major roles in canonical drama for women beyond those of wife, mother, and love interest. Writing with 21st-century views in mind allows Klein and Duckett to dissipate the monolith of masculinity and create a wider range of roles for their female characters to occupy. Additionally, they are able to play into women's position in the 17th-century in order to explore modern conceptions of gender roles, sexuality, and motherhood.

[17] This technique is used in YA novels such as Hannah Caplan's *Foul is Fair*, in which the characters from *Macbeth* are students at a prep school and Jade, the character based upon Lady Macbeth, seeks revenge on the boys who sexually assaulted her.

Observing the sweeping changes made to the above categories also emphasizes the similarities between those categories as they exist in the 17th and 21st centuries. One of the most haunting comparisons is the presence of sexual violence against women. Edmund's unwanted advances towards Ophelia in Klein's novel echo back to Lavinia's rape in *Titus Andronicus* or Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda sometime before the events of *The Tempest* as well as less physically violent forms of sexual coercion such as Angelo's demand that Isabella have sex with him in return for staying her brother's execution in *Measure for Measure*. If Klein wanted to use her novel to critique the sexual violence present in some of Shakespeare's texts, why did she not choose to base her adaptation on a play text in which sexual violence or coercion is more evident? Perhaps because critiquing sexual violence in Shakespeare's play texts is only half the project. As Edmund is not a character from *Hamlet* but one created by Klein for her adaptation, she is able to link 17th-century sexual violence to 21st-century discussions of a "rape culture" and the danger it presents to young women. This link then has the potential to make readers question why sexual violence against women is still so prevalent and consider potential solutions to the problem. Acknowledging the ways in which women are still limited by the norms set in place by patriarchal societies then becomes just as important as recognizing the ways in which their situation has improved. If, as Harold Bloom suggests, Shakespeare is not only a part of the canon, but in fact *is* the canon, then to reinvent Shakespeare is to reinvent the canon itself.[18] It is to reflect upon the limits of it and to expand them as the world expands around them.

Why YA? (Redux)

Hypothetically, Klein and Duckett could have chosen to construct their Shakespearean adaptations in a myriad of genres. Why then is it important that they chose not only novels, but YA novels in particular as their vessel of adaptation? One answer is that, in doing so, they are

[18] Found in *The Western Canon*

proving that playing with Shakespeare and adapting him for a younger audience does not necessitate simplifying or reducing the amount of meaning found either in the source texts or the novels. As demonstrated by the connections between 17th-century and 21st-century sexual violence in the above section, Klein and Duckett do not shy away from considering questions of sexual violence, gender norms, and sexuality even as the target age demographic for readers of YA fiction is around 12-18. These novels also may be some readers' first encounters with Shakespeare, and will encourage them to seek out the original play texts in order to observe the interplay between them and the novel and to generate their own connections between the two.

The decision to structure their rewritings of Shakespeare through a YA fictional lens also gives Klein and Duckett the space to disrupt traditional narratives regarding adolescent psychology. Rather than emphasizing conflict between their adolescent heroines and their mothers/mother-figures, Klein and Duckett emphasize relationships of cooperation. This cooperation is not generated as a replacement for Ophelia and Miranda's individuation, but as an aid in their self-discovery. Neither is cooperation limited to their relationships with their (surrogate) mothers. In *Ophelia*, each of Ophelia's surrogate mothers helps her expand her ideas about what traditional femininity looks like, but in *Miranda in Milan*, Miranda's exploration is primarily aided by her lover, Dorothea, and her aunt, Agata. These cooperative relationships directly reflect Alice Walker's desire to "join in sisterhood with women when often we are divided." The presence of such a "sisterhood" in YA novels illuminates its benefits for young female readers, benefits that stand in direct contrast to the notion of women being in competition with each other based on appearance, the pursuit of success, or the attention of a potential sexual partner. A cooperative "sisterhood" resists such competition and works to promote the success of many over the success of an individual.

While Shakespeare too constructs instances of cooperative "sisterhood[s]"[19], by writing specifically YA fiction, Klein and Duckett are able to pass on the virtues of female-female cooperation and the task of creating connections between time periods by creating female protagonists whose ages fall into the target demographic for YA readers. This allows readers to more easily identify with the protagonist, regardless of the difference in time or place. As the female reader notices commonalities of experience with the female protagonist such as struggling for individual identity formation, dealing with the absence of a parent, or avoiding or encouraging different kinds of romantic relationships, the reader can then begin to question what other things they share with the protagonist she has begun to identify with: things like similarities or differences in larger cultural norms.

The importance of creating a "third wave heroine" such as Klein's Ophelia or a queer heroine like Duckett's Mianda comes in the attempt to generate these commonalities of experience between the reader and the protagonist. Adolescence is a time for the exploration of identity, including one's identity as a sexual being. The "third wave heroine" uses her understanding of herself as a sexual and gendered subject to note and challenge inequalities both in her personal life and in the larger world around her. If readers can identify with Klein's Ophelia in her capacity as a "third wave heroine," they can consider which power structures affect them the most and can understand what it means "to understand power structures with the intention of challenging them" (Walker 40). As Ophelia explores what it means to be a woman, so too does the reader.

The presence of a queer Miranda is equally as important for creating commonalities of experience. While having greater access to the internet allows questioning teenagers to easily search and find vocabulary with which to define their sexuality or gender identity, this

[19] See Beatrice and Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Helena and Diana in *All's Well that Ends Well*

vocabulary does not automatically generate comfort in the coming out process. Such comfort is ultimately aided by the power of representation; that is, LGBTQ+ youth feel safer to come out as they see themselves represented positively in mass media. Duckett's iteration of Miranda exploring her sexuality presents this exploration as a natural process. In addition, Miranda's status as a queer woman in a healthy relationship with another woman by the end of the novel provides a direct example of this kind of positive representation. Duckett also chooses to represent Miranda not only as a queer woman, but as a bisexual one, thereby making her a part of the single largest group within the LGBTQ+ community. Be that as it may, the most common representations of the LGBTQ+ community in the media tend to be gay men or lesbian women. By expanding the representation of LGBTQ+ individuals to include a visible bisexual character, Duckett is able to write back against bisexual erasure both in the media and in the LGBTQ+ community itself. The creation of a queer Miranda expands categories of sexuality as well as of romance, as heterosexual romance is no longer the default ending. Queer characters and, by extent, the queer readers who identify with them, can also find their happily ever after.

The project of creating a queer Miranda also entrenches Duckett in the large body of critical work intent on queering Shakespeare's plays.[20] In plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night,* and *Romeo and Juliet,* among others, Shakespeare implicitly addresses the issue of compulsory heterosexuality as powerful same sex bonds are challenged by one or both of their characters' movements into heterosexual romance. This heterosexual coupling ultimately triumphs, sometimes by incorporating both characters into different heterosexual bonds, but also sometimes by only incorporating one character into a new heterosexual bond

[20] See texts such as Melissa E. Sanchez's "'Use Me But as Your Spaniel": Feminism, Queer Theory, and Early Modern Sexualities," Jami Ake's "Glimpsing a 'Lesbian' Poetics in *Twelfth Night*," Goran V. Stanivukovic's *Queer Shakespeare: Desire and Sexuality*, and Edward J, Geisweidt's "Antonio's Claim: Triangulated Desire and Queer Kinship in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*

while leaving the other character without any sort of coupling by the end of the play.[21] The intent of critical work based in the idea of queering Shakespeare is to bring the alternative sexual plots lurking beneath the surface of the plays to the forefront. While *The Tempest* is not usually one of the plays considered by queer Shakespeare criticism, Duckett focuses on Miranda as a queer subject in order to emphasize that her choice to marry Ferdinand was just as much because he was her only option as it was because she found him attractive. Once Miranda is removed from the androcentric environment of *The Tempest*, Duckett allows her to explore powerful homosocial bonds like the ones found in Shakespeare plays more commonly analyzed by critics which queer Shakespeare. The difference between Duckett's work and Shakespeare's, however, is that the homosocial bond developed between Miranda and Dorothea evolves into a clearly homosexual one at the forefront of the novel. Though Duckett may keep the setting of her novel the same temporally as her source text, she is writing in the 21st century. As such, the same sex bond which would have been displaced by heterosexual romance in Shakespeare is allowed to develop into its own queer romance.

[21] For an example of full heterosexual integration, see *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *As You Like It*. For an example of partial heterosexual integration, see *The Merchant of Venice*.

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