

GROTESQUE BODIES AND THEIR EFFECT ON ADAPTATIONS OF WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE'S *JULIUS CAESAR* AND *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW*

By

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requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of English

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
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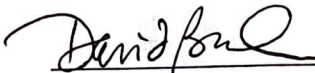


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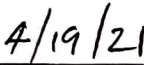


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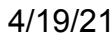


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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to examine particular scenes in two popular Shakespeare plays, *Julius Caesar* and *The Taming of The Shrew*, that I believe to be grotesque bodies. I define popular as frequency (how often a play is taught, bought, and performed); grotesque bodies are defined by me as moments in the text that are ambiguous and open to interpretation.

Interpretation of a text is what leads to adaptations of texts, which leads to heightened popularity. Shakespeare texts are a perfect example of grotesque bodies as they are continuously adapted and feature very few stage directions.

I recognize that part of the reason why Shakespeare is popular is because the literary canon was created years ago, and it was the elite few who decided for everyone else what would be taught, bought, and performed. However, I also believe that the ability to interpret literary texts in a way that continuously strives to make them engaging is another part of Shakespeare's prevalence.

In this thesis, I outline Bakhtin's definition of a grotesque body as well as adaptation theory in order to define these two concepts in a way that makes them compatible with each other and my argument. I will then focus on *Julius Caesar* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, respectively. I have also included an epilogue in which I hope to communicate my desire to continue this research into my future teaching career.

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INTRODUCTION

“Just because you wear a wig doesn’t prove you’re a girl.”

“Is it just me or does this soccer game have more nudity than most?”

-She’s the Man, 2006

In a world where Danish princes can rub elbows with the high school homecoming queen, audiences will discover Shakespeare’s everlasting influence on modern films. *Never Been Kissed*, *She’s the Man*, *Get Over It*, *O*, and *10 Things I Hate about You* stand amongst a long line of Shakespeare adaptations that seek to bring the plays into the late 1990s and early 2000s. Film adaptations of popular plays can inspire adoration, curiosity, and even contempt. However, the movie theatre is not the only place where Shakespeare is widespread. His works are studied in classrooms of varying grade levels internationally, and between the years 1959 - 2015, there were over 23,000 professional¹ stage productions of Shakespeare’s plays (Yeung et al.). One reason that Shakespeare’s plays hold such strong influences over popular culture, as well as education, stems from his use of language.² His language creates spaces or moments of interpretation that lead to countless adaptations, appropriations, allusions, and parodies of his work.

Bakhtin and Grotesque Bodies

The fact that audiences, directors, and actors can never truly know Shakespeare’s or his troupes’ original intents, stagings, and interpretations lead to grotesque bodies in his works. A grotesque body is a body that physically can be birthed, give birth, eat, drink, produce waste, suffer mortal wounds, and die. This definition seems to align with the idea that humans have/are

¹ Excluding K-12 and collegiate level performances.

² It is also important to note that people in power (white, cis, men) who determine popular, canonical texts have determined that Shakespeare is high literature, which further cements Shakespeare into curriculum and popular culture often at the expense of excluding diverse authors.

grotesque bodies, although the image of a human body does not automatically align itself with texts. Despite this image, for the purpose of this paper, I will be utilizing a broader definition of “grotesque” defined by literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and his World* as “that which cannot be determined with certainty and the inability to know authorial intent [which] encourages creativity, imagination, and open interpretations” (317). Grotesque bodies can be exploited and then expanded, creating spaces for further adaptations. Bakhtin did not study nor write about adaptations, having “never concerned himself directly with adaptation. Nevertheless, his ideas about texts...offer[s]...useful concepts for adaptation studies” (Cutchins 71). The concepts of intertextuality and the generation of meaning through language demonstrates the openness of Shakespeare’s language. This openness is directly correlated with the opening and closing of a grotesque body. If a text can be analogous with a human body, then that text can be birthed, rebirthed, and killed by various adaptations as well as stagings, as can the adaptation itself.

A grotesque body is not a corpse as the name might lead some to imagine, but it is a body. Bakhtin refers to the grotesque body as a vessel that “is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body” (317). Bakhtin is not referring to adaptation and stagings of plays, but rather an actual body that is exaggerated in its consumption and regurgitations. Regarding adaptation theory, the parallel between an unfinished body and a play script is the way that each new ending, scene, line, staging, costume, etc., can create a new space of creation for playwrights, actors, and audiences. Adaptations serve to honor the original text and then retell it in a way that makes it accessible to new audiences and new to old audiences.

This accessibility has come under scrutiny lately as Shakespeare has been historically reserved for the enjoyment of the white, cis, educated, middle-upper class population. Despite the original public opinions about the theatre during Shakespeare's time,³ public regard for his works has shifted into a place of renown and eminence. This eminence was further perpetuated by the inclusion of Shakespeare into the United States Common Core with the intent to make Shakespeare more accessible. However, this inclusion still doubled as a perpetuation of the literary canon, which is traditionally white, cis males.

Adaptations that seek to subvert the literary canon simultaneously confirm it by attempting to reach the general public as the content is intended to resonate more with audiences who are familiar with the work. For example, *10 Things I Hate about You* can stand alone as a film for its audience. If the audience member knows that it is a *The Taming of the Shrew* adaptation, it can add a layer of enjoyment for some acting as the palimpsest. The subversion of exclusivity and simultaneous perpetuation of exclusive enjoyment is similar to the medieval carnival also defined by Bakhtin:

The suspension of all hierarchical precedence during carnival time was of particular significance. Rank was especially evident during official feasts; everyone was expected to appear in the full regalia of his calling, rank, and merits and to take the place corresponding to his position. It was a consecration of inequality. On the contrary, all were considered equal during carnival. (10)

Adaptations that are created for the consumption of the masses often change language and setting to make them modern. Creating an adaptation that would appeal to the masses yet that also seeks

³ See Estill, 2015: "We can tell what Shakespeare's contemporaries thought about his plays by looking at their manuscripts. These were handwritten documents where they would jot down notes, accounts, poems, and snippets from plays. According to the Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts, early readers didn't prefer Shakespeare over other popular writers of the time, such as Christopher Marlowe or Ben Jonson."

to heighten the enjoyment of an audience member who understands the adaptation reinforces the idea of exclusion.

Similarly, when watching a play that elevates the audience above the characters in the magnification of their flaws, the audiences' own flaws are exposed. This reflection of the human condition projected through the theatre and then translated to other mediums reinforces the idea of superiority as well as solidarity. If the text reflects society, then the text must engage with that society meaning that the body expands beyond its physical limits of language and stage. "The grotesque body is not separated from the rest of the world. It is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits" (Bakhtin 26). In the examination of the world through character's emergence, death, and rebirth comes the openness that proffers the inspirations and ability to create adaptation. Texts exist in part because of inspirations and influences from other stories and lived experiences by either the author or others. Cutchins argues that influence in terms of adaptation is not accurate: "The word 'influence' suggests a one-way street along which William Shakespeare might influence Leonard Bernstein, Arthur Laurents, and Stephen Sondheim, but denies that these men could ever influence Shakespeare" (75). As ubiquitous as Shakespeare is in popular culture, an encounter with an adaptation will influence perceptions of further adaptations as well as textual studies. For example, if an audience member who has never seen a stage production of *Julius Caesar*, is watching the 1970 film by Mankiewicz for the first time, the next time that audience member goes to see *Julius Caesar* in another medium, the film will influence their perception of the play. These influences highlight the importance of intertextuality. Furthermore, the influence of watching an adaptation from popular culture will influence readings of a text in regard to visualization. For example, most audience members expect Frankenstein's monster to resemble Boris Karloff's portrayal

from the 1931 film in any future films they watch or in the text itself despite the original description. As I align my definitions and arguments with Cutchins's, I plan to expand on his conclusions. Cutchins states that "adaptation is most often a way of looking at texts, rather than a specific kind of text, because all texts...function intertextually" (81). Intertextuality allows audiences to better understand the presented text through the incorporation of outside work.

Understanding the process of adaptation means understanding the relationship between the text and the works that inspire, surround, and reference it. According to Cutchins, intertextuality exists as a form of simultaneity, which is why the Bakhtinian concept of translation can explain the modern fascination with adaptations (71). In watching an adaptation of a play, audiences will automatically recall either another performance or study of the same play while watching the new version.

The influence of other plays or readings is not the only aspect of impact on a viewer. The way that lines are given in an adaptation has the potential to change multiple aspects of the production. In his study of Bakhtin, Cutchins states that "because of the gap between language and content, Bakhtin believed that words (or any other texts) can never mean exactly what a speaker intends. As soon as words are uttered, they enter into a negotiation or a dialogue both with the listeners and with other words" (73). This negotiation is demonstrated by the act of adaptation and shows how an actor or director can change the meaning of the play as well as how audiences can interpret the play. The relationship between a play and language as an act of negotiation is a form of exploiting the openness in a piece of literature, creating a grotesque body.

Focusing on *Julius Caesar* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, I use Bakhtin's theory of the grotesque body as well as various adaptation processes to argue that the grotesqueness of

Shakespeare's language and lack of explicit stage direction is what allows his plays to continually be adapted, interpreted, and appreciated. Rather than define these entire texts as a grotesque body, I will apply the theory to explore specific moments of openness in various productions and show how that changes meaning and audience perception.

Adaptation Theory

It is important at this stage in my thesis to determine the definition of adaptation and how I will be referring to said term going forward. There are many and varying uses of the term adaptation. For instance, Hutcheon defines adaptation as "an extended, deliberate, announced, revisitation of a particular work of art" (170). The deliberate action of adapting a text is seen as an act of respect or love for a text. Desmet and Iyengar argue, similarly to Hutcheon, that adaptation revolves around context and the "attitudes toward artistic production" (7-8). Despite these definitions, Cutchins argues that "adaptations are a way of thinking about texts, and any structural definition is likely to be problematic" (80). However, this lack of definition can be frustrating for adaptation theory. To guide my analysis, I use the term adaptation as defined by Andrew James Hartley: "any performance of the play as each play has many influences" (50). I believe that adaptations are a product of a creative process by creators that admire the original text. These creators seek to produce their interpretation of the text while simultaneously capitalizing on what they believe would make their version unique and/or popular. All stagings of a performance are an adaptation. Most plays derive their inspirations from other plays, ideas, and stories, which contribute to their popularity and adaptability. Plays are also influenced by actor choice, which can change the interpretation and future stagings. These observations are the core of my beliefs and inform my study going forward.

In *A Theory of Adaptation*, Hutcheon claims that “adaptations are never simply reproductions” (4). There are spaces in each text for interpretation and creation, which are acts of homage as well as revival. Hutcheon goes further to categorize adaptation into product compared to process and defines the process of adaptation as “an act of appropriating or salvaging, and this is always a double process of interpreting and then creating something new” (20). This distinction of and focus on process allows audiences to move away from the idea of adaptation as a comparative study of fidelity regarding the original text and “permits us to think about how adaptations allow people to tell, show, or interact with stories” (Hutcheon 22). These interactions and their impact create further open/grotesque spaces for further adaptations. For example, if a director or actor sees *10 Things I Hate about You*, some aspects of the film can influence another production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. This influence is a demonstration of intertextuality. Intertextuality creates palimpsest moments in which an original viewing of a text will always show through a new viewing. A palimpsest is defined as “a manuscript or piece of writing material on which the original writing has been effaced to make room for later writing but of which traces remain” (Oxford Languages). Regardless of how far removed *10 Things* is from *The Taming of the Shrew*, traces of the text remain, such as character traits and plot elements.

In the same way that Hutcheon distinguishes the adaptation process and the consequent adapted product, Desmet and Iyengar grapple with the distinction between adaptation and appropriation. In the era of social media, the word “appropriation” is often equated with cultural appropriation and racism. Appropriation is seen as negative and used to claim that those who participate in appropriation do so for profitable gain regardless of consideration for others. Desmet and Iyengar claim that “discussions of cultural appropriation return us to the politicized context of appropriation’s cultural materialist origins” (6). However, in the terms of adaptation

scholars, readers must understand “appropriation” as a neutral word used for the creative process. I define appropriation as the creation of a product that relies heavily on the influence or structure of another piece of art for direction yet is still able to claim ownership of the production. Desmet and Iyengar argue, much like Hutcheon, that appropriation is a process rather than a product and that the argument of “theft” of a text is hard to claim as ownership of a text is hard to claim (4). Desmet and Iyengar conclude with a call to continue to explore the definitions of adaptation and appropriation and to understand these terms as “attitudes toward artistic production, consumption, and social regulation” (8). Audiences should regard the creative process as different from the product as well as understand that the adaptation process does not always equate to inferior products.

A perception that adaptations or appropriations create inferior products leads to constant comparison. Some people may feel that adaptations exist because they believe that some producers cannot come up with their own ideas.⁴ John Bryant recognizes that belief yet argues against them: “Adaptation is creativity’s stepchild, always vying for validation, never catching up to its originating source. But that view depends upon an exclusionary and inadequate notion of the ‘written work’ and the writing process in general” (1). In terms of theory, adaptation studies have been severely critiqued for being formalist and aesthetic. This critique stems from a misunderstanding of adaptation and a perceived lack of a definite definition of adaptation.

The idea that adaptations will always be subpar to the original text is irrelevant to adaptation theory as the idea of an original work is unraveled by the idea of rhizomatic works put forward by Hutcheon as well (6). A rhizome is defined as “a continuously growing, horizontal,

⁴ See Song, 2019: “In Hollywood, the colon is often a deadly weapon. Two little dots that act like nails in the coffin of the American film industry. The reason? The colon often precedes a sequel, a spin-off, an adaptation or some other form of packaged unoriginality.”

underground stem which puts out lateral shoots and adventitious roots at intervals” (Oxford Languages). Lateral shoots from a root system demonstrate that there is no one starting point for a text. All texts have been influenced by another story or experience. Scholars may attempt to track down the original draft of a text, but even that work has been influenced by stories, ideas, ideals, and experiences that came before written work.

A claim to the original text creates the trap of fidelity criticism when an audience member gets upset when an adaptation diverges from the original text source. This is a surface-level argument, especially when considering Shakespeare adaptations. Many of Shakespeare’s own works were adapted from, or at least inspired by, previous works.⁵

One of the main challenges of studying and performing Shakespeare is the lack of stage directions; therefore, any actions done outside of explicit directions will be a form of interpretation and thusly adaptation. Interpretation is often exalted when the interpretation lines up with what the audiences were picturing themselves. However, when the actions deviate, many audience members feel confused, hurt, and angry, adding to the idea of one superior text. For example, audiences expect Hamlet to hold Yorick’s skull out from him when he delivers his dramatic speech. Audiences do not expect Hamlet to be tossing the skull nonchalantly from hand to hand. As Cutchins points out, “our personalities are formed and transformed by what we have comprehended. Imagine then our disappointment with an adaptation that fails to evoke these same feelings and experiences” (77). While this may seem dramatic, the impact of literature on who we become as people is the core of the experience of studying literature and adaptations.

⁵ See Brown and Spencer, 2021: “With a few exceptions, Shakespeare did not invent the plots of his plays. Sometimes he used old stories (*Hamlet*, *Pericles*). Sometimes he worked from the stories of comparatively recent Italian writers, such as Giovanni Boccaccio—using both well-known stories (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*) and little-known ones (*Othello*). He used the popular prose fictions of his contemporaries in *As You Like It* and *The Winter’s Tale*. In writing his historical plays, he drew largely from Sir Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch’s *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* for the Roman plays and the chronicles of Edward Hall and Holinshed for the plays based upon English history.”

We understand literature to be a gateway to compassion, empathy, and understanding. When people feel that this gateway is blocked, they once become part of the community that understands adaptations as a comparison.

Thesis Overview

The purpose of this thesis is to study the language of *Julius Caesar* and *The Taming of the Shrew* to understand how they have remained popular stage productions as well as strong influences on popular culture and in education. Simple changes in language can change the nature of the play, especially in the question of perception of character as it is shown through interpersonal relationships. Character is speculative and subjective to audience members. For example, even if a villain outright claims to be a villain, such as Richard III, there are often moments in which audience members understand their motives and sympathize with them. In *Julius Caesar*, character is subjectively based on actor portrayal or what an audience member believes about government overreach. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio or Katherine can be seen as sympathetic or unsympathetic characters at different points in the play. Since audience members' personal experiences can and will affect reception, these plays present new arguments each time they are performed.

My first chapter focuses on *Julius Caesar* and three filmed stage adaptations. *Julius Caesar* has remained widely popular since its first run in 1599, and as of 2016, was ranked eleventh most popular out of the thirty-nine plays, based on the percentage of professional stagings (Kopf). *Julius Caesar* is often taught in high school as a part of world literature. Part of what I believe makes *Julius Caesar* so popular is that there is no distinct villain; there is no Iago or Richard III. The villain of the play changes depending on who is asked, or there might not be one at all. I believe that there are moments within the play that when interpreted in various ways,

can inform the audience about character and even tyranny. These moments are the funeral speeches of Brutus and Marc Antony (3.2), Portia's death (4.3), Portia's proof of her constancy (2.1), and Calpurnia's interactions with Caesar (1.2 and 2.2). It is important to note that most of my analysis focuses on the women in the play. I believe that even though this is a heavily male-centered play, the women are able to give audiences greater insight into their husband's lives and character through their revelations of intimate moments. The stagings of these intimate moments and actor reactions affect the audience's perception of that character.

In the second chapter of this thesis, I analyze *The Taming of the Shrew* and four filmed, stage productions to show how the physicality of the play impacts audience perception of abuse and sympathy. *The Taming of the Shrew* has seen recent success, especially regarding film adaptations, and by the same scale mentioned earlier, was ranked as the fifth most popular play, contributing to 5% of professional stagings (Kopf). I analyze Katherine's final speech (5.2), the wedding proposal (2.1), the wedding dinner (3.2), and the taming scenes (3.4, 4.1, and 4.4). Each of these scenes has the potential to show a very abused and obedient Katherine. However, each of these scenes also has an opportunity to subvert the violence in a subjectively comedic way. I argue that even when Katherine seems to be stripped of her power, the actors' reactions, and their ability to portray a sympathetic character, grant them more power than any other character.

Julius Caesar and *The Taming of the Shrew* are connected in how relationships are portrayed, and it is language that shapes those portrayals. These plays are also connected through their portrayal of female agency. The portrayal of the women in these plays has the ability to persuade audiences to perceive a certain character a certain way giving them the greatest power out of any other character. By addressing language and adaptability, I hope to show how and why Shakespeare's plays are still studied, taught, and prevalent in popular culture while also

addressing why it is important that his work is still studied today. The understanding and application of the text as a grotesque body regarding the two plays will show the importance of not only context but also actor choice, and how those both influence meaning and understanding, which leads to further adaptations.

CHAPTER 1: *JULIUS CAESAR*

“People totally like Brutus as much as Caesar. What is so great about Caesar? Brutus is just as cute. When did it become OK for one person to become the boss of everyone? We should just totally stab Caesar.”

-Mean Girls, 2004

Introduction

What were Julius Caesar’s last words? Most people that are familiar with the play will say “Et tu, Brute?” to which they would be wrong for multiple reasons. The first one being that Shakespeare’s last written lines for Caesar are “Then fall, Caesar” (3.1.77). Secondly, we cannot know what Caesar’s last words were. There is a lot of speculation, but we still can never know. These tiny instances of omnipresent Shakespearean influence demonstrate how audiences form their perception of characters before watching the play. With each performance, directors, actors, and audiences affect future stagings and create spaces for later adaptations. Even small details can have a greater impact when each performance can change with the simple inflection of tone or emphasis on a certain word. It is these small changes and allowances for such changes that keep audiences engaged with Shakespeare’s plays. *Julius Caesar* is believed to be sourced from Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch’s *Lives*. As Cox explains in his introduction of his edited text of *Julius Cesar*,

Shakespeare’s first Roman play had no clear historical source and a vague sense of ancient Rome, whereas those he wrote after reading Plutarch are deeply indebted to North prose and evoke the Roman past and powerful and complex ways...Shakespeare’s selection invention and rearrangement of events heighten

suspense, create symmetry and rich attic richness and action, and renders character even more thoughtfully...than his source does. (187)

Shakespeare drawing from historical events as well as the biographies from *Lives* for an immensely popular play demonstrates the rhizomatic effect that texts have. Audiences understand that the assassination of Caesar was a historical event, but any recollection of that event will be told through a form of bias and interpretation.

Julius Caesar is often studied for its utilization of rhetoric and for creating discourse about tyranny. The language from all characters is meant to persuade and manipulate. The murder of Caesar is carried out through a fear that is based on a hypothetical situation (will Caesar be a tyrant?), so each character must be a strong rhetor. *Julius Caesar* also toes the line between a history play and a tragedy. All of these considerations affect director and actor choice, which in turn affects the staging of the play. These choices also impact audience perception, which then affects popular opinion and popular culture.

History of Performance

Julius Caesar is thought to have been written in 1598-9 and may have been the first play performed at The Globe in 1599 (Hartley 2). Between the years 1700-50, 150 performances of *Caesar* are put on throughout London. By the 1810s, *Caesar* saw a revival that included an elaborate set and cast, and exaggerated costuming and design following the theatrical trends of the theatre during the Restoration and 18th eighteenth century. The play generated many adaptations that addressed fascism, the fall of real-life dictators, and finally film, most notably the 1953 MGM release (Hartley xi-xiv). Throughout its time on stage, *Caesar* has been constantly adapted, appropriated, parodied, and alluded to. Some recent stagings of *Caesar* directed by Phyllida Lloyd and Paolo and Vittorio Taviani set the play in a prison. In 2017, The

Public Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park director Oskar Eustis portrayed the characters of the play as members of President Trump's cabinet, with Caesar shown as Trump himself. This timeliness⁶ shows the impact of such plays. Many adaptations have overt references to world leaders: "The Public's stagings of Shakespeare follow the tradition of most professional productions of the Bard's work, which honor the magnitude of Shakespeare's accomplishments by using staging clues to draw connections between his plays and contemporary movements in politics and culture" (Wilkinson). Some directors of *Caesar* adaptations have recently tackled the idea of changing the race or gender of a character, which furthers the discourse surrounding the play. Regardless of cast, setting, or director, the way that *Caesar* has remained an impactful play is through the use and maintenance of language. In order to change the play and alter perspectives, adaptations must allow spaces for physical interpretation of the original lines. These interpretations persuade audience member's perception of character.

I reference multiple adaptations throughout this chapter, particularly those directed by Angus Jackson (2017), Phyllida Lloyd (2016), and Gregory Doran (2012). Jackson's version, produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company, takes place in Rome with conventional costuming, such as togas, and set design. Lloyd's Donmar Warehouse production takes place in a women's prison with an all-female cast. This production uses props and costumes that would only be available in modern prisons and includes scenes that incorporate prison guards. Doran's production, produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company and likely inspired by Yael Farber's *Sezar*, takes place in modern, postcolonial Africa. These plays showcase different time periods and props, emphasizing the impact that staging has on meaning. Each of these plays shows

⁶ Orson Wells' 1937 adaptation drew on similarities to the Nazi Regime and the 1953 version would play into America's "Red Scare."

different interpretations of Caesar as well as creating discourse about gender and culture and how those aspects impact the play.

In keeping with some of the most popular pieces of research about *Caesar*, the first major scene of my analysis will be the funeral speeches. The funeral speeches are so impactful in terms of studying the rhetoric of the play as well as the perception of character as they set the tone for the remaining acts. I will then analyze the scene of Portia wounding her thigh and the scene of Calpurnia trying to convince Caesar to not go to the Senate. The women have the opportunity to show their husbands' character traits to the audience more than what the men have shown already. These women even have the ability to cast doubt on an audience member's perceived hero. This play only has two females in its entire cast, yet this actually gives the women more power. The audience is able to feel a connection to more intimate moments between characters who also express common struggles of marriage and illnesses that beget vulnerability. The scenes with the women allow me to draw parallels to *The Taming of the Shrew* regarding the women's rhetoric as well as audience perception on not the women, but the men around them and how they interact.

The Funeral Speeches

Brutus's Speech

The funeral speeches of Brutus and Antony in Act 3, Scene 2 demonstrate how audience perception is shaped by rhetoric and staging context. Both speeches are considered great examples of rhetoric; however, Antony's speech, being the longer, the latter, and overall better speech, has a more lasting impact on future actions of the play as well as character portrayal.

Brutus's speech was no doubt persuasive as he stood before the people with his hands covered in the blood of Caesar. He was still able to convince the public he did the right thing. In

his funeral speech opening lines, which will later be subverted by Antony, Brutus calls upon “Romans, countrymen, and lovers,” harkening back to citizens’ patriotism as well as high regard for their peers. Anne Barton observes that “Shakespeare’s Rome is a city of orators, and rhetoricians” (25). This means that Brutus would have to stand alone (and above) and convince the people of Rome that he is an honorable man in a city where rhetoric is a common practice even amongst the commoners, as seen in Act 1, Scene 1.⁷ In perhaps his greatest argument, Brutus tells his audience that while he loved Caesar, he loved Rome more. Surely if someone as close to Caesar as Brutus could lay aside his allegiance for the greater good, then so can these citizens. He poses hypothetical questions about tyranny and slavery, the pivotal questions that Brutus himself at the beginning of this play sought to answer. While posing these questions is a rhetorical strategy, it creates a false dilemma, showing that Brutus is the lesser orator: “Had you rather Caesar were living and die/ all slaves then that Caesar were dead to live all free men?” (3.2.21-2) The idea that Caesar’s life would only cause slavery for the citizens of Rome was unfounded. In using fallacies, Brutus was in a position to not be questioned, leading the people and even himself into a false sense of righteousness. In this righteousness, Brutus begins to imitate Caesar, as pointed out by Girard: “Brutus unconsciously turns into a second Caesar” (400). We can see the unconscious turn in the way the crowd reacts and changes from angered to reverent, despite Brutus’s protest, similar to the Lupercal scene.

Brutus’s actions during this speech are not explicitly stated with stage directions, allowing the director and the actor to make decisions that they believe will enhance the scene. The emotions that Brutus exhibits during this scene influence how the character proceeds for the

⁷ COBBLER: A trade, sir, that I hope I may use, with a safe conscience, which is indeed sir, a mender of bad soles.
 FLAVIUS: What trade, thou knave? Thou naughty knave, what trade?
 COBBLER: No, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me, Yet if you be out, sir, I can mend you.

rest of the play for the sake of a republic. Brutus claims that he weeps for Caesar and his ambition (3.2.23). It is in this implicit stage direction where the actor has to make a conscious choice to weep for Caesar and to decide what that looks like. The passage does not mention taking time away from the speech for tears shed. In fact, the lines that follow Brutus's weeping have a parallel structure, in which saying the lines rapidly in succession would be more dramatic. In a hypothetical situation, an emotional Brutus might reveal the true turmoil that he suffered. Brutus then says, "There is tears for his love..." and given his audience, it is unclear who may be weeping at this line (3.2.25). Is it the citizens or himself? Should it be the citizens, disregarding their tears would emphasize a lack of compassion, but a show of solidarity through emotion may align him with his audience? The audience is already aware of the fickle-minded commoners of Rome based on the interaction in Act 1, Scene 1.

In the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2017 production, directed by Jackson, Brutus portrays himself as rational and levelheaded. There are no tears of sadness; however, there is also no pride in Caesar's slaying as contrasted with Lloyd's Brutus who wells up with tears as well as places extreme emphasis on the term "slew." Jackson's Brutus is methodical in his speech and speech patterns. His words are presented as facts. Lloyd's Brutus is extremely emotional, which makes it stand out compared to some counterparts. While Lloyd's Brutus might tear up during the speech, the actor still takes no time to pause for tears. In the same emotional vein, the Doran production showed a passionate Brutus who smiled throughout his speech. These three different reactions impact the audience in various ways. A levelheaded Brutus emphasizes a character of consideration and thoughtfulness. A crying Brutus emphasizes the love that Brutus had for Caesar and for Rome, validating his claims. A smiling Brutus shows the audience that he is trying to connect with others and shows that he bears them no harm. After murdering Caesar, it

is up to Brutus to convince his audience that he did the right thing. However, I believe that his speech is unconvincing as he attempts to pragmatically distance himself from the tragedy.

In most stagings right before Brutus's speech, the citizens are in distress. That distress is quickly dispelled if just examining the language. There are places in this scene (3.2) where a director can choose to have much more chaos happening on stage. This amount of chaos and how quickly it is dispelled can emphasize how great of a leader Brutus is or the opposite. As argued by Newman, "Brutus seems a bit inclined to scold the crowd, telling the group...to be patient until he's finished. His respect for the common man...is...respectful enough to make the crowd feel reasonably well-disposed toward him" (40). The reaction to Brutus's speech from the crowd is only stated at the end leaving room for interpretation of the commoner's reactions during his speech. If the commoners seem satisfied per their demands, then it would prove that Brutus was a great speaker and thusly a great leader.

Not only does the crowd's level of calm indicate Brutus's power (or lack of) as a speaker, so does the crowd's reaction to his parting words. As proof of his constancy, in his final line of the funeral speech, Brutus tells Rome that he has the same dagger for himself when it shall please his country to need his death (3.2.42). This line, although potentially manipulative, solidifies the crowd's stance as they exalt Brutus to become Caesar, completely contradicting Brutus's hypothetical sacrifice. This scene mirrors Act 1, Scene 2 when Casca retells the events of Caesar's refusal of the crown. The reaction that Brutus to the commoners calling him Caesar will reveal if protecting the republic was Brutus's true intentions or if he was "very loath to lay his fingers off of it." However, the people's exaltations also show that Brutus was not as good of an orator as he had hoped to be. The plebeians very obviously missed Brutus's point about freedom and honoring the ideals of a republic. While this scene does show the people's want and

willingness to follow a leader, it also shows that Brutus is ineffective in his speech. The staging of the citizens' chaos, Brutus' bloodied hands and lack of tears, as well as the citizens' reactions, represent four distinct, grotesque bodies. The director and actor depiction during the funeral speech has immense power to control audience perspective.

Mark Antony's Speech

Mark Antony, in the wake of his friend's murder, uses Brutus's own words against him to create chaos and subsequently civil war. In his not very subtle subversion of Brutus's opening line, Antony changes the order to emphasize "friends" over "Romans." This not only breaks the iambic meter of Brutus's speech, but it also refers to the many loyalties lost. Antony mentions that Brutus called Caesar ambitious; however, he still subverts this claim by making it hypothetical in lines 78-79, "if it were true." In speaking about Caesar's triumphs, Antony makes his speech much more personal. As noted by Colclough, "Throughout his speech, Antony uses the demagogue's wiles alternately to cajole, insult and flatter his audience, referring to their reason while exciting their passions" (228). Referring to logic as well as the crowd's penchant for excitement, Antony is able to use irony to persuade his crowd without their knowledge.

In order to not fall under the dagger of the conspirators nor to alienate the crowd, he emphasizes Brutus's honor in the beginning by claiming that Brutus graciously allowed him to speak. The constant repetition of "honorable men" could imply that the line is to grow more and more sarcastic as the speech continues. The actual audience would understand this sarcasm as Antony makes his feelings towards the conspirators known to Caesar's corpse before his speech "O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth, That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!" (3.1.269-71). Antony gives many instances where Caesar was not ambitious, casting new doubt on the conspirators' reasoning. Given different adaptations, emotional range will look different

between actors. Unlike Brutus's potential weeping, Antony has to take a moment to compose himself because the Plebeians have lines that clearly express that Antony is in mourning and it can be physically seen.

ANTONY: My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar, And

I must pause till it comes back to me.

2 PLEBEIAN: Poor soul, his eyes are red as fire with

weeping. (3.2.105-114)

The interpretation of Antony's grief can emphasize Brutus's villainy. In each portrayal, the actor playing Antony does cry, and in some instances, cries before the line, such as in Jackson's and Lloyd's. In both of these versions, the actors' lips quiver at line 101, "You all did love him once." The audience can assume that Antony is truly hurt after losing a friend and cannot contain his grief. This contrasts to Brutus who claims to have lost a friend as well, yet he explicitly took no time for his tears. I would argue that although Antony's speech is far more persuasive, Brutus's speech is more grotesque. Brutus does not have stage directions, props, nor an audience that announces what he is doing. Antony's speech is more constructed, perhaps because it is more important.

Another reason why Antony's speech was so much more impactful for the Plebeians than Brutus's, outside of being personally charged and the rhetorical use of repetition, was the withholding and reading of Caesar's will. Antony's manipulation of the leverage of the will is shown in his reluctance to read it. He stalls for fear that he will wrong the honorable men that spoke before him. His stalling tactics do present as a grotesque body as they can be more grief-driven or purposeful, or both. If Antony is portrayed as a character that is more sinister in his tactics, then the perspective of character shifts. Once he is persuaded to read it, he instead

laments over the holes in Caesar's cloak. His lamentations give ample time to remind the people that Brutus was Caesar's favorite. This information presents a new opportunity to change perceptions about Brutus's villainy.

Audiences rarely get to see Brutus and Caesar interact in this play; they exchange words only twice. In some instances, directors can take advantage of staging interactions between the two in the background. Audiences understand the extent of their friendship through Brutus's internal conflicts, Cassius's laments, and most of all, Caesar's final words. If a director or actor plays up their relationship further through background hugs or another form of attention, it can demonstrate how hard this murder was for Brutus. If there is no interaction, it is hard for audiences to see how Brutus's cut was the unkindest.

Antony's final words while reflecting on his rhetorical work can be interpreted in a couple of ways as an actor: "Now let it work. Mischief, thou art a-foot: Take thou course what thou will" (3.3.249-50). If Antony is portrayed as being excited about what he has caused, this could show lack of regard for safety and well-being of others. If he is drawn into himself or prideful, it could seem like part of a larger or more sinister plot. This quote is similar to Richard III's "Now is the winter of our discontent" (1.1.1) and Petruchio's monologue in *The Taming of the Shrew*, "Thus have I politically begun my reign" (4.1.162) in which each instance leads to some form of distress or chaos. In Lloyd's version, Marc Antony is speaking to the crowd in a way that gives them permission to carry on their riots and raiding. He uses a gym whistle to call attention to himself and everything around him stops. He does not speak loudly, forcing everyone to lean in to hear him. In Doran's version, Antony leads the crowd in a chant, chanting Caesar's name as he marches in place, giving the illusion that he will join the parade at any moment. Once he is alone, he gives this speech in which he looks more enraged than the other

actor's portrayals. Jackson's version is the best example of a villainous Antony. When the crowd is chanting for Caesar, he hides behind the will, seemingly invested in reading it. When the Plebeians leave him behind, he instantly rips the will in half and crumples it up with a simultaneous eye roll. Antony truly seems like the villain in this physical moment.

The crowd's reaction is one of the best ways to analyze the power behind each speech. These reactions do exist in part to inform us that the Roman public is easily swayed.⁸ These could also mirror real life in how humans are swayed or fickle. So, the crowd's reactions inform us of villainy. The crowd reacted strongly to the idea of being slaves and hailed Brutus for hypothetically saving them. However, Antony calls for justice and incites riots. As Newman points out, "Brutus' speech is a success at first, with the people cheering him upon its conclusion. By the end of the scene, after Antony has spoken, the crowd is rampaging through the streets, seeking to avenge Caesar's murder" (38). These speeches can be performed in a way that the crowd follows an unsympathetic traitor who murdered his supposed best friend for something that might have happened as compared to a man who is honoring a great politician that deeply loved the citizens of Rome.

Cinna the Poet

A tragic example of ineffective rhetoric revolves around the death of Cinna the poet, a result of the riots incited by Antony. A director or actor can decide to make this a scene for comedic relief, show a terrifying side of the riots, or both. This grotesque body has the ability to impact the audience's views of Antony, since his speech started the civil unrest. This body can also demonstrate the culture of the play and reflect society through that cultural portrayal.

⁸ See Murellus's speech (1. 1. 38-64).

When played for comedic relief, a director might choose to focus on the speed of the questions similar to the burlesque style of comedy in the 1930s. This can be emphasized by physical movement in which characters would alternate positioning.

Cinna can be portrayed as being a bit too clever when he only answers one question, wisely. The wise answer of Cinna's bachelorhood is then misconstrued by Plebeian 2 who is offended because the audience can assume that he is married. This makes for comedic relief after Caesar's funeral and is an example of the commoners' use of language.

There is a much more serious way to adapt this scene to make it more violent and scary, as it is commonly portrayed. There are no instructions of violence; however, the men do begin to shout. If these four commoners have Cinna the Poet surrounded, but then they do not act on their advantage, what was the point of including this scene? Cinna the poet also repeats who he is when the other Plebeians seem to have heard him as they say to burn him for his bad verses. This line shows that the Plebeians had still planned to harm someone, regardless of if they were involved in the assignation plot or not. The Plebeian's intent sets the stage for a much darker play and shows how the people of this play are commonly swayed into dangerous thinking.

Similar to the lack of stage direction during Brutus's speech allowing for actor choice is the last stage direction, "Exeunt all the Plebeians." Cinna the poet may be a common man, but he is identified with a character name unlike the Plebeians and soldiers. This could mean that Cinna is still on the stage when the scene ends. As a grotesque body, Cinna could be portrayed as weakened and beaten. It could also portray a confused Cinna if the Plebeians leave him in the street without leaving a mark on his body. If played for the confusion, this could add humor to the situation and again emphasize the chaos of and created by the commoners. Understandably, that is highly unlikely as audiences of Shakespeare's time would have understood that Cinna was

to be dead as there are clear records⁹ of his death. When the play takes on this portrayal, it shows signs of unrest and foreshadows the deaths of the conspirators.¹⁰ Girard argues that through Cinna's murder, "The crowd becomes a mirror in which the murderers contemplate the truth of their action... When they kill Cinna, the people mimic Caesar's murder in the spirit of revenge" (409). This mimicry not only reemphasizes Brutus's ineffectiveness as an orator and a leader, but the unrest that these new leaders will encounter as they fight amongst each other.

In the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2012 staging, Cinna's death is graphic as the commoners pour gasoline on him and light a match. This staging does not show if they hold the match to Cinna's body, but the burning tire in the background represents his death. The Doran staging is no less violent as it shows Cinna as an old man being beaten on stage. The swell in music followed by the absolute silence and the commoners dragging the body away also makes Cinna's death more clearly implied. Lloyd's take on this scene is doubly dark despite the audience's reaction. The actor portraying Cinna is forcefully escorted out of the scene by prison guards to take medication and needs to be replaced by another actor. This happens right after the riot scene, potentially emphasizing the institution's desire to express that they still had ultimate control. Audiences see a brief display of prison violence but find the switch in costumes to be amusing. The amusement could be a reaction of catharsis, a consequence of the release of tension from the violence, but it still taints the scene to be sinister. The sinister nature of the act is then amplified by a stage injury that again interrupts the scene and then Cinna's subsequent death. The new Cinna is accidentally pushed into the steps when the play fighting becomes too

⁹ See Suetonius, *Divus Iulius*; Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*; Appian, *The Civil Wars*; Dio Cassius, *Roman History*; Plutarch, *Life of Brutus*.

¹⁰ A new poet comes into the picture in the next Act (4.3.125-138); however, it is safe to assume that it is not Cinna as this poet does not have a name. This new poet could be introduced to show Cinna's death or serve as another comedic relief in this heavy, fourth act.

much. The actress ends up hitting her nose on a set of steps that result in a nosebleed. This time, the guards do not stop the fight until “Hannah,” the actress playing Brutus, calls for the lights to come up.

Both Doran’s and Lloyd’s versions utilize “cell phone” filming to show that this is a real fight. This cell phone also emphasizes the grotesque body as it shows how plays can be adapted to incorporate and exploit the world and culture around them. These versions show just how impactful Antony’s speech was and highlight the unrest that Antony afflicted on Rome.

Portia’s Death

Despite the centrality of men in Caesar, it is the women that have the greatest power over the play’s audience, even when they are not on stage. Brutus’s reaction to his wife dying as well as Cassius’s reaction can inform us of the bond these two characters (Portia and Brutus) shared. In Act 4, audiences become acquainted with Brutus’s many griefs and how he handles said griefs. He is at odds with his friends and fellow officers, he is tormented by the ghost of Caesar, and his wife Portia has committed suicide. Audiences and critics alike find Brutus’s two reactions to his wife’s death strange,¹¹ as the characters also find the circumstances surrounding her death strange: “Then like a Roman, bear the truth I tell. For certain she is dead, and by strange manner” (4.3.188). The word “strange” here could mean different things. For one, Portia did die in a strange manner by swallowing hot coals. Messala could also be referring to the strange fact that Brutus did not know about it. The way a director or an actor chooses to portray Brutus during this scene reveals an insight into their relationship and even how other characters perceived their relationship. Portia can lead to new interpretations of the characters individually and as a couple shaping audience perception leading to new inspirations for adaptations.

¹¹ Author Warren Smith (1953) points to criticism done by Hamilton (1841), Barker (1927), Chambers (1930), Kittredge (1939).

Brutus laments Portia's death to Cassius for the first time after a very long argument about each other's values, friendship, and faults. Cassius remarks that he is surprised by Brutus's quick temper towards him to which Brutus responds that he is sick with many griefs (4.3.144-5). Cassius mentions Brutus's stoicism, a common theme surrounding Brutus and his unwillingness to express emotion.¹² Brutus then goes on to explain Portia's death amongst cries of support from Cassius, which are grotesque bodies because of how they can be performed. The one explicit thing is the use of exclamation marks, "O insupportable and touching loss! O ye immortal gods!" (4.3.151-9). Cassius, in his typical, dramatic fashion, seems more moved by Brutus's information. Brutus has had more time to process the information of her death. Brutus is also less emotional than Cassius. Brutus could also be struggling to share this information should the actor choose that portrayal.

Brutus is very quick to dismiss the matter and calls for a bowl of wine as well as for the other officers to be invited into his tent. Upon their arrival, though eight lines of dialogue have since passed, Cassius asks, "Portia, art thou gone?" (4.3.166). It is unclear who he is speaking to, as he uses "thou." "Thou" is supposed to indicate Portia, but she is not there. It is also unclear how loud he said this. It does not say that it was an aside. This can be played as such, which would make more sense given the next few lines where two men pretend to not know about Portia's death. It could serve as a moment that breaks the tension as well should everyone in that scene pretend to not have heard it. In the Donmar staging as well as Jackson's, Cassius does not speak that line. In Lloyd's version, Cassius directs his question in a whisper to Brutus, although he is quickly rebuked for it.

¹² See Sedley, pp. 44-53 "Brutus 'had much of the Stoic in him' (Momigliano); Brutus' thought was an eclectic synthesis of Platonism and Stoicism; (3) Brutus was an authentic follower of Antiochus, but Antiochus' philosophy was itself an eclectic synthesis of Platonism and Stoicism..."

In the next moment, the men discuss letters with conflicting information about the deaths of senators. However, Messala quickly turns the conversation to Portia in asking if Brutus had received any word in her regard.

MESSALA: Had you your letters from your wife, my Lord?

BRUTUS: No, Messala.

MESSALA: And nothing in your letters writ of her?

BRUTUS: Nothing, Messala. (4.3.181-183)

This very tense scene can be played to add to the confusion and the grief. Since Messala knows about Portia, the director could portray the other men as knowing as well in an exchange of sympathetic or worried glances. Cassius also now knows of Portia's death and when Brutus boldly lies, this could signify trouble to Cassius. Cassius in this time can choose to look indignant or play along with Brutus. Messala lies right back to Brutus and says that there is no reason for his asking and that he had no news. But, if Messala had no cause to ask, then he would not have; a rule that Brutus exploits in the next line, "Why ask you? Hear you aught of her in yours? 'No, my Lord'" (4.3.185-6). Again, the men in this scene can be very obviously lying, adding humor but mostly adding to the tension. In Lloyd's version, Lucius looks the most worried about his master or he may be grieving himself. In Doran's version, Cassius seems the most worried about Brutus's reaction casting quick glances between the two characters. Jackson's version is the most different in this case as Brutus and Cassius share knowing glances during Messala's line of questions. Brutus puts his hand on Cassius's shoulder to either calm him down or signify to him to help him lie. Worried glances and grief contribute to the idea that actions influence meaning and perception as these few lines can be opened and exploited.

Brutus's choice to lie in this scene gives more insight into who he is as a person, especially in regard to his allies.

The tension is exacerbated by Brutus once more as he does not ask Messala in what manner she died. Of course, he already knows it, but if this is supposed to be his first time learning of her death, it may be surprising to his company that he does not care to know the details. There is the potential theory that this scene itself is a product of adaptations and different versions lost to time.¹³ This argument of two different versions was popular in the 1920s, yet it has been disputed in recent years.¹⁴

Brutus's first apathetic response brings the audience to Brutus's second reaction in which he bids Portia farewell: "Why farewell Portia. We must die, Messala. With meditating that she must die once, I have the patience to endure it now" (4.3.190-3). Brutus's patience could seem like the opposite of comfort to some. For example, in Jackson's version, all of the fellow soldiers gasp slightly, to which Brutus balks at. In Lloyd's and Doran's versions, the soldiers seem to express sympathy and are remorseful when he gives his lines. He then disregards their remarks and moves on to the military business as planned. A variant of this scene could show that Brutus is still upset given facial expression or body language; however, this is unlikely as Messala and Cassius remark how impressed they are with his stoicism once again: "I have as much of this in art as you, But yet my nature could not bear it so" (4.3.194-5).

Portia's death is open for interpretation, as it happened off stage and we are given her reasoning from her husband who may not be a reliable source. Off stage deaths have always had a rich history of portraying grotesque bodies and the idea of including a scene that shows her death is an interpretative opportunity. The audience learns that Portia swallowed hot coals in

¹³ See Smith, 153.

¹⁴ See Clayton, Smith, and Stirling.

grief of her husband's absence. A history of self-harm, or even the ability to do it, leads to speculation of her reasoning for committing suicide. Did her husband's actions of leaving, her general instability, or both push her to commit suicide, as one may have exacerbated the other? The only staging that might have portrayed further insight into Portia's death is Lloyd's version in which Lucius sings a cover of Joan Armatrading's 1972 song, "It Could've Been Better." It is possible that this song is supposed to represent Portia's last letter to Brutus or her final thoughts as the lyrics detail depression at the thought of someone leaving and drastic measures that may be taken. This staging presents two grotesque bodies, as the song was an interpretive choice by Lloyd and then the lyrics themselves become interpretative.

Portia and Brutus Argue

In the most telling scene of Brutus's and Portia's relationship, Act 2, Scene 1 details the strains that the couple has faced during the inception of the assassination plot. In the first half of the scene, Brutus is talking with the conspirators in his home. In some plays, Portia can be shown listening (or attempting to listen) to the men's conversation such as in the American Shakespeare Center's 2019 version, directed by Ethan McSweeney, when she stands on the balcony, overlooking the courtyard in the dark. In all of the other plays mentioned in this paper, she is not present. Should the director choose to have her present, it could show that Portia is resistant to her status as a woman that must refrain from inserting herself into the business of men.

As an advocate for the ideals of freedom, Brutus is typically thought of as more caring than Caesar and that can be demonstrated through Brutus's interaction with Portia. However, her language may suggest another view that is not too kind of him.

PORTIA: You stared upon me, with ungentle looks.
I urged you further; then you scratched your head

And too impatiently stamped with your foot.
 Yet I insisted; yet you answered not,
 But with an angry wafture of your hand
 Gave sign for me to leave you. So I did,
 Fearing to strengthen that impatience. (2.1.243-8)

This argument paints a picture of an uncaring husband yet a very attentive wife. Brutus is clearly demonstrating traits of a husband that is not nice to be around off stage. By changing these actions to be replicated on stage, this speech can also present itself as a grotesque body. For example, when Portia mentions stamping or being angry, Brutus can choose to demonstrate those actions. He can also look indignant at the accusations or ashamed of them. His level of anger during Portia's speech can show Brutus's inclination towards spousal violence or not, which in turn informs the audience of his true character.

Another imbalance in this relationship is seen in how Brutus sees strength. When Portia confronts him in his courtyard, he is surprised that she is outside and urges her to go inside: "It is not for your health thus to commit Your weak condition to the raw cold morning" (2.1.236-7). It is unclear what this condition is referring to. Her condition could be that of being a woman, and simply, naturally weaker. Brutus could also be referring to some kind of chronic illness that Portia may be suffering from, or even her mental illness.

In the Donmar Warehouse production of *Caesar*, Portia is portrayed as pregnant. Not only would this explain Brutus's concern for her condition, but it would also add to Brutus's grief following her death as well as his motivations for a free Rome. However, one thing to keep in mind is that Lloyd's version took place in a prison, so it is unclear if the motivation was to define Portia's weakness or to show a portion of what women tragically may experience when

incarcerated, or both. A body that can give birth is a grotesque body; however, a body of text in which the portrayal of a body has such a strong influence over the film is also a grotesque body. Portrayal of Portia's weakness can be explored and interpreted in different ways, each having a different effect on the play. Furthermore, if a director sees the Lloyd version, they may be influenced to incorporate Portia's pregnancy into their version, begetting further adaptation.

Brutus's and Portia's exchange is not always staged as merely an argument between lovers. This argument could be played to be aggressive or violent. Portia could be shown to be unstable or concerned. However, if audiences see the two reconcile and show a strong love, then audiences are able to equate Brutus with the character of moral high ground compared to Caesar. Not only is Portia a strong and intelligent woman, but she also informs the audience of who Brutus truly is by demonstrating his caring nature (or lack of), emphasizing his inability to argue/persuade, and showing his internal conflict, giving her one of the most powerful roles in this male-dominated play.

In an additional show of strength, Portia refers to the impact her father and husband have had on her, which shows how she is stronger than a typical woman of the age. It is unclear if she believes that women are weak or if this is a tactic to appeal to Brutus's beliefs. This demonstration goes further, as Portia mentions her voluntary wound (2.1.300-02). As studied by Marshall, "as the first act of violence in a work centering on assassination and the first knife wound in a dramatic action in which five more characters will be stabbed, Portia's 'voluntary wound' formally establishes a certain brutal pattern" (474). This pattern will be shown throughout Brutus's representations of honor. The interesting phrasing of these lines could actually mean that she gave herself the wound in the past: "I have made strong proof of my constancy." It is in these moments where the audience then typically sees Brutus reach out to his

wife to her aide and in distress over this wound. I argue that Portia could be showing him a scar in which she had to prove her constancy to Brutus before, which could potentially point to further distance/distress between the couple. This action of showing a scar might also explain Brutus's sudden disregard for his wife, once again, with the arrival of Ligarius. A disregard for her wound might demonstrate an unkind Brutus to audiences. Despite this hypothesis, most stagings show Portia wounding herself.

Lloyd's version shows Portia cutting herself with a broken CD when Brutus is not looking. She is quickly stopped by Brutus once he realizes what she is doing. Doran's version does not show Portia cutting herself on stage, rather she reveals a fresh bandage with blood, showing that she cut herself moments earlier. Brutus seems completely shocked and despaired that she has taken this action. In Jackson's version, Portia cuts herself on stage with her hairpin, as Brutus watches, but does not take the pin away. All versions of Brutus seem horrified that Portia takes this action, showing that they have a caring relationship. Marshall mentions that "Moments of onstage violence such as that of Portia's voluntary wound offer a distinctive variation on models of theatrical involvement that are based on the concept of spectacle" (481). The images of blood and puncture wounds are a staple of this play, so being able to link Caesar's murder with Portia's wound, both in some ways caused by Brutus, in another way exemplifies how much Brutus cares about both of these characters. By highlighting or eliminating the link, the interpretations have an opportunity to display character, relational history, and mental stability.

Calpurnia's Dream

The only other woman in the play, Calpurnia, has as much power as Portia does in terms of allowing audiences to determine villainy. Audiences briefly see Calpurnia during the festival

of Lupercal and audiences are given a snippet of Caesar and Calpurnia's relationship and their struggle with fertility. Lupercal is the same festival where Caesar is offered the crown by Marc Antony and where Caesar has a seizure. If Calpurnia is physically close or doting, that informs the audience of a loving relationship. A loving relationship would point towards a loving Caesar, someone that does not have to rule the marriage through violence or anger. If Caesar is not a tyrant in his marriage, then the likelihood of him becoming an actual tyrant is lowered. Calpurnia's actions in the background of these scenes have the ability to have a strong influence on Act 2, Scene 2 when Calpurnia asks Caesar to not go to the Senate.

Act 2, Scene 2 is tense and dramatically ironic as audiences know the outcome of Caesar's decision and the validity of Calpurnia's dream of Caesar's statue spouting blood.

CAESAR: Calpurnia here, my wife, stays me at home.
 She dreamt tonight she saw my statue,
 which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,
 did run pure blood... (2.2.76-8)

Dreams are not to be taken lightly in Early Modern England,¹⁵ and especially not in classical Rome.¹⁶ The fact that audiences know that Calpurnia's dream is true gives her more power than many of the men in the play.

This dramatic irony is important for Calpurnia's role as it builds trust, which persuades audiences to support her in her perceived delusion as emphasized by Marshall: "In an unusual reversal of an established gender dynamic, Calpurnia functions as the subject to whose

¹⁵ See Plane and Tuttle, 919: "Dreams were the province of several branches of knowledge, including theology, medicine, and the ars divinatoria."

¹⁶ See Pelling, 197: "Ancient audiences were primed to expect dreams to be prophetic, to come from outside and give knowledge, however ambiguously, of the future, or at least of the otherwise unknowable present."

knowledge the audience receives (mediated) access, while Caesar is the object of scrutiny” (483). Similar to Brutus’s household, there is unrest as neither can sleep. In contrast to Brutus, Caesar is very aware of his wife’s distress, but he still seems dismissive of her fears regarding his language. However, Caesar’s dismissiveness can be mitigated should the actor decide to comfort his opposite with physical touch and reassurance. If Calpurnia is receptive to these actions, that can demonstrate comfortability and closeness. This direction could be awkward regarding the lines “How foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia? I am ashamed I did yield to them” (2.2.105-06). If these lines are said in conjunction with violence towards Calpurnia, this solidifies the narrative of Caesar’s tyranny and villainy. The reaction to Caesar’s action during this scene drives audience’s perception of Caesar. It is easier to justify the means that the conspirators took if he was a terrible husband, among many other things.

Doran’s interpretation of this scene shows a loving couple as Calpurnia is seen crying and when she begs Caesar to stay, he goes to comfort her. However, when Decius mentions that the Senate plans to crown Caesar, Calpurnia turns her head in defeat, as if she knows this will convince him to leave the house. His rebuke of her fears is still said with a gentle tone. Lloyd’s version shows a more aggressive couple in terms of tone, but when Calpurnia begs Caesar on her knees, similar to the Doran production, Caesar yields and turns to comfort her. Strikingly different in this version is that Casca is the one to fetch Caesar to the Senate as well as Caesar’s physical rebuke of Calpurnia when he chokes her. Jackson’s version also shows a fighting couple, and it also shows Caesar having a slight “fit” during the argument. Calpurnia runs to care for him, but he is able to quickly regain composure. His fit causes Calpurnia to become gentle in her tone of voice; however, it causes Caesar to become angrier as he forcefully lifts her off her knee. His rebuke of her seems more dismissive as they are on opposite ends of the stage.

Jackson's version also shows Calpurnia leaving with the men towards the capital rather than leaving when the men show up as in the other versions, but she is still running to catch up with her husband. Caesar leaving without his wife yet still expecting her to follow displays a relationship that points towards Caesar being a tyrant, and as it is so near his death, it might be a reminder to the audience of his character. It is these small moments or physical actions that are not only grotesque bodies, but they have the potential to be vignettes into lifestyles and character traits that audiences otherwise would have to envision for themselves.

Conclusion

The language of the play informs the themes of betrayal, freedom, friendship, and governance. However, the language when combined with acting choices can inform the play as a whole and warp audience perception. The warping can be negative or positive regarding character reception. Even minor characters inform audiences of the actions and motivations of major characters. The idea that this play can be performed in current settings as backgrounds while maintaining the language show how this play transcends time and allows for further adaptation. Transcending time is a form of a grotesque body itself, as in every end, there is a beginning. For every body of work that dies (every play that wraps), there a body that is reborn (a play that will be produced, which is subsequently influenced by another adaptation). As there will always be a threat of tyranny, this play is able to be proffered as a social commentary. However, this play not only shows society the chaos created by power vacuums—it also shows the enduring power of language as well as silence.

CHAPTER 2: *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW*

“But mostly, I hate the way I don’t hate you, not even close, not even a little bit, not even at all.”

-10 Things I Hate about You

Introduction

The Taming of The Shrew is often criticized for its portrayals of an abusive relationship as well as a society that is deeply rooted in and celebrates misogyny. As pointed out by Gaines and Maurer in their edited version of *The Taming of the Shrew*, “The action from which its title derives, shrew-taming, is one that makes many playgoers wince” (ix).¹⁷ *The Taming of the Shrew* is one of Shakespeare’s more popular plays in spite of its controversial nature. As of 2016, *The Taming of the Shrew* contributed to 5% (as compared to *A Midnight Summer’s Dream* at 8%, which was the highest) of “notable, professional performances documented since 2011” (Kopf). This play has led to popular cinematic and Broadway adaptations; *Kiss Me, Kate* debuted on Broadway in 1948, and the film of the same name premiered in 1953. *The Taming of the Shrew*’s multiple film adaptations date back to the early 1900s and continued into the 1990s with (the often criticized¹⁸) *10 Things I Hate about You*.

It can be argued that this play is a product of its time. It can also be argued that this play’s production should be halted, especially in the wake of the Me Too movement. Kristin Gragg argues that “*The Taming of the Shrew* is an example of how time can warp comedy into dread. I suggest, however, in accordance with previous Shakespearean scholarship, that the presentation of gender, marriage, and power in *The Taming of the Shrew* is not as single-faceted as it might cursorily appear” (37). In following Gragg’s critique, I argue that when this play is performed as a slapstick comedy, Shakespeare is creating not only a comedic play but also a critique of

¹⁷ See also Crocker 143-59, Filser 101-6, Gragg 37-48, and Mathie 31-64.

¹⁸ See Burt 203-30, Ebert, Rozen.

misogyny and a model for sacrificial romance. When performed as a tragic depiction of submission, this play can serve a different audience looking for an unhappy ending or as a confirmation bias about the Early Modern period. As explained by Rackin, *The Taming of the Shrew* reflects the current audience's attitudes rather than the original audience's:

Seen in the context of current anxieties, desires, and beliefs, Shakespeare's play seems to prefigure the most oppressive modern assumptions about women and to validate those assumptions as timeless truths, already present in a sixteenth-century text and already apparent to Shakespeare's original audiences. (54)

When the theatre acts as a reflection of society, modern audiences want to distance themselves from abusive depictions. It is discouraging to see that we have made so little progress as a society as we have internalized male superiority and find its justification through historical representations. Rackin argues that too much of an exclusive view of the Shakespeare canon can be misleading towards perceptions of women in the early modern period. She also states that despite modern audiences' belief that Shakespeare incorporated strong women into his plays, "Women's roles in Shakespeare's plays are far more limited than men's, both in size and in number, and female power is repeatedly characterized as threatening or even demonic" (48). Strong women, such as Katherine, pose a threat to the perceived natural order. Thus, her strength is belittled to be seen as unreasonable violence and intolerable tantrums. However, if Katherine is truly insufferable, and the violence makes audiences uncomfortable, why is it still performed today?

Because of the "grotesque" nature of this play, meaning that the text is open for interpretation by director, actor, and audience, either the violence or comedy can be exaggerated, which has allowed this play to become an enduring story on stage and screen. Audiences enjoy

seeing couples that are equally matched in wit, so when a version portrays a flirtatious relationship between Katherine and Petruchio, the play becomes stimulating. When this play is darker and emphasizes violence, audiences become introspective as they reflect on their own feelings and the impact that has on their viewing. Audiences enjoy seeing various interpretations. Audiences do not need to have knowledge of grotesque bodies to understand how different versions affect their own understanding and enjoyment.

History of Performance

As Shakespeare's plays were originally performed without elaborate scenery and props,¹⁹ the action of *The Taming of the Shrew* would have moved quickly to keep the audience interested, and the audience was able to enjoy at least the physical comedy of the play. Editors Ann Thompson, Barbara Hodgdon, David Scott Kastan, H. R. Woudhuysen, and Richard Proudfoot outline several of these reviews: Samuel Rowland, a member of the Chamber Men, said, "The chiefest Art I have I can bestow /About a worke cald *Taming of the Shrow*." One of the earliest, definite performances of *The Shrew* was at the court of Charles I on November 26, 1633, where it was described as being "likt" (16). Samuel Pepys saw an adaptation of *The Shrew*, John Lacy's *Sauny the Scot*: "And there we saw *The Taming of A Shrew*, which hath some very good pieces in it but generally is but a mean play" (158). With the adaptation of *Sauny the Scot*, it is important to note *The Taming of the Shrew* is already an adaptation itself; it follows in the successful footsteps of *The Taming of A Shrew*, an anonymous play printed in 1594 (Gaines and Maurer ix). As the Restoration gave rise to the theatre once again, multiple adaptations started to appear as early as the 1660s. *A Tamer Tamed*, an undoubted sequel to *The Taming of the Shrew*, was printed in 1647, showing that after 20 years, Petruchio was still a common character (Gaines

¹⁹ See Sofer, vi.

and Maurer). David Garrick's *Catharine and Petruchio*, first performed in 1754, was the most successful of all adaptations as this text would be the "official" text used in stagings for the next 100 years (Pearson 229). This text leaves out the "Sly" portions of the play, as well as the subplot of Bianca's courting, and it would go on to be transformed across many stages, then to silent films, and eventually modern movies.

As the play moved on screen in the 1900s, props were added to this play to emphasize who the villain was, and costumes became especially important in this play where Katherine and Petruchio are frequently defined by what they are wearing. In the 1920-30s productions, the play was performed as a physically comedic show, an approach that has remained popular when dealing with such hard subject matter (Shapiro 143). The idea of embracing physical comedy endures today in readings in which audiences hope to distance themselves from the violence.

I reference multiple adaptations throughout this chapter, particularly those directed by William Ball (1976), Christopher Dixon (1981), Lucy Bailey (2012), Chris Abraham (2015), and Justin Audibert (2019). These adaptations are so different from the others that each one presents a new perspective on the play. These stage productions have been filmed with a present audience, except for Bailey's. While my history of performance mentions film adaptations, I will be focusing on stage productions as I believe that film and editing adds an additional layer of analysis. Stage productions are also capable of invoking imaginations of what the original production looked like. Ela Gündüz argues that "*Taming of the Shrew* productions on stage emphasizes the notion of feminine subordination in Elizabethan patriarchal society but in different moods: sometimes ironically, sometimes harshly, and sometimes detachedly. Thus, the performances mostly differ in their emphasis of depicting the problematic gender representations

of the play” (833). It is the irony, harsh violence, and detachedness that each performance will exemplify in its own way.

William Ball’s production was produced by the American Conservatory Theater, in a company-proclaimed *commedia dell’arte* style. Some actors wear masks and have overexaggerated proportions such as stuffed stomachs or large, prosthetic ears: “The cartoon effect of the production is, in part, what made the taming plot easier for the audience to view. The entire production was very physical, but the actors’ interactions were more acrobatic rather than violent” (Kass 19). The company uses a makeshift stage on top of a real stage, and so, while they do not include Sly’s plot points, the two stages still allude to a play within a play. The pronunciation of lines and physical comedy are also overexaggerated. This production portrays a very flirtatious Katherine and Petruchio who actually seem to like each other and are equal in strength and wit. For example, Katherine is able to put Petruchio in a headlock multiple times during a physical argument. Ball’s production is an example of a play that emphasizes flirting as well as equality. Katherine throws her body against a stage pole and Petruchio talks into her ear from behind during their first scene together. Petruchio is shirtless for this scene as well. Despite this flirting, there is violence that is exaggerated in a slapstick way. Both actors have their chance to have the upper hand while mimicking chokeholds and foot stamping. These violent blows are not seen as scary as both actors are winning at some point.

Kiss Me, Petruchio, directed by Christopher Dixon, was a Shakespeare in the Park performance by the New York City Shakespeare Company. It starred Meryl Streep and Raúl Julia, and it was filmed as a documentary with some of *The Taming the of Shrew* scenes interrupted by commentary. Commentary took place mostly backstage during a costume change and highlighted Julia and Streep’s thoughts on the play and their character portrayal. Some of the

commentary also highlighted audience members and their thoughts on the play. The commentary centered around thoughts of abuse that Julia and Streep contest and some audience members admonish: “Why is it so hard for someone to say, just because it’s a man, that I would do anything for you? ...that’s love, that’s absolute selflessness” (Streep). I am including this very different production for the commentary because it is able to offer actors’ perspectives, which is overwhelmingly positive.

Lucy Bailey’s production is portrayed as modern through the use of costumes and the demonstration of problems such as alcoholism and incessant smoking. Bailey is the only female director amongst my selected adaptations. While not as violent as Audibert’s version, Bailey’s overtly sexual scenes and modern twist push back against the idea that women are much more reserved than men. This production was performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2012. “What to do with *The Shrew*? Basically, you can either treat it as a drunken tinker’s sexual fantasy, or a faintly perverse love story. Lucy Bailey’s new production leans towards the former, even to the extent of turning the Stratford stage into a gigantic bed. The result is vigorous, lively and inventive” (Billington). Katherine has her full name tattooed on her arm, an act of defiance against those that call her Kate. The set takes place on a giant bed, perhaps as a nod to Katherine and Petruchio’s sexually charged relationship and arguments. Even Katherine’s fight with Bianca is sexualized within this context. Bailey’s is not so much flirting as it is overtly sexual, really emphasizing Shakespeare’s sexual innuendos instead of the wit or abuse. Bailey herself said that although “consummation does not take place, the play is a kind of long foreplay towards that” (258). They embrace, bite, strike with feathery pillows, and grind their bodies against each other in a way that mimics sexual positions. This gives the illusion that their fight is a form of foreplay and consensual.

Chris Abraham's production presents itself as the play might have looked in Shakespeare's time with the early modern costumes and minimal set design. Performed live at the Stratford Festival in 2016 by the Melbar Entertainment Group, this production features an incredibly violent Katherine and a more emotional Petruchio as he is often seen welling up with tears when Katherine agrees with him. Since it is mostly Katherine that expresses violent outbursts, it is easier to see this production as a comedy since she is much smaller and weaker than Petruchio, which is an interesting bias to examine. Some may believe that since men are historically seen as physically stronger, that the idea of a woman being able to harm men is comedic. This play also has multiple actors introducing the play and discussing aspects or themes that they find important, such as costumes and their influence on perception and performance. For example, a man playing an accordion signals that it is time to start the play, and two men roll out a cart with costumes on it as well as a mannequin with a wedding dress. One pretends to tailor the wedding dress while the other one gives a speech about the importance of costuming. However, these men are only on stage for 30 seconds when they are interrupted by the actress who plays Katherine, and she sings "The Virgin's Meditation." She is joined by the other women in the play. There is also a "disturbance" in the form of a man who has had too much to drink and is upset by the performance; he becomes Sly as he passes out on the stage. Subsequently, this action turns into the Sly framing mechanism with Katherine acting as the Lord as a form of gender-swapping.

Lastly, Justin Audibert's 2019 production, also by the Royal Shakespeare Company, is unique in that the characters are gender-swapped, which creates a new hierarchy within the play. This new hierarchy also creates a strange sensation when Petruchio is being violent, as once again when a woman is being violent, society tends to understand that as less of a threat. Please

note that to reflect this change in gender, I will be changing the pronouns from Katherine (she/her/hers to he/him/his) and Petruchio (he/him/his to she/her/hers). I believe that this change is necessary to demonstrate the new social order as well as some of the comfortability this play has, despite showing the most violence out of the five mentioned. However, in the beginning, with Kate much taller than Petruchio, it is seen as much more comical. It is only when the couple arrives at Petruchio's very dark home (literally) that the violence begins to become hard to watch. Each play presents differing levels of flirtation or violence to keep audiences interested and to portray the director's ideal adaptation. Each play causes the audience members to reflect on their own gender biases and their pictured ideal relationship as compared to that of Kate and Petruchio.

For this chapter, I will be analyzing 4 scenes in the language of the play, as well as the performances. First, I will analyze Katherine's final speech. This speech is a source for many feminist critiques and study. For this section, I also briefly analyze Mary Pickford's representation of Katherine. While I do not reference this production further so that I can avoid analyzing cinema, I believe that her interpretation of Katherine is important. Secondly, I analyze Katherine's and Petruchio's first meeting, placing emphasis on her name and what she wishes to be called. Thirdly, I study the wedding dinner scene focusing on Petruchio's speech about ownership. Finally, I will examine Petruchio's taming tactics by placing emphasis on studying Petruchio's starvation tactics as well as forcing Katherine to agree with him about the time of day. I have chosen these scenes because I believe that they represent the greatest opportunities for interpretation as they are almost exclusively focused on Katherine and Petruchio as well as potentially high-action scenes.

Final Speech

After hours of being subjected to Petruchio's taming tactics, Katherine gives a speech about the weakness that is being a woman and how unkind it is to be ill-tempered and impatient:

KATHERINE. My mind hath been as big as one of yours,
 My heart as great, my reason haply more,
 To bandy word for word and frown for frown.
 But now I see our lances are but straws,
 Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare,
 That seeming to be most which we indeed least are.
 Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,
 And place your hands below your husband's foot:
 In token of which duty, if he please,
 My hand is ready, may it do him ease. (5.2.182-91)

Katherine is addressing the other wives during this speech, which is the "yours" that she is referring to. In the first three lines, Katherine claims that her wisdom, pride, courage, and reasonings to once be stubborn and witty towards suitors was equal to, if not greater than, the stubbornness that the women show now. She commands the women "vail²⁰ their stomachs" or to take down their pride as it is not advantageous (boot²¹). While this speech may seem straightforward, the grotesque body presents actors and directors with various interpretive opportunities to dismantle this view. Mackay observes that Katherine's language is an act of rebellion. Mackay argues that Katherine's use of pronouns places her at the "head" of the relationship:

²⁰ Oxford Languages.

²¹ O'Conner and Kellerman, 2015.

...the “natural” gendered order of which she speaks turns round when the “head” pronoun refers to a wife, the inferior consequent to the husband. As they are interpellated by Katherine’s possessive pronouns and her syntax, women come first, husbands second. If, for early modern England the rhetor is represented as “ruler,” “king,” or “head”, then as the rhetor, Katherine assumes that position through her pronoun usage. Moreover, in addition to possessive pronouns that turn gender order around, Katherine makes subtle moves to reimagine the place of women and men in the domestic sphere. (37)

Mackay is analyzing this English speech with Latin rules, so this claim of a head woman could be a theory that feeds into a wanted vindication for Katherine. However, the combination of an action with this language coupled with Petruchio’s reaction demonstrates to audiences the sincerity (or lack of) of Katherine’s speech. This study of Katherine’s language represents the grotesque body that is language. Audiences are unfamiliar with Katherine’s level of familiarity with Latin; we know that her sister is being tutored in it: “I here bestow a simple instrument, And this small packet of Greek and Latin books” (2.1.97-8). If an audience member does not make the connection of Katherine making herself the powerful subject of the speech, this speech is about obedience. If the connection is made, then it is about subversion. If the audience does not make that connection, it is still about subversion. This purposeful language creates one space for interpretation amongst many; it creates a body of language that is born and born again. Holly Crocker argues against modern interpretations of subversion: “The display of Katharine’s obedience provides empirical evidence of Petruchio’s ability to reaffirm a cultural ideal, in that her final speech performs the rhetorical figuration of desirable femininity current in early modern discourse” (142). Crocker believes that this play cannot be performed as wholly slapstick

comedy and the darkness of the play cannot be ignored. She rejects the idea of a flirtatious Katherine and Petruchio. Rejecting the idea of a flirtatious relationship also rejects the idea of a grotesque body and further undercuts the popularity of the play. I do not believe that the theatre can be black and white. *The Taming of the Shrew* is not all funny, nor is it all abusive. As noted by an audience member in *Kiss Me, Petruchio*, “It’s that whole ambiguity that makes it such a fabulous play and such a disgusting play” (1974).

Katherine’s final speech has been analyzed many times by Shakespeare and feminism scholars alike.²² In Pearson’s article, “In Search of a Liberated Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*, ” she analyses the impact on audiences of different interpretations of the final speech: “The test of a good production of *The Shrew* is Katherine’s final long speech” (236). Pearson points to several adaptations from the 1970s (which I will detail later) and how this speech can either show equality of the main characters depending on actor reaction or it can make audiences uncomfortable. Elizabeth Hutcheon argues, “Katherine’s final speech marks the culmination of her rhetorical training. The very fact of its existence is important—no other character gets such a long and formally constructed speech” (331). The existence of this speech, while about obedience, is a large grotesque body because the crafting of this speech as an actor is as important as the rhetoric. Crafting the speech physically can heighten a sense of subversion from Katherine.

Actress Mary Pickford immortalized one example of subversion by winking at the camera in the first filmed, “talking” Shakespeare production in 1929. Pickford’s Katherine acted opposite of a whip carrying Petruchio, whose nature is more sinister as exemplified by the prop. This wink was directed at Bianca after Katherine used the word “obey.” Bianca then nods with

²² See also Crocker, Gragg, Kahn, Tartamella, Termizi, Shaw, Smith, etc.

sudden understanding that her sister is not being genuine in her speech, something that the men do not pick up on. This wink means an instant yet secretive upper hand over Petruchio's taming. Pickford's portrayal laid the foundation for many other actresses to use this speech as a proclamation of rebellion. When staged by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 1978, Katherine was the only character who stood and moved around during this speech, which established her visual and spatial dominance. Petruchio was so moved by Katherine's speech that when she started to kneel, he knelt too, catching her hand and creating a sense of equality (Pearson 238). Pearson also argues that this scene was one of the most intense when it was directed by Michael Bogdorav: "Katherine relished her new-found servitude in a perverse, masochistic way that bothered even Petruchio. He snatched his foot away nervously before she could kiss it; the other characters were horrified and disgusted" (238). This interpretation is an example of this speech that makes audiences uncomfortable. Since this staging is a dream, it is possible that a woman who is a masochist is a fantasy of Sly's. Furthermore, if Katherine enjoys this subjugation, then this new relationship as a submissive wife also grants her agency.

As the final proof of servitude, Katherine tells the women to place their hand below their husband's foot, which she has already done: "My hand is ready, may it do him ease" (5.2.191). This line is a grotesque body as an actress can choose what her hands should be doing at this point in the speech. She could merely give the speech and not include any form of physicality. She can place her hand under her husband's foot as he sits or stands. Once she is physically holding Petruchio's foot, she could hurt him in some way as the ultimate subversion of obedience.

In Audibert's version, Kate places his hand on the floor, but he does not actually touch Petruchio. Kate's final speech is met with admiration from Petruchio who exclaims "wow"

instead of “why” (5.2.192) while the women are also watching in awe. Being so moved, Petruchio kneels down to Kate’s level and the two passionately kiss. For Abraham’s version, Petruchio and Katherine are moved to tears, casting doubt on their true feelings about Katherine’s tameness. When Katherine mentions placing her hand under her husband’s foot, she says the line (and most of the final speech) extremely aggressively but placing emphasis on particular words and slightly snarling. With her hand, she points towards Petruchio who is standing away from her. His tears are more prominent than hers when she does this and he actually looks hurt. This gives the illusion that Katherine is not being obedient but is rather scolding him. He seems regretful of the taming strategies that he has put her through. He moves to be in front of her and as she drops her hand, he moves to grab it and pull her in close. This serves as his last act of aggression. This can show that he is not remorseful for what he has done, or that he really wants to express how he feels to her. His tears can represent joy that he has tamed Kate and is moved by her speech, or his tears can represent sadness for something that he thinks he has lost. Their simultaneous tears can also represent overwhelming joy at falling in love with one another. Furthermore, tears from both actors can express regret of their marriage and the pain of conforming to gendered expectations. After his remarks, Katherine is the one that is forcefully dragging him back to bed as a demonstration of lust, love, power, or a combination. In *Kiss Me, Petruchio*, Katherine does put her hand at her husband’s foot for him to step into it. Instead, he reaches down and kisses Katherine’s open hand as Katherine returns the kiss. Her tone of voice is also much more kind and less emotionally charged than the other versions. The effect of a gentle tone of voice coupled with Steep’s commentary: “This is my life, my food, my happiness my Lord, my everything. It’s grand” emphasizes a loving relationship in which both partners share the same view about ideal an ideal marriage. Ball’s production, in keeping with

the exaggerated style of the play, is the most dramatic and incorporates elements from each of the previously stated versions. Katherine holds up her hand as if it is on display and at her last line, she collapses on the ground in a fake, faint-like manner. Petruchio kisses the inside of her hand, which causes Katherine to tear up with joy. After they kiss, Katherine winks at the audience. This could be a reference to Pickford's wink, but because it comes after the kiss and is directed towards the audience with whom this actress communicates a lot, it looks as though she is happy to have scored Petruchio as her husband.

After seeing Katherine starved and manipulated for two days, it can be relieving for audiences to watch Katherine get back at Petruchio by placing her hand at his foot and then doing some form of physical harm towards Petruchio. However, given Petruchio's response of embrace, "Come on, and kiss me, Kate" (5.2.192), it is important for audiences to keep in mind that this could genuinely be a loving speech. Despite Katherine's genuineness or lack thereof, Michaela Ursa argues that an audience's cultural context affects the reading of this speech, as an audience's culture is bound to affect any reading or interpretation of literature: "Whether handled as a puppet, objectified as a sexual object or aggressively seeking power in a world dominated by men, contemporary Katherines are representations of the power play of the cultures in which and for which they are represented" (102). One example of a power play can be seen with Pickford's wink, representing her objection to misogyny, and embracing the new liberation of women in the 1920s. Ursa's cultural effect can be seen even in my own bias as a reader in twenty-first century America, where women have equal rights in terms of marriage and voting. In plays that make people uncomfortable, audiences will look for a way to make it comfortable. One of the main indicators of the tone of this play is shown when Katherine and Petruchio first meet.

Introductions and Katherine's Name

At the beginning of the play within a play, it is made clear that no suitor is interested in marrying Katherine given her ill temper and predisposition to violence.

GREMIO: To cart her rather. She's too rough for me

HORTENSIO: No mates for you, Unless you were of
gentler, milder mold. (1.2.195-200)

However, it is not clear whether or not Katherine wants to be married. She seems to not want to suffer through suitors that are boring or ignorant: "I pray you, sir, is it your will/ To make a stale of me amongst these mates?" (1.2.197-8). However, she is very upset with her sister, Bianca, during her courting. After Katherine physically fights Bianca to find out which suitor she likes better, her father confronts Katherine about her actions, who acts hurt by his decision to help Bianca and not herself: "I must dance barefoot on her wedding-day/ And for your love to her lead apes in hell" (2.1.33-4). Dancing barefoot was a euphemism for older siblings that did not marry first, and leading apes in hell is reserved for old maids as they do not have children to lead into heaven (Gaines and Maurer 78). As Katherine is expressing her dislike of the idea of dying a spinster, doubt about Katherine not wanting to be married is further cemented by Katherine's first interaction with Petruchio in some portrayals.

In many other comedies, Shakespeare shows a compatible relationship by the pair's ability to verbally spar with each other.²³ In the past, Katherine is always able to get the upper hand in her arguments with others either by using her wit or violence as seen with the suitors at the beginning, "To comb your noddle with a three-legged stool" (1.2.204), and the lute lesson, "Why, no, for she hath broke the lute to me" (2.1.147). However, motivated by money, will, or Katherine's beauty, Petruchio is able to deflect her insults and turn them into sexual innuendos.

²³ See Talley 30-1.

KATHERINE. Moved, in good time. Let him that moved
 you hither/ Remove you hence. I knew you at the first
 You were a moveable.

PETRUCHIO. Why, what's a moveable?

KATHERINE. A joint stool.

PETRUCHIO. Thou hast hit it. Come, sit on me (2.1.195-200)

As usual, there is the potential for double meaning in this exchange. If Katherine thought Petruchio was moveable, that could mean that she believes that he is unreliable or unstable. When Petruchio pushes her on the point of movement, she claims that he is a stool, potentially calling him dumb. However, Petruchio turns this comparison into a sexual innuendo, inviting Katherine to sit on him. In most adaptations, Petruchio indicates that Katherine should sit on his face (Abraham's) or lap (Audiebert's, Ball's, and Dixon's) by gesturing to it. As their battle of wits continues, Katherine strikes Petruchio, yet still engages in banter with him. Their argument is often seen as an opportunity for directors and actors to play up a flirtatious relationship. This flirtation is seen in Ball's version where both Petruchio and Katherine are taken by each other's physical appearance. The actors are silent with Petruchio seeming to be in awe of Katherine when she steps on stage. When Petruchio turns away from Katherine, she looks him up and down and then displays her approval to the audience by giving them a huge grin behind his back.

This silence or awe of Petruchio is also used in Audibert's adaptation in which Petruchio has to quietly remind herself to speak in Katherine's presence as compared to the other versions in which "Speak, Petruchio" (2.1.181) is more of a confident command, such as Ball's when Petruchio has not seen Katherine yet. "Speak, Petruchio" comes after Petruchio's monologue in which he reveals to the audience how he attempts to win Katherine's hand. Seeing the shift from

a confident plan of action to a sudden shyness can indicate how beautiful Katherine is really supposed to be.

While the flirtation angle lessens the violence that is to come after the wedding, this argument can also be staged as violent. For example, in Audibert's version, Kate was physically restrained and choked during the battle of wits. While Kate did strike first as the text commands (2.1.223), Petruchio responds in a manner that is not equal to the force of Kate's slap. In what was once was a witty exchange, the scene changes into something much darker. The use of force does not have to be, and is often not, Petruchio's only weapon.

In Dixon's version, Katherine is often seen as doing some type of physical activity such as boxing to mitigate ideal femininity of the time. During introductions, Katherine's punching bag hangs in the background as she tosses a stool back and forth like a weight. She also giggles at some of Petruchio's remarks, which is a good sign for him, and at multiple points, she is at a loss for words. When Petruchio goes on to describe how beautiful she is, instead of it being chaotic, these characters have a tender, and also sexualized moment. As Petruchio wrestles Katherine, when he finally bests her, he caresses her face and bodice while she breathes heavily, the effect of this being very sexually charged and suggestive. They almost kiss, but he instead picks her up, quite literally sweeping her off her feet. This scene also has an allusion and reversal to Katherine's line, "Place your hands below your husband's foot" (5.1.189) as Petruchio returns her slipper in a Cinderella-like performance. The effect of this is reminiscent of a true, fairy-tale style, romance.

Before any use of violence, the misuse of Katherine's name is the first act of taming as seen by audiences:

PETRUCHIO: Good Morrow Kate for that's your name by here

KATHERINA: Well have you heard but something hard of hearing/ They call me Katherine that do talk of me.

PETRUCHIO: You lie and faith for you are called plain Kate
And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the Curst. (2.1.182-5)

By using “here” and “hear,” this creates conflict before the couple even knows each other. Petruchio claims that people from Padua call Katherine “Kate.” Katherine says that he must not be listening very well because she is called Katherine. Furthermore, Petruchio is lying about what people call her as it is only her father who calls her Kate in private. In all other moments, she is referred to as Katherine. When Katherine addresses this lie, Petruchio instead calls her the liar. Katherine might not care what Petruchio calls her, and instead is just trying to create problems. If Katherine wanted to go by Kate, she might not protest too much to this nickname; however, in each adaptation mentioned in this paper, she is against being called Kate. In subverting what she actually wishes to be called, Petruchio attempts to disarm her from the moment they meet. His continuation of this subversion subtly robs her of her identity and agency while under the guise of a pet name, which is a tactic that Petruchio uses very often throughout the play.²⁴ Katherine’s name may seem minor, but in productions such as Bailey’s, when the name is tattooed on her arm, the nickname is a clear sign of disrespect. Another sign of disrespect is how Petruchio behaves at the wedding banquet and how this engagement scene is staged, which influences how the wedding scene is played.

Wedding Dinner Scene

As the play continues, the violence seems to increase, manifesting during the wedding and wedding dinner. It was bad enough for Petruchio to show up to his wedding late and dressed

²⁴ Bonny Kate, my super-dainty Kate, honey-love, etc.

as he was; he then proceeded to hit the priest during the vows: “This mad-brained bridegroom took him such a cuff/ That down fell priest and book” (3.2.161-2). Furthermore, Petruchio arrives to his wedding riding in on a horse that is plagued by many ailments: “His horse hipped with an old mothy saddle and stirrups of no kindred; besides possessed with the glanders a like to mourn in the chine, troubled with the lampass, infected with the fashions...” (3.2.47-50).

Audiences are also not sure where Petruchio found this horse and it may not be his, just like Katherine is not his. His ability to tame, bridle, and ride this diseased/ill-tempered horse to his wedding anticipates his ability to tame his ill-tempered bride whom he will leave the wedding with. Elizabeth Mathie unpacks this parallel between Katherine and the horse and the man that tamed them both. A loving marriage between Katherine and Petruchio is rejected by Mathie, who turns her attention towards Petruchio’s controlling nature toward the men and animals in the play, as particularly emphasized by Petruchio’s horsemanship. Mathie concludes that “Petruchio’s ability to pass himself off as an admirable trainer is unsettling within the world of the play because it suggests that social hierarchy can be transgressed through deception and performance, not because the play questions the value of that hierarchy, and certainly not because the drama encourages us to have sympathy for his untrainable subject” (257). Mathie is addressing a main concern of Shakespeare’s audience in that characters in the play transgress social norms regularly. This transgression of power was not perceived nearly as bad as a woman that is unmanageable. Furthermore, Petruchio’s othering of Katherine is uncomfortable. The othering and analogous treatment of Katherine compared to an animal (especially a horse) is potentially exemplified by Petruchio’s lasso. Not only does a whip make audiences uncomfortable as it heightens the violence, but it solidifies the idea of taming.

During the dinner scene, Petruchio confesses to treating his wife like property. In previous scenes, Petruchio monologued his plans to woo Katherine thus securing her dowry. This leads audiences to believe that he does not care to be married, least of all to Kate. Once he has finally secured her hand in marriage, Petruchio reveals his feelings towards marriage:

PETRUCHIO. But for my bonny Kate, she must with me.

Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret;

I will be master of what is mine own.

She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,

My household stuff, my field, my barn,

My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything (3.2.200-5)

This speech is a grotesque body in its presentation. Petruchio could be potentially mocking the wedding guests as he stamps his feet in an overexaggerated manner. When he is met with multiple protests, “Let us entreat you stay” (3.2.192), he claims that no one else has the right to detain him or his bride, not even his bride: “I will be master of what is mine own” (3.2.226). This line seems to be clearly misogynistic with no room for interpretation. As Mackay explains, “Repeatedly, Petruchio enacts his rights through ‘I’-possessive pronouns, in a syntactical construction through which he assumes his identity as both head of household and as Katherine’s ‘head.’ This ‘natural’ grammatical order places Katherine ‘second’ as Petruchio’s domestic property, as his inferior, as his wife” (31). However, despite this clear claim of ownership, in Abraham’s version, Petruchio says this line with tears in his eyes and instead of comparing Katherine to things he owns, he seems to be comparing her to things he loves. In stark contrast with this “loving” comparison, Audibert’s version has Petruchio lasso Katherine during this

speech, cementing the idea of ownership as well as playing up the violence. The lasso also contributes to Mathie's argument of Petruchio's control over people and animals.

However, a prop could also constitute a slapstick comedy during what could be a funny scene with an angered Katherine and misplaced paranoia. If Petruchio is already wearing pants that are inside out, then a play sword or no sword could really enhance the idea that no one is fighting Petruchio. Ball's production plays up a similar idea; while Petruchio does not have a lasso or sword of any kind, he has a very choreographed dance with Katherine and Grumio. He is also not the best fighter as he stumbles and is easy to overtake, leading to more hilarity. The hilarity is contrasted with Dixon's production as Katherine throws an extreme tantrum, reminiscent of a seizure when she learns that they are not staying for the wedding feast, which is more serious; however, the poor fighting skills of Petruchio remains and Grumio fights off the wedding guests with a chair making the scene less serious. The idea of Petruchio not being able to fight a crowd that also does not want to fight him is subjectively comedic; however, the exclamations of ownership are not. The level of violence and ownership displayed in this scene is then far greater in the following scenes.

Taming Tactics

Adding to Petruchio's perceived dominion over animals, he compares his taming of Katherine to that of a falconer: "My falcon now is sharp and passing empty" (3.4.169). Petruchio very clearly tells the audience that he will not let Kate be "fully gorged" (3.4.170), nor will he let her sleep. Fully gorged would not be a problem as Kate is not full by any means as she did not get to eat at the wedding feast, and anytime that she is able to eat in the future will be dictated by Petruchio. Petruchio's speech (3.4.167-90) does not present itself as a grotesque body. They are an admittance of knowingly doing harm to Katherine. When reading this play as a slapstick

comedy, this has to be the moment where audiences content themselves with knowing that no matter what version they are watching, this scene is still a representation of a form of abuse. The “taming” of Katherine is planned to be carried out through mockery, manipulation, sleep deprivation, and starvation. Most directors chose to lean into the violence of these scenes to try and create a more sympathetic story. In every version outlined in this paper, save Dixon’s, Katherine is dirty, hungry, faint, and miserable when at Petruchio’s house. The effect of this is to make audiences uncomfortable with how Katherine is being treated.

While Petruchio’s reign is not a grotesque body, the dinner scene is. The stage directions say, “Enter servants (one named Peter) with supper” (3.3.119). While Petruchio may be insulting his servants and commanding them here and there, “You loggerheaded and unpolished grooms/ You peasant, swain, you whoreson malt-horse drudge” (3.3.102-6), Katherine receives no stage directions. Most versions of this play show a frantic Katherine trying to grab at food as it is taken away from her. Abraham’s version shows Katherine trying to eat decorative flowers that are taken away from her similar to a dog being reprimanded as he vocalizes “no” in a pedantic way while also adding an “Aht, Aht” and snapping, which is typically reserved for animals. Any comparison of a wife to a dog is uncomfortable for most audiences. Abraham’s Katherine also takes on a “Gollum” persona when offered food (a growling voice, holding item close to her chest), which does play up humor and adds to Katherine’s shrewdness. However, if a director chooses to still have food in front of Katherine, it could present the argument that she is being as picky as Petruchio is. It can also be staged where Katherine is using the chaos to sneak quick bites, which creates another layer of comedy especially if she is bad at sneaking the food. In Dixon’s production, Katherine and Petruchio have a subtle tug-of-war with the plate, as they both simply tighten their grips, which is subjectively funny.

Another grotesque body can be found in the scene in which Grumio is offering Katherine food. The image of Katherine having the food in front of her but Grumio messing it up can be seen as more comedic rather than the usual portrayal of mocking:

GRUMIO: What say you to a neat's foot?

KATHERINE: 'Tis passing good; I prithee let me have it.

GRUMIO: I fear it is too choleric a meat. How say you to a fat tripe finely broiled?

KATHERINE: I like it well; good Grumio, fetch it me.

GRUMIO: I cannot tell; I feared 'tis choleric. What say you to a piece of beef and mustard?

KATHERINE: A dish that I do love to feed upon.

GRUMIO: Ay, but the dish is too hot a little. (4.1.17-25)

Choleric is not sickness but rather an ill-tempered disposition (Gaines and Maurer 112). In this exchange, Grumio appears to be what is causing Katherine's temper, which is ironic. Most stagings have an intentionally "unaware" Grumio mocking a more and more aggravated Katherine. This can be funny or mean-spirited. For example, in the case of the mustard, if Grumio keeps dropping it so that the meat no longer has any mustard on it can be high comedy. The more frustrated Katherine is, rather than defeated, presents an easier starvation scene to watch. Richard Raspa points out that "[t]he choice between living by obedience and living by exasperation...reveals the way characters choose to be in relationship with each other. Indeed, the structure of the play from the opening induction to the concluding inflammatory remarks by the 'tamed' shrew Katherine presents characters with that choice: obey or exasperate" (102).

This evaluation of exasperation and obedience seems to be one and the same; if Katherine is exasperated, she is tame. In some plays, she is often too frustrated to protest.

In keeping with the humor found amongst Katherine's starvation, when Hortensio is told by Petruchio to eat all of the food before Katherine can, the image of Hortensio having to eat too much food for one person adds to the humor. The idea of Katherine watching Hortensio eat too much food confusedly or having Hortensio gagging on multiple pieces of meat once again could show that Petruchio does not have full control over everything yet, by overestimating Hortensio and in turn underestimating Katherine's hunger. Furthermore, if Katherine and Hortensio are fighting for the food, there is more potential for physical comedy. When the suffering is directed away from Katherine and audiences are instead laughing at Hortensio trying to eat copious amounts of food quickly, the comedic relief is greater.

Of course, forced starvation is no laughing matter, and it is important to remember Petruchio's true intentions that were revealed on stage. Katherine's taming is typically performed in much more violent or abusive ways. In Audibert's version, the starvation scenes are incredibly dark. Petruchio's house is staged as darker and colder with a change in lighting. The servants are much more mocking of Katherine, and Katherine looks much more sorrowful as compared to angry. In the scene with Hortensio, Katherine's despair at not being able to eat and him licking the plate is too uncomfortable for even Hortensio's attempt at eating all of the food at once to distract from. However, it is important to note that throughout these scenes, Katherine is never mute. She is often speaking protest or in defense of the innocent (whether it be herself or the servants). While her lines do decrease, they never do so completely, still allowing Katherine some agency. An example of this agency is in act 4, scene 4, when Katherine and Petruchio make the journey back to her father's house and Katherine is still fighting with Petruchio:

PETRUCHIO: I say it is the moon that shines so bright.

KATHERINE: I know it is the sun that shines so bright. (4.4.4-5)

It is only when Hortensio confronts her about the arduous journey for the entire party involved does she yield to Petruchio's wild claims about the time of day: "And be it moon, or sun, or what you please. And if you please to call it a rush-candle, Henceforth, I vow it shall be so for me" (4.4.13-5). It is unclear if she did this to save herself and if she is finally tamed, if she did this to help the traveling party, or if she is making fun of him. Regardless of her reasoning, she is able to convince Petruchio that she has been tamed. While Abraham's Petruchio shows dismay at her being tamed, many other performances see this encounter as a test of Katherine's obedience. Dixon's model uses this line as Katherine understanding that she cannot treat people the way she has in the past. Petruchio mocks her and shows her how unreasonable some of her ways were in the past (violence, selfishness, arrogance, etc.) by pitching his voice higher, stamping, then imitating her tantrum that she threw at the wedding. When she agrees to agree with him, Petruchio rejoices in exclaiming "Wow" over and over. It seems as if the two characters finally understand one another. This understanding is what leads to the final speech and it is not so jarring to listen to, knowing how much they both love each other.

Conclusion

While *The Taming of the Shrew* is controversial due to its depictions of violence, the grotesque nature of Shakespeare's plays allows audiences to view this play from different perspectives, incorporating different interpretations. Over the course of its history, *The Taming of the Shrew* has been seen by some as a tragedy with a wedding at the end because of modern adaptations. Adaptation allows directors and actors to explore other options to encapsulate what they feel is representative of the text. This play can build on the violence and create a tragedy, or

it can emphasize the humor, creating a slapstick comedy that is easier to watch in modern times.

Regardless of the interpretation, each adaptation allows audiences to examine the text as a product of its time as well as our own time and culture.

Epilogue

In Tim Crouch's 2012 play, *I, Cinna (The Poet)*, the scenes are set on the backdrop of *Julius Caesar*. The set is Cinna's sparsely furnished apartment and only features Cinna. Cinna is searching for a subject for a new poem and encourages the audience to write along with him. Although the audience never sees it, Cinna tells viewers that he experiences the victory of Caesar over Pompey, Lupercal, and Caesar's death. Audiences watch as Cinna contemplates the implications of these events, but soon they are filled with dread when he feels compelled to leave his apartment after Caesar's murder because they will understand what will happen when Cinna leaves the safety of his home. When watching *Julius Caesar*, there is no indication that Cinna was there for any of these events, but it is possible and likely that he could have been. In a moment of sonder, audiences realize that each character is living a life that is as intricate as the main characters. When Brutus and Portia argue, Cinna watches the news. When Katherine leaves her father's house, Bianca misses her. In creating further works, we can give new voices to characters that otherwise would never get that chance. Grotesque characters allow directors to extrapolate them into further adaptations, giving them new life. Scenes, lines, and props have the potential to grow and morph and this study can lay the groundwork for studying those aspects of adaptation. The examination of grotesque bodies, whether they be in the form of a line interpretation, costuming, or characterization, creates moments of meta-theatre, which enrich audience experiences, begetting popularity.

Changing scenes, lines, characters, and props are not the only way to influence productions. The effect an adaptation has on the audience informs audiences of cultural biases. For example, exploring a crying Brutus, as I mentioned in my first chapter, can lead to revelations or confirmations of gender bias. A culture that sees crying men as weak may find a

crying Brutus to be unsympathetic or disingenuous. However, in a culture that values vulnerability in men, Brutus not crying can be seen as cold and harsh. This idea of gender bias can further be examined when the play is gender swapped. If Brutus is a woman and crying, audience reactions will also change based on their culture. If audiences expect Brutus to cry because he is now portrayed by a female, that means that audiences believe women to be more sympathetic, dramatic, or both. In a culture that values women who cry and show their feelings, then a stoic, female Brutus can be off-putting. If a culture believes women are too dramatic, then crying would be off-putting in the same manner. For example, critic Michael Billington writes:

Lloyd's production proves that female actors can bring a fresh perspective to traditionally male roles. The shining example is Harriet Walter's Brutus. In recent years Brutus as the noblest Roman of them all has been replaced by a hopelessly bungling tactician. That is still present in Walter's reading, as on the eve of battle, she puts Cassius loftily in his place. But Walter, who with her sleek-backed hair and cavernous cheeks cuts a remarkable figure, gives us a Brutus who seems riven with internal anguish. Walter, who has the capacity to bend the verse to her will, comes across as a Roman Hamlet torn between action and inertia.

Billington was born and raised in Britain, and like many western cultures, he expects to see women crying, but not necessarily men. Because of this expectation, he is able to claim that Lloyd's production offers a new perspective. These grotesque bodies, such as the choice to cry, are grotesque bodies that call for further examination.

Grotesque bodies do not have to just be lines but instead they can be props or gestures. For example, the symbol of the whip in *The Taming of the Shrew* can have several purposes. It can serve to make people uncomfortable. More than that though, a whip wielding husband shows

the culture that is inside of the play. If the characters of the play are not uncomfortable to be around the whip, then by extension they are comfortable with the torture that Katherine will have to endure. Detmer points out that while perception on physically hitting your wife had waned in popularity at the time *The Taming of the Shrew* was staged, it was not an obsolete concept: “The willingness to discipline rebellious women, sometimes brutally, is documented in the accounts of the legal and extralegal ‘correction’ of scolds and shrews as well as itinerant or homeless women, bastard-bearers, whores, and witches” (273). Detmer goes on to explain that while violence against a spouse was looked down upon, the action that “brought on” the domestic violence was worse. Further exploration as to how culture can change reception, is through bodily gestures. Readdressing Pickford’s wink, which subverted the symbol of the whip, can show an undercurrent of the feminist movement of the 1920s. As Hodgdon analyzes,

If Pickford’s wink clears any space for real women spectators within Shrew’s ending, that space is traversed with questions of ownership, whether of Fairbanks’s exotically masculine image or of Pickford’s identity as “America’s Sweetheart.” Possessing either, however fleetingly, would effectively (and conventionally) mask whatever cultural tensions remained concerning those who, only a short ten years before, had been enfranchised. (544)

When Pickford winks at her sister, who shows understanding, this demonstrates the reliance that women need to have with one another. The community of support can be found in women alone because they seem to understand their place in the home and the world better than men.

While the plays that I have examined for this thesis are works that are familiar to me, they have a greater through line that connects them. Both of these plays are popular, but I believe they are strangely popular. *Julius Caesar* is a story that audiences are familiar with; audiences

know to expect his death in the play, which could make it less exciting. However, his death is not the end of the play, making this play not about Julius Caesar, but the characters around him. The falling actions turn into a story about civil war, subjectively not as interesting as love, betrayal, and uncertainty. With the play focusing on the characters around Caesar, this creates a lack of a clear villain and a clear hero. This interpretation of the strangeness of Julius Caesar is supported by Ernest Schanzer:

Julius Caesar is one of Shakespeare's most perplexing plays. Its stylistic simplicity, coupled with an absence of bawdy lines, has made it a favorite school text, and this has led some critics to believe that it ought to be a simple play, a belief which has easily ripened into the conviction that it is a simple play. Others have acknowledged its perplexities... There is widespread disagreement among critics about who is the play's principal character or whether it has a principal character, on whether it is a tragedy and if so whose, on whether Shakespeare wants us to consider the assassination as damnable or praiseworthy, while of all the chief characters in the play violently contradictory interpretations have been offered. (297)

This analysis leads me to believe that audiences genuinely enjoy the complexity. Since there is no concrete answer about who the hero is, there is more room for debate with other viewers. Furthermore, because there is no answer, directors can attempt to create an answer through the exploitation of grotesque bodies.

Secondly, *The Taming of the Shrew* highlights domestic abuse. I have previously mentioned the struggle with understanding why it is popular, which is partially answered by Rackin. However, her argument and the grotesque body still cannot give audiences a concrete

answer as to why this play is popular. A second characteristic that these plays have in common rather than their faults is that they are potentially adaptations themselves. As I mentioned earlier, *Julius Caesar* uses a lot of information from *Plutarch's Lives* and *The Taming of the Shrew* could have been inspired by *The Taming of a Shrew*. Working with these texts not only allows me to refine my definition of an adaptation, but it also allows for the illustration of intertextuality.

Every story comes from another story, making literature an integral part of the human experience. Through literature we are encouraged to be empathetic, compassionate, curious, and inventive. These are the qualities that we should be emulating and striving for. It is through adaptations that we pursue those traits as we strive to understand that old texts create new ones.

This thesis has detailed the theory of a grotesque body as it applies to adaptations. As I have demonstrated, small lines have the ability to have a larger impact on the scene around the characters and how audiences perceive character. Finding grotesque bodies throughout literature, and especially in plays, emphasizes what the audience cannot know. However, interpreters, directors, actors, and audiences can change the meaning of a piece of work, becoming an integral part of not only the reading process, but also the creative process.

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