



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Access to Electronic Thesis

Author: David Skinner
Thesis title: A Critical and Historical Analysis of Charles and Mary Lamb's Tales from Shakespear and Thomas Bowdler's The Family Shakespear
Qualification: PhD

This electronic thesis is protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. No reproduction is permitted without consent of the author. It is also protected by the Creative Commons Licence allowing Attributions-Non-commercial-No derivatives.

If this electronic thesis has been edited by the author it will be indicated as such on the title page and in the text.

A Critical and Historical Analysis of
Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* and
Thomas Bowdler's *The Family Shakespeare*

David Skinner

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
University of Sheffield School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics

December 2011

Abstract

This thesis will discuss Charles and Mary Lamb's 1807 *Tales from Shakespeare* and Thomas Bowdler's 1818 *The Family Shakespeare* in a critical and historical context. Running through this thesis is the argument that these texts are cornerstones of children's Shakespeare, though their reputations and contributions to the genre are buried beneath generations of misconceptions and sensationalism. This thesis provides a new perspective on *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* that exposes the prejudices and misinformation surrounding them, offering an assessment of their respective adaptation methods and editorial influence over Shakespeare from the nineteenth century to the present.

The first chapter introduces the thesis and identifies the scope of its research. It discusses the misconceptions surrounding the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts and examines the practice of reading Shakespeare in the home. The second chapter establishes the historical context of *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* by examining the origins of both children's literature and Shakespeare adaptations. It highlights influential educational philosophies, editorial trends, and critical debates in both of these fields. The third chapter discusses and contrasts the distinctive adaptation methods used by Charles and Mary Lamb respectively in *Tales from Shakespeare*. The fourth chapter discusses the adaptation methods used by Thomas Bowdler in *The Family Shakespeare* and distinguishes them from the accepted term bowdlerization. The fifth chapter establishes the legacy of the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts by discussing their influences over subsequent Shakespeare adaptations for children during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The sixth chapter presents the concluding arguments and final observations of the thesis.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	5
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Thesis	
1.1 – Popular Perceptions of the Lambs and Bowdler	6
1.2 – Reading Shakespeare at Home	9
1.3 – The Editorial Methods and Goals of the Lambs and Bowdler	14
1.4 – The Scope of the Thesis	18
Chapter 2: Historical Analysis of Children’s Literature and Shakespeare Adaptations	
2.1 – Introduction	22
2.2 – Locke and the Origins of Children’s Literature	23
2.3 – Rousseau and Pre-Revolutionary Children’s Literature	30
2.4 – Revolutionary Developments for Children’s Literature	38
2.5 – Shakespeare Adaptations and the New Theatre	49
2.6 – Bringing Shakespeare Home	58
2.7 – Conclusion	69
Chapter 3: Charles and Mary Lamb’s <i>Tales from Shakespeare</i>	
3.1 – Introduction	70
3.2 – Mary Lamb’s Madness	73
3.3 - Charles Lamb’s Shakespeare Folk Tales	80
3.4 - Mary Lamb and Thematic Abridgement	98
3.5 – Conclusion	119

Chapter 4: Thomas Bowdler's <i>The Family Shakespeare</i>	
4.1 – Introduction	122
4.2 – Shakespeare Expurgation Prior to Bowdler	127
4.3 – The Bowdler Family's Editorial Tradition	132
4.4 – Separating Bowdler from Bowdlerization	140
4.5 – Bowdler's <i>Henry IV</i>	153
4.6 – Bowdler's <i>Othello</i>	160
4.7 – Bowdler's <i>Measure for Measure</i>	170
4.8 – Conclusion	176
Chapter 5: The Lambs' and Bowdler's Adaptation Legacy	
5.1 – Introduction	177
5.2 – Household Shakespeare Adaptations of the Nineteenth Century	179
5.3 – The Lambs in China	202
5.4 – Shakespeare Films and Animation for Children	209
5.5 – Conclusion	230
Chapter 6: Conclusion to Thesis	
6.1 – Closing Arguments on the Lambs and Bowdler	232
Bibliography	236

Acknowledgements

I would like thank Sylvia Adamson, Joe Bray, Danny Karlin, and Angela Wright for their assistance and support in the development of this project.

This work is dedicated to my parents, William and Jo-ann Skinner, and to my sisters, Ruth and Julie.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Thesis

1.1 – Popular Perceptions of the Lambs and Bowdler

Shakespeare adaptations for children are one of the most controversial and sensational categories of Shakespeare studies. Though introducing young readers to the playwright and educating them in the nuances of his dramas can appear to be a benign, even altruistic, enterprise, it is actually fraught with perilous editorial debates that are overrun with misconceptions and distractions. At least, that is the conclusion that one reaches after examining two cornerstones of children's Shakespeare: Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* and Thomas Bowdler's *The Family Shakespeare*.

Tales from Shakespeare was designed to be a transitional text that prepared children for reading other Shakespeare editions and viewing performances of his plays. It was not always a source of controversy, but initially received substantial and consistent praise after it debuted in 1807. In 1808, *The Critical Review* declared that it was "unique, and without rival or competitor" among Shakespeare adaptations or children's literature.¹ The anonymous reviewer praised its capacity to educate young readers on the complexities of Shakespeare's plays. A subsequent review from *The Gentleman's Magazine* later that year was equally enthusiastic, calling the text an ingenious introduction to Shakespeare for young readers.² However, closer to the present, critics are preoccupied with Mary Lamb's history of mental illness. Texts such as Susan Tyler Hitchcock's 2005 *Mad Mary Lamb* and Kathy Watson's 2006 *The Devil Kissed Her* are more enamoured with the details of how she killed her own mother during a violent psychotic episode than with her skills as a Shakespeare editor.

¹ Watson, Kathy. *The Devil Kissed Her: The Story of Mary Lamb*. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004), 130.

² Review of *Tales from Shakespeare*, by Charles and Mary Lamb. *The Gentleman's Magazine*. Vol. 78, no. 2. (1808): 1001.

In contrast, *The Family Shakespeare* has been consistently controversial since it first appeared in 1818. Bowdler's text is a censored adaptation of Shakespeare's plays that is intended for family reading at home. Though his goal was to expurgate all material that he considered offensive to these readers, his actions drew significant criticism. An 1820 article in *The Monthly Review* declared that the text was published proof that "the nicest person has the nastiest ideas," accusing him of exaggerating the playwright's faults and removing so much material that it disrupted the dramas' coherence.³ Others, such as Reverend John Rogers Pittman in 1822, argued that *The Family Shakespeare's* plays were "injudiciously altered" and insufficiently "purified from coarse and profane expressions."⁴ A prominent critic and editor of Shakespeare editions, and later domestic chaplain to the Duchess of Kent, Pittman's prestigious social standing lent significant public weight to his disapproval and encouraged subsequent criticism. These reactions coalesced when the Oxford English Dictionary devised the term "bowdlerize" in 1836, which equated Bowdler's editing with castration.⁵ The term misrepresents the complexities of Bowdler's adaptation methods, and has contributed to the false image of him as an overzealous cutter that has been perpetuated to the present.

With madness and castration being the two leading concepts that respectively define *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare*, it is easy to see how each collection's didactic potential and significant influence over children's Shakespeare adaptations have been overlooked. This thesis provides a new

³ Review of *The Family Shakespeare*, by Thomas Bowdler. *The Monthly Review; or Literary Journal*, *Enlarged: From January to April, inclusive*. Vol. 91. (1820): 433.

⁴ Pittman, John Rogers, ed. *The School-Shakespeare; or, Plays and Scenes from Shakespeare, Illustrated for the Use of Schools with Glossarial Notes*. (London: J. F. Dove, 1822), i.

⁵ "bowdlerize, v." *OED Online*. September 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/22199?redirectedFrom=bowdlerize> (accessed December 09, 2011).

perspective on the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts by exposing the prejudices and misinformation that surround them, offering an assessment of their respective adaptation methods and an exploration of their editorial influence over Shakespeare from the nineteenth century to the present. It proves that there is more distinguishing these two texts and their legacy than Mary Lamb's macabre personal history or the accusations of Bowdler's severely misguided censorship methods.

1.2 – Reading Shakespeare at Home

Uncovering the facts about the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts requires some understanding of the history of Shakespeare adaptations. For much of the seventeenth century, Shakespeare was regarded as an obsolete relic from the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. However, by approximately 1660, his plays had gained notoriety in England through adaptation performances by Sir William Davenant's Duke of York's Company. The group's success encouraged many subsequent imitators from the seventeenth century onwards. The second chapter of this thesis touches on several adaptations from the period, and their specific goals, in greater detail. By 1849, editor John W. S. Hows declared that adaptations had endowed Shakespeare with such an indomitable literary presence that his fame was "striding the world like a colossus."⁶

This acclaim was not obtained exclusively through the proliferation of theatrical Shakespeare adaptations, but was also owed to the playwright's popularity as a subject for household reading from the late eighteenth century onwards. This practice involved private readings at home that were conducted between audiences that consisted of family and friends. Later evidence in this thesis shows that the Lambs and Bowdler considered this pastime while developing their adaptations' respective goals.

Household reading's origins are connected to the growing literacy rates that Britain had achieved by the late eighteenth century. Reinhard Wittman argues that, since the seventeenth century, the entirety of Europe had undergone a "reading

⁶ Hows, John W. S., ed. *The Shakspearian Reader: A Collection of the Most Approved Plays of Shakspeare; Carefully Revised, With Introductory and Explanatory Notes, and a Memoir of the Author.* (New York: D. Appleton & Co, 1849), vii. Note that Hows used an unconventional spelling for both Shakespeare and the terms derived from his name.

revolution” that had altered the practice in several capacities.⁷ Literacy was no longer exclusive to academics or social elites, but gradually expanded over the decades to include domestic workers, chambermaids, and barbers, along with other members of the urban and rural working classes.⁸ As the reading community became less homogenous, so did their reading habits, which diversified into several styles and forms. Household reading has the distinction of being a popular and versatile format that could be used to teach as well as entertain its audiences.

Alberto Manguel says that Shakespeare’s popularity as a frequent subject for household reading was owed to the prominent reputation that the playwright had garnered through frequent theatrical adaptation over the past century.⁹ This point is discussed further in chapter two of this thesis. Manguel believes that the appeal of Shakespeare’s didacticism was in its ability to stimulate camaraderie and intellectual competition among friends and family as they attempted to decipher the various lessons of his plays together.¹⁰ Katherine Newey also notes that Shakespeare’s association with intellectualism and British culture meant that household readings could evoke a sense of personal confidence and national pride in their participants.¹¹ These perspectives, along with the social prominence attached to Shakespeare reading, are emphasized throughout the activity’s frequent appearances in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fiction.

For example, in Susanna Keir’s 1765 *Interesting Memoirs*, Lousia Seymour reads aloud from *Twelfth Night* with her love interest, Lord Hastings. Shakespeare

⁷ Cavallo, Guglielmo, ed. and Chartier, Roger, ed. *A History of Reading in the West*. (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1999), 284.

⁸ Cavallo, *Reading in the West*, 291.

⁹ Manguel, Alberto. *A History of Reading*. (London: Flamingo, 1997), 123.

¹⁰ Manguel, *A History*, 123.

¹¹ Newey, Katherine. "Shakespeare and the War of the Playbills." *Victorian Shakespeare, Volumes I & II*. Edited by Gail Marshall & Adrian Poole. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 13.

becomes a medium for intensifying their intellectual and emotional intimacy as they express their affections indirectly through their respective speaking roles. Jacqueline Pearson argues that their cooperative distribution of these parts conveys a sense of gender equality and mutual respect that underlies their relationship.¹² Shakespeare reading is portrayed as less of a pastime and more of a social art in Jane Porter's 1803 *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, where proficiency with the act is considered a prestigious mark of scholarly sophistication. Lady Sara Ross believes that learning to read Shakespeare from protagonist Thaddeus Sobieski will make her appear more elegant and poetic among peers like Lord Berrington.¹³ Berrington's penchant for integrating Shakespeare quotations into conversation is meant to emphasize the power of his wit and intellect. Additionally, some of Porter's characters also use Shakespeare reading as a discrete means of communication. For example, Euphemia Dundas conveys her intense attraction to Thaddeus by reciting lines from *Romeo and Juliet* aloud to him.

A prominent example of fictional Shakespeare reading at home appears in the third volume of Jane Austen's 1814 *Mansfield Park*, when Henry Crawford reads *Henry VIII* aloud to Fanny Price and Mrs. Bertram. This moment provides insight into both the popularity of reading Shakespeare as well as the pastime's ability to serve as a developmental device for fictional characters. Fanny is engrossed by Crawford's presentation of *Henry VIII*:

She could not abstract her mind five minutes; she was forced to listen; his reading was capital, and her pleasure in good reading extreme. To good reading ... she had been long used; her uncle read well--her cousins all, Edmund very well; but in Mr. Crawford's reading there was a variety of excellence beyond what she had ever met with. The King, the Queen, Buckingham, Wolsey, Cromwell, all were given in turn; for with the happiest knack, the happiest power of jumping and guessing, he could always light, at will, on the best scene, or the best

¹² Pearson, Jacqueline. *Women's Reading in Britain: 1780-1835*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 63.

¹³ Porter, Jane. *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. (New York: Charles Wells, 1834), 174.

speeches of each; and whether it were dignity or pride, or tenderness or remorse, or whatever were to be expressed, he could do it with equal beauty.--It was truly dramatic.¹⁴

Fanny recognizes that there is power evoked by Shakespeare's writing when it is read aloud. This is amplified to captivating levels by Crawford's "dramatic" style, which involves his use of emotional speech intonations and animated physical movements.¹⁵ Its effectiveness is reflected in the way that it preoccupies a "high concentration of attention" in Fanny, leaving her "oblivious to [her] immediate surroundings."¹⁶ She emphasizes the distinctiveness of Crawford's reading by contrasting it with Mrs. Bertram's recitation of "a very fine speech" attributed to "that man," later revealed to be Cardinal Wolsey. Though she compliments Wolsey's capabilities as a speaker, her generalizing his identity is a prominent indicator of its comparative inability to appeal to her like Shakespeare does. Her reaction is likely abetted by Mrs. Bertram's preferred style of presentation, which is less emotive than Crawford's.

Crawford's antics seem more appropriate on the theatrical stage than in households. However, they are also a reminder that reading Shakespeare aloud in the home need not be limited to brief quotations or full scene re-enactments. Despite his methods, Crawford does not perform exactly like an actor. He reads many roles, not just a single part, and has the luxury of choosing selections that are suited to his listeners' tastes and his own personal goals. Like any Shakespeare adaptor, he can avoid potentially dull, offensive, or irrelevant content if he chooses. In this case, his primary goals are to entertain and impress his audience, which he succeeds in doing.

Additionally, the experience emphasizes both Fanny and Crawford's dominant character traits. By this point in the novel, it has been established that Fanny's

¹⁴ Austen, Jane. *Mansfield Park: A Novel*. (London: T. Egerton, 1814), 228.

¹⁵ "dramatic, adj. and n.". *OED Online*. September 2011. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/57477?redirectedFrom=dramatic> (accessed December 09, 2011).

¹⁶ Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 279.

behaviour is governed by a strict sense of personal morality. Her reaction to Tom Bertram's efforts to stage a performance of the risqué *Lovers Vows* shows the integrity of her beliefs. Despite the alluring extravagance of the play, which captivates the remainder of the household, Fanny maintains her protest to its displays of romantic affection between unmarried couples. She stands by these convictions even after Edmund Bertram, her love interest and fellow objector, surrenders and participates in the show. Though she is caught up in the allure of Shakespeare due to Crawford's performance, she is not smitten by it. His reading impresses her, but she "cannot approve of his character," and maintains her view of him as a reprobate, even if he has the ability to read well.¹⁷ The theatrical nature of Crawford's reading, along with Fanny's full opinions of it, emphasize his association with superficiality. Yet, his lack of moral strength and responsibility do not prevent him from being a capable, even compelling, participant in the household pastime of reading Shakespeare aloud.

¹⁷ Ibid., 289.

1.3 – The Editorial Methods and Goals of the Lambs and Bowdler

The Lambs' and Bowdler's adaptations take advantage of the cultural prestige associated with Shakespeare's writing as well as the increasing prominence of household reading as a social experience, using both to facilitate their respective didactic agendas. *Tales from Shakespeare's* preface enthusiastically supports the perpetuation of "Shakespeare's matchless image."¹⁸ The Lamb siblings maintain that there is a psychological correlation between reading Shakespeare and becoming a moral, learned, and confident individual, the dramas acting as "enrichers of fancy, strengtheners of virtue" that offer "a lesson of all sweet, honourable thoughts and actions."¹⁹ *The Family Shakespeare's* preface possesses similar enthusiasm, Bowdler declaring "the immortal bard" to be an "inimitable" icon that shall "remain the subject of admiration as long as taste in literature shall exist."²⁰ Yet, despite their similar views of Shakespeare, the Lambs and Bowdler have very distinctive methods for editing his plays.

Though the Lamb siblings believe that Shakespeare has a "beautiful English tongue," they also argue that his plays' themes, characters, and conflicts are too complex for young women and children to understand.²¹ Their solution is to abridge several plays into short stories, making them "easy reading" for this target audience.²² However, *Tales from Shakespeare* is not meant to replace Shakespeare's plays. Subsequent chapters of this thesis will show that, unlike critics and philosophers such as John Earle, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sarah Trimmer, and Anna Barbould, the Lambs contextualize education as a continuous lifetime experience

¹⁸ Lucas, E. V. ed. *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb: Volume III, Books for Children*. (London: Methuen & Co., 1903), 1.

¹⁹ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 2.

²⁰ Bowdler, Thomas, ed. *The Family Shakespeare, In Ten Volumes*. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster-Row, 1818) 1: viii.

²¹ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 1.

²² *Ibid.*, 2.

rather than a process exclusive to the transition from childhood to adulthood. They believe that Shakespeare's plays offer beneficial lessons to readers of all ages, and that it is vital for everyone to develop an appreciation of their content. To accomplish this, they intended for their child readers, particularly boys, to eventually turn their attention to regular Shakespeare editions.

Tales from Shakespeare's preface states that boys are typically "allowed to read the plays at full length" before girls as they tend to be granted permission to use their fathers' libraries at a younger age.²³ This gives the former the opportunity to discover the differences between Shakespeare and the adaptations:

When time and judicious friends shall put them into Your hands, you will discover in such of them as are here abridged (not to mention almost as many more that are left untouched) many surprising events and turns of fortune, which for their infinite variety could not be contained in this little book, besides a world of sprightly and cheerful characters, both men and women, the humour of which I was fearful of losing if I attempted to reduce the length of them.²⁴

Highlighting the strengths of Shakespeare reiterates *Tales from Shakespeare's* role as a didactic stepping stone, not a substitute, to prepare young readers for engaging with this content. Brothers who have graduated from the adaptations are entrusted with the responsibility of combining their knowledge with *Tales from Shakespeare* to help them teach the plays to their sisters. Darlene Ciraulo notes that such sibling education, with a brother acting as an "'indulgent monitor' to mould his sister" while she "influences him by passive example and expectations," was commonly employed throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²⁵ *Tales from Shakespeare's* preface admits the collection's limitations as a supplier of "imperfect abridgements"

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ciraulo, Darlene. "Shakespeare and Education in the Lambs' *Poetry for Children* and *Tales from Shakespeare*." *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*. [electronic journal] Vol. 2, no. 1. (2006): available from borrowers.uga.edu; Internet.

that offer brief exposure and insight into “the beautiful extracts” of the playwright’s work.²⁶ Further chapters of this thesis will elaborate on how this is relevant to the Lambs’ adaptation methods.

In contrast, Bowdler argues that there are references in Shakespeare’s dramas that are “of so indecent a nature as to render it desirable that they should be erased.”²⁷ However, he does not attack Shakespeare for allowing this offensive content. Instead, he attempts to rationalize its presence in the dramas:

Of these the greater part were evidently introduced to gratify the bad taste of the age in which [Shakespeare] lived, and the rest may perhaps be ascribed to his own unbridled fancy. But neither the vicious taste of the age, nor the most brilliant effusions of wit, can afford an excuse for profaneness or obscenity; and if these could be obliterated, the transcendent genius of the poet would undoubtedly shine with more unclouded lustre. To banish every thing of this nature from his writing is the object of the present undertaking.²⁸

Bowdler does not consider Shakespeare’s inclusion of offensive material to be a reflection of the playwright’s bawdy tastes, but a concession made to appease the morally dubious expectations of his Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences. However, he notes that nineteenth-century readers, particularly young children, are more sensitive to offensive writing. Shakespeare’s lack of moral sophistication may discourage them from reading or attending performances of his plays.

To remedy this, Bowdler uses Isaac Reed’s 1813 edition of Samuel Johnson’s and George Steevens’ *Plays of William Shakespeare* to create adaptations that are “unsullied by any scene, by any speech, or, if possible, by any word that can give pain to the most chaste, or offence to the most religious of his readers.”²⁹ He believes that his work renders the plays accessible to morally cautious families. To keep his expurgations from interfering with the presence of Shakespeare’s “transcendent

²⁶ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 2.

²⁷ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 1: viii-ix.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

genius,” Bowdler strictly limits his content changes. Unlike the Lambs’ text, this collection’s dramas remain in verse form, and are divided into acts and scenes rather than converted to prose. Furthermore, while the Lambs aim to surmount the intellectual shortcomings they perceive in their young audience, Bowdler attempts to protect their morality and innocence by cutting words and expressions that he believes are inappropriate for them to read. This includes expletives and oaths, insults and derogatory comments, as well as references to sexuality. He also asserts that “not a single line, nor even the half of a line, has in any one instance been added to the original text.”³⁰

Bowdler emphasizes the need to remove references to Scripture, especially when they were tied to the aforementioned vulgarities. He outlines this in his text’s preface:

The most Sacred Word in our language is omitted in a great number of instances, in which it appeared as a mere expletive; and it is changed into the word Heaven in a still greater number, where the occasion of using it did not appear sufficiently serious to justify its employment.³¹

Bowdler justifies his censorship of this material by claiming that the use of sacred Christian terminology as “mere expletives,” while tolerated in the sixteenth century, is considered “manifestly improper” in the more progressive and sophisticated nineteenth century.³² However, he acknowledges that the removal of specific references to God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, as well as their replacement with the general term “heaven,” can damage the coherence of some statements. This prompts him to limit his use of expurgation and substitution. Chapter four of this thesis elaborates on how he editorially reconciles his respect for Shakespeare with his veneration for Christianity.

³⁰ Ibid., 1: x.

³¹ Ibid., 1: ix.

³² Ibid.

1.4 – The Scope of the Thesis

The prefaces of both *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* offer only brief overviews of the story of each text's creation. However, this provides enough insight to demonstrate that both texts are far more complex than most contemporary criticism has acknowledged. Additionally, despite the intense praise for the playwright featured in the Lambs' and Bowdler's prefaces, neither adaptation was created purely to satisfy idealistic objectives. Though the texts have distinct editorial methods and goals, both were significantly influenced by over two centuries of preceding philosophical debates and publications of both children's literature and Shakespeare adaptations. While most of this material was being developed, the perceptions of childhood and childhood education, as well as the popular preferences for editing Shakespeare's plays, were continuously changing. The second chapter of this thesis examines the significance of the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts amid these categories and debates, contextualizing *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* within the critical histories of children's literature and Shakespeare adaptations. This not only establishes their identities among the children's texts, didactic philosophies, and other adaptations of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, but also highlights the basis of their literary legacy.

Critics' aforementioned fascination with Mary Lamb's psychological issues has dominated many contemporary discussions on her and Charles Lamb. The third chapter distances *Tales from Shakespeare* from this sensationalism, exposing the overlooked complexities of its adaptation editing. Though Charles and Mary Lamb's objectives are the same, each has his/her own philosophy for reformatting the playwright's dramas into short narratives. While Charles prefers to use structures that are reminiscent of those present in moralized fairy tales, Mary tends to create large

plot summaries that are supported by the use of direct quotations as dialogue. Specific examples show how each approach exhibits its share of strengths and weaknesses. There is also consideration given to the full purpose of the adaptations, and whether or not each sibling is motivated by private agendas.

The fourth chapter similarly debunks popular discussions and misconceptions about Thomas Bowdler in order to explore the history and editing methods he used in *The Family Shakespeare*. Past and present assessments of Bowdler's work have inspired and perpetuated the editorial term "bowdlerization," but this concept inadequately reflects the nuances and exceptions found in his work. This chapter dispels many of these misconceptions, and explores the elaborate adaptation processes used in *The Family Shakespeare*. Particular attention is paid to the collection's adaptations of *Henry IV*, *Othello*, and *Measure for Measure*, which reveal that Bowdler is as capable of making editorial compromises as he is of cutting.

These discussions culminate in the fifth chapter, which argues that both *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* have had a profound and enduring influence over many other Shakespeare children's adaptations produced from the nineteenth century to present. Several such adaptations have imitated, borrowed, challenged, or otherwise altered content from the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts. Some have clear relationships to the Lambs' or Bowdler's work, establishing links through references to one or both of the texts. Others lack such explicit connections to *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare*, but feature similar editorial strategies. At the very least, the Lambs' and Bowdler's adaptations further encouraged interest in editing Shakespeare's dramas for reading at home, leading to numerous didactic text adaptations throughout the nineteenth century.

This trend continued in the twentieth century, and was supplemented by numerous adaptations produced in the new media formats that were invented at the time. In addition to a continuation of text-based adaptations, this period saw the appearance of animation films that were also designed to educate young readers on the playwright's dramas. However, it is virtually impossible to chronicle the large number of Shakespeare children's adaptations that appear in the various formats used during this era. Instead, the chapter turns its focus to a close examination of one work from the beginning of the century, Lin Shu's 1904 *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu*, and one from the end, the 1992 *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales*.

Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu, which translates into *English Poet Reciting from Afar on Joyous Occasions*, is a Chinese version of *Tales from Shakespeare*. However, it is more than just a translation of the original text. It alters the content and context of the Lambs' Shakespeare tales, integrating numerous values from Chinese culture into its didacticism. Its existence demonstrates the role that adaptations like *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* have played in assisting the playwright's transition into languages and philosophies beyond English borders. *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales* is a collection of short film adaptations that crosses another form of border, integrating the editorial concepts from *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* into a new technological medium rather than a foreign culture. The artistic and didactic potential of various modern animation techniques are used to bring the editorial philosophies of both texts into the present via a format that is appealing to contemporary youth. Exploring these two modern adaptations provides insights into the influence that the Lambs' and Bowdler's legacy have and continue to exert over children's Shakespeare adaptations and education to the present.

The Lamb siblings and Thomas Bowdler have both been overshadowed by exaggerated parodies of themselves and their work. It is past time that *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* were evaluated on their true merits as works of children's literature and Shakespeare adaptations. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, the perceptions of childhood and child didacticism, as well as the popular preferences for editing Shakespeare's plays, were continuously changing. This generated philosophical debates and publications that significantly influenced the development of the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts as well as their respective editorial methods and goals. This thesis continues with a thorough examination of these editorial histories in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Historical Analysis of Children's Literature and Shakespeare Adaptations

2.1 – Introduction

This chapter's objective is to contextualize *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* as both examples of children's literature and as Shakespeare adaptations. This establishes their distinctions from the didactic philosophies and adaptation methods that shaped similar literature during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Examining the early history of children's literature is the first step to tracing the editorial origins of the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts and their literary legacy. Martyn Lyons calls the genre a product of the nineteenth century, arguing that its emergence and proliferation encouraged English society to acknowledge childhood and adolescence as "discrete phases of life with unique problems and needs."³³ Yet, substantial evidence challenges this declaration.

While *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* played crucial roles in the development of children's Shakespeare, they are not among the first children's texts. Lyons' assessment overlooks many earlier publications, including two philosophical texts that helped establish the conceptual expectations for both English children and the literature created for them: John Locke's 1693 *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 1762 *Émile or On Education*. This chapter begins by examining the key traits and subsequent influence of the former.

³³Cavallo, *Reading in the West*, 327.

2.2 – Locke and the Origins of Children’s Literature

The content of children’s literature created during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was influenced by specific philosophies on child education and development. Alan Richardson considers Locke’s 1693 *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* to be one of the first English texts to express intellectual interest in these two fields.³⁴ Locke recognized the benefits of creating a literary genre specifically for children, and his views encouraged generations of subsequent authors and philosophers. However, the definition and conditions of childhood were of academic interest long before Locke’s work appeared. John Earle, for example, offers perspectives on the identity and education of children in his 1628 *Microcosmographie*.³⁵ Earle’s views emphasize the presumption of youth’s innocence:

A Childe is a Man in small letter, yet the best Copie of Adam before he tasted of Eve, or the Apple; and he is happy whose small practice in the World can only write this Character. He is natures fresh picture newly drawn in Oyle, which time and much handling dimmes and defaces. His soule is yet a white paper unscribbled with observations of the world, wherewith at length is becomes a blurr’d Notebook.³⁶

Though it appears contradictory of Earle to refer to childhood as a drawn picture and an empty sheet of paper, these diverging images emphasize that the average child is a pure and innocent being. This supports Earle’s biblical analogy that parallels the child to the prototypical Adam of Genesis. Both are newly formed creatures that are unacquainted with desire or sin, and dependent on the benevolence of a higher authority’s care and teaching.

³⁴ Richardson, Alan. *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 9.

³⁵ Richardson, *Literature*, 9.

³⁶ Earle, John. *Microcosmographie; or A Piece of the World Discovered; in Essays and Characters*. ed. Philip Bliss. (London: White and Cochrane, 1811), 1-2.

Earle's perspective is similar to Locke's famous comparison of the child's mind to a blank slate – a tabula rasa – that is waiting to be filled with the lessons of life experience. However, Richardson identifies Earle as a minor precursor to Locke's philosophies rather than as the actual progenitor of the debates over childhood theory and literature. Though *Microcosmographie* precedes *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, its definition of the child lacks development. Instead of suggesting methods for educating children, Earle places life experiences and knowledge in a negative context. Continuing with his prior rhetoric, he argues that such exposure “dimmes” and “defaces” life's allegorical painting, and scribbles over its “white paper” soul.³⁷ The suggestion that growth debases and tarnishes children contrasts significantly with Locke's perspective, which also identifies negative implications to maturity but offers a means of educating children against them.

Locke's plans for child education place substantial onus on the responsibilities of parents. He argues that a parent's role is to project the outward image of both guardian and friend while acting as a constant supervisor and disciplinarian. He emphasizes that a child must be guided into states of awareness without forcing knowledge or pressuring values upon him/her. He advises against using physical discipline or intimidation to enforce learning, saying that it is temporarily effective at best. Parents who depend on it inevitably discover that “the Time must come when (children) will be past the Rod, the Correction,” and unresponsive to these threats.³⁸

Instead, Locke wants parents to give children the opportunity to indulge in the “free liberty” of recreation, citing this as ideal for developing or displaying ingenuity and innate aptitudes.³⁹ Though their behaviour is periodically immature, Locke argues

³⁷ Richardson, *Literature*, 9.

³⁸ Locke, John. *Some Thoughts on Education*. ed. J. A. St. John. (London: J. A. Hatchard and Son, 1836), 56.

³⁹ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, 161.

“that children are to be treated as rational creatures.”⁴⁰ This partly involves appreciating the value of their “folly, playing, and childish actions,” regardless of whether such actions appear didactically constructive.⁴¹ He believes that the key to successful learning is to guide these pleasant activities to practical ends. For example, he notes that while children draw for amusement, they should also be taught to recognize its usefulness for recording details about locations that they visit on foreign travels. However, realizing that it is impossible to teach all that is knowable, Locke acknowledges that a sense of educational structure is needed to steer the topics that a child learns. He encourages parents to focus on nurturing “a love and esteem of knowledge; and to put [the child] in the right way of knowing and improving himself,” which reflects his intent to guide children towards becoming productive contributors to society.⁴²

While Locke desires children to become independent, their appreciation of knowledge and order is meant to encourage them to place society’s goals ahead of their own interests. They gain the ability to think and act freely and confidently, as long as they respect the boundaries of a class-centric status quo. For example, Locke endorses a prejudicial attitude towards household servants, identifying them as an “infection of bad company” while warning parents not to expose their children to them.⁴³ He portrays the working class as intellectually useless and socially counter-productive while encouraging children to feel animosity towards them. Richardson considers this model ideal for creating “a young Gentleman;” an educated individual that does not risk upsetting the order of things.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ibid., 65.

⁴¹ Ibid., 72.

⁴² Ibid., 305.

⁴³ Ibid., 120.

⁴⁴ Richardson. *Literature*, 49.

Locke's views on literature and reading perpetuate this social agenda. He approves of children's literature that is created with didactic goals, though he considers the subjective language of poetry to be an impediment to learning. He is also conflicted on the issue of folk tales and other forms of literature that incorporate supernatural elements. Locke recognizes that, though these stories use fictional creatures and details, they tend to frame them in a morally didactic context that focuses on a consistent lesson for young children: those that do good deeds are rewarded, while those that indulge in selfish actions are punished. However, he also believes that the frightening context of several creatures common to folk tales, such as goblins and ghosts, can overwhelm young readers with a debilitating sense of fear that distracts them from learning.

This leaves Locke sceptical as to whether or not folk tales can effectively convey their educational messages. As later analysis emphasizes, Charles Lamb vehemently rejects Locke's arguments against the didactic value of supernatural elements, and considers folk tales to have as much educational potential as any non-fiction children's text. Bowdler does not confront the philosophical issues of children's literature in as direct a fashion, but his strong support for Shakespeare indicates that he approves of supernatural elements in literature. Both editors consider reading Shakespeare to be an essential experience for all individuals.

The influences of Locke's philosophies are apparent in subsequent generations of English children's literature, but his doubts concerning folk tales did not initially resonate with most writers or editors working during the genre's infancy. The majority of them embraced these tales, particularly those that originated abroad. Several of English literature's first children's texts were actually created from content that was imported, translated, and modified from French oral traditions. This includes

adaptations of Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville's 1699 *Les Contes des Fées*, meaning *The Fairy Tales*, Antoine Galland's Arabic tales from the 1706 *The Thousand and One Nights*, renamed *The Arabian Nights*, as well as 1729 translations of Charles Perrault's *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella*, and *Little Tom Thumb*.

Most English authors eventually created new tales for children featuring several of the motifs and elements they had observed in French stories. However, concerns over the didactic merits of folk tales and supernatural content arose during this shift from translation to imitation. Like Locke, several authors believed that young readers found supernatural concepts to be either confusing or frightening, making them impediments to didacticism. This attitude encouraged divisions within the genre as some authors, such as John Newbery, opted to write instructional literature for children rather than narratives.

Newbery's 1744 *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* presents a series of short lessons on childhood activities that outline acceptable guidelines for good behaviour. The specificity of these entries is reflected in the first page of "Behaviour when Abroad:"

- 1 Go not Singing, Whistling nor Hollowing along the Street.
- 2 Quarrel not with any Body thou meetest or dost overtake.
- 3 Affront none, especially thy Elders, by Word or Deed.
- 4 Jeer not at any Person whatsoever.⁴⁵

This numbered sequence of directives continues for several more pages, and features various subcategories, such as "Children's Behaviour at the Meeting House," "Behaviour when at Home," and "Behaviour in (Parental) Discourse." Each selection's instructions are framed in absolute terms, and lack subordinate commentaries or footnotes. Richardson concludes that these uncompromising education principles are modelled on Locke's ideas. However, such direct and

⁴⁵ Newbery, John. *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book, Intended for the Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy, and Pretty Miss Polly*. (Worcester: Isaiah Thomas, 1787), 117.

assertive behavioural conditioning suggests that Newbery supports an authoritarian form of child-raising.⁴⁶ This clashes with the philosophies in *Some Thoughts on Education*, as Locke believes that too much emphasis on strictness and regulation eventually makes children disinterested in learning and resentful towards teachers.

Instructional writing did not replace narrative children's literature. In 1749, Sarah Fielding published *The Governess, or The Little Female Academy*, a novel which uses narrative structures and supernatural elements, but in a manner that convey philosophies similar to Locke's. The story focuses on nine selfish and apathetic female boarding school students' efforts to change their behaviour and thinking with the assistance of Mrs. Teachum, their governess.⁴⁷ Despite her droll name, Mrs. Teachum is not a humorous figure, nor a strict authoritarian. Both the plight of her charges and its solution are closely tied to Locke's assertions on the malleability of children and the need for parental supervision as a productive influence. The girls' behaviour is attributed to their inattentive and irresponsible upbringings. In the place of care that could shape them into productive individuals, their parents have simply spoiled them enough to ensure that they are physically and intellectually lethargic creatures of chronic desire.

The governess attempts to remedy this by becoming an authority figure reminiscent of Locke's theoretical guardian. Instead of addressing the girls' issues in structured lessons, Mrs. Teachum interacts with them outside of the formal didactic environment of the classroom to establish a series of close, personal relationships. Through this approach, she discovers that all of her students actually have strong desires to reform into productive individuals. She does not use her authority to

⁴⁶ Richardson, *Literature*, 116.

⁴⁷ Fielding, Sarah. *The Governess, or The Little Female Academy. Being the History of Mrs. Teachum and Her Nine Girls. With Their Nine Days of Amusement. Calculated for the Entertainment and Instruction of Young Ladies in their Education.* (London: A. Millar, 1749), 1.

manipulate each girl into unwitting obedience, but insists that they teach themselves to think beyond their whims and to consider their place in the world. Like Locke's archetype, she pairs her advice with assistance that encourages results without forcing them. Her overall objective is to fill their metaphysical blank slates with a sense of reason and identity that is personally and socially beneficial.

In pursuit of her goal, Mrs. Teachum teaches the girls how to read folk tales and dramas critically. The examples of the former reiterate the didactic capacity of supernaturally-influenced narratives. The girls use the stories of monsters and magical wonders to perfect their interpretative abilities. They grow more intuitively critical and gain the capacity to conduct thorough readings of their own personal lives. Their resulting epiphanies reveal their respective character flaws, and lend them insight into correcting them. The girls achieve Locke's philosophical goal for children by shedding their vapid personalities to become ambitious, compassionate, and productive contributors to society.

Locke's philosophies exerted influence over children's literature well into the nineteenth century. Even when he is not specifically referenced, many of his ideas maintain a presence in child-related discourse. However, his prominence did not dissuade other theorists from publishing additional perspectives on childhood and childhood education, nor did it discourage authors and editors from adopting these theories and integrating them into children's literature. As noted in this chapter's introduction, Rousseau's *Émile* was one of the more influential didactic texts to follow *Some Thoughts on Education*. Several works of children's literature produced during the second half of the eighteenth century exhibit elements of his philosophies, though Locke's ideas also remained prominent in the genre.

2.3 – Rousseau and Pre-Revolutionary Children’s Literature

Rousseau, like Locke, placed substantial emphasis on the importance of raising children to have practical knowledge and independence. However, the majority of mid-eighteenth-century children’s authors adopted only portions of his philosophies, ignoring his 1762 *Émile*’s politicised goals. Rousseau believes that society presents individuals the ultimatum of either living as human beings or as citizens, having an individualistic lifestyle or one relative to the community.⁴⁸ He calls the latter denaturing; claiming that it robs one of the rights to the independent existence needed to develop individual potential. His method for educating children is therefore meant to create activists that will redefine society according to his expectations.

The first chapter of this thesis noted that the Lambs and Bowdler highlight the importance of parental and sibling involvement in the reading and learning processes. Locke values the presence of a parent or close parental figure to guide a child through education. However, Rousseau does not trust the family members to be impartial or responsible educators, and argues that only a private tutor can teach a child. He appoints *Émile* a tutor who is under orders to create a strong emotional bond with the student. Rousseau encourages the tutor to be caring and affectionate, to “spare nothing to become [the child’s] confident.”⁴⁹ Yet, this relationship has an underlying agenda which lends insight into the type of learning that *Émile* encourages.

Rousseau considers children to be “like lions” that “must be tamed with kindness.”⁵⁰ However, this animal comparison is meant as a sign of their primitive nature rather than their strength. Like Locke, Rousseau considers children to be

⁴⁸ Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Émile or On Education*. trans. Allan Bloom. (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 81.

⁴⁹ Rousseau, *Émile*, 325.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 91.

impressionable and dependent upon very exact guidance in order to function. He argues that an educator, like an animal trainer, should use positive reinforcement to exert mastery over a subject and promote practical goals. Rousseau considers this superficial benevolence to be an ideal control mechanism; “there is no subjection so perfect as that which keeps the appearance of freedom.”⁵¹ He says that an educator “will not be the child’s master if you are not the master of all that surrounds him.”⁵² This includes controlling routines and even orchestrating social encounters to expose the child to a wide variety of scenarios.

However, Rousseau notes that the educator should never openly reveal the extent of its control, but allow the child to “always believe [it] is the master.”⁵³ Once children love and trust their educators, he is convinced that “you may make them walk on red-hot irons.”⁵⁴ The purpose of this deceptive supervision is to manipulate a child’s social and political outlook so that it feels compelled to change the status quo. An examination of the children’s literature published subsequent to *Émile* reveals that Rousseau’s emphasis on practical didacticism is typically mixed with Locke’s objective of creating an ideal member of the social status quo.

One of the first texts to show some signs of Rousseau’s influence was Oliver Goldsmith’s 1765 *History of Little Goody Twoshoes*. Its story revolves around Goldsmith’s equating good and productive actions with earthly gain.⁵⁵ He asserts that honest, hard-working, and moral individuals will always yield financial profit, influence, respect and security from their deeds. For example, the novel’s orphaned protagonist, Margery Meanwell, goes through life virtuously despite being

⁵¹ Ibid., 120.

⁵² Ibid., 95.

⁵³ Ibid., 120.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 91.

⁵⁵ Goldsmith, Oliver. *The History of Little Good Twoshoes; Otherwise Called Mrs. Margery Twoshoes*. (Worcester, Massachusetts: Isaiah Thomas, 1787), 1.

consistently impoverished and alone. Her good behaviour endears her to a gentleman benefactor whose resources allow her to become a teacher and marry a wealthy widower. Margery's fiscal gains and marriage enable her to defy typical social conventions and boundaries. Despite being an orphan, she associates with extremely wealthy members of her community and influences their perspectives on various political and societal issues.

While aspects of Goldsmith's moral ending appear to be inspired by Rousseau, the means of achieving it are not. Margery's success is the result of circumstances rather than a personal desire for profit or change. Overall, the story bears a closer resemblance to the folk tale *Cinderella*, the protagonist's wealth and prestige bestowed by a benevolent figure, than a guideline for revolutionaries. At best, the resolution offers hope or inspiration by entertaining the possibility that one can transcend their socio-economic limitations. Catharine Macauley protests the mixing of principles similar to Rousseau's with folk tale elements. In her 1790 *Letters on Education*, she argues that narratives offering material rewards for good behaviour are legitimizing virtuousness through bribery rather than encouraging genuine morality. She prefers children's literature to be more directly instructional, as Rousseau does. However, she also believes that it should be created to promote the social status quo, as Locke advocates, not a revolution. This again demonstrates how *Émile's* didactic strategies are used in contradiction to their purpose.

The didacticism in Anna Barbauld *Lessons for Children*, a four-volume collection published between 1778 and 1779, shows stronger signs of Rousseau's influence than Goldsmith's work does. Her texts feature lectures issued by an unnamed mother to her son, Charles. They use this narrative to guide child readers through instructional lessons on science and polite conduct. The intent of the text

supports Rousseau's view of using learning to expand a student's knowledge, endow greater self-awareness and ensure social survival. While the involvement of a parent goes against the expectations for *Émile's* tutor, no overt affection is exchanged between the mother and Charles. Like Rousseau's models for an educator and student, they can only share facts. As the boy's age increases with each volume, so does the complexity of the lectures' subjects and diction, but the stoic relationship between him and his teaching mother is constant.

The first volume is designed for teaching facts to children of approximately two-to-four years of age:

There is a butterfly.
Come we shall catch it.
Butterfly, where are you going?
It is flown over the hedge.
He will not let us catch him.
There is a bee sucking the flowers.
Will the bee sting Charles?
No, it will not sting you if you let it alone.
Bees make wax and honey.
Honey is sweet.⁵⁶

Each observation is clearly and concisely outlined in simple terms, the topics transitioning into one another without going into great detail. The text abides by the most general and obvious elements associated with each subject; the butterfly is too quick to catch, the bees sucking at the flowers make honey, honey tastes sweet. These are obvious details that are easily observed and remembered by a young child when encountering insects or flowers. Further entries in the first volume instruct good behaviour within the household, including cleanliness and mealtime etiquette.

Lessons' second volume moves away from lectures on literal objects to discuss conceptual constructs. It focuses on teaching child readers to tell time by the

⁵⁶Barbauld, Anna. *Lessons for Children, Part I: For Children from Two to Three Years Old*. (London: J. Johnson, 1801), 18-19.

calendar year through lessons on day and month naming, as well as an overview of each season's distinguishing characteristics. As the lectures advance, Charles grows from a quiet listener to a responsive student. He eventually responds to direct questions from his mother:

What is to-day, Charles?
To-day is Sunday.
And what is to-morrow?
To-morrow will be Monday.
And what will the next day be?
The next day will be Tuesday.
And the next day?
Wednesday.⁵⁷

Though the diction in this conversation is relatively simple, new words for this volume are written phonetically to assist children with their pronunciation. By the final volume, lessons focus on teaching poetic structure, geography, meteorology, agriculture, political economy, and geology. Charles' lessons are issued in accordance with Rousseau's expectation that a child be made a productive member of society. However, just as there is no maternal emotion in Barbauld's narrative, nor is there any urgency for the boy to excel. Charles does not become Rousseau's revolutionary, but is merely fit to assume a place among the status quo. Furthermore, later analysis shows that Barbauld's experience with this instructional emphasis does not prevent her subsequent writing for children from using folk-tale storytelling and supernatural elements, which Rousseau objects to.

The prevalence of Locke's influence over Rousseau's is further emphasized by the lessons in Sarah Trimmer's 1780 *An Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature*. Like Barbauld's *Lessons*, this is an instructional text that frames didactic lectures to children in narrative elements. It also casts a mother in the role of tutor to

⁵⁷ Barbauld, Anna. *Lessons for Children, Part II: Being the First for Children Of Three Years Old*. (London: J. Johnson, 1801), 5-6.

two of her own children, Charlotte and Henry. As they join her on a garden walk, she uses the surroundings as starting points for her lessons. However, Trimmer's text does not take this opportunity to label and discuss the flora and fauna, as *Lessons* might under similar circumstances. Instead, *Knowledge of Nature* dwells upon the potential virtues that children can gain from imitating the characteristics of plants, animals, and insects.

Trimmer considers nature to be an ideal source of social conduct models, and is particularly admiring of the organizational habits of insects. Their world is portrayed as a structured environment where all residents prioritize survival of society:

See those busy little ants, they work as hard as possible. Do you know that they get all the corn they can, and lay it up against the winter comes? [*sic*] If all Men and women were as provident as they are, there would not be so many Beggars.⁵⁸

The mother's words emphasize that ants appreciate the stability that comes with focussing their energies on hard work and maintaining routine. They do not spend time dwelling on their existence or probing ways of changing it; to invest effort in such activities is not only detrimental to society, but potentially deadly. This socially conservative emphasis on the perpetuation of order is more reminiscent of Locke's goals than Rousseau's.

Maintaining social order proves to be a continuous theme in late-seventeenth-century children's literature, even in works that incorporate supernatural content. Like Locke and Rousseau, Trimmer once criticized fairy tales for "fill(ing) the heads of children with confused notions of wonderful supernatural events," but this did not

⁵⁸ Trimmer, Sarah. *An Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature, and Reading the Holy Scriptures. Adapted for the Capacities of Children*, 10th ed. (London: T. Longman and O. Rees, 1799), 69.

stop her from incorporating elements from the genre in her didactic storytelling.⁵⁹ Her 1786 *Fabulous Histories, or The Story of the Robins*, involves two congenial families' efforts to raise and educate their children to be benevolent, intelligent, and virtuous. One is the human Bensons, composed of two parents along with the youngsters Harriet and Frederick. The other is a nest of robins that reside on the Benson property.

Trimmer's creation and development of an anthromorphic family is unusual considering her prior children's literature. The mother and father bird interact through speech, though the language represents a form of communication unique to them that, while written as English, is not intended to be English. Like a human parent, the mother robin bestows names on to each of her four children, introducing them as Robin, Dicky, Flapsy, and Pecksy. The parallel stories of the two households subsequently unfold with children from each listening attentively to their parents as they are given lessons on conduct. There are times when these points are species-distinct, such as mother Benson teaching how to care for caged pets, or mother robin's advice on the etiquette of bird songs. However, underlying the majority of these lessons are universally applicable messages on respecting one's parents, following conduct by example, and taking responsibility for one's actions.

Trimmer defends her use of fantastical elements in the text's introduction. She humanizes the birds to excite her readers, saying that the animals' capacity to act as humans stimulates interest and wonder. Trimmer also hopes that learning through the robins will give child readers a sense of universal benevolence, prompting them to acknowledge the possible human complexities of animal existence. This, in turn, bestows them with a respect for nature that ensures they do not harm it.

⁵⁹ McGavran, J. Holt Jr., ed. *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth Century England*. (London: University of Georgia Press, 1991), 19.

Though aforementioned examples frequently endorsed Rousseau's principles on encouraging practical didacticism, his call for political activism never resonated strongly with English children's literature. Near the end of the eighteenth century, when revolutionary activities engulfing France inspired an ideological counter-revolution in Britain, children's literature became an instrument for proponents of the status quo. Stories continued to focus on practical didacticism, as well as advocacy against liberal political agendas. As the next section shows, many of the critical issues that arose within this turbulent literary environment contributed to the inspiration and development of the Lambs' and Bowdler's respective adaptations.

2.4 – Revolutionary Developments for Children’s Literature

The previous sections of this chapter have focussed on the philosophical influences of English children’s literature. However, the politics of the eighteenth century also had a role in shaping the genre, particularly by 1790. Though the execution of King Louis XVI and the declaration of a French republic were two years away, English citizens were already engrossed in the potential consequences of France’s violent political situation during that year. Those endorsing the Revolution’s principles adopted, or were labelled with, the name of its leading political movement: the Jacobin Club. However, the critical views of English Jacobins were usually overshadowed by vocal conservative proponents. These anti-Jacobins gained a foothold by using the violent fallout of France’s political turbulence to create an animosity towards republican reform.⁶⁰ Jacobins were characterized as enemies of the pillars of British society: order, faith, and the monarchy. Subsequent political upheaval in France galvanized conservatives while increasing the public fear. One of the most notorious events was the French National Convention’s 1792 Edict of Fraternity, which called on all Europeans to overthrow their secular and spiritual leaders.

In 1793, Hannah More stated that “it is not so much the force of French bayonets, as the contamination of French principles, that ought to excite our apprehension.”⁶¹ Her remark offers insight into the motivation behind many English texts produced over the subsequent decade. Though conservative paranoia tended to focus on the potential threat of an armed republican insurgency, a conflict between Britain’s Jacobins and anti-Jacobins also transpired on the literary battlefield. Two of

⁶⁰ Ward, William. “Some Aspects of the Conservative Attitude Towards Poetry in English Criticism, 1798-1820.” *PMLA*. Vol. 60, no. 2. (June 1945): 389.

⁶¹ More, Hannah. *The Works of Hannah More*. (London: Fisher, Fisher and Jackson, 1834), 2: 406.

William Godwin's novels, the 1794 *Adventures of Caleb Williams* and the 1799 *St. Leon*, stand as good examples of literature for adults that promoted Jacobin agendas. However, Jacqueline Pearson notes that other English liberals tended to use subtler messages than Godwin's, while conservatives had a penchant for deciphering reformist political allegories from seemingly innocent narratives. Matthew Grenby estimates that at least fifty Jacobin and anti-Jacobin novels were published in Britain between 1791 and 1805, to say nothing of similar examples of poetry, drama, and non-fiction.⁶²

English children's literature became involved in this tumultuous political debate at an early point. In 1788, Trimmer created the *Family Magazine* to help outline her fears over the genre's vulnerability to Jacobin infiltration. At the time, she believed that thousands of impressionable children were at risk to the "vices" supposedly promoted by Jacobin writings:

At first they read these infamous publications under the notion of amusement, and by degrees lose all sense of virtue until they can take pleasure in nothing but riot, intemperance, obscenity, and profaneness – which too frequently end in an ignominious death!⁶³

Trimmer's warning was intense, though very few authors and editors of children's literature appeared to share her urgency. That is not to suggest that they were indifferent to Jacobin politics' influence over the genre, or the possibility that the movement could lead to the chaotic future that she foretold. However, it was very rare for children's literature to be openly political. The majority of anti-Jacobin arguments and ideals were not stated directly, but integrated into their texts' didactic content. One of the works that used this strategy of subtlety was John Aiken and Anna Barbauld's *Evenings at Home; or, the Juvenile Budget Opened*.

⁶² Grenby, Matthew O. *The Anti-Jacobin Novel*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1.

⁶³ Trimmer, Sarah. "Preface." *Family Magazine*. Vol. 1. (1788): 1.

Aiken and Barbauld's six-volume collection was published between 1792 and 1796, and contains a combination of fictional prose, poetry and dramatic verse. This content resembles the work of several prior eighteenth-century children's authors, including Goldsmith's moral narratives, Barbauld's instructional narratives, and Trimmer's humanized animals. Despite these elements, the text's didacticism maintained a moderately anti-Jacobin tone that encouraged orderly behaviour in its child readership without attacking liberal reforms. Its content is attributed to the private library of the fictional Fairborne family. Consisting of "the master and mistress, and a numerous progeny of children from both sexes," the members of this prolific and wealthy household claim to regularly read aloud from their extensive collection during holiday evenings.⁶⁴ Each chapter represents a single evening's schedule of titles.

The text's narrative introduction suggests that each set of stories, poems, and dramas are chosen randomly through a contest. However, they are actually organized by common literal elements and themes that emphasize specific moral and social lessons for children. For example, the material for "Evening I" uses fables featuring animal families that are endowed with human speech, mannerisms, and values. A short story entitled "The Young Mouse" depicts a mother mouse explaining the dangers posed by humans and their baited traps to her young, allegorically cautioning against temptation and the deceptiveness of immediate appearances. "The Little Dog" depicts the young canine Fido, who is so uncertain of his ability to serve his master that he asks his mother to teach him how to be a better companion. She advises her son to "love [the master] dearly, and prove your love by all the means in your power,

⁶⁴ Aiken, John and Barbauld, Anna Laetitia. *Evenings at Home; or, the Juvenile Budget Opened*. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1868), 9.

and you will not fail to please him.”⁶⁵ These suggestions supplement a direct statement of the fable’s moral that follows the narrative’s conclusion: that one can give satisfactory repayment to any obligations or debts by faithful, affectionate, and humble service.

The text’s moderate political stance is clear from “On Wines and Spirits,” a drama from its thirteenth night. The story lectures on alcohol using a short play starring George and Harry, two students attending their tutor’s daily lesson. The tutor offers a thorough outline of the process by which alcohol is created, the expectations of drinking etiquette, and the dangers of overindulgence. The most politicised moment of the discourse comes when the tutor shares his personal views on spirits:

They have so little good in and so much bad in them, that I confess I wish their common use could be abolished altogether. They are generally taken by the lowest class of people for the express purpose of intoxication; and they are much sooner prejudicial to the health than wine, and, indeed, when drunk unmixed, are no better than poison.⁶⁶

Alone, this statement can be interpreted as an argument in favour of prohibition, or at least of temperance. However, rather than promote an anti-Jacobin message, the tutor argues against the merits of banning alcohol to solve inebriation issues. He declares that change fuelled by either radical liberalism or absolute conservatism is unnecessary. Instead, he notes that there are individuals, such as chemists, that can be trusted with jurisdiction over issuing liquor. The tutor argues that such people recognize the dangers of abusing alcohol, and can remedy them by educating others on the ills of drunkenness.

Greater interest in the Revolution’s consequences for children’s literature finally began appearing by the mid-1790s, with Trimmer again at its forefront. Her anti-Jacobin views motivated her to turn her focus away from fiction in order to create

⁶⁵ Aiken, *Evenings at Home*, 14.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 164.

specialized textbooks for English charity schools. These included a reading guide entitled *The Charity School Spelling Book* and a collection of bible lessons compiled as *An Abridgement of Scripture History*. Her rationale for these projects is outlined in her 1802 *Guardian of Education*, a journal dedicated to “the preservation of the young and innocent from the dangers which threaten them in the form of infantine and juvenile literature.”⁶⁷

In her first issue of *The Guardian of Education*, Trimmer claims that she does not want to get involved with the political controversies of the “Jacobinical sect.”⁶⁸ However, she betrays this assertion by identifying reformists as members of a “conspiracy against Christianity and all social order” that was attempting to “infect the minds of the rising generation, through the medium of Books of Education and Children's Books.”⁶⁹ She asked other authors of children’s literature to support “the commencement of a Christian Education from the very cradle” that would endow young readers with the values needed to “defeat the nefarious designs of the enemy.”⁷⁰ Trimmer believed that a strong sense of “truth and virtue” would immunize children against the dangers that she associated with Jacobin policies, ensuring a stable and moral social status quo for England.⁷¹

The Guardian of Education was one of the first journals dedicated to reviewing children’s literature and addressing issues of childhood education. However, Quinlan notes that it was also a platform for Trimmer’s rigid and hypocritical literary criticism.⁷² For example, despite supporting the use of

⁶⁷ Watson 119.

⁶⁸ Trimmer, Sarah, ed. “Introduction.” *The Guardian of Education, A Periodical Work*. Vol. 1, no. 1. (May 1802): 16.

⁶⁹ Trimmer, “Introduction,” 2.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷² Quinlan, Maurice. *Victorian Prelude: A History of English Manners, 1700-1830*. (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1965), 94.

supernatural elements in her *Fabulous Histories*, she opposed all other children's stories that involved magic creatures or talking animals. She argued that, unlike her own work, they were too foolish to coherently teach anything, and often promoted immoral Jacobin beliefs.⁷³ Trimmer's views and work on children's literature rapidly provoked outrage from other critics, particularly Charles Lamb.

Lamb believed that writers working on children's literature were losing sight of its potential for combining excitement with learning. He detested the instructional emphasis of narrative writers like Trimmer and Barbauld. He claimed that they had abandoned the creative principles of fiction, and used narrative elements to disguise their politicised academic textbooks. The intensity of his assertions is communicated in an 1802 letter to Samuel Coleridge:

Knowledge as insignificant & vapid as Mrs. B's books convey, it seems, must come to a child in the *shape of knowledge*, with conceit of his own powers, when he has learnt, that a Horse is an Animal, & Billy is better than a Horse, & such like: instead of that beautiful Interest in wild tales, which made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child. Science has succeeded to Poetry no less in the little walks of Children than with Men. -: Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil?⁷⁴

The "sore evil" that Charles attributes to Barbauld and Trimmer's "vapid," "nonsense" writing comes from his belief in the superior didactic potential of folk tales and other "old classics of the nursery."⁷⁵ He believes that an emphasis on factual details overwhelms and confuses audiences, rendering them helpless. This prompts him to "*Damn*" the two women and their supporters as "*Blights and Blasts* of all that is Human in man & child."⁷⁶

⁷³ Watson, *The Devil*, 119.

⁷⁴ Marrs, Edwin W., ed. *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 2: 81-82.

⁷⁵ Marrs, *Letters*, 2: 81.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

Lamb argues that integrating didacticism into folk tales makes it more memorable than inserting it into textbooks.⁷⁷ He believes that this literature embodies the virtues of Poetry, which is his label for writing that inspires and exhilarates readers with an idealistic sense of “beautiful Interest.”⁷⁸ In his view, this sensation appeals to the wildness in readers’ imaginations while still serving a didactic purpose. It involves the emotional responses generated by the visceral encounters with supernatural creatures and challenges that are typical to folk tales. Lamb believes that these moments enhance children’s retention of practical knowledge, their didactic lessons made memorable through associations with excitement and wonder.⁷⁹

Lamb later outlines further benefits of this sensation while challenging assertions that content of “beautiful Interest” instils children with unnecessary fears.⁸⁰ Recall Trimmer’s belief that folk tales foster turmoil by presenting confusing and frightening fictional concepts such as monsters or ghosts. Lamb counters by arguing that “it is not book, or picture, or the stories of foolish servants, which create these terrors in children” as “fear would have come self-pictured in some shape or other” regardless of their readings.⁸¹ He adds that folk tales help children to define boundaries for their fears, which encourages the development of appropriate responses as they mature; some fears are abandoned when their fictional nature is finally acknowledged, while others are countered using other emotions.⁸²

However, Lamb’s arguments did not discourage authors from continuing to use fiction to promote practical didacticism and anti-Jacobin values among children.

Elizabeth Turner’s 1808 *The Daisy, or Cautionary Stories in Verse Adapted to the*

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Lamb, Charles. “Witches and Other Night-Fears.” *The Essays of Elia*. ed. Geoffrey Tillotson. (London: Dutton, 1962), 79.

⁸² Lamb, “Witches,” 79.

Ideas of Children from Four to Eight Years Old motivates children towards socially constructive behaviour by depicting characters that are either rewarded for making moral, responsible decisions or grotesquely punished for being bad. Joseph West, the protagonist of “The Good Scholar,” is praised for being quiet and attentive during school lessons, leading him to become idolized as the best student in his class. On the other hand, the titular character of “Careless Maria” is scolded severely by her uncle for carelessly throwing her toys and clothes around the house. The sickly Henry of “Frances and Henry” promises to be eternally kind to his sister Frances after she comforts him while he is ill. In “Dressed or undressed,” an unnamed child is barred from the dinner table until he gets over his lethargy and changes out of his bedclothes. In “The Giddy Girl,” young Helen falls into a well and drowns after she ignores her mother’s warnings against playing near it. Little Jack of “The Chimney Sweeper” is kidnapped and enslaved by the titular labourers after he disobeys his parents and runs far from home.

Godwin’s Juvenile Library, the publisher for Charles and Mary Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare*, created several examples of didactic children’s literature during the early nineteenth century. The business was established in 1805 by Mary Jane Clairmont, Godwin’s wife, who was inspired to pursue publishing children’s texts after the critical and commercial success of her earlier translation of the French *Tires des tragedies de Shakespeare*.⁸³ This collection adapted several of Shakespeare’s tragedies into didactic stories for children, and provided the editorial template later used for *Tales from Shakespeare*.⁸⁴ Chapter three of this thesis examines the history of the latter in greater detail.

⁸³ Marris, *Letters*, 2: 202.

⁸⁴ Burton, Sarah. *A Double Life: A Biography of Charles & Mary Lamb*. (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 221.

Godwin's earlier writing demonstrates that he did not shy away from using fiction to engage in Jacobin and anti-Jacobin political debates. Both *Caleb Williams* and *St. Leon* promoted Jacobin themes through their titular characters' conflicts with the English upper class. In the former, the titular Caleb discovers that Squire Ferdinando Falkland, his employer, has committed murder and arranged for two innocent men to be executed in his stead. Falkland believes his rank gives him the right to kill and to blame others for the crime, and cannot bear the implication that Caleb's awareness of the truth grants the servant power over him. To preserve his status, the Squire relentlessly persecutes Caleb with the help of a corrupt cabal of nobles and public officials. In the latter, St. Leon is a nobleman who uses a supernatural elixir and talisman to grant himself immortality and wealth. Though he intended to use his powers to benefit humanity, his infinite life and riches render him bored and indifferent to the plights of others.

These two stories reflect Godwin's frustration with the power and privilege of the English upper classes. They also convey his belief that governing officials are corrupt and lethargic individuals that prioritize their interests over those of others. Though the Juvenile Library's texts are not as political as these novels, they promote concepts that are antithetical to the aforementioned abuses. Stories with themes based upon integrity, morality and responsibility are commonplace in Godwin's collection, and support his attitudes towards childhood education

In his 1793 *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Modern Morals*, Godwin declares that children are "raw material put into our hands, a ductile and yielding substance" that must be moulded into maturity.⁸⁵ His emphasis on the inexperience of children is similar to both Locke and Earle's perspectives. He places

⁸⁵ Godwin, William. *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Modern Morals and Manners*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 112.

responsibility for shaping the malleable child upon an adult, and resolves that, if the student fails to become a noble and productive individual, then this teacher is to blame. The Juvenile Library assists with this teaching process by providing texts that, like *Tales from Shakespeare*, are designed to foster moral didacticism while priming children for their transition into more mature reading.

The first adaptation printed for the Juvenile Library was Godwin's own *Fables Ancient and Modern* (1805). The publisher also contributed several text books to the imprint, including *The Pantheon; or History of the Gods of Greece and Rome* (1806), the biographical *Life of Lady Jane Gray* (1806), as well collections detailing the histories of England (1806), Rome (1809), and Greece (1811). Texts by other authors and editors include *The Little Woman the and the Peddler* (1805), *Gaffer Grey* (1806), *Tom and his Cat* (1806), *Stories from Old Daniel* (1808) and a linguistic textbook by William Hazlitt titled *A New and Improved Grammar of the English Tongue* (1810).

Though Charles Lamb considered his editing of *Tales from Shakespeare* to be "hackwork for survival," both he and Mary wrote for the Juvenile Library for several years.⁸⁶ The former contributed an expanded version of the anonymous children's poem *The King and Queen of Hearts* (1805), a didactic Iliad adaptation called *The Adventures of Ulysses* (1808), a fairy tale in verse titled *Prince Dorus; or, Flattery Put Out of Countenance* (1811), and a poem based on *Beauty and the Beast* (1811). The latter created a collection of didactic stories for girls titled *Mrs Leicester's School* (1809), and assisted her brother with the creation of their *Poetry for Children* (1810).

However, the Lambs' *Tales from Shakespeare* is distinguished from these and other Juvenile Library texts by several characteristics. Most of Godwin's and the Lambs' contributions are folk tale and poetry adaptations, textbooks, or original

⁸⁶ Watson, *The Devil*, 21.

works of fiction that are for children to read individually. As noted in the first chapter of this thesis, *Tales from Shakespeare* encouraged collaborative family reading of its adapted narratives; the Lambs ask brothers to teach Shakespeare to their inexperienced sisters by reading aloud from the text. Neither prior children's texts nor Shakespeare adaptations featured such specific goals. Furthermore, chapter five notes that the uniqueness of the Lambs' text helped inspire several Shakespeare children's adaptations produced during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Despite some philosophical similarities, the varied motivations and goals of the children's literature produced between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries prove that it was impossible for editors and authors to achieve any consensus on a definition for the genre. The politicisation of this debate during the French Revolution intensified these disagreements. Children's literature was no longer regarded as just a vehicle for didacticism, but also a means of making political inroads on young and impressionable minds. Though some authors and editors were less overt with their Jacobin and anti-Jacobin politics, it was impossible to divorce their work from the debate. These factors contributed to the birth of *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare*, though it is also vital to consider another side of the texts' histories: their places among Shakespeare adaptations.

2.5 – Shakespeare Adaptations and the New Theatre

The first chapter of this thesis noted that Shakespeare had undergone several significant transitions from the seventeenth-to-nineteenth-centuries. During the former period, the entire institution of English theatre experienced its Restoration revival. Initially, Shakespeare had neither the public's attention nor much interest from critics and editors. His plays were widely dismissed as obsolete examples of Elizabethan and Jacobean writing, which did not appear to bode well for the future notoriety of any adaptations. Yet, by the nineteenth century, public and critical perceptions of Shakespeare had undergone substantial changes. Adaptations of his plays were not only frequently performed on English stages during this period, but were also common subjects of household readings. This section explores many of the editorial alterations that the plays underwent during their transition from obscurity to prominence in theatres, and their expansion into the privacy of the parlour. It highlights several of the adaptations that influenced the creation of both *Tales from Shakespeare's* and *The Family Shakespeare's* editing philosophies and goals.

Renewed interest in Shakespeare surfaced during the late seventeenth century, when several theatre company managers began evaluating his plays' usefulness as raw material for new productions. Sir William Davenant, the manager and patentee of the Duke of York's Company in 1660, was among those interested in the dramas. At the time, he held the performance rights to only two plays. This was a stark contrast to Thomas Killigrew's rival King's Company, which had the rights to all other English plays written prior to 1642, including some by Davenant.⁸⁷ Davenant remedied this disparity by successfully petitioning the Lord Chamberlain for the performance rights to eleven of the plays held by Killigrew, nine of which were Shakespeare's. Several

⁸⁷ Freehafer, John. "Formation of the London Patent Companies in 1660." *Theatre Notebook*. Vol. 20, no 1. (1965): 26-27.

critics believe that the circumstances and outcome of this bid emphasize Shakespeare's insignificant status at the time. Don-John Dugas argues that Killigrew would have been far more protective of the plays if he believed that they had any commercial viability.⁸⁸ Judith Milhous and Robert Hume concur, and add that Killigrew could have used his considerable court influence to contest the grant if he objected to it.⁸⁹ Instead, the loss of a few Shakespeare plays was likely treated as a meagre concession to maintain the King's Company's continued monopoly over the works of Ben Jonson, John Fletcher, Francis Beaumont, and, to the humiliation of the Duke's Company, Davenant himself.

While many critics focus on Killigrew's reactions, Julie Sanders considers the factors that may have influenced Davenant's unusual determination to acquire these Shakespeare dramas. She believes that the plays not only accommodate the expansion and reinterpretation of their content, but invite it, making them an ideal basis for developing new ideas.⁹⁰ Sanders says that many Shakespeare adaptors updated their plays to suit their contemporary standards, appealing to audiences' changing tastes and values.⁹¹ Some productions changed the outcomes of events; others focused on altering or expanding upon the backgrounds of specific characters. The latter often involved either exploring the personalities, histories, goals, and onstage absences of existing cast members or inventing new *dramatis personae* for adaptations.

Davenant, like many of the Shakespeare adaptors that followed him, used these ideas throughout much of his career. However, he initially limited his work to cutting lines and scenes rather than adding content. This was done in his 1661

⁸⁸ Dugas, Don-John. *Marketing the Bard: Shakespeare in Performance and Print, 1660 – 1740*. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 27.

⁸⁹ Milhous, Judith, and Hume, Robert D. "New Light on English Acting Companies in 1646, 1648, and 1660." *Review of English Studies*. Vol 42, no. 168 (November 1991): 487.

⁹⁰ Sanders, Julie. *Adaptation and Appropriation*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 48.

⁹¹ Sanders, *Adaptation*, 48.

adaptations of *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night* to ensure that his company's performances remained within the two-to-three hour timeframe typical of the era's dramas. Many critics have accused the Lambs and Bowdler of cutting material on a similar basis of convenience; however subsequent discussions on their respective uses for expurgation show otherwise. As for Davenant, his later projects experimented in more extensive deviations from Shakespeare, such as his 1662 version of *Measure for Measure*, entitled *The Law against Lovers*. This play incorporates large amounts of original content, including new comedic lines, songs, and dance routines. Davenant also added *Much Ado about Nothing*'s Benedick and Beatrice to the cast, casting the former as the brother of Angelo while the latter appears in the company of a new younger sister named Viola. Contrary to many critical reactions, neither *Tales from Shakespeare* nor *The Family Shakespeare* makes similar content changes. Even some of Davenant's later plays avoided making similarly radical alterations to Shakespeare.

Davenant's 1664 version of *Macbeth* shows the more creative side of his adaptation editing. Though there are no alterations to events of the story, several songs and dance routines were added to the source material. John Downes, one of Davenant's contemporaries, later published his opinion of the resulting musical tragedy in his history of the Restoration stage:

*The Tragedy of Macbeth, alter'd by Sir William Davenant; being drest in all it's Finery, as new Cloath's, new Scenes, Machines, as flyings for the Witches; with all the Singing and Dancing in it: The first compos'd by Mr. Lock, the other by Mr. Channell and Mr. Joseph Preist; it being all Excellently perform'd, being in the nature of an Opera, it Recommenc'd double the Expense; it proves still a lasting play.*⁹²

It is not the performance of the actors or the portrayal of Shakespeare's source material that captures Downes' interest in the play, but the combination of new

⁹² Downes, John. *Roscius Anglicanus*. ed. Judith Milhouse and Robert D. Hume. (London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1987), 72.

costumes, artistic content, vibrant scenery, and the use of modern machinery to assist performers. This response reflects the sense of constant innovation that Davenant incorporated into his productions, a measure that became his signature. His company became the leading purveyor of English Shakespeare adaptations, producing twenty-four performances compared to the King's Company's five.

Davenant created his final Shakespeare adaptation, *The Tempest, or, The Enchanted Isle*, with John Dryden in 1667. Finished and first performed just a year before Davenant's death, it is an extensively altered drama that adds several original comedic characters. These include Hippolito, a male version of Miranda who has never seen a woman, Dorinda, a second daughter of Prospero's who becomes attracted to him, and Milcha, Caliban's fairy sister who is Ariel's love interest. For the Duke's Company, the play marks the start of a declining reliance on Shakespearean source material. Not only had the death of their manager deprived them of their most active Shakespeare adaptor, but the company had gained new resources and talent that was taking them beyond the playwright's work. Though the Company continued using its Shakespeare source material, it also performed adaptations of work by other playwrights, as well as original dramas.

It is possible that Davenant varied his editing style in an attempt to determine an ideal or preferred formula for creating Shakespeare adaptations. However, it is more likely that this constant change in style is the intended attraction. Davenant's productions continuously drew audiences with the promise of transforming old plays into new experiences. By avoiding the use of a recurring editing strategy, he allowed his work to contrast with Killigrew's plays, which typically adapted Shakespeare using minimal language modernization. From the 1670s onward, many theatre companies, including the King's Company, attempted to emulate the success of

Davenant by investing more time into creating their own signature Shakespeare adaptations. Numerous adaptations were also created by editors attempting to locate an ideal format for presenting Shakespeare to their contemporary English audiences. Those that were successful encouraged several subsequent imitators, resulting in many themes and editorial philosophies becoming standardized, while plays that failed to resonate with audiences typically garnered critical infamy before falling into obscurity.

Several of the Shakespeare adaptations produced during the 1670s and 1680s were edited to include transparent commentaries on contemporary public figures, political activities, and literary trends. The Duke's Company embraced this trend with their production of Thomas Shadwell's 1678 *History of Timon of Athens*, a satirical sexual comedy. They followed this with Thomas Otway's 1679 *History and Fall of Caius Marius*, which adapts portions of *Romeo and Juliet* into a story set in ancient Rome. Much of the dialogue of Metellus, son of title character Marius, is taken from Romeo's part in Shakespeare's play, while his lover Lavinia uses portions of Juliet's dialogue. Attempting to escape their feuding parents, the couple marries in secret, only to share Romeo and Juliet's fate. This private loss intensifies the tragedy of the story's public war, lending emphasis to *History and Fall's* poignant lesson on the destructiveness of civil conflict.

Not all adaptations focussed on developing obvious political messages. Nahum Tate's 1681 *History of King Lear* trades Shakespeare's tragic ending for a new, triumphant one that celebrates virtuous behaviour. Both Lear and Cordelia survive the adversity, and murder attempts, of Goneril, Regan, and Edmund. Lear is able to learn from his mistakes in judgement while Cordelia lives to become Queen

with Edgar as her king. These new events teach audiences that ambition, betrayal, and immorality are no match for the superior stability of love, trust, and nobility.

The King's Company, later restructured into the United Company in 1682, performed several adapted Shakespeare plays during this same time period. Among them was Edward Ravenscroft's 1678 *Titus Andronicus*, which added new horrifyingly violent scenes and more grisly character deaths to provide an intense warning against indulging in revenge. Tate edited *Coriolanus* into his 1681 *Ingratitude of a Commonwealth* with a similarly visceral emphasis. Like *The History of King Lear*, this adaptation ends with strong didactic point, though it involves the majority of the cast experiencing brutal combat, rape, or gory mutilation. Coriolanus dies horrifically, followed by Aufidius, Martius, and Virgilia, leaving Volumnia alone to sink into pathetic, crippling despair and intense madness. This entire display is meant to communicate the dire consequences of abandoning social regulation and morality.

Other adaptors also created material reminiscent of some of Davenant's past work. Colley Cibber followed the example of *The Law against Lovers* with his 1699 *The Tragical History of Richard III*. This play patched together Shakespeare's *Richard III* with extracts from both parts of *Henry IV* as well as *Henry V* to create a massive story. The editor removed many supporting characters, along with several of the scenes that did not feature Richard, to cut performance time. Charles Gildon attempted to recapture the playful excitement of Davenant's productions with his 1700 *Measure for Measure; or, Beauty the Best Advocate*, which introduces several new song and dance scenes to Shakespeare's play. George Granville also added musical interludes and comedy to his 1701 *Jew of Venice*, an adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* that portrays Shylock as an outrageously crude and despicable villain.

Some adaptors believed that exploiting Shakespeare's humour, not constructing new moral or social lessons, was the key to pleasing audiences. This encouraged John Dennis to transform *The Merry Wives of Windsor* into his 1702 *The Comical Gallant: or the true Amours of Sir John Falstaffe*. Dennis prioritized the role of Falstaff, added coarse dialogue to the script, and increased the number of jokes, insults, and farcical incidents in each scene. However, the resulting production was accused of being juvenile, and was only given two performances. One anonymous critic commended its failure, saying that it "dy'd like an Abortive Bastard."⁹³ Dennis did not cope well with this response, and used his preface to the play's print edition to absolve himself of responsibility for its shortcomings. He accused his actors and the theatre managers of conspiring to ruin and humiliate him. He later gave a similar response following the failure of another of his Shakespeare adaptation: a 1719 version of *Coriolanus* entitled *Invader of His Country; or Then Fatal Resentment*.

Just a few years after Dennis' second adaptation, Charles Johnson adapted material from several plays into his 1723 *Love in a Forest*. Though advertised as a comedy based on *As You Like It*, it also included quotations from *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Richard II*. Additionally, the Pyramus and Thisbe play from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is performed for Duke Senior and his exiled court as part of a new scene in the Forest of Arden. The play was initially popular with audiences and critics, the *London Post* commenting that its second performance garnered "as numerous an Audience as has for this great while been seen; not only the Boxes, Pit, and Galleries, but the stage too being crowded with Spectators."⁹⁴

⁹³ Anonymous. *A Comparison Between Two Stages*. ed. Staring B. Wells. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942), 97.

⁹⁴ Avery, Emmett L., ed. *The London Stage 1660 – 1800: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments & Afterpieces, Together with Casts, Box-Receipts and Contemporary Comment*. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), 2: 1: 704.

However, this success did not endure, and the play received no more than a total of six performances.

Despite the creative liberties that many adaptors took with Shakespeare's plays, very few removed Shakespeare's name from their adaptations. Even when original content was added or outcomes were changed, many of the resulting productions were still advertised as the creations of Shakespeare. Charles Marowitz proposes a rationale for this decision:

In all these convolutions, there is an underlying assumption that the new work, no matter how extrapolated, still owes some kind of debt to its original source and, indeed, in the more successful treatments, the spirit of the original can be discerned coursing through the coagulated matter from which the Frankenstein monster has been assembled.⁹⁵

Though Marowitz's monstrous allusions suggest that he personally disdains the adaptation process, his overall logic remains valid. Acknowledgement from Davenant and other early eighteenth-century adaptors endowed the playwright with substantial recognition from contemporary critics and the general public. Dugas credits the playwright's current popular stature to the plethora of drama editions and derivative works released during this time.⁹⁶ Jonathan Bate concurs, saying that the texts created a literary climate that was distinctly "Shakespearean," giving rise to his recognition as "the Bard."⁹⁷ Sanders adds that the playwright's growing "aura and reputation" created "a veritable industry in Shakespeare source-spotting," encouraging additional editors to create adaptations.⁹⁸

The successes of theatrical Shakespeare adaptations encouraged interest in private reading of the plays during the eighteenth century. As the next section reveals, presenting the dramas aloud became a common social and scholastic household

⁹⁵ Marowitz, Charles. *Recycling Shakespeare*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1991), 7.

⁹⁶ Dugas, *Marketing*, 1.

⁹⁷ Bate, Johnathan. *Shakespeare Constitutions: Politics, Theatre, Criticism, 1730 – 1830*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), xv.

⁹⁸ Sanders, *Adaptation*, 46.

pastime; gentlemen read excerpts of plays to ladies, hosts to their guests, and parents to children. Marvin Rosenberg notes that the quick and frequent publishing of numerous Shakespeare adaptations encouraged the development of this reading culture around the playwright's work.⁹⁹ Additionally, many of the editorial strategies that had thrived among stage adaptations, particularly the use of censorship and emphasis on didactic themes, followed the plays into the home. Editors began to generate specialized versions of the playwright's work, further developing the atmosphere that would nurture *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare*.

⁹⁹ Rosenberg, Marvin. "Reputation, Oft Lost Without Deserving...." *Shakespeare Quarterly*. Vol. 9, no. 4. (Autumn, 1958): 499.

2.6 – Bringing Shakespeare Home

Shakespeare's transition into the English household, and its ensuing debates, began long before the appearance of the Lambs' or Bowdler's texts. One of the first steps in this process was unwittingly made by the Bishop of Rochester in 1721. In a letter to Alexander Pope, he argued that Shakespeare was unsuitable for reading at home:

I protest to you, in a hundred places I cannot construe (Shakespeare), I dont understand him. The hardest part of Chaucer is more intelligible to me than some of those Scenes, not merely thro the faults of the Edition, but the Obscurity of the Writer.... There are Allusions in him to an hundred things, of which I knew Nothing, & can guess nothing. And yet without some competent knowledge of those matters there's no understanding him.¹⁰⁰

The Bishop's inability to understand Shakespeare was exacerbated by the lack of supplementary material in the published editions of early eighteenth-century stage adaptations. Lewis Theobald's adaptation of *Richard II* is representative of the problems that this caused. Though the play was supposedly "Alter'd and Improv'd from Shakespear," its printed edition had neither footnotes nor a preface that outlined its adaptation methods and goals. Theobald's lack of explanation for his alterations to Shakespeare caused confusion among readers that attempted to differentiate between the work of the former and the latter.

In May of 1721, Pope was commissioned by publisher and bookseller Jacob Tonson to create a new anthology that addressed these concerns. Four years later, Pope completed *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*, one of the first entries in an extensive lineage of household Shakespeare adaptations. Instead of using one of the many aforementioned stage adaptation styles, this six-volume collection featured a set of editorially unified and annotated plays that exhibited "a religious abhorrence to all

¹⁰⁰ Sherburn, George, ed. *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), 2: 78-79.

Innovation” and to “any indulgence to my private sense of conjecture.”¹⁰¹ This meant that Pope attempted to distance his work from the story and character alterations featured in previous stage adaptations. His edited Shakespeare includes several footnotes on meaning as well as definitions for many of the unusual words and phrases used in the plays. These details were intended to assist household readers with understanding the content.

Another of Pope’s measures is his relocation of all “suspect passages” with “excessively bad” diction and grammar.¹⁰² This is not censorship, but the modification of lines that the editor accused of being too out of context or erroneous to be Shakespeare’s work. Pope moves them from the plays to the margins, adding footnotes to rationalize his specific actions. He also corrects diction in the plays for historical accuracy, removing words that he determines inappropriate for specific settings. Most of these changes involve the replacement of Elizabethan and Jacobean jargon in the Roman plays with something that was deemed more culturally and historically appropriate.

Theobald’s 1726 *Shakespeare Restored* gives a thorough critique of Pope’s *Works* that highlights its supposed editorial failings. Theobald accused Pope’s text of several errors, and included a one hundred and thirty-two page examination of Pope’s *Hamlet* that attempted to improve the entire script, line-by-line. Rather than issue a hostile rebuttal, Pope actually took many of these corrections into account for his second edition of *Works*. However, one of Theobald’s main arguments attacked the very basis of Pope’s editing. He believed that Pope’s language alterations were an editorial liberty that distanced the adaptations from Shakespeare. He argued that the only way to make the plays truly “Shakespearean” was to restore them to a state that

¹⁰¹ Pope, Alexander, ed. *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*. (London: Jacob Tonson, 1725), 1: xxi.

¹⁰² Pope, *Works*, 1: xxi.

resembled their unedited Elizabethan and Jacobin formats. This conclusion inspired him to create a rival version of *Works* in 1733 which attempted to do just that.

The editorial rivalry between Theobald and Pope establishes the contentious atmosphere surrounding many early household Shakespeare adaptations. According to Adrian Poole, supporters of these projects were often disdainful of post-Restoration theatre adaptations. They accused editors like Davenant, Tate, and Dennis of being literary “pretenders” that wanted to appropriate Shakespeare’s notoriety using “inferior hybrids” of his plays.¹⁰³ However, these accusations did not impede the continuing production of theatrical adaptations. Many editors of the dramas objected to Theobald’s idea of restoring the plays to their roots, though it remained a common goal of household adaptors. The prologue to David Garrick’s 1754 *Florizel and Perdita*, an adaptation of *The Winter’s Tale*, assures the audience that “Tis my chief Wish, my Joy, my only Plan, To lose no Drop of this immortal man,” referring to Shakespeare.¹⁰⁴ However, the play actually loses more than a “Drop” of content. The first three scenes of the source material are cut while those remaining are modified to develop a love story between the title characters.

Garrick was a prolific adaptor who modified characters, added music and dance, and either inserted or removed scenes from Shakespeare. His 1754 *The Taming of the Shrew* was adapted similarly to his *Winter’s Tale*. Renamed *Catherine and Petruchio*, it cuts Shakespeare down to a three-act performance of the title characters’ romance, eliminating the Bianco/Lucentio subplot and inserting slapstick comedy. In 1755, he co-wrote an opera based upon *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* entitled *The*

¹⁰³ Poole, Adrian. *Shakespeare and the Victorians*. (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2004), 19.

¹⁰⁴ Garrick, David, ed. *Florizel and Perdita. A dramatic pastoral, in three acts. Alter'd from The winter's*

tale of Shakespear. As it is performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane. (London, J. and R. Tonson, 1758), 4.

Fairies. The performance borrowed several musical routines from similar productions by John Dryden, John Milton, and Edmund Waller. In 1756, he turned *The Tempest* into an opera and also produced an adaptation of *King Lear* that actually used Tate's play as its basis. He also made a 1761 adaptation of *Cymbeline* that abridges Imogen's burial scene and removes most of the fifth act.

Several proponents of returning Shakespeare's work to a state resembling its origins were unimpressed by Garrick. One vocal critic was Theophilus Cibber, son of aforementioned Colley Cibber. He argued that Shakespeare was an "immortal" poet who "enriched the stage with [his] admirable compositions."¹⁰⁵ In contrast, he called contemporary adaptations the editorial aberrations of "Indolent and Ignorant" editors and patentees.¹⁰⁶ He considered Garrick's work to be especially offensive to his tastes:

Were *Shakespeare's* Ghost to rise, wou'd he not frown Indignation on this pilfering Peddler in Poetry, – who thus shamelessly mangles, mutilates and emasculates his plays? *The Midsummer Night's Dream* has been minc'd and fricasseed into an indigested and unconnected Thing, called, *The Fairies: – The Winter's Tale*, mammoc'd into a Drole; *The Taming of the Shrew*, made a Farce of; – and *The Tempest*, castrated into an Opera.¹⁰⁷

By defining Garrick's editing with such visceral terminology, Cibber shows his intense emotional attachment to Shakespeare's unedited work. He does not just single out the problematic elements of Garrick's adaptations, but objects to everything about them. He is convinced that these projects have uprooted their source material from the sanctity of their origins, forcing the plays into new, inappropriate, and periodically unidentifiable genres. He determines that this not only diminishes their integrity as

¹⁰⁵ Cibber, Theophilus. *Theophilus Cibber, to David Garrick, Esq; With dissertations on theatrical subjects*. (London: W. Reeves and J. Phipps, 1759), 9.

¹⁰⁶ Cibber, *Theophilus*, 11.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

representations of Shakespeare's abilities, but is a violation; a maiming and theft of their fundamental elements.

While Cibber criticized Garrick, other editors and adaptors considered ways of restoring Shakespeare's plays to a state resembling their Elizabethan and Jacobean condition. Household adaptations supporting this movement appeared throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. One of the first was written by Samuel Johnson, who believed that Shakespeare's language could only be restored to his plays through combining a "careful collation of all the oldest copies" of the dramas.¹⁰⁸ He spent much of the next decade gathering aged folio editions of the plays from the private collections of various colleagues. His work was eventually published as the 1765 *Plays of William Shakespeare*. The adaptation's emphasis on promoting household Shakespeare reading and discussions encouraged Johnson to include large amounts of crucial supplementary material. Like Pope, he anticipates that his audience will find several Elizabethan and Jacobean terms to be antiquated and confusing. However, instead of replacing these outdated terms with contemporary synonyms, he attempts "to explain what is obscure" using several annotations that translate and discuss them.¹⁰⁹

George Steevens used similar principles in 1766 to create a household adaptation collection entitled *Twenty of the Plays of Shakespeare*. This text combines material from several early quarto printings of the plays. Steevens believes that these documents are a more reliable reflection of Shakespeare's true writing style than the folio editions, which have "suffered" from the "licentious alteration" of editors

¹⁰⁸ Yung, Kai Kin et al. *Samuel Johnson, 1709–84*. (London: Herbert Press, 1984), 87.

¹⁰⁹ Yung, *Samuel Johnson*, 87.

looking to correct or amend his language.¹¹⁰ Johnson was impressed with the result, and the two later collaborated on the 1773 *Works of Shakespeare*. This sixteen-volume collection was based on Johnson's prior work. It featured annotated passages as well as illustrations relevant to each play. Edmond Malone, a Shakespeare scholar who had previously worked with Johnson, published another similar collection, *The Works of Shakespeare*, in 1790.

Not every household adaptation editor was concerned with producing an entire anthology of edited plays. Some selected isolated quotations of thematic and poetic interest to foster discussions among specific reading groups. Both William Enfield's 1774 *The Speaker* and Vicesimus Knox's 1784 *Elegant Extracts* use selections from Shakespeare's plays to emphasize the literary greatness that they attribute to the playwright. Mary Wollstonecraft's 1789 *The Female Reader* uses play extracts "to imprint some useful lessons on the mind, and cultivate the taste at the same time – to infuse a pure and simple style by presenting natural and touching scenes" that emphasize the importance of moral values.¹¹¹ These selections are intended to develop the judgement and reason of young women. John Newbery calls Shakespeare a "sweet Songster and Nurse of Wit and Humour," and included several songs and rhymes from his dramas in the 1794 *Mother Goose's Melody: or Sonnets for the Cradle*.¹¹² The text introduces child readers to Shakespeare, though it does not feature any additional annotations or didactic commentary.

¹¹⁰ Steevens, George, ed. *Twenty of the Plays of Shakespeare, Being the whole Number printed in Quarto During his Life-Time, or before the Restoration, Collated where there were different Copies, and Published from Originals*. (London: J. and R. Tonson, 1766), 1: 9.

¹¹¹ Todd, Janet, ed. & Butler, Marilyn, ed. *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*. (New York: New York University Press, 1989), iv.

¹¹² Newbery, John. *Mother Goose's Melody: or Sonnets for the Cradle*. (New York: Kraus-Thomas, 1975), i.

Prior to these texts, William Dodd published his 1752 *Beauties of Shakespeare*. He cites Shakespeare not only as his favourite author, but as a man of “Poetical Beauty” who has the rare honour of “all humours, ages, and inclinations jointly proclaim(ing) their approbation and esteem of him.”¹¹³ He argues that this status is not only due to technical aspects of Shakespeare’s language, but its ability to evoke didacticism. He defines Shakespeare’s plays as lessons on society and individual behaviour, and uses extracts from them to offer readers a sample of the playwright’s teachings. Dodd contextualizes the passages that call attention to their themes. Some are brief, such as *King Lear*’s Edmund’s lament over the unjust connotations drawn from the nature of his birth in “Bastardy.” The longer “Subtly of Ulysses, and Stupidity of Ajax” juxtaposes the title traits of the former and latter using most of scene three of *Troilus and Cressida*’s second Act. Despite his confidence in Shakespeare’s didactic potential, Dodd does not outline the specific lessons being taught by these selections. Instead, he encourages readers to generate scholarly discourse while attempting to decipher these meanings on their own.

Before working on *Tales from Shakespeare*, Charles Lamb expressed his views on reading Shakespeare in the home via several essays that promoted the pastime. These early nineteenth-century studies do not contextualize the activity as an alternative to viewing theatrical performances, but argue that it is actually a superior practise. Lamb believes that reading Shakespeare among family and friends is both socially and didactically beneficial to its participants. He argues that stage performers are subject to several limitations that impede their ability to effectively communicate the full complexities of Shakespeare’s characters. The majority expose audiences to biased and inconsistent interpretations of their roles which interfere with the

¹¹³ Dodd, William, ed. *The Beauties of Shakespeare, Selected from each play: with General Index Digesting Them Under Proper Heads*. (London: John Bumpus & Holborn Bars, 1822), vii.

presentation of plays' story elements and themes. He uses G.F. Cooke's 1800 portrayal of the title protagonist in a production of *Richard III* as an example.

Lamb credits Cooke's ability to convey the monstrous elements of Richard's personality, including his ruthless cunning, consummate hypocrisy, vulgar morality, and vigorous ambitions. However, he criticizes the actor's apparent omission of the character's positive traits:

I am possessed with an Admiration of the genuine Richard, his genius, and his mounting spirit, which no consideration of his cruelties can depress. Shakespear has not made Richard so black a Monster, as is supposed. Wherever he is monstrous, it was to conform to vulgar opinion. But he is generally a Man. Read his most exquisite address to the Widowed Queen to court her daughter for him, the topics of maternal feeling, of a deep knowledge of the heart, are such as no monster could have supplied. Richard must have *felt*, before he could feign so well; tho' ambition choked the good seed.¹¹⁴

Lamb uses Cooke's emphasis of the unsympathetic and tyrannical side of Richard's complex personality to confirm his assessment of dramatic performances. Actors prove to be very much like editorial adaptors, customizing the portrayals of characters' personalities based upon their individual preferences. He argues that this not only leads to the exaggeration of certain traits to the detriment of others, but can also create disparities between the ways that Shakespeare's characters appear from production to production.

Even if actors attempt to defy these expectations and offer broader portrayals of their characters' traits, Lamb still does not believe that they are capable of communicating the full intensity of their roles' emotional states. For example, Lamb argues that the participants of stage productions are ill-prepared to adequately convey passionate romantic sentiments:

The love-dialogues of Romeo and Juliet, those silver-sweet sounds of lovers' tongues by night; the more intimate and sacred sweetness of

¹¹⁴ Codwell, Joan, ed. *Charles Lamb on Shakespeare*. (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe Ltd, 1978), 17.

nuptial colloquy between an Othello or a Posthumus with their married wives, all those delicacies which are so delightful in reading, as when we read those youthful dalliances in Paradise. – ‘As besem’d Fair couple link’d in happy nuptial league, Alone:’ – by the inherent fault of stage representation, how are these things sullied and turned from their very nature by being exposed to a large assembly; when such speeches as Imogen addresses to her lord, come drawling out of the mouth of a hired actress, whose courtship, though nominally addressed to the personated Posthumus, is manifestly aimed at the spectators, who are to judge of her endearments and her returns of love.¹¹⁵

Lamb idealizes the intensity of the love and adoration that many couples in Shakespeare’s plays feel towards one another. This emphasis increases scepticism over whether or not actors, as professional imitators, can adequately make the same pronouncements while maintaining the illusion that they actually are the characters that are in love. He does not believe they can, and perceives actors only as orators that dictate their respective characters’ relationships directly to audiences. The viewers of plays are left overly conscious of the fact that, for all their pronouncements, the Romeos and Juliets on stage are not real lovers but actors pretending to be such.

Lamb also argues that there are some characters in the plays that actors are too inhuman to be adequately portrayed on stage. He believes that the limitations of the eighteenth- and-nineteenth-century theatre make the appearance of any creature from Shakespeare’s elaborate bestiary of monsters, spirits, sprites, witches, and other “terrible beings” seem ineffective and mundane. Instead of ominously prophetic acolytes of the arcane, the witches of *Macbeth* are reduced to “so many old women, that men and children are to laugh at.”¹¹⁶ Likewise, the fearsomeness of the bestial Caliban is potentially diminished if he appears on stage as an unshaven man in a heavy mask and overcoat.

¹¹⁵ Codwell, *Charles Lamb*, 28.

¹¹⁶ Lamb. “Witches,” 35.

Lamb believes that solitary reading Shakespeare's plays that are conducted in the privacy of the home bypass the various limitations that he associates with theatrical performances. However, his arguments are dependent on a number of ideal conditions being fulfilled. For example, he says that solitary readers always have access to unbiased adaptations that are more detailed than those used by theatre groups. He believes that this gives the former a broader presentation of Shakespeare that shields them from the potentially leading or incomplete performances of stage actors. However, these views are dependent on readers having access to such supposedly flawless, unaltered editions of Shakespeare. Lamb does not consider the possibility that they would use adaptations that are as potentially biased as any individual actor's performance. He does not acknowledge the potential benefits of privately reading the plays aloud to others, nor does he seem to realize that private readings do not necessarily involve the content of an entire play. Some practitioners prefer to isolate selections out of order, probing for iconic extracts or reading something deemed appropriate to a particular occasion. This can consequently result in readings that are, by Lamb's standards, contextually incomplete.

Another flaw in Lamb's argument is his overconfidence in the capacity of readers' imaginations. He argues that solitary readers can mentally conceive of far more vivid portrayals of Shakespeare's scenes and characters than any stage performance can. He questions whether or not readers can even distinguish between the traits of a character on stage from those of the actor portraying him or her. Furthermore, he also credits the imagination with the ability to create vivid interpretations of Shakespeare's bizarre and mystical characters. Rather than suspending disbelief to perceive an old woman on stage as a witch, readers can mentally construct and insert their ideal images of that character into their readings.

However, Lamb's views are generalized, neglecting to consider the varying limits of every individual's imagination and abilities to comprehend the details of the plays. He forgets that the act of reading Shakespeare alone in the home does not necessarily guarantee that one will understand or appreciate the material.

Bowdler also had contentions with the presentation of Shakespeare in theatres. However, unlike Lamb, he was concerned over the morality of these performances rather than with identifying aesthetic shortcomings. Chapter one of this thesis notes that Bowdler says that Shakespeare's plays were flawed from their very first incarnations. He still reveres Shakespeare's literary, cultural, and educational significance to English society. Yet, he also argues that the dramas include offensive material, particularly humour that was designed purely to appease the morally dubious interests of Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences.

As chapter four of this thesis elaborates, Bowdler is convinced that theatrical productions have continued to prioritize offensive content. However, he believes that advancing education and cultural sophistication have made nineteenth-century audiences sensitive to the offensiveness of such material. He presents *The Family Shakespeare* as an alternative text for moral Britons, portraying household reading as a sanctuary against the flawed Shakespeare productions that dominate the English theatre. Furthermore, Bowdler considers his expurgated adaptations to be accurate approximations of the plays that Shakespeare would have created had he not bowed to public tastes. This declaration seems extremely arrogant in contrast to the Lambs' intentions, making it easier to portray Bowdler as a malicious editorial figure. However, chapter four's look into the specific details of his editing form shows that any accusations of his overzealous expurgations are unwarranted.

2.7 – Conclusion

Tales from Shakespeare and *The Family Shakespeare* represent the unprecedented convergence of the various developments, debates, and trends of both children's literature and Shakespeare adaptations. This chapter has shown that the two genres were preoccupied with their separate internal critical debates throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Children's literature previously focussed on the creation of original content that was framed within specific didactic philosophies. Many of these texts were influenced by the contrasting theories on childhood education outlined in John Earle's 1628 *Microcosmographie*, Locke's 1693 *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* and Rousseau's 1762 *Émile*. This caused contention between writers that preferred teaching children practical lessons using text books, such as Trimmer, Newbery and Barbault, and those that created educational children's narratives, such as Fielding, Goldsmith, and Turner. These divisions waxed and waned over time, as evidenced by Trimmer and Barbault's acknowledgement that there were didactic merits to fiction, resulting in the former's 1786 *Fabulous Histories* as well as the latter's work with Aiken on *Evenings at Home* in 1792 and 1793.

Meanwhile, Shakespeare adaptors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were focussed on locating an ideal format for presenting the dramas to a broad theatre audience. Tate believed in emphasizing Shakespeare's moral didacticism, and did so in 1681 by removing bawdiness from *King Lear* and intensifying the violent tragedy of *Coriolanus*. Cibber and Johnson entertained audiences by mixing elements from different plays together into extensive stories. These debates continued as Shakespeare adaptations migrated into the English household. Pope believed that Shakespeare readers preferred a text that was both footnoted and censored. Johnson

and Steevens attempted to create ideal Shakespeare collections by collating the oldest editions available to them. Enfield, Knox, and Wollstonecraft were satisfied with collecting extracts from Shakespeare that supposedly possessed didactic insights.

Though writers of children's literature and Shakespeare adaptations had generated a variety of editing philosophies prior to the nineteenth century, there were no English Shakespeare editions designed specifically for children or families. *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* changed this by combing several elements from both genres into a new literary entity: children's Shakespeare. Like the writings of Trimmer, Barbauld, Tate, and Pope, the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts are concerned with issues such as content organization, thematic emphasis, censorship, and didactic potential.

Additionally, *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* have inspired new critical debates that specifically concern the development of Shakespeare adaptations for young people. Many of these discussions are connected to analyses of their respective methods for creating children's Shakespeare. *Tales from Shakespeare* introduces children to the playwright's work in preparation for their reading other editions and adaptations, while *The Family Shakespeare* is designed to replace these previous texts. Subsequent chapters will show that misconceptions and contentions surround discussions on the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts. However, the strengths and weaknesses of their respective editing methods have still influenced the creation of new children's Shakespeare for the past two hundred years. The extensiveness and eclectic nature of these projects emphasizes that *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* are not just products of children's literature and Shakespeare adaptations, but have moved beyond these influences to create their own distinctive legacy.

Chapter 3: Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*

3.1 – Introduction

The distinctiveness of Charles and Mary Lamb's respective adaptation methods is one of the defining characteristics of their *Tales from Shakespeare*. Though the text is meant to introduce young readers to Shakespeare's dramas, each sibling favoured a different philosophy for editing the plays. The result is two very distinct types of storytelling created *from* Shakespeare. The objective of this chapter is to contrast the specific nuances of each Lamb sibling's editorial philosophies, defining their respective strengths and weaknesses. Charles Lamb's adaptations of the tragedy and history plays incorporate several elements from folk tales. His work is also distinct from that of other adaptors, particularly Bowdler, for its avoidance of severe censorship. Though *Tales from Shakespeare* is meant for children, neither violence nor tragedies are removed from its stories. However, Charles adds a prominent narrative voice to his adaptations which moralizes characters and their actions. This is combined with narrative commentary that further emphasizes the ethical conflicts found in the plays and outlines the didactic significance of their resolutions for the benefit of child readers.

Mary Lamb is responsible for the majority of *Tales from Shakespeare's* adaptations, and her editing methods contrast significantly with her brother's. While he creates focussed, moralized versions of Shakespeare's tragedy and history plays, she presents longer adaptations of the comedies and romances. Unlike Charles, she avoids inserting moral commentary into her stories. Instead, she presents retellings of the plays that retain many of their supporting characters and subplot incidents, points that Charles frequently limits or cuts altogether. However, this is not to suggest that there is absolutely no moralization or expurgation in Mary's work, she just uses these

measures more subtly than her brother. In keeping with her lack of overt moralization, she avoids using strict character and scenario archetypes.¹¹⁷ Her *dramatis personae* are never unilaterally good or evil, but tend to retain the complex ethical potential that is present in Shakespeare. Her heroic adaptation characters can possess reprehensible traits, while her villains can have the ability to evoke sentiments such as sympathy. Charles and Mary Lamb's varying adaptation styles can influence their young audience's perception of Shakespeare.

This chapter examines Charles and Mary Lamb's methods to contrast their respective didactic strengths and weaknesses, something that few critics have done in detail. Despite having been in circulation for over two hundred years, there has rarely been more than a superficial evaluation of *Tales from Shakespeare's* editorial strategies. Nineteenth-century reviews typically approved of the text, but seldom offered specific rationales for these reactions. From the twentieth century to the present, critics of the Lambs have become more preoccupied with Mary's mental health issues and the scandalous details of her matricidal past than with editorial debates. This chapter's first section lends some insight into this infatuation with Mary's murder of her mother by noting ways that the topic has arisen in criticisms and studies of the Lambs and their literature.

¹¹⁷ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 1.

3.2 – Mary Lamb’s Madness

The second chapter of this thesis notes that *Tales from Shakespeare* was published as a part of William Godwin and Mary Jane Clairmont’s Juvenile Library. Clairmont had contracted Mary Lamb to create a children’s Shakespeare collection similar to the French *Tires des tragedies*. Though delighted by the opportunity to establish a literary reputation outside of her close circle of friends, Mary’s inexperience with editing led her to enlist her brother’s assistance. Charles showed little interest in the text, and placed more attention on his recently-created farce, *Mr. H*.¹¹⁸ Despite the encouraging praise of Drury Lane Theatre’s managers, the play was a dismal failure that was persistently booed and heckled on its opening night.¹¹⁹ Mary offered Charles the opportunity to assist her with *Tales from Shakespeare* to abate his subsequent depression. However, Charles viewed the text as a source of income that he and his sister needed to repay past debts. He was personally dissatisfied with his adaptations, and asked that they be printed anonymously, though Clairmont ignored his request.

However, Mary expressed a very different reaction to their collaboration in an 1806 letter to her friend, Sarah Stoddart:

You would like to see us as we often sit writing on one table (but not on one cushion sitting) like Hermia and Helena in *Mid-Summer’s Nights Dream*, or rather like an old literary Darby and Joan. I taking snuff and he groaning all the while & saying he can make nothing of it, which he always says till he has finished and then he finds out he has made something of it.¹²⁰

Though strange for a sibling relationship, Mary’s marital comparisons reflect her intense appreciation for her brother’s constant care and involvement in her life. She had been under Charles’ guardianship since 1796, when a severe mental breakdown

¹¹⁸ Marris, *Letters*, 3: 231.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 3: 229.

had led to her kill their mother. Their cooperation on *Tales from Shakespeare* gave her an opportunity to demonstrate her growing stability and abilities. Despite his personal dissatisfaction with his adaptations, Charles showed appreciation for her writing and editing skills in a letter to Thomas Manning. He declared that not only had she “has done [her tales] capitally,” but that the quality of her work guaranteed that the text would “be popular among the little people.”¹²¹

This thesis has previously noted that *Tales from Shakespeare* was critically praised throughout the nineteenth century. The anonymous 1808 *Critical Review* article that was mentioned briefly in the first chapter lauded the text’s distinctiveness among its contemporaries:

We have compared it with many of the numerous systems which have been devised for riveting attention at an early age, and insinuating knowledge subtly and pleasantly into minds, by nature averse to it. The result of this comparison is not so much that [*Tales from Shakespeare*] rises high in the list, as that it claims the very first place, and stands unique, and without rival or competitor.¹²²

The reviewer argues that *Tales from Shakespeare*’s unparalleled ability to educate young readers on the complexities of Shakespeare ranks it above all previous and present children’s literature and adaptations. He/She compares the Lambs’ work to Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, and says that the former have emulated the latter’s ability to endow adventurous stories with didactic overtones.¹²³ Just as the reviewer considers Defoe’s work to be the best piece of educational children’s literature of the eighteenth century, he/she believes that *Tales from Shakespeare* will hold the same prestigious status in the nineteenth century.

The December 1808 article in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, also referenced in the thesis’ first chapter, further emphasizes *Tales from Shakespeare*’s early critical

¹²¹ Ibid., 3: 225.

¹²² Watson, *The Devil*, 130.

¹²³ Marrs, *Letters*, 3: 226.

success. Its anonymous author believes that the text's reputation is not driven by misplaced enthusiasm for something new to the early nineteenth-century literary scene, but is genuinely deserved.¹²⁴ Like the *Critical Review*, the journal praises the text's success in combining an educational goal with effective adaptation methods:

The substance of the play from which each story is taken is ingeniously compressed into a short tale, which conveys a very just idea of the spirit and fancy of our immortal Bard; and even the language is introduced where it can be admissible, so that these Tales may very justly be considered as an introduction to the young pupil to the perusal of Shakespeare, and may interest the mind at an age where the Plays themselves cannot be properly appreciated.¹²⁵

This assessment came with an apology from the reviewer for having been a year late in printing a response to *Tales from Shakespeare*. It states that “although the public has long since decided in (the adaptations’) favour,” *The Gentleman’s Magazine* “cannot hold our testimony of their merit.”¹²⁶ The writer resolves that, for the sake of informing any readers that may have missed the release of the Lambs’ work, space in the journal absolutely must be devoted to pronouncing its greatness. These enthusiastic statements are a testimony to the acclaim and respect garnered by the text.

Tales from Shakespeare continued to receive positive reactions from critics for the remainder of nineteenth century. This encouraged other booksellers to acquire its publication rights following the closure Godwin’s Juvenile Library in 1822. Though these rights changed hands several times, the text’s adaptations did not undergo any editorial alterations, but remained as they were in the first published edition from 1807. However, this prolonged stability is not without disadvantages. *Tales from Shakespeare*’s continued success and lack of controversy prompted it to experience a lull in critical attention by the mid-nineteenth century. Criticisms of the text grew

¹²⁴ Review of *Tales from Shakespeare*, *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 1001.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

fewer and briefer, though their tone remained positive. The only response to the text's 1870 Lockwood and Company's edition is a brief note of praise for being "a work worthy of occupying the library of the young" in the journal *Notes and Queries*.¹²⁷ Later, the introduction of illustrations by Arthur Rackham the text in 1899 generated some brief interest in the work.

However, the criticism that *Tales from Shakespeare* generated from the twentieth century to the present was not as positive as that of the previous century. Instead of examining the Lambs' adaptation philosophies or the sentimental elements of their text's history, several critics have fixated on the details of Mary's mental illness. Opportunities to conduct analyses of the Lambs and their work are usually squandered by unsubstantiated accusations, sensationalism, and hostility towards Mary. Noel Perrin, for example, uses her mental health to undermine *Tales from Shakespeare* and promote his preference for Henrietta and Thomas Bowdler's respective editions of *The Family Shakespeare*. He calls the former a fraudulent text that was written by a homicidal madwoman and her greedy brother.¹²⁸ He adds that there is nothing of didactic value in it, only "some charming prose" designed to deceive reviewers and parents into favouring the adaptations.¹²⁹

Perrin goes on to argue that Mary's "Lizzie Bordenish past" was an obvious sign that she should not be near children, let alone edit literature for them.¹³⁰ He believes that she used her editing as a self-deceiving escape from her madness, and had no genuine interest in didacticism. However, no evidence or elaboration accompanies these observations. By contrast, he characterizes Henrietta and Thomas Bowdler as heroically "passionate" and "motivated to protect young people from

¹²⁷ "Miscellaneous Notes on Boots, Etc." *Notes and Queries*. Vol. s4-IV, no. 151. (Nov. 19, 1870): 450.

¹²⁸ Perrin, Noel. *Dr. Bowdler's Legacy: A History of Expurgated Books in England & America*. (Macmillan & Co. Ltd: London, 1970), 63.

¹²⁹ Perrin, *Dr. Bowdler's Legacy*, 63.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

indelicatecy.”¹³¹ These idealistic observations confirm that Perrin’s bias against *Tales from Shakespeare* is meant to facilitate his self-serving interest in promoting *The Family Shakespeare* and his criticism of it. The perpetuation of this hostility distorts the former’s identity, causing further debates surrounding the Lambs to focus more on Mary’s mental health than the editorial content of their text.

Not all critics that reference Mary’s psychological issues adopt such a hostile tone. Some use the details to generate sensationalism before diverting attention to an unrelated topic. Tim Milnes briefly discusses Charles’ history of caring for his “mentally ill sister at home” before moving on to unrelated analysis of his writing style.¹³² Milnes states that Charles was motivated to write through the stress and melancholy of his home life, and cites his relationship with Mary as having a defining influence over his fiction, editing, and criticism. However, despite her purported significance, the remainder of the essay makes no additional reference to his sister, her personal life, or her supposed contributions to the tense household atmosphere surrounding Charles. Milnes’ reference to her thus appears to be an interesting, if self-serving, attempt at garnering attention rather than a strong argument.

Despite professing to be objective and impartial, Kathy Watson immediately uses the violence of Mary’s past to generate intrigue in her 2004 biographical account of the woman’s life and literature, *The Devil Kissed Her*. The biography’s title leaves the impression that she possessed predominantly devious, monstrous qualities that encouraged her to deliberately stab her mother to death. The Satanic metaphor used to define her mental state creates an immediate sense of sensationalism while exaggerated her illness as a powerful supernatural force of evil.

¹³¹ Ibid., 63.

¹³² Milnes, Tim. “Charles Lamb: Professor of Indifference.” *Philosophy and Literature*. Vol. 28, no. 2. (October 2004): 324.

Watson's attraction to sensationalism is also evident from her text's introduction:

On the afternoon of 22 September 1796, Mary Lamb killed her mother. She stabbed her at home, in the dining room, with the carving knife the family used at mealtimes, making this a homely crime as well as a violent one. Mary was thirty-one years old and, at the moment she raised the knife, quite mad.¹³³

This statement is juxtaposed with an abstract illustration of a monstrous, knife-wielding woman. The image, combined with the preceding details, sets an excitable tone for the remainder of the Watson's text, which portrays Mary as an enraged and murderous writer of admirable children's fiction. Throughout these judgements, there is no consideration for her adaptation methods, their use of themes, or her portrayal of Shakespeare's characters. Watson avoids such analysis, and defines *Tales from Shakespeare* as a means of giving Mary "pleasure and confidence in her writing ability" that helped her to cope with her mental state.¹³⁴ Along with Perrin's views, this limited use of the text overwhelms relevant discussion points concerning *Tales from Shakespeare* and other writing by the Lambs.

Bonnie Woodberry claims to have connected Mary's mental health issues to the nuances of her adaptation methods in *Tales from Shakespeare*. She argues that Mary's murdering her mother was an unconscious reaction to English society rather than due to a psychological affliction. While Perrin compares Mary to Lizzie Borden, Woodberry prefers making parallels to *Hamlet's* Ophelia. She argues that Mary was so frustrated by being "submerged and silenced" by the gender bias of the early nineteenth century that she replied with violence and aberrant behaviour.¹³⁵

¹³³ Watson, *The Devil*, 1.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹³⁵ Woodberry, Bonnie. "The Mad Body as the Text of Culture in the Writings of Mary Lamb." *Studies in English Literature*. Vol. 39 (Autumn 1999): 661.

Woodberry goes on to construct an activist image of Mary, saying her literary work is the result of madness being channelled creatively and industriously. She defines Mary as an emotionally overwhelmed heroine who filled her portion of *Tales from Shakespeare* with strong female protagonists to confront the male-dominated social order's conception of femininity.¹³⁶ However, like many critics, Woodberry's points are based purely on speculation, and offer no specific evidence or insight into any sign of such specific intent from Mary within her personal commentaries or correspondence regarding the text. The argument appears overly general, and Woodberry seems keener to use Mary's madness as an exciting anecdote for garnering attention to her work than to explore a valid point.

These examples show that the intense preoccupation with Mary Lamb's mental state has distracted from critical discourse on the content of *Tales from Shakespeare*. While these historical details can offer potential avenues for discussion on the Lambs, precedent indicates that the majority of critics prefer to dwell on Mary's purported madness, which can come at the cost of an argument's coherence and relevance. Adequately defining the purpose and didactic potential of *Tales from Shakespeare* requires one to consider its content in addition to the personal history of either its authors, no matter how exciting or visceral the facts might seem. Examining the text's two editorial formats for transforming plays into short narratives is the first step towards defining its didactic goals as well as the strengths and flaws of its various tales. These editing styles can also establish *Tales from Shakespeare's* importance among its peers, including its role within the lineage of Shakespeare productions for children that have been created from the nineteenth century to the present.

¹³⁶ Woodberry, "Mad Body," 662.

3.3 - Charles Lamb's Shakespeare Folk Tales

Charles Lamb's adaptations in *Tales from Shakespeare* present Shakespeare's tragedies with a moralized and didactic emphasis that is thematically and structurally reminiscent of folk tales. This section focuses on defining Lamb's use of folk tale motifs using the system of character archetypes and developmental criteria outlined by Vladimir Propp. Propp defines folk tales as the sum of symbiotic parts, thirty-one in total, which operate in sequence. Each serves a function in the narrative that successively helps to propel events towards their resolution, though some can be omitted without impacting those remaining.¹³⁷ Several elements of Propp's models are present in Lamb's tales, and even details that do not match them perfectly tend to have similarities with their functions.

The specific activities that transpire within each of Propp's functions are determined by the actions of a folk tale's *dramatis personae*.¹³⁸ Propp argues that characters' motivations and actions will always fall within the boundaries of specific archetypes. For example, the *villain*'s sphere of action is confined to selfish goals and creating strife for the hero.¹³⁹ They are present purely to "disturb the peace... to cause some form of misfortune, damage, or harm."¹⁴⁰ In contrast, the *hero* will always be driven to honour the challenges posed by other characters, called *donors* or *providers*, while overcoming the obstacles created by the villain.¹⁴¹ Assisting him/her in this quest are loyal *helpers*, as well as a cadre of connective *dispatchers*, sought-after *princesses*, and rewarding *kings*.¹⁴² *Tales from Shakespeare*'s versions of *Macbeth*,

¹³⁷ Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folktale*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 1.

¹³⁸ Propp, *Morphology*, 9.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 14

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

Hamlet, and *King Lear* initially appear to follow these expectations, albeit with some modifications.

The first function dictates that folk tales open with a prominent figure, usually the protagonist, being absent from his/her home.¹⁴³ The second function implants this hero with a specific suggestion that either poses a call to action or presents an obstacle.¹⁴⁴ The third function involves the hero acting upon this call or challenge, which provokes the appearance of villains. Lamb's "Macbeth" and "Hamlet" begin by referencing the title protagonist's returns from travel abroad, though this is less immediately relevant to "King Lear." As in Shakespeare, the monarch is not absent until his kingdom is divided and he has fallen out with Cordelia. The protagonists of these tales are immediately exposed to suggestions or requests for action. In the opening lines of "Macbeth," the witches deliver their prophetic suggestion of destined prominence and eventual kingship. The ghost of the murdered king in "Hamlet" immediately demands that his son avenge him. The function is again modified for "King Lear," where it is the protagonist that makes the call to action via his requests for declarations of love from each of his daughters.

By responding to these requests, the protagonists of Lamb's tales draw out the villainous characters of their respective stories. "Macbeth's" narrative states that, by announcing his prophesised kingship, Macbeth inadvertently encourages the murderous ambition of Lady Macbeth. In the tale, it is stated that her murderous advice and actions initiate his moral decay. Hamlet's acceptance of his father's appointed quest in Lamb's tale draws attention to the dark deeds of Claudius, who quickly plots to murder his nephew. Lear's ultimatum to Cordelia, her departure, and

¹⁴³ Ibid., 12.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 13.

the exile of Edgar encourages Goneril and Regan's attempt to seize their father's crown.

It is not as difficult to apply further elements of Propp's scheme to Lamb's Shakespeare adaptations. While Shakespeare features complex *dramatis personae* that are difficult to frame within the strict moral boundaries of Propp's folk-tale heroes and villains, Lamb tends to define many of his tales' cast members in absolute moral terms. His protagonists are noble individuals whose ethically questionable conduct is either attributed, in part or in whole, to factors that are outside their control or are justified by circumstances. His villains are obstructive, irredeemable characters that do evil either for personal gain or its own sake. This moralized editing strengthens many of stories' folk-tale parallels by simplifying characters' motivations and condensing extensive plotlines

The diverse actions and motivations of many of Shakespeare's characters can make Lamb's editorial measure seem awkward, if not impossible, to execute without altering story events. None of Shakespeare's tragic protagonists can be regarded as unequivocally heroic. Though Macbeth begins his story as a champion of King Duncan, he is also a central party in the man's assassination, as well as to several other murders committed to cement his usurpation of Scotland's throne. The righteousness of Hamlet is drawn into question as his enthusiastic rage and remorse prompt him to accidentally murder Polonius while in pursuit of Claudius, which drives Ophelia to madness and suicide. A persistent critical question surrounding *King Lear* is whether or not the king's actions are perpetrated out of genuine tyrannical vanity or if he is the victim of mental deterioration brought on by old age. In a similar vein, Shakespearean villains can exhibit sympathetic traits. Lady Macbeth's emotional breakdown and madness, preludes to her suicide, dilute her ruthlessness.

She becomes a pitiful creature overwrought by the ramifications of her own immoral choices. *King Lear*'s Edmund presents a compelling defence for his actions, citing them as inevitable consequences of a lifetime's mistreatment predicated on the illegitimacy of his birth. While *Hamlet*'s Claudius appears irredeemable, there is sympathy for those he sways to villainy, such as Laertes.

In contrast, *Tales from Shakespeare* features exposition that frames the actions of its characters in a definitively positive or negative light, and sets the two groups against one another in a moral conflict. Though the space restrictions of his editing lead to the removal of some minor characters, such as *Macbeth*'s castle porter, others are present specifically to support the folk-tale qualities of key *dramatis personae*. Lamb's "King Lear" demonstrates this moralizing in its depictions of the title character, Cordelia, Goneril and Regan, as well as Edmund. This version of Lear is particularly striking given the aforementioned debate regarding his mental state. The narrative introduces the character as:

An old king, worn out with age and the fatigues of government, he being more than fourscore years old, determined to take no further part in state affairs, but to leave the management to younger strengths, so that he might have time to prepare for his death, which must at no long period ensue.¹⁴⁵

Lamb's Lear is conscious of the limitations posed by his mortality and the necessity of making practical contingencies for them. The adaptation stresses that it is the preservation of stability, not a desire to flee responsibility or retire to a life of revelry, which motivates its Lear to divide his kingdom between his daughters. Lear's intentions convey both a sense of pathos and selflessness, for though he is about to face inescapable death, his primary concern is ensuring his kingdom's future prosperity.

¹⁴⁵ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 80.

Unfortunately, the adaptation's Lear has already started to succumb to the deterioration of his body and brain, which leads to the very tumultuous situation that he had wished to pre-empt. He is unable to recognize Cordelia's good intentions when she declares her love for him in the same manner as her counterpart in Shakespeare's play. The tale also clarifies the reason for her refusal to exaggerate her adoration for her father:

Cordelia, who in earnest loved her old father, even almost as extravagantly as her sisters pretended to do, would have plainly told him so at any other time, in more daughter-like and loving terms, and without these qualifications which indeed sound a little ungracious: but after the crafty flattering speeches of her sisters, which she had seen draw such extravagant rewards, she thought the handsomest thing she could do was to love and be silent.¹⁴⁶

This establishes that Cordelia, like her father, also exhibits selflessness; she a loving daughter, he a benevolent ruler, and neither seeks personal gain. While arguing that Cordelia's display of affection "had so much the more of truth and sincerity than her sisters," Lamb also notes that Goneril and Regan love Lear only for "mercenary ends."¹⁴⁷ This results in a juxtaposition of each character's roles; Cordelia and Lear fill the heroic function while Goneril and Regan are villainous. Lear and Cordelia both act in accordance with their consciences rather than their base desires, and the resulting conflicts are out of their control. The narrative states that, "in his best of times [Lear] always shewed much of spleen and rashness," and he would have once had no difficulty to "discern truth from flattery, nor a gay painted speech from words that came from the heart."¹⁴⁸ However, his mind is too clouded by the "dotage incident to old age" and the deceptions of his other two daughters to discern the nobility of others.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 81.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

Lamb uses some of Shakespeare's supporting characters in "King Lear" to emphasize the protagonists' noble traits throughout the story. The adaptation portrays the Earl of Kent as another selfless figure, stating that "he had been ever loyal to Lear, whom he had honoured as his king, loved as a father, followed as a master."¹⁵⁰ Kent regards himself as nothing more than "a pawn to wage war against his royal master's enemies."¹⁵¹ He protests Lear's treatment of Cordelia as a bout of "hideous rashness," thinking it uncharacteristic of the king as he is aware of the man's true nobility.¹⁵² When Kent speaks up, "Lear's safety was the motive," as he believes that the ruler's judgement will unravel the principles of the court; that "when power bows to flattery, honour bows to plainness."¹⁵³ His views are a reminder that the adaptation's Lear is a good man that has lost control of his judgement. The King of France has a similar reaction, and recognizes Lear's uncharacteristic behaviour as well as Cordelia's virtuous intentions.¹⁵⁴ He seeks to protect and honour her idealism, sparing her from any further abuse from her addled father. Both men perceive the truth beneath the argument between father and daughter, and value the true goodness of each stricken party equally.

Lear's fool plays a similar supporting role as Kent. The vast majority of his jokes are condensed to a brief note on "his good humour," in which he periodically mocks Lear for "uncrowning himself, and giving all away to his daughters."¹⁵⁵ However, behind his mischief Lamb states that he is a "loyal boy" who uses his free speech to help Lear realize the error of his ways.¹⁵⁶ The narrative emphasizes this by singling out one particular jest: the fool's proclamation "that Lear was no longer Lear,

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 82.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 83.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 84.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

but the shadow of Lear.”¹⁵⁷ The attention lent to this joke highlights how the fool is being used to emphasize that Lear is typically nobler. This becomes even more evident as the jester follows the king out on to the stormy heath. The narrative states that they do not merely wander out into the storm, but “sallied forth to combat the elements,” to “defy the wind and thunder,” and welcomed the cathartic punishment of nature like champions.¹⁵⁸ The adaptation’s fool offers “merry conceits striving to outjest misfortune” in hopes of drawing his king back to greatness.¹⁵⁹

By contrast, Lamb portrays Goneril and Regan as unsympathetically villainous. The narrative emphasizes their lack of human emotion, sentiment, or values, calling them “empty hearted” wenches whose words possess “hollowness.”¹⁶⁰ It is noted that “Cordelia was no sooner gone, then the devilish dispositions of her sisters began to shew themselves in their true colours.”¹⁶¹ They have no loyalty as daughters, only a mutual “coolness and falling off of respect” for Lear that betrays familial expectations.¹⁶² The emphasis on their corruption escalates as the story progresses, until they are finally called “wicked creatures” and “monsters of ingratitude,” bereft of trust and willing to murder for their own gains.¹⁶³ The introduction of Edmund towards the tale’s end intensifies these sentiments.

Lamb confirms that his version of Edmund is the “natural son of the late Earl of Gloucester,” born outside of wedlock.¹⁶⁴ However, the character does not express any grief over his illegitimacy, and acts like an archetypical antagonist from Propp’s functions. He is an evil man that revels in his evil actions, particularly his successful

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 85.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 87.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 88.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 82.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 83.

¹⁶² Ibid., 85.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 90.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

disinheritance of his brother. In keeping with Lamb's penchant for moral conflicts, he defines the brothers simply as Edmund "the bad earl of Gloucester" and Edgar the good, "lawful earl of Gloucester."¹⁶⁵ Meeting Edmund immediately inspires Lear's dark daughters to go further down their immoral path. They murder one another out of jealousy over him, his darkness having transposed itself on to them. It is noted that Edmund feels absolutely no remorse for these "deserved deaths," and uses them to his advantage in a bid for Lear's throne.¹⁶⁶ To facilitate his coup, he arranges the circumstances that lead to Cordelia's death, murdering the "young and virtuous daughter" with an anonymous proxy.¹⁶⁷ Her destruction is the final wicked straw for Edmund's brief existence in the tale, his actions inviting "the judgement of Heaven."¹⁶⁸ Edgar takes on this divine obligation, the adaptation suggesting that he confronts and slays Edmund not out of revenge, but for the sake of moral justice.

Similar character moralization appears in *Tales from Shakespeare's* adaptation of *Hamlet*, where the narrative portrays the title character as a noble man. Though his initial depression over his father's death is described as having left him caring "too little about life to fear the losing of it," he is also reputed to be "as hardy as a lion."¹⁶⁹ However, there is a complication accompanying Hamlet's heroic portrayal: the moral question of his goal to avenge murder by committing murder. Though Lamb notes the existence of this dilemma, his narrative tends to overlook the moral dubiousness of the "rough business" of revenge.¹⁷⁰ Instead, he portrays it as a necessary form of justice.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 91.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 90.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 91.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 174.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

While the sight of his father's ghost strikes Hamlet "with a sudden surprise and fear," he resolves to proceed with revenge against his "wicked uncle" once he learns of Claudius' regicidal ascension to the throne.¹⁷¹ Hamlet acknowledges that "the mere act of putting a fellow creature to death was itself odious and terrible," a judgement that reflects upon his high morality.¹⁷² The strength of his nobility and moral convictions ironically makes it difficult for him to overcome the "wavering of purpose" that keeps him from killing a murderer to avenge a victim.¹⁷³ However, the narrative labels the spectral king's request with "a sacred injunction," a task that Hamlet has a divine obligation to fulfil. The implication that his mission is sanctioned by providence invites parallels with Propp's archetypical hero, who is tasked by a supernatural power to complete a quest or overcome a challenge. Hamlet attaches holy legitimacy to his vengeance, noting that while its commission is "no easy matter" for his conscience, every hour of delay is "a sin, and a violation of his father's commands."¹⁷⁴

Similarly to "King Lear," there are supporting characters in "Hamlet" that are used to emphasize both the protagonist's heroism and the sacred purpose of his revenge, Ophelia being one of the most prominent. Like his counterpart in Shakespeare's play, the adaptation's Prince notes that even righteous murder "did not suit with the playful state of courtship."¹⁷⁵ Though he initially resolves to break his emotional ties, he cannot help but feel remorse over the consequences that doing so has for Ophelia. Hamlet's affection for her in Shakespeare is not openly expressed until his declaration that "forty thousand brothers could not with all their quantity of

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 175.

¹⁷² Ibid., 176.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

love make up my sum” in the play’s fifth act.¹⁷⁶ Even then, there is no clear confirmation as to whether or not this affection is romantic or familial.

However, *Tales from Shakespeare’s* version of the Prince confirms his romantic attraction to Ophelia early in the story. His extravagant letter to her is not just an addendum to his plan to feign insanity, but also stems from his belief that he has been “unreasonably harsh” to his love interest.¹⁷⁷ Its wild declarations of his passion for her are meant as a ploy to preserve the façade of his “supposed madness,” while his true feelings are:

Mixed with some gentle touches of affection, which could not but shew this honoured lady that a deep love for her yet lay at the bottom of his heart.¹⁷⁸

Despite the intensity of his emotions, the adaptation Hamlet resolves to set aside romantic love until his father’s ghost is avenged. This selflessness gives him a heroic sense of pathos, as it reflects his sacrifice of all other pursuits, pleasures, and diversions for the sake of moral justice. He pledges to not embrace opportunities for happiness until after he has left his father’s spectre at peace.

The nobility of the adaptation Hamlet is emphasized again during his confrontation with Gertrude. He brashly accuses her of being both complicit in his father’s murder and blatantly disrespectful of his memory. As in the play, he declares that her actions are so heinous that “the heavens blushed at it, and the earth was sick because of it.”¹⁷⁹ Despite his contempt and hostility, the narrative still references Hamlet as “the virtuous prince” and defends his outburst:

¹⁷⁶ Reed, Isaac, ed. *The Plays of William Shakespeare. In Twenty-One Volumes. With the Corrections and Illustrations of Various Commentators. To Which Are Added, Notes, By Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, With a Glossarial Index.* (London, J. Nicholas & Son, 1813), 18: 338.

¹⁷⁷ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 176.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 179.

And though the faults of parents are to be tenderly treated by their children, yet in the case of great crimes the son may have leave to speak even to his own mother with some harshness, so as that harshness is meant for her good, and to turn her from her wicked ways, and not done for the purpose of upbraiding.¹⁸⁰

This statement is a form of disclaimer for Hamlet's actions, validating his exclamations over Gertrude's supposed deeds. It acknowledges that her suspected complicity in his father's murder exempts her from the respect and tolerance that parents are typically due from their children. His harsh words prompt Gertrude to dwell upon her actions and turn her eyes "inward upon her soul, which was black and deformed."¹⁸¹ This discovery validates Hamlet's judgements, leading him to beg her to cleanse her sins by confessing them to heaven. Yet, by comparison, there is little consideration for the implications of Hamlet's own sin during this scene: his murder of Polonius. Hamlet weeps for his deed, but there is no dwelling on its consequences. Rather than portray it as the disastrous result of zealous revenge, the narrative cites it as an accident wrought by "unfortunate rashness" that temporarily renders the prince "a little quieter."¹⁸² Resolving that it is a necessary sacrifice for his divine and moral mission, he quickly recovers and says nothing else of the deed.

While Hamlet's faults and mistakes are frequently excused throughout the tale, no such quarter is given to Claudius. The narrative emphasizes his loathsomeness, describing him "as contemptible in outward appearance, as he was base and unworthy in disposition."¹⁸³ This ugliness in mind and body reflects his inhumanity, a straightforward descriptive tactic that hastens and intensifies his recognition as chief antagonist. Though he has very few moments of direct interaction with characters in the story, the narrative goes on to call him as a serpent, highlighting

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 180.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 172.

his subtle and skilful ability to conceal pretences behind a benevolent façade. As in the play, he uses this “cover of peace and reconciliation” to goad Laertes into participating in a poison-laced duel with Hamlet. Like a folk-tale villain, Claudius’ actions are balanced by his just punishment, in this case execution.

The interpersonal moral struggles present within both “King Lear” and “Hamlet” carry lessons reminiscent of those in Propp’s folk-tale endings. The final tale function stipulates that all heroes must triumph over evil as a didactic testimonial to their moral superiority.¹⁸⁴ Though the adaptations maintain the tragic conclusions of Shakespeare’s plays, they also balance the sorrow of their protagonists’ deaths with moral victories. In “King Lear,” it is noted that Cordelia’s “good deeds did seem to deserve a more fortunate conclusion.”¹⁸⁵ However, instead of reflecting the triumph of immorality, her death memorializes her “illustrious example of filial duty.”¹⁸⁶ Though they killed her mortal body, Goneril, Regan, and Edmund cannot eclipse her memory. Cordelia’s love and respect for her father, despite his mental deterioration, makes her life a fine example of ideal familial loyalty and responsibility that offers *Tales from Shakespeare*’s young audience a lesson in behaviour.

In a similar capacity, Hamlet’s tragic death is not without moral gains, as he is able to fulfil his obligation to his father’s memory. Even as he dies from poison, he derives satisfaction not just from avenging his father, but for saving Denmark from the murderous “contriver of treachery” that sat on its throne.¹⁸⁷ He does not curse or bemoan his fate, but merely delivers a request for Horatio to tell his story.¹⁸⁸ Moral justice’s success over greed and sin supersede the despair of lost mortality, and negate the morally questionable means by which this end was reached. Despite his having

¹⁸⁴ Propp, *Morphology*, 42.

¹⁸⁵ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 90.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

committed deception and murder himself, Hamlet is made a martyr to his fellow Danes, who “with many tears commended the spirit of their sweet prince.”¹⁸⁹ The strength of his nobility is intensified by the hypothetical declaration that, “if he had lived, [Hamlet] would have no doubt have proved a most royal and complete king of Denmark.”¹⁹⁰ This posthumous praise evokes further sympathy for the fallen prince while reinforcing the lesson that it is better to die righteously than to turn a blind eye to tyranny.

In contrast to “King Lear” and “Hamlet,” *Tales from Shakespeare’s* adaptation of *Macbeth* places less emphasis on depicting interpersonal moral conflicts and directs more attention to internal moral debates. This deviation from folk tale models can be attributed to Lamb’s overriding desire to present an accurate portrayal of the play, optimizing his adaptation’s value as a preparatory work for young readers. It also demonstrates his willingness to make exceptions to his emphasis on a folk tale style, giving his editing a sense of flexibility. Instead of dichotomous moral camps of heroes fighting villains, “Macbeth” focuses on its title character’s turbulent internal transition from a loyal subject to irredeemable monster. Unlike Cordelia and Hamlet, the character does not abide by just one of Propp’s moral archetypes, but fulfils the expectations of both a hero and a villain. This shifting behaviour provides children with a vivid reflection of the moral contrasts between good and evil.

Much as in Shakespeare’s play, Macbeth is initially portrayed in a very positive light:

When Duncan the Meek reigned king of Scotland, there was a great thane, or lord, called Macbeth. This Macbeth was a near kinsman to the king, and in great esteem at court for his valour and conduct in the wars; an example of which he had lately given, in defeating a rebel army assisted by the troops of Norway in terrible numbers.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 91.

The narrative draws attention both to Macbeth's closeness and loyalty to Duncan, emphasizing the point by presenting an act of patriotic heroism. Though he will become a villain, there are no early indications of wickedness or hints of ambition in his thoughts, deeds, or appearance. This is in stark contrast to the more immediately transparent depictions of evil that Lamb opts for in the previous examples. From their first appearance, attention is drawn to the thorough hollowness of Goneril and Regan's thoughts and words, the innate evil of Edmund, and the way that Claudius' sinister nature is evident as the loathsome features on his face. However, in this case, Lamb prefers to offer a representation of Macbeth that reflects the complexity of Shakespeare's characterization, something that those other villains are denied. As with the play, Macbeth's initial nobility and honour intensifies the severity of his moral decay, making him a sympathetic villain.

The story's deviation from moral transparency becomes evident following this Macbeth's encounter with the witches. Their supernatural nature and prophetic foretelling of Macbeth's kingship also meet the criteria of a key trait and function of Propp's folk-tale villains: the use of magic and deception to mislead or corrupt a hero.¹⁹² Narrative subsequent to the prophecy strengthens this parallel by noting that "the wicked suggestions of the witches had sunk too deep."¹⁹³ Like a mystic spell or thrall, they ensure that "from that time he bent all his thoughts how to encompass the crown of Scotland."¹⁹⁴

Further support for the villainously corruptive influence of the witches comes from comparing the tale's portrayals of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Though the former fixates on fulfilling the prophecy, he "felt compunction at the thought of

¹⁹² Propp, *Morphology*, 15.

¹⁹³ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 92.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

blood,” showing reluctance to use murder or other seditious means.¹⁹⁵ Despite his enthusiasm, Macbeth remains “scrupulous, and not yet prepared for that height of crime which common in the end accompanies inordinate ambition.”¹⁹⁶ At this moment, he is caught between these principles and his base desires. Lady Macbeth, on the other hand, initially embodies many of the traits that Propp assigns to folk tale villains:

She was a bad, ambitious woman, and so as her husband and herself could arrive at greatness, she cared not by the means. She spurred on the reluctant purpose of Macbeth, who felt compunction at the thoughts of blood, and did not cease to represent the murder of the king as a step absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of the flattering prophecy.¹⁹⁷

Lamb identifies her as the sole mastermind behind the plot to murder Duncan. The narrative juxtaposes their contrasting morality, acknowledging her fear “that the natural tenderness of his disposition (more humane than her own) would come between them and defeat their purpose.”¹⁹⁸ Like the witches, “she won him to consent to murder” by persuasively representing it “as a step absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of the flattering prophecy.”¹⁹⁹

However, Macbeth’s doubts persist even as an opportunity presents itself. His wife resolves to deliver the *coup de grace* to his conscience with a stronger dose of dark counsel:

She being a woman not easily shaken from her evil purpose, began to pour in his ears words which infused a portion of her own spirit into his mind, assigning reason upon reason why he should not shrink from what he had undertaken; how easy the deed was; how soon it would be over; and how the action of one short night would give to all their nights and days to come sovereign sway and royalty!²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 93.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 92.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 93.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 92.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 94.

Lady Macbeth's words are administered like a poison, choking off Macbeth's nobility while hiding their true implications with sweet promises of rule and prestige. He does not even appear to be a reluctant accomplice, but a powerless victim of intoxicating temptations brought before him by an evil woman abusing her marital trust. Working from this portrayal of their relationship, one might consider the tale's Macbeth to be of a similar to Lamb's version of Lear: a moral man drawn to inappropriate action by forces beyond his control.

Following Duncan's murder, the values of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth undergo an exchange, each adopting the other's original mindset. Their shifting moralities meet at a sense of mutual guilt over their role in the murder of Banquo, which afflicts them both with "dreadful fancies" and "terrible dreams."²⁰¹ This is rapidly overshadowed by intense anxiety over the escape of Fleance, and the prediction of Banquo's heirs enduring to produce a line of rulers that inevitably supplant Macbeth. These details occupy Lady Macbeth's final selfish thoughts before her newly-discovered guilt and morality drive her to madness and suicide. They also linger in Macbeth's conscience, but out of concern for the security of his new throne. Like his counterpart in Shakespeare, he seeks peace of mind from the witches, demonstrating his deepening dependence upon these supernatural figures and their arcane prophecies. He even defers to them for an answer to his internal conflict, having lost the ability to distinguish between right and wrong.

From this point, the story of the tale shifts towards an interpersonal conflict between Macbeth and Macduff. Having ordered the murder of the latter's family, Macbeth further confirms his place as the story's villain. Macduff is his antithesis, representing not only personal vengeance, but the inevitability of divine, moral

²⁰¹ Ibid., 96.

justice. Even the ambition-laden prophecies that Macbeth trusts say that he is unstoppable. Their confrontation ends with the usurper realizing his folly just before his death, reiterating the same good versus evil moral message found in “King Lear” and “Hamlet.” However, this element is only prominent in the final stages of the story. These same events also conclude the internal moral didacticism that Lamb brings out in this adaptation, which cautions against unabashed greed and temptation by demonstrating the terrible consequences of giving into their seductive influences. The fates of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth affirm that, even if an ambitious person comes to an epiphany regarding their nature, their realization is too late for justice.

The moral emphasis in Lamb’s adaptations can potentially impede the text’s specific didactic objectives. Adult Shakespeare readers may argue that, by simplifying many of the moral complexities of Shakespeare’s characters and their actions, Lamb risks prejudicing children’s readings of the plays. Presenting the adaptation version of Hamlet as a heroic agent of justice negates the moral dilemmas of his using murder to avenge murder, and overlooks the tragic consequences that his vendetta has for Ophelia, Polonius, and Gertrude. Likewise, transforming *King Lear*’s Edmund into a bloodthirsty murderer denies the sympathetic dimension of his character that stems from the hardships that he has endured as an illegitimate child.

However, Charles Lamb’s adaptation of *Macbeth* demonstrates that his contributions to *Tales from Shakespeare* can still present some of Shakespeare’s moral complexities, offering a preliminary introduction to the plays’ conflicts and characters. Maturing young Shakespeare readers will likely acknowledge the limitations of Lamb’s didactic emphasis as they move on from his tales to read other versions of Shakespeare. Still, his lack of consideration for some themes and character elements contrasts with his sister’s adaptation methods. The next section will

demonstrate that Mary Lamb's tales are not as morally focussed, and avoid inserting potentially leading conclusions altogether.

3.4 - Mary Lamb and Thematic Abridgement

Mary Lamb's editorial philosophy in *Tales from Shakespeare* is expressed in the measures that she takes to create her versions of *Measure for Measure*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Twelfth Night*. Despite their different plots, the first two narrative adaptations were created using the same general strategies. Her *Twelfth Night* shares many of their elements, but its editing deviates somewhat from her standard approach. Rather than upset the consistency of her contributions to the collection, this story demonstrates her editorial versatility.

At the foundation of Mary's tales are lengthy quotations from Shakespeare that are used as character dialogue and framed by narrative elements. The latter maintain a neutral tone by avoiding the moral commentaries of Charles' tales in favour of presenting more comprehensive retellings of the events from the dramas. Many supporting characters and incidents found in Shakespeare, which Charles frequently limits or cuts altogether, are given thorough acknowledgement in Mary's tales. However, this is not to suggest that there is no moralization or evidence of expurgation in Mary's work. The actions of Mary's characters have moral significance, but tend to be more varied and complex than the *dramatis personae* of her brother's tales.

Though Mary's adaptations place strong emphasis on showcasing interpersonal confrontation, her tales do not make as strict use of the character and scenario archetypes as Charles' adaptations; the morality of her *dramatis personae* is never unilaterally good or evil. Instead, her versions of Shakespeare's characters tend to retain the complex moral potential that the previous section noted in their source counterparts. This is seen in the way she allows presumably heroic characters to still possess reprehensible traits, while some villains have the ability evoke sentiments

such as sympathy. Additionally, the themes of her tales are frequently associated with various forms of love and trust; romantic, familial, and platonic.

Mary's version of *The Merchant of Venice* demonstrates her preference for developing characters with complex moral backgrounds and motivations that contrast with Charles' one-sided representation of protagonists and antagonists. The tale initially portrays Shylock as an unsympathetic villain and Anthonio as a noble philanthropist:

Shylock being a hard-hearted man, exacted the payment of the money he lent with such severity, that he was much disliked by all good men, and particularly by Anthonio, a young merchant of Venice; and Shylock as much hated Anthonio, because he used to lend money to people in distress, and would never take any interest for the money he lent; therefore, there was a great enmity between the covetous Jew and the generous merchant Anthonio.²⁰²

Positioned in the introduction of the tale, this moral dichotomy has conditions reminiscent of Propp's folk-tale villains. Shylock is defined as more than a strict money lender. He is an enemy of "all good men," and, by that implication, must consequently be a bad man. This portion of narrative defines goodness in terms of answering dire financial need with generosity, suggesting that Shylock's opposition to helping those that require such assistance demonstrates that he is more than just uncompromisingly selfish. It implies that his animosity extends to all noble traits, and to those like Anthonio, that exhibit them. Furthermore, in refusing to "love thy neighbour," Shylock shows disdain for a fundamental Christian axiom. This lends emphasis to the association between his faith and a sinister sense of otherness; he is not just covetous, but a "covetous Jew." In contrast, the Christian Anthonio appears to be a celebrated community hero for prioritizing the welfare of his fellow Venetians

²⁰² Ibid., 60. Mary Lamb prefers to spell the character's name as "Anthonio" rather than "Antonio."

over his personal material wealth and security, assisting the needy without concern for monetary consequences that could befall him.

However, subsequent dialogue shows that Mary does not adhere to Propp's expectations as her brother tends to. Her Shylock is not beyond sympathy, nor is her Anthonio above recrimination. Like his Shakespeare counterpart, the adaptation's Shylock has accusations against Anthonio:

“Signior Anthonio, on the Rialto many a time and often you have railed at me about my monies, and my usuries, and I have borne it all with a patient shrug, for sufferance is the badge of all our tribe; and then you have called me unbeliever, cut-throat dog, and spit upon my Jewish garments, and spurned at me with your foot, as if I was a cur. Well then, it now appears you need my help; and you come to me to say, *Shylock, lend me monies*. Has a dog money? Is it possible a cur should lend thee three thousand ducats? Shall I bend low and say, Fair sir, you spit upon me on Wednesday last, another time you called me a dog, and for these courtesies I am to lend you monies.” Anthonio replied, “I am as like to call you so again, to spit on you again, and spurn you too.”²⁰³

Mary expands her initially one-sided characterization of Shylock by rationalizing his anger. His beliefs are a response to the insults that are constantly endured from Anthonio, who no longer appears to be an icon of unequivocal goodness. Shylock's disdain stems from Anthonio's hypocrisy rather than a loathing of generosity. The latter shows tolerance and kindness towards his fellow Christians, but offers only insults and threats of violence to the Jew. Anthonio not only admits to his despicable behaviour and racial prejudices, but also proudly confesses that he will continue to mistreat Shylock even after pleading for his help.

By basing their relationship on reciprocated abuse, Mary's tale portrays the two characters in ways similar to their Shakespeare counterparts. This is an important factor as it allows the tale to preserve the debate that William Hazlitt identifies as central to Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*: the question of whether or not Shylock

²⁰³ Ibid., 61.

is himself an evil man revelling in maliciousness or as a downtrodden man craving justice.²⁰⁴ Hazlitt argues that, while the character is not faultless, it is important that he not be above pity either.²⁰⁵ He calls the moral dilemma of seeing Shylock portrayed as a victim and villain as a perfect demonstration of the emotional intensity and complexity of Shakespeare's character development.²⁰⁶ By avoiding overt moralization, Mary is able to convey these vital story elements in her adaptation.

However, there are moments later in the tale where Shylock appears comparatively more antagonistic than Anthonio. The Jewish merchant's anger towards his debtor takes intensely violent overtones during his courtroom testimony to the disguised Portia:

Portia asked if the scales were ready to weigh the flesh; and she said to the Jew: "Shylock, you must have some surgeon by, lest he bleed to death." Shylock, whose intent was that Anthonio bleed to dead, said "It is not so named in the bond." Portia replied, "It is not so named in the bond, but what of that? It were good you did so much for charity." To this all the answer Shylock would make was, "I cannot find it; is it not in the bond."²⁰⁷

This dialogue continues with the resolution of the court case. During this confrontation, the narrative focuses on the Jewish merchant's malicious desire to be avenged through a debt of blood that will unquestionably leave Anthonio dead: the infamous pound of flesh. However, while this display of animosity and anger intensifies the negative traits associated with Shylock, it does not represent a transformation into an archetypical folk tale villain. Though he wishes harm on Anthonio, recall that this antagonism is not unprovoked, as is the case with many of the evil actions conducted by Charles' adaptation villains. Additionally, despite wishing death to Anthonio, Shylock's fate at the trial's conclusion evokes sympathy.

²⁰⁴ Hazlitt, William Carew. *Lectures on The Literature of the Age of Elizabeth and Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*. (London: Bell & Daldy, 1870), 193.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 190.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 193.

²⁰⁷ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 66.

He is publicly humiliated and chastised by his abusers, and forced to give up his faith along with his wealth in order to appease the court.

Similarly, a somewhat more benevolent emphasis is placed on Anthonio during the final moments of the adaptation. Though his confrontation with Shylock is the primary focus of the story, “Merchant of Venice” retains the ring exchange prank and love declarations that follow the resolution of that conflict in Shakespeare. The playful deception that Portia and Nerissa conduct against their unwitting husbands, Bassanio and Gratiano, accounts for a quarter of the story’s ten pages. This can seem peculiar given the light-heartedness of the scene in contrast to the life-and-death severity of the circumstances preceding it. Hazlitt actually criticizes the prank’s necessity in Shakespeare, arguing that it diminishes the tension of the legal drama and contributes nothing to it.²⁰⁸ However, Mary uses it to place Anthonio in a more positive light than his earlier characterization offered. This leads to thematic consequences that are subsequently discussed.

Mary’s portrayal of Leontes in her adaptation of *The Winter’s Tale* also lacks the one-sided moralization found in her brother’s work. Like Shylock, the character initially appears to be an uncompromising and irredeemable antagonist. This demeanour is associated with his persisting belief that his wife Hermione is having an affair with his best friend, Polixenes:

Although Leontes had so long known the integrity and honourable principles of his friend Polixenes, as well as the excellent disposition of his virtuous queen, he was seized by an ungovernable jealousy. Every attention Hermione showed to Polixenes, though by her husband’s particular desire, and merely to please him, increased the unfortunate king’s malady; and from being a loving and true friend, and the best and fondest of husbands, Leontes became suddenly a savage and inhuman monster.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Hazlitt, *Lectures*, 193.

²⁰⁹ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 21.

Mary highlights the irrationality of Leontes' attitude towards both Hermione and Polixenes, as well as the irony of these turbulent emotions, by noting that the former is being kind to the latter out of her intense desire to please her husband. The juxtaposition of the paranoid, unreasonable king and his devoted, virtuous queen emphasizes the cruel folly of Leontes' thoughts and subsequent behaviour. The narrative confirms that Leontes' views have "not the slightest foundation in truth," but he refuses to acknowledge facts and orders Camillo to poison Polixenes for his non-existent crimes. Leontes' initial seems similar to one Charles' irredeemable antagonists, such as the violent and unsympathetic Edmund of "King Lear."

However, this is not the full extent of Mary's use of Leontes. His cruel and selfish antics prove to be just a part of a much more complex, and eventually repentant, personality. Instead of labelling him a villain or dismissing his further significance, Mary draws a great deal of attention to this emotional transition. As in Shakespeare, Mary's Leontes eventually realizes the folly of his jealousy after Hermione's apparent death. Chastising his own impetuous cruelty, he becomes more of a sympathetic figure that "gave himself up to remorse, and passed many years in mournful thoughts and repentant grief."²¹⁰ He bemoans his foolishness throughout his appearances in the tale, and the narrative stresses his attempts to make emotional amends for his prior actions. He finally has the opportunity during the story's idyllic conclusion, where he is reunited with his wife, daughter, and scorned friend. His open confession of his folly prompts the other characters to forgive him. Even Polixenes states that he is willing to look past the murderously "unjust jealousy [Leontes] had

²¹⁰ Ibid., 23.

conceived against him, and they once more loved each other with all the warmth of their first boyish friendship.”²¹¹

Though Mary’s adaptations attempt to be more representative of Shakespeare than her brother’s, it is impossible for her tales to include every detail from the dramas. The preposition within the text’s title acknowledges this by indicating that these are tales that are *from* Shakespeare and not full representations of his work. Even when her adaptations attempt to be as inclusive as possible, editorial necessity demands that priorities be established regarding the material that is included or cut. While Mary’s tales are not explicitly moralized, they place emphasis on themes related to interaction. They place a particularly strong emphasis on confrontations that reflect various nuances of emotional relationships.

A key element of Mary’s tales is that they use several of the confrontations between characters to present young readers with subtle lessons on human behaviour. Though there is no commentary outlining their specific didactic message, as in Charles’ tales, the events and outcomes of her adaptations warn against endorsing views that are based upon prejudice, presumption, and other negative emotional states. By focusing on the conflict surrounding Leontes in the adaptation of *The Winter’s Tale*, and maintaining the resolution found in Shakespeare, Mary provides a lesson on repentance. Readers can interpret her tale as a clear suggestion that even violently impulsive characters can achieve a sense of peace and earn forgiveness if they are willing to admit their faults and acknowledge truth. Characters and events from Shakespeare that are not connected to the various central themes that Mary has chosen for her tales tend to have a reduced presence or are cut from her stories.

²¹¹ Ibid., 28.

Furthermore, the Shakespeare quotations that are used as dialogue in Mary's tales are typically used in a manner that promotes these interaction-based themes. In *Tales from Shakespeare's* version of *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare extracts are reserved for confrontational exchanges and reconciliations, often involving Shylock. The conversation between Shylock and Anthonio quoted previously is one such instance, as it highlights the specific details of their adversarial relationship and clarifies the complexity of their respective beliefs and motivations.

Dialogue extracts are also prolific following Shylock's trial, when Portia confronts Shylock about these character traits, as well as later, when Anthonio interacts with her, Bassanio, and Nerissa. Here, the tale features quotations that emphasize the morality of acting out romantic love and friendship. Bassanio's friendship with Anthonio, Portia's love for Bassanio, and Nerissa's friendship with Portia form a chain of affection that is able to foil Shylock's murderous intentions. The benefits of this are evident from the reactions Portia receives conducting Anthonio's defence. After learning of her efforts, Bassanio is filled with "unspeakable wonder and delight, that it was by the noble courage and wisdom of his wife that Anthonio's life was saved."²¹² Anthonio declares himself indebted to Portia "in love and service evermore."²¹³ Besides praise and adulation, Portia's actions leave her "in that happy temper of mind which never fails to attend the consciousness of having performed a good deed."²¹⁴

The pleasantness of these friendly and romantic interactions is supplemented by the accompanying reference to the safe arrival of Anthonio's purportedly lost ships:

²¹² Lucas, *Books for Children*, 69.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 68.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

So these tragical beginnings of this rich merchant's story were all forgotten in the unexpected good fortune that ensued; and there was leisure to laugh at the comical adventures of the rings, and the husbands that did not know their own wives.²¹⁵

These pleasant events seem to abide by the idyllic expectations of folk tales. Like one of the genre's heroes, Anthonio receives an unsolicited reward for enduring his trial. Circumstances seem to affirm the fundamental folk-tale lesson that heroes always do well and are rewarded, while villains always do poorly. However, unlike Charles, Mary does not use the third-person narrator to explicitly lecture to her audience on morality, and it is important to recall that her characters are not exclusively heroic or villainous. At most, these details offer a subtle testimony to the rewards garnered through trust in one's friends, which Anthonio exhibits, while Shylock chooses to remain isolated by his anger.

A similar lesson in strong friendships and love is implied in "The Winter's Tale." In addition to the folly of destructive behaviour, dialogue extracts also emphasize the merits of personal trust. The very first dialogue exchange is between Lady Paulina and Hermione's attendant, Emilia, before the story's setting leaps ahead sixteen years:

"I pray to you Emilia, tell the good queen, if her majesty dare trust me with her little babe, I will carry it to the king its father; we do not know how he may soften at the sight of this innocent child." "Most worthy madam," replied Emilia, "I will acquaint the queen with your noble offer; she was wishing to-day that she had any friend who would venture to present the child to the king." "And tell her," said Paulina, "that I will speak boldly to Leontes in her defence."²¹⁶

This conversation demonstrates the compelling power of close friendship. Paulina's intense trust and loyalty towards Hermione endow her with the strength and willingness to boldly confront the impulsive and paranoid Leontes. Despite the rank

²¹⁵ Ibid., 70.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 22.

and power of the king, she is willing to stand by in defence of her friend and challenge his views and behaviour. The nobility of this trait is abruptly contrasted with the self-destructive and isolating nature of Leontes' actions. In the next dialogue extract that appears in the tale, the Oracle of Delphi proclaims that the "jealous tyrant" Leontes "shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found."²¹⁷ This use of this prophetic declaration lends further emphasis to the inappropriateness of his behaviour, offering another subtle example of moral didacticism for Mary's young readers.

Both quotations also involve the fate of Perdita, who takes on the role of personifying the good and moral traits that contrast to her father's behaviour. The first extract establishes the strength of her innate innocence as an infant by declaring that laying eyes on her may be enough to quell her father's irrationality. The second emphasizes her role as an embodiment of goodness by predicting the misery that will transpire in her absence. These traits are not merely associated with Perdita due to her physical state as an innocent and unknowing newborn, but grow more intense as she ages. Later in the story, the beauty and morality of the teenage Perdita become common subjects of admiration:

The simple yet elegant manner in which Perdita conversed with his son did not a little surprise Polixenes: he said to Camillo, "This is the prettiest low-born lass I ever saw; nothing she does or says but looks like something greater than herself, too noble for this place." Camillo replied, "Indeed she is the queen of curds and cream."²¹⁸

Characters that encounter Perdita are "charmed with the spirit and propriety of [her] behaviour," as well as the distinction of her beauty.²¹⁹ Florizel comes to love her for her kindness and good conduct, both traits that eventually accomplish the goal that Paulina had hoped they would years earlier. Returning to her father's court, Perdita

²¹⁷ Ibid., 23.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 24.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 25.

easily shakes him from his maliciousness and malaise. Leontes is repentant in the face of her example, his new mood and her presence fostering the restoration of optimism and prosperity to the melancholy kingdom, as well as the return of Hermione.

Mary's subtle fostering of moral didacticism has a major weakness when compared to her brother's stated lessons. It is true that, by outlining his tales' lessons, Charles potentially prejudices young readers towards one reading of Shakespeare's plays. Her tales demand greater critical thinking to decipher their meaning. Audiences must intuitively form connections and conclusions about any ethical implications for the traits and actions of her adaptations' characters. However, while not as leading as Charles' approach, this exercise is not necessarily in the best interests of *Tales from Shakespeare's* target audience: young children.

Many of these readers may be intellectually unprepared to make independent assessments of the tales, or to appreciate the full complexity of Mary's lessons. Fortunately, a solution for this is outlined in *Tales from Shakespeare's* preface. Having assumed that older children have already made the transition from these short adaptations to reading Shakespeare's dramas, the Lambs task them with assisting their younger siblings in understanding *Tales from Shakespeare*. This third-party intervention has the added benefit of offsetting the potential bias of readings gained from Charles' adaptations. Experienced young readers can educate their charges, offering insight into the additional lessons that are present in Shakespeare, or simply encourage them to be mindful of *Tales from Shakespeare's* limitations.

Despite her tendency to focus her tales thematically, Mary still attempts to retain several of each play's subplots and cast members, offering young readers a more thorough representation of Shakespeare. However, her use of thematic abridgement and short story format still necessitates some editorial streamlining. Her

primary solution involves the removal of insults, innuendo, and forms of sexual humour that are present in Shakespeare. These efforts are facilitated by Shakespeare's tendency to segregate comedic verses and scenes from other content, which allows her to remove several actions, references, and characters without adversely impacting the coherence of the remaining details. One such example is her complete expurgation of Launcelot Gobbo from "The Merchant of Venice." Most of Launcelot's actions are pranks against his father and lamentations on his employment to Shylock. While many of his lines offer humorous commentary on Shylock's volatile temperament and his plot against Antonio, their absence does not impede either aspect of the main plot. Similar circumstances surround the expurgation of the carnal exploits of the Clown and his accompanying shepherdesses from "The Winter's Tale." Though their antics parody the romantic pursuits of the story's protagonists, the former and latter events are conducted independently of one another. The absence of the Clown's humorous romance is easily separated from the central plight of Perdita.

Tales from Shakespeare's preface does not offer any insight into specific rationales for the omissions, nor does Mary's personal correspondence hint at any particular agenda behind them. This absence of evidence leaves the explanation for her changes to supposition, and there is no shortage of theories. Beyond editorial convenience, it may be Mary's intent to censor material that is inappropriate for the text's readership. Like Thomas Bowdler in *The Family Shakespeare*, she could believe that her text's young audience lacks the knowledge or maturity to reconcile the meanings of Shakespeare's satire, bawdy references, and similar humour.

Several critics have also explored a variety of additional motivations for these expurgations. Both Jean Marsden and Erica Hateley note that "while introducing imaginative fiction to children may have been Charles' aim, it was not Mary's main

goal.”²²⁰ Instead, they believe that Mary’s adaptations contain subtle didactic lessons on sexual maturity specifically for young nineteenth-century women. Marsden argues that, while young boys “would have little need for *Tales*,” the text filled “a gap in the education of young ladies whose access to challenging imaginative fiction was limited.”²²¹ She believes that the adaptations are designed to instill their female readers with “humility, modesty, and gentleness, the virtues traditionally assigned to women.”²²² She determines that Mary’s expurgations remove the “raucous humour or rough emotion” of Shakespeare’s plays to ensure that they do not “coarsen feminine softness and thus destroy the precarious ideal of femininity” that is didactically promoted by the remaining details.²²³ She adds that this alters the tales’ genre, uprooting them from their origins as Shakespearean comedies and transforming them into love stories that use happy resolutions to encourage female readers to imitate the protagonists.²²⁴

Hateley also believes that Mary’s expurgations are meant to help young girls to identify with and learn from the fictional women in *Tales from Shakespeare*.²²⁵ However, she adds that the characters’ ideal portrayal of femininity is conducted not only for the sake of promoting moral purity, but also in order to encourage respect for parental authority while making a specific correlation between matrimony and maturity.²²⁶ “The implied pre-adolescent female reader is encouraged to look forward to becoming the kind of late-adolescent woman who will please her father and marry

²²⁰ Marsden, Jean I. “Shakespeare for Girls: Mary Lamb and *Tales from Shakespeare*.” *Children’s Literature*. Vol. 7 (2002): 47

²²¹ Marsden, “Shakespeare for Girls,” 48.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid., 53.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Hateley Erica. “Of Tales and Tempests: Feminine Sexuality and Shakespearean Children’s Texts.” *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*. [electronic journal] Vol. 2, no. 1. (2006): available from borrowers.uga.edu; Internet.

²²⁶ Hateley, “Of Tales and Tempests.”

well,” guaranteeing herself life-long emotional and fiscal security.²²⁷ An examination of these two similar readings highlights both their valid points and where they succumb to generalizations.

Mary’s removal of sexual references involving Caliban from *Tales from Shakespeare*’s adaptation of *The Tempest* can be interpreted as support for either of the aforementioned didactic arguments. Expurgation eliminates one of the defining testimonies to his “bad nature:” his desire to rape Miranda.²²⁸ This has significant consequences for the tale’s portrayal of both characters. In Caliban’s case, this change works in tandem with the overall reduction of his presence in “The Tempest.” He has no interaction with Trinculo or Stephano, and is mentioned only as Prospero’s compliant servant, making him a minor background character. As Marsden notes, this leaves greater opportunity to focus on Miranda, adapting the play into “the story of [her] and Ferdinand’s developing love.”²²⁹ The omission of Caliban’s desires also complements their union by eliminating the most overt example of carnality associated with her. There is no overt pursuit of her virginity in *Tales from Shakespeare*, which is appropriate for its intended young audience. The adaptation’s version of Miranda is instead defined exclusively by the language of divinity, described by Ferdinand as “the goddess” of the enchanted island.²³⁰

Hateley believes that this portrayal of Miranda fits a feminine archetype that Mary is attempting to promote among female readers: “the pure young virgin... apt to wonder, guileless, and because guileless, of easy belief, compassionate and tender – in other words, as the ideal daughter.”²³¹ Such a character has virtually no voice in the adaptation, nor does she conduct any independent action. Even when she objects to

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Marsden, “Shakespeare for Girls,” 53.

²³⁰ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 7.

²³¹ Hateley, “Of Tales and Tempests.”

Ferdinand's declaration of her divinity, her reply is "timid," and immediately interrupted by her father, who silences her. Marsden notes that these characteristics amount to an ideal state of femininity for nineteenth-century audiences, and that it is Mary's intent to offer this example for her readership to emulate.²³² Hateley takes this conclusion an additional step further by arguing that Mary emphasizes this femininity as an essential step in a woman's journey towards marriage. She notes that Miranda lives under her father's authority, awaiting the attentions of a suitor who will grant her freedom from the enchanted isle and the prosperity of his royal station. This makes marriage her goal, while passivity is the means of reaching it.

Both Marsden and Hateley's views on Mary's editing also seem applicable when taking into account some of the adaptations previously examined in this chapter, such as "The Winter's Tale." The removal of the humorous characters and bawdy references places greater emphasis on the relationship that develops between Perdita and Florizel, which highlights the ideal femininity of the former. Furthermore, their marriage serves as more than an affirmation of their love. Perdita is not only emotionally fulfilled, but receives both recognition of her royal status from her father and security of her husband's station, while their union marks the end of a long-standing dispute between their families. However, not every female character in Mary's contributions to *Tales from Shakespeare* possesses this passivity.

Portia in "The Merchant of Venice" also conflicts with Hateley's argument. She is neither a humble, modest, silent, nor obedient character, but one that demonstrates cleverness and courage. She not only lacks that traits that Marsden and Hateley attribute to Mary's other female characters, but subverts them and her sex by taking on an elaborate masculine disguise in order to come to the legal defence of the

²³² Marsden, "Shakespeare for Girls," 52.

powerless Anthonio. She does not act for the sake of appeasing parental expectations or gender ideals, nor for wealth or social stability, but out of her own desires and initiative. Her marriage is not a matter of financial security, or a reward for feminine behaviour, but a consequence of Bassanio's clever triumph over the unusual challenge that her father established for her suitors.

Marsden acknowledges that there are some female characters in *Tales from Shakespeare* that do not exhibit ideal femininity, though she focuses more on Charles' adaptations than Mary's. She identifies "Hamlet's" Ophelia and the wife of the titular Macbeth as "bad role models in all other respects," but notes that their stories have didactic value to nineteenth-century female readers.²³³ In the former case, she argues that almost a third of "Hamlet" is devoted to establishing the virtuousness of Ophelia, which elevates the pathos of her tragic fate. Marsden believes that the destruction of Ophelia's virtuousness and femininity elevates the sorrow of the title protagonist, leading her to label the tale "a romantic tragedy."²³⁴ In the latter case, she notes that Lady Macbeth's life serves as an allegorical warning to young women against betraying femininity; that through bad behaviour one "comes to a terrible end, haunted by guilt for her evil deeds."²³⁵

While most of Mary Lamb's tales are edited according to her preference for this style of abridgement, there is an exception that uses a different format. Mary's version of "Twelfth Night" follows an editorial format that is more comparable to her brother's use of folk-tale motifs than to methods that she uses in her other adaptations. These similarities are apparent from the start of this story. Like a folk tale, its introduction immediately identifies its protagonist and provides a challenge, while its conclusion focuses on divulging this character's fate and explicitly outlining the

²³³ Ibid., 53.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

moral didacticism of the story. However, even in these situations, Mary's editing features a few unconventional changes. "Twelfth Night" opens as follows:

Sebastian and his sister Viola, a young gentleman and lady of Messaline, were twins, and (which was accounted a great wonder) from their birth they so much resembled each other, that, but for the differences in their dress, they could not be known apart, They were both born in one hour, and in one hour they were both in danger of perishing, for they were shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria as they were making a sea-voyage together.²³⁶

This introductory identification of Sebastian seems to confirm him as one of the story's main characters under Propp's folk tale functions. Yet, an inventory of his appearances in the tale shows that he lacks both the prominent presence and influence of a protagonist. He has two brief scenes in "Twelfth Night:" first he provokes and defeats the proxy character for Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and later he returns to marry Olivia. He is included in the introduction more for the sake of his gender identity than his character role, while greater attention is given to Viola.

Sebastian's maleness justifies Viola's ease in constructing her Cesario alter-ego as well as the lasting effectiveness of the disguise. Her resemblance to her brother is one of the key qualities that permits Cesario's existence, and allows for the circumstances that are intricately tied to this male persona. On his own, Sebastian serves as a convenient plot device, appearing at the right time to appease Olivia's desire for a Cesario-like husband. This leaves Viola as "Twelfth Night's" true protagonist, with the entire context of the plot transforming from a Shakespearean comedy to a folk tale with a gender-inverted love story. Folk tales that possess such romantic elements typically address them with gendered conditions that have a male protagonist discovering a female who captures his affection. While engaging the challenges set forth by the villain, the hero also pursues a relationship by engaging in

²³⁶ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 139.

courtship. This can involve complimenting her qualities and conducting actions in her honour until love is reciprocated; the brave, devoted prince woos and weds the stunningly beautiful princess. Mary's reversal of this formula makes Viola the pursuing lover while Orsino serves as the quiet recipient of her affections.

Unlike the play, Mary's adaptation focuses on this love pursuit. The comedic subplot is removed, and several supporting characters are either expurgated or given a reduced role in the story. There is no mention of Malvolio, Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew, Maria, the Clown, or their antics in the adaptation. Malvolio is replaced by a nameless steward and Sir Andrew with an anonymous knight. There are no suggestions of humorous qualities in either substitute character. The steward serves as a briefly-noted functionary who announces Olivia's guests, and never voices any attraction towards his employer. The knight is a rejected suitor of Olivia's who confronts the disguised Viola, but retreats when she is assisted by Anthonio, never appearing or receiving mention again.

The complete removal of an entire subplot and its characters is an anomaly among Mary's contributions to *Tales from Shakespeare*. Previous examples have shown that she prefers to abridge and include material, even if it does not have a large role in her tales, while minimizing complete cuts. Even Charles, with his folk-tale adaptation style, finds ways to integrate some elements from Shakespeare's subplots into his moralized stories. Both Lambs are likewise hard-pressed to expurgate all comic characters. Most are adapted in a manner that decreases their relevance, as seen in the aforementioned comedic neutering of Lear's fool, the absence of the clownish traits in characters from *The Winter's Tale*, and an overall reduction of comedic scenes in the entire text. However, even the most severely edited fools and bawds tend to remain visible to some extent in the other tales.

In the case of *Twelfth Night*'s adaptation, it may be that Mary judged the subplot to be extraneous, especially since Malvolio's attraction to Olivia does not influence or interfere with the Viola/Orsino love story she focuses on. Its development and resolution are separate from the other activities in the Illyrian households, and localized to the play's close-knit collection of pranksters and rogues. In Shakespeare, this segregation is emphasized by the majority of characters showing indifference towards Malvolio's promise of vengeance at the play's conclusion. The main cast is unaware of the purpose for this vendetta.

William Hazlitt offers an argument that can be used to validate Mary's decision to focus on the supremacy of *Twelfth Night*'s love story at the cost of the subplot. He believes that two stories fall under an emotional hierarchy:

The great and secret charm of *Twelfth Night* is the character of Viola. Much as we like catches and cakes and ale, there is something we like better. We have a friendship for Sir Toby; we patronize Sir Andrew; we have an understanding with the Clown, a sneaking kindness for Maria and her rogueries; we feel a regard for Malvolio, and sympathy with his gravity, his smiles, his cross garters, his yellow stockings, and his imprisonment in the stocks. But there is something that excites in us a stronger feeling than all this – it is Viola's confession of her love.²³⁷

Relationship dynamics provide the basis of Hazlitt's categorization of each plot's significance. He argues that *Twelfth Night*'s comedic subplot is platonic, making it fun and endearing like a close friend, but not as emotionally engaging as a lover.²³⁸

The victimization of Malvolio is entertaining, but is overshadowed by the more palatable notion of emotional intimacy. While both Malvolio and Viola are in pursuit of love, the emotional intensity of a truly romantic experience is only pronounced in the latter's portion of *Twelfth Night*. Even the mirth over Malvolio's torment is fleeting. It fades with the resolution of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, the Clown, and Maria's

²³⁷ Hazlitt, *Lectures*, 183.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

pranks, just as a joke expires after the delivery of the climactic punch line. Love, on the other hand, is an enduring state that transforms one into an emotionally invested follower of its qualities.

Mary's thematic prioritization of quotations is one aspect of "Twelfth Night" that is consistent with her other adaptations. In keeping with her tale's restructured emphasis on the play's main love triangle, quotations are used only during declarations of affection involving Viola, Olivia, and Orsino:

"It is beauty truly mixed; the red and white upon your cheeks is by Nature's own cunning hand laid on. You are the most cruel lady living, if you will lead these graces to the grave, and leave the world no copy." "O sir," replied Olivia, "I will not be so cruel. The world may have an inventory of my beauty. As, *item*, two lips, indifferent red; *item*, two grey eyes with lids to them; one neck; one chin, and so forth. Were you sent here to praise me? Viola replied I see you are what you are: you are too proud, but you are fair. My lord and master loves you."²³⁹

This particular selection highlights Olivia's unflattering inventory of her own physical traits, and favours statements of fact over elaborate poetic language; Viola is clear and direct with her assertions against Olivia's personality. However, it still incorporates dialogue, leading to Orsino's declaration of love by proxy. The development of this seemingly straightforward, but thematically and literally relevant, declaration contrasts with the brevity of the content that is not prioritized.

Yet, this is a comparatively minor similarity when one considers "Twelfth Night's" thematic distinction from Mary's other adaptations. The story's gender-inverted folk tale elements present a protagonist who contradicts Marsden's and Hateley's didactic assessments of the text. *Tales from Shakespeare's* version of Viola embraces her Cesario persona in order to court Orsino as a man would court a woman. Her actions and goals flout the gender conventions of the nineteenth century outlined

²³⁹ Lucas, *Books for Children*, 143.

by Marsden and Hateley. Mary's Viola is not a humble or modest example of feminine softness, but a woman that sets this conventional femininity aside and uses her masculine alter-ego to pursue her personal desires.

Though Viola's conduct is not appropriate by Marsden's and Hateley's definitions, it does not necessarily negate "Twelfth Night's" didactic potential for young readers. Viola is determined to accomplish her goals despite the challenges created by her gender and the intervention of other characters such as Olivia and the Sir Andrew proxy. Her success is consistent with Mary's presentation of triumphant female protagonists throughout all of her contributions to *Tales from Shakespeare*. Marsden's and Hateley's emphasis on imitating behaviour is valid, but distracts from a general theme that Mary's work presents for both young male and female readers. While Charles Lamb's adaptations add moral didacticism to Shakespeare, Mary Lamb offers children, particularly young girls, personal inspiration through her female protagonists' consistent victories over adversities and their personal limitations. "The Winter's Tale" shows that even the violent and seemingly irredeemable Leontes can achieve redemption through love and humility. Portia's loyalty and cleverness in "The Merchant of Venice" helps her save Anthonio from certain death. Viola's willingness to venture into the unknown by embracing an unconventional identity and its characteristics help her to achieve her heart's desire.

3.5 – Conclusion

Unlike the majority of Shakespeare adaptations created prior to it, *Tales from Shakespeare* was not meant to overshadow other versions of the dramas, nor was its content designed for theatrical presentation. Its goal was to provide children with an introduction to Shakespeare's stories, characters, and themes that they could read at home. This experience assisted their eventual transition to other versions of Shakespeare found in their parents' parlour.

Throughout this chapter, there has been a consistent emphasis on the editorial complexity of *Tales from Shakespeare*. This is the result of Charles and Mary Lamb's contrasting preferences for transforming dramas into short narratives. The former's adaptations draw inspiration from folk-tale motifs, transforming plays into moralized narratives that portray Shakespeare's characters as either definitively good or unrepentantly evil. His version of *Hamlet*'s protagonist is a heroic agent of justice, while *King Lear*'s Edmund is an ambitious usurper who commits evil acts for his own amusement. In contrast, Mary Lamb's adaptations use numerous lengthy quotations extracted from Shakespeare to create dialogue and highlight narrative elements that have fewer moral biases. Her characters retain the moral complexities that they possess in Shakespeare, allowing seemingly heroic characters like Anthonio from *Merchant of Venice* to also feature reprehensible traits, while villains like Shylock can evoke sympathy.

These contrasting approaches to Shakespeare adaptation can prompt debate over which siblings' methods are more effective for accomplishing *Tales from Shakespeare*'s goals. Charles Lamb's adaptations may be accused of being limited interpretations of Shakespeare as they omit definitive character elements and moral debates involving the *dramatis personae*. Celebrating Hamlet's heroism negates the

ethical dilemmas of his using murder to avenge murder, and overlooks the tragic consequences that his vendetta has for Polonius and Gertrude. Likewise, transforming Edmund into a bloodthirsty murderer denies the sympathetic dimension of his character that stems from the hardships caused by his illegitimacy.

In contrast, the more inclusive approach to defining characters and conflict used by Mary Lamb creates adaptations that offer a fuller representation of Shakespeare's content. However, before we designate her work as the superior means for educating and preparing children for the plays, there are some additional strengths and weaknesses in each editing philosophy to consider. Charles Lamb's work simplifies a child's first steps into Shakespeare reading, but this limited experience also minimizes young readers' potential confusion. While his characterizations and thematic moralizations can seem leading, they provide young readers with a transparent critical reaction to Shakespeare that can assist their future readings of his plays. Mary Lamb's adaptations offer more comprehensive accounts of Shakespeare's characters and stories, but present ethical ambiguities and thematic uncertainties that may be too complex for children. The amount of possible explanations and resolutions within each story is potentially overwhelming for young readers.

These contrasts show us that Charles Lamb's contributions to *Tales from Shakespeare* can be read as either ideally simplified introductory Shakespeare stories for children, or as biased adaptations that fail to capture the full complexity of the playwright's work. Similarly, Mary Lamb's tales can be praised for their attention to detail, but also critiqued for the way that these details can overwhelm and confuse young Shakespeare readers. Regardless of the conclusions one reaches regarding each sibling's efforts, there is no denying that *Tales from Shakespeare* has had a substantial impact on the ways that Shakespeare is adapted for children. As the next chapter of

this thesis demonstrates, the same can be said for Thomas Bowdler's work. Despite the sensationalism surrounding the Lamb siblings, *Tales from Shakespeare* helped establish the basis for an eclectic legacy of children's Shakespeare adaptations that has endured to the present.

Chapter 4: Thomas Bowdler's *The Family Shakespeare*

4.1 – Introduction

The concept of bowdlerization has persistently misled researchers and critics since it was first documented in the 1836 Oxford English Dictionary. The term is used to identify the editing methods that Thomas Bowdler employed to create *The Family Shakespeare*. As noted in chapter one, to bowdlerize is to expurgate indelicate or offensive words and passages to such an extreme extent that it is considered an act of castration; it leaves the remaining material maimed and incomplete. However, this definition is not representative of the methods or goals outlined in *The Family Shakespeare*. The term initially grew from the negative criticisms that this Shakespeare adaptation received during its first years in circulation. It has endured due to a combination of continuous misconceptions and a partial understanding of Bowdler's efforts. This is compounded by several generations of cynicism, confusion, and animosity that have contributed to the general lack of awareness regarding his work. Contrary to expectations, Bowdler does not endorse the uncompromising hacking of a text. Though he edits Shakespeare with a moral emphasis, his use of expurgation is subject to specific conditions, and makes exceptions that are in the best interests of readers.

Chapter one of this thesis outlined the turbulent critical responses that Bowdler's Shakespeare adaptations received early in the nineteenth century. This attitude persists to the present, with several modern researchers labelling Bowdler a tyrannical editorial puritan rather than a conscientious and moral censor. Maureen Logan's and Nan Levinson's independent studies of Shakespeare editions used in the American public-school system late in the twentieth century each offer examples of the ways that misinterpretation and exaggeration continue to permeate discussions

involving Bowdler. Both researchers drew attention to two separate publishers' attempts to issue expunged editions of *Romeo and Juliet* to students. Logan's 1985 study focuses on a Pelican edition of the play that had been supplied to schools without any indication that it omitted "trivial or ribald wordplay and especially difficult, static passages of poetry."²⁴⁰ Levinson's 1990 work profiles freelance artist Jane Zweig and her investigation of publishers Scibners and Prentice Hall's similar practise of selling unlabelled editions that she considered bowdlerized.

Logan is disgusted by the "trivial" and "foolish" editing done by Pelican, which tends to "cut out any reference to parts of the body, sexual passion, or its consequences."²⁴¹ She says the result is that "key images which develop main themes are lost," leaving the entire play "destroyed."²⁴² Levinson is also passionate in her protest, calling her targeted publishers "perverse and misguided" for removing references to sexuality and death from *Romeo and Juliet*.²⁴³ However, neither of them shows an understanding of the specific conditions of Bowdler's editing in *The Family Shakespeare*. Instead, they mistakenly interchange his name with the term "bowdlerize." They associate both words with the complete, uncompromising, and clandestine erasure of all supposedly offensive references within a text. Each critic considers Bowdler to be a selfish expurgator who deliberately conceals his "emasculated" work as an uncensored Shakespeare edition.²⁴⁴ Such unsubstantiated accusations and conspiracy theories perpetuate Bowdler's present infamy and illustrates the continuing lack of perspective on the realities of his editorial goals.

²⁴⁰ Logan, Maureen F. "Star-Crossed Platonic Lovers, or Bowdler Redux." *The English Journal*. Vol. 74,

no. 1. (Jan. 1985): 53.

²⁴¹ Logan, "Star-Crossed," 54.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Levinson, Nan. "Bowdler Revisited." *Index on Censorship*. Vol. 19, no. 2. (March 1990): 20.

²⁴⁴ Logan, "Star-Crossed," 54.

Even twentieth-century criticisms that support or maintain a neutral stance on Bowdler's editing have mistaken bowdlerization to be an accurate definition of his work. Marvin Rosenberg passionately defends *The Family Shakespeare*, claiming that critics "libel" its creator "when we make his name stand for the first and worst in censorship of Shakespeare."²⁴⁵ He believes Bowdler to be a fearless, uncompromising editorial "crusader" governed by the "honourable purpose" of producing a Shakespeare edition that saves audiences from being "despoiled" by "contamination by indecent language."²⁴⁶ However, his perception of Bowdler exaggerates the editor's moral intentions for adapting Shakespeare with a combination of mistaken facts, rhetoric, and hero-worship. Like Bowdler's aforementioned detractors, Rosenberg exaggerates his intentions while ignoring his editorial limitations and concessions.

Kenneth Bradford gives a similarly inappropriate definition of Bowdler's editing in his attempt to categorize several adaptation and alteration methods associated with Shakespeare. He acknowledges Bowdler as one of the major forces governing modern perceptions of the playwright's dramas.²⁴⁷ However, he identifies Bowdler's adaptation process as the work of "a medical doctor who made a career publishing "family versions" of classic literature."²⁴⁸ Furthermore, Bradford expands his definition of Bowdler's editing to include "the changing of language deemed morally offensive into language deemed inoffensive."²⁴⁹ Yet, *The Family Shakespeare's* preface specifically notes that the text minimizes language changes and word replacement, and cuts inappropriate material.

²⁴⁵ Rosenberg, "Reputation," 499.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Bradford, J. Kenneth. "To Be or Not to Be: Issues on Changes in Literature Anthologies." *The English Journal*. Vol. 75, no. 6. (Oct. 1986): 53.

²⁴⁸ Bradford, "To be or Not," 53.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

It cannot be emphasized enough that Bowdler's editing is much more comprehensive, and less zealous, than these studies proclaim. The process is driven by two conflicting principles that distinguish it from other editorial philosophies. The first is Bowdler's intense desire to preserve as much of the texts he is adapting as possible. This sets him apart from many other Shakespeare censors, abridgers, and extractors. The second is his belief that the text also contains words and ideas that are so immoral or pernicious that they cannot remain. As Francis Jeffrey observes, Bowdler attempts to reconcile these contradicting points by selectively applying his "precise or prudish spirit" to remove only "the gross indulgences which everyone must have felt a blemish."²⁵⁰

However, Bowdler makes exceptions to his strict standards for content inclusion and expurgation. His adaptations of *Henry IV*, *Othello*, and *Measure for Measure* show that he is also capable of making substantial compromises. Each of these plays presents a situation that forces him to alter his normal adaptation measures, leading to concessions that occasionally prompt radical editorial decisions. His work on them proves that he is not willing to damage the narrative integrity of Shakespeare's plays for the sake of moral purity. Furthermore, these cases also emphasize the complexity and flexibility of Bowdler's editing, proving that the term is not just a synonym for arbitrary cutting.

Two centuries of critical responses to *The Family Shakespeare* have proven that Bowdler's editing methods have not only become synonymous with expurgation and censorship, but are frequently considered a form of literary mutilation. This chapter will dispel these misconceptions using historical context and thorough analysis. Contrary to the majority of critics' reactions, Bowdler conducts his editing

²⁵⁰ Jeffrey, Francis. Review of *The Family Shakespeare*, by Thomas Bowdler. *Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*. Vol. 36 (Oct, 1821): 52.

of *The Family Shakespeare* more elaborately than his other family members do in their various literary projects. While some of his measures resemble adaptation formats used during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, his philosophy also exhibits a distinctive versatility. His editorial cuts are made with precision, not wanton or indiscriminate hacking, and are always conducted with attentive respect for Shakespeare's work.

4.2 – Shakespeare Expurgation Prior to Bowdler

Despite his critical infamy, Thomas Bowdler is far from being either the first or most extensive expurgator of Shakespeare's plays. George Branam argues that the censoring of controversial content was a primary concern of most Shakespearean adapters following Charles II's 1660 reopening of public playhouses.²⁵¹ Thomas Seward concurs, adding that the work of the earliest editors was divided between making changes for the sake of moral purity and being "forced to be dressed fashionably by the poetic tailors of the day."²⁵² Gary Taylor briefly elaborates on the latter sentiment by noting that the creative climate of the Restoration generally viewed Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas as "mouldy," "ridiculous," "incoherent" and in desperate need of updating.²⁵³ However, whether they intended to "purify" the plays or to update them with contemporary language, many adapters were also motivated by their desires for fame and profit. Very few of the censored Shakespeare adaptations created during the late seventeenth century had content expurgated to satisfy their editors' ideals or sense of morality. Censorship was initially just a legally mandated expectation for these productions.

Chapter two of this thesis noted that many Restoration theatre companies viewed Shakespeare's plays as sources of raw materials for new productions. The legal rights to perform the resulting adaptations were initially exclusive to Sir William Davenant's Duke of York's Company and Thomas Killigrew's rival King's Company. This thesis has already cited some of the specific editing measures that these men used in their respective projects. Despite their distinctive methods, all of

²⁵¹ Branam, George C. *Eighteenth-Century Adaptations of Shakespearean Tragedy*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), 2.

²⁵² Vickers, Brian, ed. *Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975) 3: 7.

²⁵³ Taylor, Gary. *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History, from the Restoration to the Present*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 21.

their work was subject to the conditions of a formal proclamation issued in 1660 by Charles II's Master of Revels, Sir Henry Herbert. It required the two playhouses to deliver him advance scripts for their performances so that his office could ensure that they were "reformed of prophanes and ribaldry."²⁵⁴

Davenant reacted by expurgating profanity from several of his plays. For example, comedic references to "lechery" in his 1662 *Measure for Measure* are replaced with the less sexually-charged synonym "incontinence" in the hope that this would avoid offending audiences.²⁵⁵ In similar fashion, his 1664 expurgation of *Macbeth* removes the titular protagonist's conversation with the castle Porter, along with the latter's account of his night of wanton drunkenness and revels. Instead of a foolish and abrasive character, the play portrays the Porter as a nondescript servant whose only participation in the story is to simply bid his master good day, without any further conversation. Killigrew's company, which performed Shakespeare adaptations less frequently, tended to expurgate offensive elements to similar effect. This removal and replacement of terms is one of the measures later used by Bowdler, though it is not the extent of his philosophy. As with Davenant, there is more intricacy to Bowdler's methods than simple cutting.

Davenant did not always obey Herbert's expurgation order, though it is uncertain whether or not he made this decision out of a sense of editorial rebellion. This may be the case as some of his adaptations appear antithetical to the notion of censorship. His 1662 *Measure for Measure* adaptation, *The Law against Lovers*, adds a plethora of original comedic lines along with elaborate songs and dance routines. That same year, his company performed James Howard's rendition of *Romeo and Juliet*, which increased the presence of the humorous characters from the source

²⁵⁴ Perrin, *Dr. Bowdler's Legacy*, 88.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

material. Mercutio is the most prominent of the *dramatis personae* to receive a larger role, his extended comedic antics resulting in the play's recognition as a tragicomedy.²⁵⁶ A third deviant adaptation was Davenant's 1667 *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island*. Two of his new characters, Hippolito and Dorinda, are gender-inverted copies of Ferdinand and Miranda that Prospero manipulates alongside the latter couple. Their combined antics effectively double the number of comedic and confusing moments that already permeate this portion of the play's story. These sentiments are compounded by Davenant's addition of Milcha and her whimsical attempts to pursue a love affair with the ethereal Ariel.

Davenant's deviations from Herbert's order set an example for some Shakespeare adaptors, encouraging continued defiance of it into the next decade. Among the more controversial adaptations were Edward Ravenscroft's 1678 *Titus Andronicus*, which added violent scenes and graphic character deaths, as well as Thomas Shadwell's 1678 sexual comedy, *The History of Timon of Athens*. However, there were also other editors who had no objections to expurgation, and continued to support the order. Thomas Otway's 1679 *History and Fall of Caius Marius* expurgates the comedy of *Romeo and Juliet* to frame the remaining elements in a war story set in ancient Rome. Analogues for Mercutio and other clownish characters could potentially undermine Otway's intended lesson on the utter devastation brought by civil conflict. Their absence intensifies the tragic atmosphere nurtured by the losses endured during the public war and the private despair of the protagonist couple.

Nahum Tate's 1681 *The History of King Lear* also uses expurgation to protect his main point from being undermined. His adaptation's characters are in a moral struggle of good against evil. The embodiments of the former, Edgar and Cordelia,

²⁵⁶ Branam, *Eighteenth-Century*, 1.

prove their sentiment's superiority by triumphing over the advocates of the latter, Edmund, Goneril, and Regan. The success of the couple's campaign, their romantic fulfilment, and their ascension to England's throne as King and Queen further testifies to the superiority of virtue over vice and ambition. To avoid distracting from this moral focus or appearing hypocritical, Tate purges his play of all potentially offensive references that otherwise go unpunished in the story. This not only includes every insult, every joke, and every trace of sexual humour, but also the removal of the character behind their delivery: Lear's fool. This radical expurgation inspired several successive attempts to create a perfectly censored *King Lear*, the majority of which appeared during the eighteenth century.

Both David Garrick's 1756 and George Coleman's 1768 versions of *History of King Lear* copy Tate's removal of the fool, the editors each asserting that the character is a wasteful and distracting element whose offensive nature detracts from the severity of the main conflict.²⁵⁷ Though Garrick and Coleman took issue with Tate's insertion of Edgar and Cordelia's romance as well as the happier ending, this irritation was more with the content of these changes than their execution. It is not narrative alterations that the pair each cites as the ruination of Tate's *History of King Lear*, but Tate's attempt to imitate Shakespeare's writing style.²⁵⁸ Both believe that Tate infringes upon the integrity of Shakespeare's language, creating a poor facsimile of it that disrespects the work of the playwright.

A very different perspective comes from John Kemble, an actor in Garrick's employ who supported creative editorial change. To this end, Kemble created his own version of *The History of King Lear* in 1809 using Garrick's script, resulting in an adaptation of an adaptation of an adaptation of Shakespeare. Unlike Garrick or

²⁵⁷ Vickers, *Shakespeare*, 3: 296.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 3: 295.

Coleman, he measured the necessity of editorial changes based on predictions of the audience's reception of them. This mindset, likely inspired by his career as an actor, prompts his adaptation to retain Tate's pleasant ending while restoring the Fool to the cast. Kemble argues that his *King Lear*, having balanced its use of Shakespeare with alterations that will supposedly impress and appeal to audiences, is guaranteed to be eternally adored.²⁵⁹ Bowdler makes a similar assertion regarding his work in *The Family Shakespeare*. However, further analysis in this chapter will show that Bowdler balances his conservative goals with his reverence for Shakespeare's plays, setting his work apart from preceding censored and expurgated adaptations. This includes those created by members of his family, particularly the 1807 version of *The Family Shakespeare* that was edited by his sister, Henrietta.

²⁵⁹ Brown, Penny. *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England*. (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsleaf, 1993), 17.

4.3 – The Bowdler Family’s Editorial Tradition

The Family Shakespeare was partially inspired by Bowdler’s nostalgic memories of his father’s informal censoring of Shakespeare during home reading. However, neither Squire Thomas Bowdler’s readings nor his son’s adaptations were the only examples of expurgated and moralized texts produced by members of this family. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, several of Bowdler’s relatives were driven by their personal preoccupations with gentility to act as social and literary watchdogs, censoring and editing various forms of literature.

Bowdler’s mother, Elizabeth, was among the participants in this family pastime. Learned in Biblical scholarship, she created a list of censorship suggestions for Bishop Thomas Percy’s *Song of Solomon Paraphrased*. Elizabeth believed the clergyman’s efforts “to clear this beautiful Poem” were so unsatisfactory that they lead to “fresh occasion for the charge” of indecency.²⁶⁰ “A Commentary on the Song of Solomon Paraphrased” appeared in the 1775 edition of Percy’s text, and highlights areas where Elizabeth believed his editing could be improved. Examining a few such points helps reflect on the strictness of the Bowdler family’s editorial traditions.

In Percy’s poem, a bride remarks that her new husband “shall lie all night between my breasts.”²⁶¹ Mrs. Bowdler suggested changing the pronoun “he” to a more general “it” to address the bride’s mirth or contentment rather than her corporeal bridegroom. Her literal-minded reasoning cited that it was physically impossible for a man to lie between a woman’s breasts, and that the “indelicate” of such an act’s sexual suggestiveness “would suit ill with this poem.”²⁶² She similarly objected to

²⁶⁰ Percy, Thomas, Bowdler, Elizabeth S., and Harper, W. *The Song of Solomon: paraphrased with an introduction, containing some remarks on a late translation of the sacred poem; also, a commentary, and notes critical and practical, written in 1769.* (Edinburgh: Drummond, 1775), 1.

²⁶¹ Percy, *Song of Solomon*, 86-87.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 86-87.

repeated references to the word “bed,” citing that Percy used it as a euphemism for sexual intercourse. Believing it indecent to dwell on physical intimacy, Mrs. Bowdler suggested a total replacement of the term with metaphorical references to a “bridal chariot,” which had a less obvious sexual implication.²⁶³

Elizabeth Bowdler continued her work with a verse-by-verse commentary of the *Revelation of St. John*. Her 1775 *Practical Observations of the Revelation of St. John* reflects several of the moral principles commonly found in the Bowdler family’s work. Her argument, reminiscent of Locke’s views, states that young minds are naturally blank, and parents are obligated to fill this void before it becomes cluttered with trifles. She emphasizes the need to expose children to moral learning through edited literature, which can be used to shape them into productive and moral adults. Elizabeth says that her role in this is to offer a responsible, moral, and learned perspective on the *Revelation* that will keep new readers from misinterpreting its didacticism. The parallel between morality and learning, as well as the emphasis on family communication and respect for one’s parents, are all foundational elements of *The Family Shakespeare*.

Jane Bowdler, the Squire’s eldest daughter, carried on the moral literary tradition until her death in 1784. Her work was published posthumously in 1786 as *Poems and Essays by a Lady Lately Deceased*. The collection combines poetic themes and direct instruction into etiquette lessons to young women. Among its recommendations is the need for them to “restrain the freedom of [their] conversation,” or risk tactlessly embarrassing themselves, their families, and others.²⁶⁴ John Bowdler, the eldest son, is more recognized for his political activism via his 1797 pamphlet *Reform or Ruin*, which calls for hierarchical changes to the British

²⁶³ Ibid., 87.

²⁶⁴ Bowdler, Jane. *Poems and Essays by a Lady Lately Deceased*. (Bath: R. Cruttwell, 1786), 223.

monarchy, parliament, and clergy. He believed that the nobility, gentry, and clergy heading these institutions were far more interested in gaming, luxury, and other amusements than in the best interests of the average citizen.

However, John also promoted the family's conservative values through personal correspondence. He is most prominently remembered in this regard for routinely sending letters to the daughters of family friends that were engaged to be married. These messages outlined the moral behaviour expected of a wife. Their conditions included a section on interaction that urges young women to "avoid everything which has the least tendency to delicacy or indecorum," especially physical labour.²⁶⁵ John's son, John Bowdler Jr., used letters to express his dissatisfaction with the censoring of didactic texts for children. Though he was determined to prevent "the mind of youth from being corrupted," he did not believe that "the mere omission of every offensive passage in the public lessons" was effective enough to do this.²⁶⁶ He argues that "prohibition always provokes desire;" that forbidding students from reading offensive literature only increases their interest in its content.²⁶⁷ However, these views were not shared by other members of the Bowdler household.

Henrietta Bowdler contributed her 1803 *Sermons on the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity* to the family legacy. In it, she argues that the promotion of conservative Christian ideals is the best means for socially and morally improving members of society. Rather than editorialize another work, this collection offers eighteen sermons focused on striving:

²⁶⁵ Bowdler, Reverend Thomas. *Memoir of the Life of John Bowdler, Esq.* (London: A. and R. Spottiswoode, 1824), 123.

²⁶⁶ Bowdler, John. *Select Pieces in Prose and Verse by the Late John Bowdler, Junior, Esquire.* (London: G. Davidson, 1816), 2: 546.

²⁶⁷ Bowdler, *Select Pieces*, 2: 546.

To supply the ignorant, and those who with to instruct them, with a plain and simple summary of the faith and duty of a Christian.²⁶⁸

The text accomplishes this objective with a chronologically-ordered instructional guide to fulfilling all the daily expectations of a good Christian over an entire lifetime. Its promotion of the merits of continuous life-long faith garnered the attention of Beilby Porreus, the Bishop of London, when it first appeared. Convinced that it could only have been composed by an extremely devout man of the holy orders, he declared that its anonymous author was worthy of a parish in his diocese. This success encouraged Henrietta to continue participating in the family practice, which led to her most noteworthy contribution to the Bowdler legacy: her 1807 version of *The Family Shakespeare*. Declared an editorial “mutilation” by the *British Critic*, this text is frequently perceived as a prototype for her brother’s adaptation.²⁶⁹

While they share the same title, there are several editorial contrasts between the two versions of *The Family Shakespeare*. Henrietta expurgates only twenty plays, sixteen less than her brother, and her adaptation methods are much less consistent than his. While she declares that her focus is on the removal of offensive material, she leaves several morally questionable incidents and words unchanged. For example, Henrietta’s version of *Henry IV*’s Falstaff no longer references his regular pursuit of prostitutes, but his carnal interests towards women are still well pronounced. This Falstaff also retains some use of profanity, and still concludes a hearty dinner by making a comical exhibition of unbuttoning his trousers to expose himself to those in attendance. These references are cut from Thomas’ text, along with Prince Hal’s sexual feminizing of the sun, which Henrietta retains. Her text also removes material simply because she considered it dull. The majority of these supposedly boring lines

²⁶⁸ Bowdler, Henrietta. *Sermons on the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity*, 23rd ed. (Bath: Cadell and Davies, 1810), v.

²⁶⁹ Review of *The Family Shakespeare*, by Henrietta Bowdler. *British Critic*. Vol. 30 (Oct. 1807): 442.

involve the rogues and fools from Shakespeare's plays. She cuts lines from Touchstone's poetry from *As You Like It*, and scales back Falstaff's interactions with Prince Hal, abridging some of their conversations. Despite her declaration, there is no indication that Henrietta's cutting follows a set method or goal, which leaves it appearing arbitrary.

The distinctions between the two versions of *The Family Shakespeare* did not prevent a great deal of confusion among critics and historians over the authorship of the first text. Thomas Bowdler was credited as the creator of both works for over a century, an error that was even enshrined in the records of the British Museum archives until about 1910.²⁷⁰ This case of mistaken identity is the result of several compounding factors. Foremost was Henrietta's decision to publish her work anonymously, leaving early nineteenth-century reviewers to speculate over the identity of its editor. Among the possible candidates named at the time were Jane Austen, Elizabeth Inchbald, and Samuel Coleridge.²⁷¹

The involvement of the Bowdler family was first revealed through a footnote in James Plumptre's *Four Discourses on Subjects Relating to the Amusement of the Stage*. However, Plumptre, a faculty member at Cambridge University and close personal friend of the Bowdler family, declared that the editor was Thomas rather than Henrietta.²⁷² Many took Thomas' name on the 1818 edition as further confirmation of this statement, but subsequent criticism also probed the possibility that other members of the Bowdler family were the true editors of both editions.

Though Stanley Yonge's 1958 article speculates on the identities of these culprits by

²⁷⁰ Yonge, Stanley. "Two Thomas Bowdlers, Editors of Shakespeare." *Notes and Queries*. Vol. 203. (Sept. 1958): 384.

²⁷¹ Perrin, *Dr. Bowdler's Legacy*, 72.

²⁷² Plumptre, James. *Four Discourses on Subjects Relating to the Amusement of the Stage*. (Cambridge: Merrs. F.C. and J. Rivington, 1809), 222.

examining Thomas and his siblings, the investigation is inconclusive.²⁷³ Outside of Yonge's article, one of the more commonly suggested editors is Thomas and Henrietta's nephew, John Jr. His premature death at the age of thirty-one in 1815 prompted some critics to hypothesize that Thomas had taken up the second edition in honour of his nephew's anonymous first attempt.

Henrietta was not initially a suspect in this pursuit of the first *The Family Shakespeare's* editor for several reasons. Though she was noted for some literary work, the bulk of her documented career is brief compared with that of other family members, and easily overlooked. Even in death, she was ironically overshadowed by the reputation her work had given Thomas; her obituary honoured her as the sister of the prestigious creator of *The Family Shakespeare*. By the mid-nineteenth century, she was still regarded as a minor pre-Victorian author who had written "a small volume of sermons" that was overshadowed by the controversial work of her famous, Shakespeare-expurgating brother.²⁷⁴

Like her brother's version of *The Family Shakespeare*, Henrietta's text never gained a substantial amount of critical approval. The scathing response from the *British Critic* in 1807 was followed by a similar reaction from *The Monthly Review* later that year, which called the work a "castrated version of [Shakespeare's] plays."²⁷⁵ *The Christian Observer* generated further disapproval by taking the opposite stance, accusing *The Family Shakespeare* of failing to remove enough harmful content to make the plays suitable for children.²⁷⁶ The *Observer* also criticizes Henrietta's failure to provide didactic commentaries for each play, saying it would have been useful to clearly define the moral consequences of her adaptations

²⁷³ Yonge, "Two Thomas Bowdlers," 384.

²⁷⁴ "Miss Bowdler." *Notes and Queries*. Vol. s2-VII, no. 180. (June 11, 1859): 484.

²⁷⁵ Review of *The Family Shakespeare*, by Henrietta Bowdler. *The Monthly Review; or Literary Journal, Enlarged: From September to December, inclusive*. Vol. 54. (1807): 212.

²⁷⁶ "Let it Live or Perish." *The Christian Observer*. Vol. 7. (1808): 326.

for young readers.²⁷⁷ The only publicised approval for Henrietta’s text appeared in Plumptre’s footnote, which declares that the entire world, not just Shakespeare readers, is “indebted to the excellent editor” of *The Family Shakespeare*.²⁷⁸ However, like many reviewers before him, Plumptre offers no elaboration to explain this assertion. One possible rationale for his support involves his similar attitude towards censorship.

Plumptre published a volume of expurgated literature, *A Collection of Songs*, just a year prior to Henrietta’s text. It collects several English ballads and folksongs that were singled out by the Society for the Suppression of Vice as “prohibitively offensive and indecent.”²⁷⁹ He edited this collection by removing objectionable ideas and situations, as well as any expressions that he considered impious. These included references to romantic love, murder, suicide, lawlessness, blasphemy, as well as any mention of heaven or hell that did not also give praise to God. This content was usually replaced with original material that better served the priorities of his editorial philosophy: “With me, the cause of morality and religion is paramount.”²⁸⁰ This leaves him appearing more concerned with creating didactic material than with offering an accurate representation of his sources, a contrast to Thomas Bowdler’s adaptation methods. He later used these views as guidelines for his *Four Discourses*, his methods still showing similarities with a few of those used by members of the Bowdler household.

There is no denying that Thomas Bowdler’s *The Family Shakespeare* draws some inspiration from his family’s editorial traditions. However, as previously noted, many members of the Bowdler family endorsed the liberal cutting of material for

²⁷⁷ “Let it Live,” *Christian Observer*, 326.

²⁷⁸ Plumptre, *Four Discourses*, 222.

²⁷⁹ Plumptre, James. *A Collection of Songs, Moral, Sentimental, Instructive, and Amusing*. (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1806), 1: xiv.

²⁸⁰ Plumptre, *Collection of Songs*, 1: xiv.

zealous moral ends. Even after *The Family Shakespeare* appeared in 1818, other members of the Bowdler family continued producing works in accordance to this strict editorial tradition, such as the 1821 *Poems Divine and Moral* by John Bowdler Sr. Its goal was “not to produce a collection of elegant poetry, but to do good” by encouraging moral themes in its verses.²⁸¹ This is achieved via the censorship of several recognized works, such as John Dryden’s “Character of a Good Person.” Expurgation is used with an indifference towards aesthetics and style, resulting in whole lines and stanzas being removed or replaced regardless of the impact on poetic structure or stability. This editorial measure appears to have more in common with bowdlerization than Thomas Bowdler’s work does. Subsequent analysis demonstrates that Thomas Bowdler made a unique effort to balance the preservation of Shakespeare’s content with his emphasis on morality. His determination to keep his work representative of the playwright’s efforts even led him to concede to the presence of objectionable content that he would have rather removed.

²⁸¹ Perrin, *Dr. Bowdler’s Legacy*, 68.

4.4 – Separating Bowdler from Bowdlerization

Having established the context of Thomas Bowdler's work, it is now time to examine the specific measures that he undertook to edit plays for *The Family Shakespeare*. As previously noted, editors both within and outside the Bowdler household created or modified various texts to suit practical, educational objectives. These were also tailored to the respective social or moral ideals of their creators. One of Bowdler's defining traits is his respect for Christianity. He decries Shakespeare's levity with religious references, and either replaces them with synonyms or removes them. However, Bowdler's Shakespeare does not promote any social or religious lessons or commentaries; existing elements and themes in Shakespeare are never revised or modified to enforce such agendas. Rather than use the plays to champion his principles, Bowdler's objective is to create a conservative Shakespeare reading experience for the entire family. Unlike the Lambs' *Tales from Shakespeare*, he intends for his text to be a replacement for existing editions of the plays rather than a didactic companion-piece that assists readers with understanding Shakespeare. Consequently, themes in *The Family Shakespeare* do not venture beyond those found in the playwright's work.

Examining plays from *The Family Shakespeare* provides greater insight into the aforementioned characteristics of Thomas' adaptation strategy as well as his other editorial standards. The first act of his *Twelfth Night* adaptation offers a sample of how expurgation and censorship are employed throughout most of the collection. For example, matters of sexuality, whether presented through the use of individual terms or in elaborate conversations, initially appear to be dealt with decisively. Bowdler replaces a term from the ship captain's dialogue with Viola in the play's first scene,

where he has the man suggest that Viola disguise herself as a court page instead of a eunuch.

A more elaborate example of Bowdler's editing involves an innuendo-filled exchange between Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Sir Toby Belch at the conclusion of Act one, Scene three. Isaac Reed's 1813 edition of the plays, which Bowdler uses as the basis for his adaptations, presents this scene as follows:

SIR AND. And, I think, I have the back-trick, simply
as strong as any man in Illyria.

SIR TO. Wherefore are these things hid? wherefore have
these gifts a curtain before them? are they like to take dust,
like mistress Moll's picture? why dost thou not go to church
in a galliard, and come home in a coranto? My very walk a
jig; I would not so much as make water, but in a sink-a-pace.
What dost thou mean? is it a world to hide virtues in? I did
think, by the excellent constitution of thy leg, it was formed
under the star of a galliard.

SIR AND. Ay, 'tis strong, and it does indifferent well in a flame
-coloured stock.²⁸²

Sir Andrew's assurance of his sexual prowess is playfully rebuked by Sir Toby's declaration that the younger man must conceal his talents. His comparison of these "gifts" to a covered portrait segues into a point on Moll Cutpurse, the alias of sixteenth-century rogue Mary Frith. Reed notes that this reference emphasizes concealment by alluding to Frith's questionable identity and mysterious activities. He labels the woman, who preferred to use male attire and mannerisms, a hermaphroditic mystery.²⁸³ Not only did she spend her life concealing her gender behind fraudulent masculinity, but her deeds as a pickpocket, fence, and pimp to London's middle class are speculative. Artists have attempted to define them creatively via dramas such as Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* as well as numerous illustrations and portraits. Sir Andrew denies that his masculinity is an illusion, and

²⁸² Reed, *Shakespeare*, 5: 254.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 5: 255.

uses Sir Toby's subsequent use of dance as a euphemism for sexual intercourse. He assures his companion of the excellent condition and constitution of his "leg" and its proficiency with the galliard routine. However, this entire conversation, including its extended references to sexuality, is expurgated from *The Family Shakespeare*. Instead, the adapted versions of the two knights merely pledge to "set about some revels" for the evening.²⁸⁴

Both the small word-change and larger expurgation to *Twelfth Night* show a conscious desire to censor sexual concepts that could potentially offend or confuse Bowdler's intended readership: families with children. Bowdler is editing so that Shakespeare's plays can be read aloud to listeners of all ages. He does not wish to expose his audience, especially impressionable children, to issues of controversy or to concepts they cannot understand. The ship captain's first-scene word exchange, for example, spares parents reading the text aloud from a potentially confusing and embarrassing discourse to their children on the nuances of castration. Naming the position of page conveys the same idea without this turbulence. Similarly, Moll Cutpurse's notoriety is based upon behaviour involving vice and carnality, two topics that Bowdler wishes to avoid referencing. He seems to view any historical significance to her identity as overshadowed by her sexualized and criminal nature.

Similar sentiments prompt expurgations to a conversation between Viola and the Clown at the beginning of the first scene of Act three. Though the interaction begins innocently, their discussion on the implications of wordplay is cut from the adaptation:

Vio. Nay, that's certain ; they, that dally nicely with words, may quickly make them wanton.
CLO. I would therefore, my sister had had no name, sir.

²⁸⁴ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 1: 246.

Vio. Why, man ?

CLO. Why, sir, her name's a word ; and to dally with that word, might make my sister wanton: But, indeed, words are very rascals, since bonds disgraced them.²⁸⁵

As in previous expurgations, this passage's removal is brought on by its sexual suggestiveness. Viola's intention is to subtly undermine the fool by associating wanton word use with unruly and chaotic behaviour. However, the Clown turns her suggestion into a carnal joke by correlating this same wantonness with sexual promiscuity. This prompts him to humorously wish that his sister avoid full words, or else risk becoming sexually indulgent.

Bowdler removes this moment, as well as the Clown's subsequent attempts to obstruct Viola's audience with Olivia using additional wordplay and allusions. In Shakespeare, Viola expresses exasperation over the boy's antics, and he teasingly compares her and his lady to the mythological characters Troilus and Cressida, the former a young lover and the latter patiently awaiting his affections. Both the innuendo and the allusion are removed by Bowdler because their meaning would be lost upon a young child. The correlation between wantonness and carnality demands knowledge of sexuality that children reading *The Family Shakespeare* do not have. Furthermore, it is also associated with a topic to which Bowdler does not wish to expose them.

One can argue that any amount of expurgation prevents *The Family Shakespeare* from accurately representing Shakespeare. However, Bowdler is conscious of the need to preserve the integrity of each character's depiction in the dramas, despite his mandated changes. Unlike many editors and expurgators that came before him, Bowdler does not redefine every single moment that disagrees with his editorial strategy. His preference is to exclude rather than rewrite, but he also

²⁸⁵ Ibid.,1: 276.

argues that removing several instances of impropriety compromises the integrity of the script and the development of its characters. Though he expurgates a great deal of material that would be offensive or incomprehensible to his readership, there are several elements that are contentious to his moral philosophies that go unaltered.

For example, while the aforementioned sexual discourse of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew is cut, they retain their voracious drinking habits. Bowdler's Sir Toby still spends his evenings enthusiastically "drinking to the health of (his) niece," pledging to do so "as long as there is a passage in (his) throat."²⁸⁶ Sir Andrew is also "drunk nightly in (his) company," though the elder knight still regards him as "a coward and a coystril," his insults going unexpurgated.²⁸⁷ Similarly, Sir Andrew's subsequent subtle, but sexually-charged, flirtations with the maid Maria in the third scene of Act one are unaltered, along with Sir Toby's encouragement to accost her, "front her, board her, woo her, assail her."²⁸⁸ This allows *The Family Shakespeare's* version of *Twelfth Night* to maintain both characters' presentation as selfish, and periodically inebriated, rogues. The alternative is neutering their comedy, which would dilute their identities and their comedic contributions to the story.

Additionally, though Malvolio's manic behaviour late in the play is no longer compared to demonic possession, and his unusual attire no longer described as "heathen," the actions taken against the foppish steward remain in this adaptation. He is still manipulated by Maria, the Clown, and the roguish knights. They insult openly and secretly humiliate him with a false love letter from Olivia, and finally bind and lock him away to panic in a dark room. Despite the cruelty of these antics, Bowdler does not remove any details, nor does he add any commentary condemning the pranks or their perpetrators. No major expurgation takes place, and there are no moralizing

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 1: 243.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 1: 244.

amendments to warn children against emulating the conspirators' behaviour. The humiliations are committed as they are in Shakespeare, their perpetrators are unpunished and their victim is not avenged. This demonstrates that, contrary to his reputation, Bowdler does not cut every single joke, insult, or comment that might embarrass or offend his audience.

Expurgation in *The Family Shakespeare* is typically reserved for overt offensive references, and for minor antics that are easily trimmed from the adaptations. In either case, the process does not affect the presentation of the plays' content or central themes. A common example of Bowdler's light censorship is his exclusion of words with religious overtones. In *Twelfth Night*, this is demonstrated by Sir Andrew's line "Faith, I'll home to-morrow" in Act one, Scene three changing to simply "I'll home to-morrow."²⁸⁹ A similar, minor change appears in the fourth scene of Act three with the removal of insults that emphasize Malvolio's contempt for Maria. He still presumes to be socially superior to her and her cohorts, Sir Toby and Fabian, calling them "idle and shallow things" while declaring that he is "not of [their] element."²⁹⁰ However, his insinuation that Maria is a mischievous and flirtatious "minx," as he calls her in Shakespeare, is removed.²⁹¹ While these changes reduce the amount of disdain expressed in these encounters, they do not significantly affect the overall coherence of the story.

Even heavily censored plays still maintain a strong resemblance to their source material. The editing of the beginning of the third scene of *Macbeth*'s second act demonstrates this. In Reed's edition of the play this scene depicts the railings of the castle porter:

Here's a knocking, indeed ! If a man were porter of hell-

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 1: 245.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 1: 288.

²⁹¹ Reed, *Shakespeare*, 5: 362.

gate, he should have old turning the key. [Knocking.]
 Knock, knock, knock : Who's there, i'the name of
 Belzebub? Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on the
 expectation of plenty: Come in time; have napkins
 enough about you ; here you'll sweat for't. [Knocking.]
 Knock, knock : Who's there, i'the other devil's name?
 'Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both
 the scales against either scale; who committed treason
 enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to
 heaven : O, come in, equivocator. [Knocking.] Knock,
 knock, knock : Who's there ? 'Faith, here's an English
 tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose:
 Come in, tailor ; here you may roast your goose. [Knocking.]
 Knock, knock: Never at quiet ! What are you? But this
 place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I
 had thought to have let in some of all professions, that
 go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire. [Knocking.]
 Anon, anon ; I pray you, remember the porter.
 MACDUFF. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,
 That you do lie so late ?
 PORT. 'Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock;
 and drink, sir, is a great provoker of three things.²⁹²

By referring himself as Hell's gatekeeper, the porter exaggerates his responsibility for tending to the castle's guests into a form of devilish toil that plagues him in the early hours of the morning. However, these details do more than emphasize his exasperation, especially when considered with his boisterous theories on the disturbance's source, be it a farmer, an equivocator, or a tailor. His admitting to a long night of revelry and alcohol contextualizes his words as a drunken rant, or at least the product of somewhat inebriated logic. Furthermore, the "devil porter" proclaims that drink is the provoker of nose painting, sleep, and urine, as well as an influence over lechery, encouraging desire but inhibiting one's performance.²⁹³ This humorous anecdote draws sexuality into the conversation in a briefly explicit manner.

Though the character and scene are present in *The Family Shakespeare's* version of the play, they undergo extensive editing:

²⁹² Reed, *Shakespeare*, 10: 121-123.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 10: 124.

Here's a knocking, indeed [Knocking.] Knock,
 knock, knock : Who's there? Come in time; have
 napkins enough about you. [Knocking.] Knock,
 knock : Who's there? [Knocking.] Knock, knock:
 Never at quiet! What are you? [Knocking.] Anon,
 anon ; I pray you, remember the porter.
 MACDUFF. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to
 bed, That you do lie so late ?
 PORT. 'Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second
 cock.²⁹⁴

Bowdler removes the porter's references to hell, drink, and sexuality. He also scales back the character's theories regarding the visitors outside the door. It is no longer implied that the character's reactions are fuelled by alcohol. *The Family Shakespeare's* version of the man focuses more on sound at the door than on ruminating over the culprit. However, this porter still manages to appear ill-tempered, even if expurgation has transformed Shakespeare's drunken theologian into a sober complainer. The absence of his hellish emphasis and additional complaints, as well as the intoxication references, does not impede the overall story's coherence. Reed argues that the scene is meant to be an isolated comedic moment that light-heartedly separates the previous evening's murders and their inevitable discovery.²⁹⁵ Though Bowdler's editing dilutes this humour, much of the extracted material, particularly the drunken revelry, would be unfamiliar or disconcerting to a young audience.

Furthermore, not every reference to religious concepts or images is removed from *The Family Shakespeare's* version of *Macbeth*. Banquo's desperate plea that heaven "restrain in [him] the cursed thoughts, the nature" created by the witches' arcane prophesies remains intact.²⁹⁶ This affirms that, while Bowdler frequently expurgates references to faith, he is only compelled to remove humour and insults rather than sincere prayers. Nor does he restrain the presentation of the witches'

²⁹⁴ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 4: 191.

²⁹⁵ Reed, *Shakespeare*, 10: 121.

²⁹⁶ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 4: 186.

wicked and inhuman nature. The only detail from their magical ceremonies that Bowdler excludes is the fact that their brew includes the finger of a prostitute's strangled infant.

Previous examples have examined Bowdler's editing of the crude and bawdy humour found in *Twelfth Night* and *Macbeth*. These are not isolated cases of expurgation, as jesting commentary and sexual barbs are common in many of Shakespeare's plays. Most of this content is disseminated by the rogues and fools among the *dramatis personae*, which vary in prominence between each production. Some exist as part of the main story while others appear in parallel parodies of the central conflict. No matter what their specific functions, the antics and personalities of fools are usually antithetical to the morals and virtues that inspire Bowdler's efforts in *The Family Shakespeare*. His treatment of these brazen characters offers additional insight into the conditions of his expurgation philosophy. While Bowdler does not cut all of them, they tend to receive thorough editing.

The most extensive changes that Bowdler makes to his adaptation of *King Lear* involve content associated with Lear's fool. In Shakespeare, this character is a disruptive young man that shows neither fear nor respect for the monarch's station. His attitude is established from his very first jesting gesture as a courtly critic, where he offers to trade his position to the king. This follows the latter's disastrous decisions during the tumultuous inheritance scene and the banishment of Cordelia. The fool also offers this same dubious honour to the Earl of Kent after the nobleman professes loyalty to Lear despite the king's growing madness. These acts immediately demonstrate the fearless humour of the jester; he targets anyone, and is unaffected by their inevitable threats of reprisal.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷ Bevington, David, et al. *King Lear*. (London: Bantam Books, 1980), 25.

However, in *The Family Shakespeare*, many of his jokes and insults are expurgated. For example, one of the fool's early lyrical jests involves his observation that "the codpiece that will house before the head has any, the head that he shall lose, so beggars marry many."²⁹⁸ The line is a mocking allusion to Lear's state, remarking that that men who place their own desires over acting responsibility quickly find themselves without either a warm bed or their sexual extremities. This is removed from Bowdler's version of the play. Many other jokes and quips with sexual overtones are also expurgated. The edited fool no longer describes the evening chill as cold enough to "cool a courtesan," nor does he make any references to "heretics," "cutpurses," "bawds and whores."²⁹⁹

Overall, the desexualized dialogue of Lear's fool in *The Family Shakespeare* reduces the character's potential for controversy while transforming him from a social commentator to a childish background figure. His activities are inconsequential to the remainder of the play. In one instance, a significant line of his is given to the edited Lear. When the king asks, "who is it that can tell me who I am," it is not the fool that informs him that he has become "Lear's shadow."³⁰⁰ Instead, the king makes this statement himself, transforming this response to a literal question into an epiphany. However, this particular change creates an inconsistency. Making Lear the respondent suggests that he already recognizes his transition from respected ruler to a virtual vagabond within his own country. This disrupts the development of the edited play: Bowdler's version of the protagonist has potentially reached his epiphany prematurely, only to forget it and return to madness during later scenes.

Similar editing is conducted on the clown Touchstone in Bowdler's adaptation of *As You Like It*. The character's experiences in Shakespeare parody those of the

²⁹⁸ Bevington, *Lear*, 66.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

³⁰⁰ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 9: 235.

protagonist Rosalind. When she takes romantic interest in the noble exile Orlando, Touchstone begins a sexual affair with the shepherdess Audrey. While Rosalind uses her masculine alter-ego Ganymede to probe Orlando's affection, Touchstone is more forward and carnal in his intentions, sleeping with his counterpart. After marriage symbolically confirms the bond between Rosalind and Orlando, the sexually-active clown seeks it as a social necessity to prevent the stigma of living "in bawdy."³⁰¹ These parallels, however, are removed from *The Family Shakespeare's* version. The edited play omits the physical dimension to Touchstone and Audrey's relationship. Instead, the pair walks on and off stage together over the course of several scenes, eventually expressing mutual affection and interest in marriage. The absence of the expurgated material removes the clown's carnal parallel to the main love story, turning him into a minor background character.

Besides religious references and humour, Bowdler also edits lines that he considers explicitly vicious or violent, such as those associated with *The Tempest's* Caliban. This character presents a potentially difficult case for editing since, in Shakespeare, his hideous form and deviant behaviour are paired with the sympathy that his life of abusive servitude evokes. Bowdler justifies Caliban's slavery to the wizard partly by maintaining Shakespeare's emphasis on his physical inhumanity, defining him as a monstrous beast that deserves to be chained. He is described as "a dull thing," "a freckled whelp, hag born" and "not honour'd with a human shape."³⁰² While Shakespeare declares that he is a "poisonous slave, got by the devil himself," Bowdler opts to omit the latter detail.³⁰³ Similarly, though the edited Caliban regards Prospero as a powerful master, he does not acknowledge the wizard's parallels to

³⁰¹ Harbridge, Alfred, ed. *Shakespeare: The Comedies and Romances*. (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1969), 218.

³⁰² Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 1: 15.

³⁰³ Reed, *Shakespeare*, 4: 37.

God.³⁰⁴ Though the absence of these references dilutes some of the emphasis on Caliban's dark nature and Prospero's divine abilities, the remaining details are sufficient to emphasize each character's nature and their relationship with one another. While he is no longer satanic, Caliban in *The Family Shakespeare* is still "poisonous," assuring the audience of his dangerousness. Furthermore, this snake-like quality has a symbolic association with the Christian devil, and therefore still manages to imply the parallel that Bowdler omits. Likewise, the fact that Prospero has the power to exert mastery over such a supernatural creature is an indirect testimonial to the divine power that he possesses.

Bowdler's editing of Caliban's behaviour achieves a similar effect. Though the monster expresses an interest in Prospero's virgin daughter Miranda, Bowdler expurgates his aspirations of raping and impregnating her. The removal of this graphic plot seems appropriate for *The Family Shakespeare's* target audience. However, while Bowdler objects to Miranda's rape by a monster, he does not preclude the same crime being committed by a human male. In the second scenes of both Acts two and three of the edited play, the monster drunkenly cavorts with Trinculo and Stephano, both of whom are also intoxicated. Amid the trio's inebriated antics, Bowdler's Caliban proposes that the two men violently overthrow Prospero. In return, he offers Miranda's virginity to Stephano, so that he might use her to "bring forth a brave brood."³⁰⁵ This implicit suggestion of rape also allows Bowdler to emphasize Caliban's frightening nature indirectly, maintaining his monstrousness without making any offensive references.

The majority of *The Family Shakespeare's* adaptations are created using editorial measures that are similar to those outlined in the previous examples.

³⁰⁴ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 1: 38.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 1: 46.

Bowdler maintains his determination to balance his moral standards with as accurate a presentation of his Shakespeare as his expurgation policy allow. However, it is premature to conclude that this is the extent of the Bowdler's process when further analysis demonstrates that not every drama is as conducive to the removal of bawdy references as *Twelfth Night* and *Macbeth* or to the amendment of characterization as *The Tempest* and *As You Like It*. *Henry IV*, *Othello*, and *Measure for Measure* all present characters, scenarios, and thematic elements that Bowdler cannot remove without making significant changes to the content of the plays.

These three cases represent the supremacy of Bowdler's respect for Shakespeare over the strength of his moral convictions. He realizes that moral readers may find the persisting indelicacies in *Henry IV*, *Othello*, and *Measure for Measure* to be offensive. However, he maintains that omitting these plays would have rendered the collection incomplete, and been a great disservice to the playwright's legacy. Instead, he uses unique adaptation strategies for each play, exhibiting a level of editorial flexibility that seems uncharacteristic of his critical reputation as an inflexible and unrepentant cutter. They receive special prefaces that identify the specific moral and structural complications posed by their content, supplemented by rationalizations for their alternative editing. Given that some of these special measures contradict the fundamental intentions of the text, Bowdler also frequently apologizes to the audience. He recommends that those most offended by his decision should either set the three adaptations aside for private reading or leave them forgotten on the shelf.

4.5 – Bowdler’s *Henry IV*

The special preface to Bowdler’s adaptation of both parts of *Henry IV* begins by expressing his difficulties with attempting to expurgate content from the plays that he judged to be offensive. He argues that the dominant presence of Falstaff and his associates necessitates several modifications and exceptions to his typical editorial style. Unlike many of Shakespeare’s other rogues and fools, Falstaff is more than just bawdy clown or saucy commentator that lingers in the background. Though his behaviour is reprehensible, Bowdler considers the rogue, and his followers, to be intimately tied to the development of Prince Hal. He argues that they allegorically represent the tumultuous lifestyle that the royal heir outgrows during his ascent from England’s taverns to its throne. This consequently leads him to believe that, with the exception of Doll Tearsheet, it is impossible to remove or significantly alter these characters without endangering the integrity of the play’s story.

While Bowdler believes that he cannot omit the drunken revelry and mischief of Falstaff and his cohorts, he still feels obligated to minimize their offensiveness. To that end, his usual editing tactics are employed to minimize immorality. His most common alterations involve the exclusion or revision of incidental terms and brief statements in characters’ speech. Bowdler’s Falstaff still serves as the jesting master of ceremonies for a tumultuous lifestyle that Hal must cast off. However, the number of carnal references associated with him is significantly decreased, resulting in the rogue being associated more with childish pranks and idle pleasures than with wanton inebriation or sexual indulgence.

Several minor changes to this effect appear in a conversation between Falstaff and Hal in Act one, Scene two. While Shakespeare’s Falstaff compares his melancholy to “a gib cat, or a lagged bear,” Bowdler’s version opts for just the

latter.³⁰⁶ This is due to the former's invocation of a sexually frustrated tomcat, an inappropriate comment for *The Family Shakespeare*. Later, the unedited Falstaff expresses his desire to purchase a noble reputation, declaring "I would to God, thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought."³⁰⁷ Bowdler again expurgates the divine invocation and replaces it with a secular "I wish," allowing Falstaff to keep his roguish statement without taking God's name in vain.³⁰⁸

Bowdler similarly edits two of Falstaff's literally damning declarations toward Hal later in the scene: "O thou hast damnable iteration; and art, indeed, able to corrupt a saint," and "I'll be damned for never a king's son in Christendom."³⁰⁹ Both lines are part of Falstaff's attempt to attribute his disreputable nature to the prince's influence. Bowdler does not omit the first line, but changes its wording to expurgate swearing: "Oh thou art indeed, able to corrupt a saint."³¹⁰ This statement helps to partially establish the rogue's irresponsibility. However, the second example is omitted. While this reduces some of the emphasis on Falstaff's selfish nature, it does not negate this portrayal, nor does it interfere with later events in the story.

More expurgation is used during the two men's conversation within the tumultuousness tavern featured in Act two, Scene four. Early in this encounter, Bowdler removes Falstaff's insults toward both Hal and Hotspur. The rogue no longer addresses the former as a "vile standing tuck," as this is disrespectful towards royal authority.³¹¹ This alteration reflects Bowdler's correlation between Hal's royal station and the respect that he deserves as the young heir to the throne. However, this also means that Hotspur, a usurper, receives no immunity from slander. It is true that the

³⁰⁶ Reed, *Shakespeare*, 11: 214.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 11: 217.

³⁰⁸ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 5: 104.

³⁰⁹ Reed, *Shakespeare*, 11: 217.

³¹⁰ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 5: 124.

³¹¹ Reed, *Shakespeare*, 11: 305.

religious connotations of Falstaff's reaction to Hotspur in *The Family Shakespeare* are removed. He is no longer accused of having "made Lucifer cuckold, and swore the devil his true liegeman upon the cross of a Welsh hook."³¹² However, this is conducted out of the editor's reverence for faith rather than any respect for the insulted character. The remaining barbs pitched towards him persist, with the edited Falstaff still declaring him the "mad fellow of the north" and the "plague" that cripples order.³¹³

Bowdler later takes an opportunity to remove additional sexual references that appear as Hal and Falstaff's conversation shifts, towards recent developments of the war. This example of expurgation is not as incidental as many of those previously listed, as it involves the exclusion of lines that make a more significant contribution to character development than those mentioned previously. The unedited version of this moment reads as follows:

FAL. I grant ye, upon instinct. Well, he is there too,
and one Mordake, and a thousand blue-caps more:
Worcester is stolen away to-night; thy father's beard
is turned white with the news; you may buy land now
as cheap as stinking mackarel.
P. HEN. Why then, 'tis like, if there come a hot June,
and this civil buffeting hold, we shall buy
maidenheads as they buy hob-nails, by the hundreds.
FAL. By the mass, lad, thou sayest true; it is like, we
shall have good trading that way.-But, tell me, Hal, art
thou not horribly afeard? thou being heir apparent,
could the world pick thee out three such enemies again,
as that fiend Douglas, that spirit Percy, and that devil
Glendower? Art thou not horribly afraid? doth not thy
blood thrill at it?³¹⁴

Falstaff seems to uncharacteristically raise genuine issues for Hal to consider between their moments of slanderous statements and drunken mirth. Not only does he highlight Bolingbroke's recent losses and consequential stress, but he attempts to

³¹² Ibid., 11: 311.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 11: 313.

draw the heir's attention to the implications that the conflict has for his young life. However, when considered in lieu of his personality and other actions, Falstaff's concerns appear more self-motivated than altruistic.

Beyond his interest in cheapened, war-torn property is the reality that Hal's safety and prosperity directly influence his own. Bowdler keeps this portion of the conversation intact, ensuring that *The Family Shakespeare* conveys Falstaff's selfish insecurity. However, there are changes to Hal's statements that alter the conversation:

FAL. I grant ye, upon instinct. Well, he is there too, and one Mordake, and a thousand blue-caps more: Worcester is stolen away to-night; thy father's beard is turned white with the news; you may buy land now as cheap as stinking mackarel. -But, tell me, Hal, art thou not horribly afraid? thou being heir apparent, could the world pick thee out three such enemies again, as that fiend Douglas, that spirit Percy, and that devil Glendower? Art thou not horribly afraid? doth not thy blood thrill at it?³¹⁵

Bowdler removes Hal's concern with the procurement of prostitutes. In Shakespeare, the expurgated statement emphasizes the depths of prince's immaturity and deviance early in the story. Yet, his carnal indulgence also broadens the extent of his maturation from lecherous rogue into a responsible heir to the throne. Bowdler's Hal still engages in some silly, childish antics, such as playacting with Falstaff. However, the absence of sexual references, combined with several other minor expurgations to Hal's lines, decreases the vulgarity of his immature ways. His transition to nobler pursuits is not as grand, and neither is the exaltation that accompanies it.

A similar series of changes are made to the second part of *Henry IV*, one of the first taking place during the second scene of Act one. As he is reintroduced to the story, Falstaff asks his page to divulge "what says the doctor to my water."³¹⁶ This

³¹⁵ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 5: 139.

³¹⁶ Reed, *Shakespeare*, 12: 26.

line is meant to suggest that Falstaff has had a physician investigate his urine for signs of venereal diseases.³¹⁷ Bowdler considers this line of inquiry inappropriate for child readers, and expurgates the initial conversation. Instead, Falstaff begins by boasting that “the brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent any thing that tends to laughter more than I invent, or is invented on me.”³¹⁸ His exaggeration still emphasizes his foolishness, though Bowdler’s expurgations continue to reduce his sexual aggressiveness, tempering the lusty rogue into an innocently humorous barroom clown. This example is followed for the remainder of this scene in *The Family Shakespeare*. Falstaff’s use of the terms “s’blood,” a shortened form of the religious slur “God’s blood,” and “whoreson” along with his sexually suggestive references to the “horn of abundance” are expurgated, as is his suggestive promise to “tickle” Mistress Quickly’s “catastrophe” in the first scene of Act two.³¹⁹

Henry IV part two also features an editorial measure that is significantly different from previous examples of Bowdler’s editing. In this portion of the play, Bowdler’s determination to expurgate “obscenity,” “barbarism,” and “corruption” from Falstaff and his followers takes a step beyond its typical boundaries. This involves the removal of Doll Tearsheet, along with the entire fourth scene of *Henry IV* part two’s second act and all subsequent references to her character. This decision is similar to Tate’s removal of the Fool from his adaptation of *King Lear*. It also draws Bowdler away from his usual compromising stance and closer towards the accusations of zealous cutting that haunt his reputation.

This radical move is the result of Bowdler’s reactions to the bawdy women who associate with Falstaff. Though he sees a use for Mistress Quickly, he does not extend these views to Doll. Both characters are active participants in the tavern

³¹⁷ Ibid., 12: 26.

³¹⁸ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 5: 206.

³¹⁹ Reed, *Shakespeare*, 12: 27.

revelry that predominantly surrounds Falstaff and his cohorts. Though neither is the model of a genteel, conservative lady, Bowdler's editing tries to redeem the sins of Mistress Quickly for *The Family Shakespeare*. Falstaff pronounces her to be a sweet girl, implying kindness and good character, rather than the more base implication drawn from her being "a sweet wench."³²⁰ Likewise, her self-comparison to a mare, and Falstaff's accompanying promise to "ride the mare, if I have any vantage of ground to get up," are both expurgated for transparently representing the pair's plotted sexual congress.³²¹ Bowdler argues in his special preface that Mistress Quickly is essential to the play, that her presence "completes" Falstaff's character while offering a dose of diverting comedy.³²² However, he does not elaborate on the meaning of this, leaving the point to speculation.

In contrast, Bowdler argues that there is nothing redeemable or useful about Doll, adding that every scene she appears in is indefensibly and inexcusably indecent.³²³ Though he never identifies it, the main motivation for his scrutiny of her is likely tied to her being a prostitute. The illicit nature of her vocation provokes his intolerance, leading him to believe that she offers no value to the story. Still, it is a peculiar gesture in light of the supposedly indecent or inappropriate story elements that he leaves unexpurgated in other plays, such as the torment inflicted on *Twelfth Night's* Malvolio. Furthermore, the differences between Doll and Mistress Quickly appear purely subjective: neither exits outside the tumultuous tavern scenes; both provoke Falstaff's innuendo; both join in the jests of him and his peers. One could argue that the revelry depicted in the expurgated scene is an exception to Hal's typically cathartic interactions with Falstaff. Rather than learn from, object to, or deny

³²⁰ Ibid., 12: 122.

³²¹ Ibid., 12: 238.

³²² Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 4: 96.

³²³ Ibid.

the rogues, the prince participates in their festivities as an equal. The absence of significant didacticism makes the scene seem less substantial than other moments of cathartic revelry. Therefore, Bowdler may not consider its loss to be detrimental to the overall story.

However, this is a subjective argument, especially in lieu of the aforementioned nature of such entertaining characters. Even when they appear to contribute nothing of immediate significance, the play's rogues are not just mechanisms for revelry. They have the potential to be continuously essential to thematic points, acting as reminders of the traits that Hal must grow out of. Editing them severely could generate problems with the stability and coherence of the prince's development.

Overall, Bowdler's *Henry IV* offers a dichotomous view of the editing used in *The Family Shakespeare*. The inclusion of Falstaff goes against Bowdler's usual measures, demonstrating that the editor's conservative objectives do not deter him from making editorial compromises. The exclusion of Doll Tearsheet, and the entire scene that features her, appears consistent with the zealous and inconsiderate cutting that Bowdler is accused of inflicting on Shakespeare. However, examples of such editing are actually rare within *The Family Shakespeare*, and should be taken as an exception to Bowdler's typical adaptation methods rather than as the rule.

4.6 – Bowdler’s *Othello*

The content of *Othello* presents another challenge to Bowdler’s normal adaptation methods. Like *Henry IV*, the specific details of Bowdler’s editorial concerns are outlined in a special preface that precedes the play. However, unlike the previous drama, Bowdler’s contention is not with a character, but with the offensiveness of some of the play’s story elements, particularly its references to adultery. He considers the action to be “a crime which is deservedly placed next to murder” by “every being whose mind is not wholly insensible to the most obvious principles of virtue.”³²⁴ Though he realizes that the act appears only as an accusation, and is not actually committed, he takes issues with the arguments and proof that Iago uses to portray Desdemona as being unfaithful to her husband and to provoke Othello’s murderous response. Bowdler considers these depictions of jealous deception and destructive rage to be abhorrent, but recognizes their integral place in the coherence of the play and the presentation of its tragedy. He therefore remains determined to include the play and these elements in his collection regardless of any moral difficulties.

Though Bowdler considers *Othello*’s content “little suited” for family reading, he still believes that the play is “one of the noblest efforts of dramatic genius that has ever appeared in any age or language.”³²⁵ This sentimentality fuels his defence of his adaptation. Besides this high estimation of the tragedy, he also provides thematic and structural justification for adapting it to *The Family Shakespeare*. His main rationale for retaining the actions and reactions associated with adultery involves their value as a didactic warning against allowing self-destructive emotions to overpower reason.

³²⁴ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 10: 242.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10: 241.

Shakespeare's dramas often testify to the danger, and sorrow, of impulsively embracing emotions. The tragedy of *Macbeth* is attributable to his reckless pursuit of ambition goading him to commit evil. Hamlet's death, along with the deaths of Ophelia, Polonius, Laertes, and others results from an uncompromising thirst for revenge. Bowdler sees the same lesson in *Othello*, though he frames it in a specific context:

I have much been influenced by an opinion which I have long entertained, that this play, in its present form, is calculated to produce an excellent effect on the human mind; by exhibiting a most forcible and impressive warning against the admission of that baneful passion, which when once admitted, is the inevitable destroyer of conjugal happiness.³²⁶

This realization is applicable to both Iago and Othello, whose respective actions and reactions are fuelled by emotional turbulence involving their marriages. Iago's deceptions are provoked by a combination of jealousy, paranoid suspicion, and rage. He is envious of the successes of Michael Cassio and his commander, believes the former has been adulterous with his wife, and lets the resulting fury fuel his plots against both men. His lies stoke similar emotions in Othello, creating suspicions that lead to his misplaced retribution against his innocent wife. Both men destroy their conjugal happiness by passionately reacting to situations that do not actually exist. Bowdler's view suggests that any inappropriateness with exposing family readers to these emotionally and physically violent circumstances is overshadowed by the urgent lesson inherent in the fates of these two characters.

Plot coherence is a related rationale for preserving *Othello*'s accusations against Desdemona and their subordinate elements. The controversy of adultery is integrated into the development of the play, making it difficult to alter or expurgate. Recall that, in *Henry IV*, objectionable elements are predominantly localized to the

³²⁶ Ibid., 10: 242.

tavern scenes. Most are brought out via the humour of Falstaff and his associates, and rarely intermingle with major events of the story. This segregation renders it easy to edit, or even remove, entire details without greatly upsetting the coherence of the main plot. However, adultery is not just dominant in isolated portions of *Othello*, but prominent throughout the entire play. Bowdler realizes this, and the dilemma it creates for *The Family Shakespeare*:

I find myself, therefore, reduced to the alternative of either departing in some degree from the principle on which this publication is undertaken, or materially injuring a most invaluable exertion of the genius of Shakespeare.³²⁷

Bowdler is not exaggerating when he calls the controversial elements “invaluable.” The references to adultery are key influences over the emotional development and actions of the play’s cast, particularly Othello. Bowdler says that they endow the titular character with “all the bitter terms of reproach and execration with which the transports of jealousy and revenge are expressed.”³²⁸ Othello’s actions are motivated by his rage and jealousy towards Desdemona, as is his subsequent urge to punish her supposed adultery. The tragedy of the play requires him to surrender to these unrestrained passions; otherwise he would not murder his wife.

Other major *dramatis personae* also rely on the presence of these controversial emotional details to emphasize their role and development in the play. Iago’s conduct reveals this, his anger and jealousy towards Michael Cassio provoking the controversial circumstances in the first place. Once engaged in the deception, he exhibits the capacity for Machiavellian manipulation and deceit that is frequently regarded as his defining character trait. Iago’s actions also attest to his overall intelligence and devious cunning, qualities that were less apparent prior to his

³²⁷ Ibid., 10: 241.

³²⁸ Ibid.

plotting. Early in the play, the deceiver acts more like a malicious child than a genuine threat to Othello, Desdemona, or the other characters. His antics are confined to the slanderous insults and pranks he plays beneath Brabantio's window. He appears to grow out of this impetuosity as he engineers the elaborate downfall of Othello. His eventual execution also demonstrates the fate that awaits such violently deceptive individuals.

Though Bowdler claims to have edited *Othello* minimally, he still employs some expurgation while adapting it for *The Family Shakespeare*. He notes that the adaptation removes a "multitude of indecent expressions which abound in the speeches of the inferior characters."³²⁹ While use of the term "inferior" suggest these changes are exclusive to *dramatis personae* outside of the main cast, the editor does not shy away from expurgating some of Othello's, Iago's, Cassio's, or Desdemona's lines. Most of these changes are reminiscent of the minor expurgations encountered in other versions of Bowdler's Shakespeare plays, and typically involve the removal or replacement of offensive words and phrases related to religious references or sexualized terms. However, in the process, there are occasional expurgations that diminish the development of main characters, which deemphasizes their defining traits.

For example, several changes are made to Iago's evening escapade below Brabantio's window during the first scene of Act one. Like *Henry IV*, there is a general removal of oaths and vulgar insults, such as the use of "s'blood" as well as Iago's describing Cassio as "damn'd."³³⁰ Some expurgations involve the editing of Iago's vindictive accusations against Othello. Shakespeare presents a scathing declaration he makes to Desdemona's father:

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid., 10: 246.

IAGO. 'Zounds, sir, you are robb'd ; for shame,
put on your gown ;
Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul ;
Even now, very now, an old black ram
Is tugging your white ewe.
Arise, arise ;
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you :
Arise, I say.³³¹

The base implications that Iago gives to Othello and Desdemona's marital bed are part of his two-fold attempt to provoke Brabantio. First, he aims to incite the father's anger by using visceral imagery to portray a savage Othello violently mating with innocent, helpless Desdemona. Second, there is the embarrassment of indiscreetly making such accusations in open, public space. This use of graphic subject-matter in such a manipulative fashion provides one of the earliest defining moments of Iago's personality: he is both eager and shameless in twisting the truth to fit his private agenda, turning details into ammunition to use against his enemies.

The more explicit points of this declaration are removed in *The Family Shakespeare's* version of the play. The remainder of the edited Iago's words are comparatively vague:

IAGO. Sir, you are robb'd ; for shame, put on
your gown ;
Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul ;
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell :
Arise, I say.³³²

These lines have the same fundamental intent as those presented in the source material: to wake Brabantio and declare that his daughter is in peril. However, the absence of the graphic details implying sexual violation dilutes the selection's potential for provoking outrage and humiliation. A precise, and urgent, danger is no longer obvious. Also, while his attempt to incite Brabantio remains devious, the full

³³¹ Reed, *Shakespeare*, 19: 233.

³³² Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 10: 248.

extent of Iago's capacity for manipulation is not as evident in Bowdler's version of events.

Similar expurgation and consequences appear in Iago's subsequent elaboration of his warning. In Shakespeare, Iago continues his provocation tactics when faced with an irate Brabantio:

IAGO. 'Zounds, sir, you are one of those, that will not serve God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to do you service, you think we are ruffians : You'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse ; you'll have your nephews neigh to you : you'll have coursers for cousins, and gennets for germans.

BRA. What profane wretch art thou ?

IAGO. I am one, sir, that comes to tell you, your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.³³³

Iago maintains his use of visceral, sexual imagery in the hopes of enraging the concerned father. However, his arguments are again heavily edited and abridged in

The Family Shakespeare:

IAGO. Then, sir, because we come to do you service, you think we are ruffians.

BRA. What wretch art thou ?

IAGO. I am one, sir, that comes to tell you, your daughter and the Moor are now together.³³⁴

Just as with the first entry, all sexual implications are gone; Othello is no longer compared to a dark horse attempting to breed a beast in Desdemona. Instead of providing final confirmation of the couple's conjugal status, the edited Iago simply renders his previously oblique references to danger transparent.

Again, while both selections have similar intent, there is greater emotional impact to the words used in Shakespeare. Fortunately for Bowdler, the children that make up *The Family Shakespeare*'s audience are unlikely to comprehend the meaning

³³³ Reed, *Shakespeare*, 19: 235.

³³⁴ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 10: 249.

of Iago's unedited sexual slander. Furthermore, it would be inappropriate to expose them to many of these graphic details. On the other hand, Bowdler's concise and directive statement that Desdemona and Othello "are together" is easily understood. Also, the expurgation does not negate the lie, which still lends some emphasis to Iago's villainy.

Bowdler again attempts to retain the emotional turmoil of a conversation while expurgating its sexual elements during the first scene of Act four. During this scene, Iago deceives Othello into believing that Cassio has confessed to having an affair with Desdemona. He presents his false tale cautiously, knowing it will enrage his inquiring commander:

OTH. What hath he said ?
IAGO. 'Faith, that he did, - I know not what he did.
OTH. What? what?
IAGO. Lie-
OTH. With her?
IAGO. With her, on her ; what you will.
OTH. Lie with her ! lie on her ! We say, lie on her,
when they belie her : Lie with her! that's fulsome.
Handkerchief, confessions, handkerchief. To confess,
and be hanged for his labour. First, to be hanged,
and then to confess : I tremble at it. Nature would
not invest herself in such shadowing passion,
without some instruction. It is not the words that
shake me thus :- Pish ! Noses, ears, and lips : - Is
it possible ? - Confess ! - Handkerchief! - O devil ! -³³⁵

Just as with Iago's shouts to Brabantio, the crux of this lie is its sexual suggestiveness. Though he urges Othello to take it as he will, Iago's feigned hesitance with the word "lie" draws embarrassment to its meaning, confirming its euphemistic referral to a sexual encounter. Othello's repetition of the same term conveys his bewilderment with the accusation, followed by his sudden rage. His subsequent fixation on the handkerchief evidence that bedevils him confirms his furious state.

³³⁵ Reed, *Shakespeare*, 19: 434.

Bowdler's version of this conversation is similar, though there are noticeably absent details:

OTH. What hath he said ?
IAGO. 'Faith, that he did, - I know not what he did.
OTH. What? what? confessions, handkerchief. -
I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in
such shadowing passion, without some instruction.
It is not the words that shake me thus :- Pish !
Noses, ears, and lips : - Is it possible ? - Confess !
- Handkerchief! - O devil ! -³³⁶

The expurgation of the term "lie" removes the obvious sexual suggestiveness of Iago's accusations. Instead, Othello is left to draw meaning from his subordinate's hesitance. This can imply that embarrassing or scandalous conduct has taken place. The edited Iago's subsequent satisfaction with success of his deceptive "medicine" confirms that this encounter has been about manipulation rather than truth.³³⁷ Again, while children in *The Family Shakespeare's* audience may not understand sexual overtones of Shakespeare, the absent lines detract from the villainous portrayal of the adapted Iago. Though there is still enough evidence to recognize his nature when edited, the full, loathsome extent of his deceptiveness is comparatively weaker.

Many of the remaining expurgations are comparatively benign, having less influence over the play's characters. The unedited version of a conversation between Iago and Roderigo in the third scene of Act one begins with several sexualized comparisons between the body and a garden. The majority of these arboreal references are cut from Bowdler's adaptation, particularly the suggestive lines tied to the notion of virility. Furthermore, the adapted Iago's reply to Roderigo's melancholy over Desdemona's marriage no longer includes the former's suggestion that the latter wait for her to be "sated with [Othello's] body" before resuming his pursuit.³³⁸ Instead

³³⁶ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 10: 316.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Reed, *Shakespeare*, 19: 293.

of portraying Desdemona as a sexual being, Bowdler's Iago implies that only Othello's waning interest will be necessary to give Roderigo his opportunity.

Bowdler does not exclude Iago's rationale for hating Othello, expressed late in this same scene, but he does alter its specific presentation. In Shakespeare, Iago believes that "twixt my sheets [Othello] has done my office;" that his commander has cuckolded him.³³⁹ In the adaptation, the character similarly declares that "in my bed [Othello] has done me wrong."³⁴⁰ This rewording is uncharacteristic of Bowdler, who prefers expurgation to alteration. However, this change suits the interests of *The Family Shakespeare's* audience by offering clarity and minor censorship. Young readers may not comprehend the sexual meaning of a husband's "office" twixt the sheets, but can recognize the general sanctity of a couple's marital bed. Even though the altered line lends some sexual suggestiveness to Othello's actions, its presence is defensible under Bowdler's argument over the impossibility of removing every controversial detail from the play.

Bowdler argues that no amount of defence, explanations, or reverence for the Shakespeare can make his adaptation of *Othello* absolutely ideal for *The Family Shakespeare's* audience. Though he believes that reading his "flawed" *Othello* is still preferable to engaging other versions, he gives his advice for those that are still uncomfortable with his adaptation:

But if, after all that I have omitted, it shall still be thought that this inimitable tragedy is not sufficiently correct for family reading, I would advise the transferring it from the parlour to the cabinet, where the perusal will not only delight the poetic taste, but convey useful and important instruction both to the heart and understanding of the reader.³⁴¹

³³⁹ Ibid., 19: 299.

³⁴⁰ Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 10: 267.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 10: 243.

Bowdler's respect for both Shakespeare and the didactic potential of *Othello* leave him unwilling to suggest that his audience ignore the play or remove it from his collection. Keeping the text in the parlour ensures that, while it will no longer be read in the open among family members, it remains available to those that have the maturity to appreciate the content's didacticism despite any objectionable elements. This suggestion is a further reflection of Bowdler's intense admiration for Shakespeare and his willingness to set aside his editorial principles in favour of preserving the essence of the playwright's dramas.

4.7 – Bowdler’s *Measure for Measure*

A third special preface pre-empts *The Family Shakespeare*’s version of *Measure for Measure* in similar fashion to the two plays previously discussed. As in these previous cases, Bowdler enthusiastically establishes the merits of the play by arguing that its content is “worthy of the very first dramatic poets.”³⁴² However, like *Henry IV* and *Othello*, there are also elements of *Measure for Measure* that pose challenges to his standard adaptation and expurgation methods. Rather than compensate for these difficulties with amendments or exceptions to his usual criteria, the editor capitulates to them. Though Bowdler feels compelled to include *Measure for Measure* because he believes that it has a great deal to offer *The Family Shakespeare*’s audience, he confesses that he is not confident with his ability to sufficiently modify it for family reading. He concludes that his only solution to this clash between his editorial ideals and idolization of Shakespeare is for him to do nothing at all. Instead, he uses another adaptation as a substitute, borrowing John Philip Kemble’s 1789 edition of the play.

This radically unprecedented decision raises questions about Bowdler’s rationale for including *Measure for Measure* in *The Family Shakespeare*. The latter consists of ten volumes of plays, so there is already no shortage of other material present and adapted for family reading. *Measure for Measure*’s apparent immunity to Bowdler’s adaptation methods also seems to undermine his editorial credibility and the text’s moral goals. Recall his opening argument that Shakespeare would be identical to *The Family Shakespeare* had the playwright not pandered to the base demands of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre audiences. Of the three special adaptation exceptions, *Measure for Measure* presents the greatest challenge to his

³⁴² Thomas Bowdler, *Family Shakespeare*, 2: 1.

assertion that he offers a more Shakespearean experience than Shakespeare. While the deflation of this grandiose claim is humbling, it does not cripple *The Family Shakespeare*. It just emphasizes that, like other adaptations, Bowdler's editorial style has both its share of strengths and weaknesses. It also reiterates on the flexibility of his adaptation strategy and his willingness to acknowledge its limitations.

Bowdler's determination to include *Measure for Measure* in his collection, despite its incompatibility with his adaptation methods, stems from his enthusiasm for its exhibition of sibling love and loyalty:

Isabella pleading with Angelo on behalf of mercy to her brother, and afterwards insisting that his life must not be purchased by the sacrifice of her chastity, is an object of such interest, as to make the reader desirous of overlooking the many great defects which are to be found in other parts of the play.³⁴³

Bowdler admires Isabella's determination to save her brother, especially because she refuses to do so at the cost of her virginity. Despite the hopelessness of her scenario, she maintains a simultaneous devotion to family and to her personal purity, refusing to believe that one must be compromised to protect the other. Grounded in the sanctity of family, this example of moral didacticism is not just relevant to children, but can also appeal to *Measure for Measure*'s adult readership. The relevance of this lesson enhances the play's value for household reading, and gives Bowdler's editorial exception pragmatic substance. However, this effective family didacticism does not make *Measure for Measure* impervious to Bowdler's criticism.

Despite the appeal of Isabella's plight, Bowdler argues that several objectionable elements remain in Kemble's version of the play. He notes there are several characters that exhibit inappropriate characteristics, and has a particularly strong enmity for Angelo. Bowdler cites his blackmailing Isabella for both her virtue

³⁴³ Ibid.

and brother's life, his consequential betrayal of his own martial vows, as well as his breaking his word by ordering Claudio's murder as proof that he is a "monster of iniquity" and an insult to human decency.³⁴⁴ The editor argues that these actions not only represent a betrayal of the authority and trust placed in him by both the Duke of Vienna and its citizens, but also show Angelo's "atrocious" subservience to personal satisfaction.³⁴⁵ Bowdler also reserves additional animosity for the character's hypocrisy, noting that while Angelo professes to be a conservative looking out for others' interests, he is clearly anything but.

Still, Angelo is not the first reprehensible Shakespeare character to give Bowdler pause. In the previous two special cases, the editor had similar objection to Falstaff and Iago. However, he still accepted each of them in light of their serving greater thematic or moral roles: Falstaff being instrumental to Hal's growth while Iago is the catalyst for demonstrating infidelity's destructiveness. It seems surprising that Bowdler does not make a similar argument for Angelo, as his illicit activities ironically provoke the appearance of the sibling bond that he admires. Furthermore he does not consider that, as the antithesis to the loyalty and virtue of Isabella, Angelo's behaviour offers a didactic example of how not to conduct oneself in society. Instead, Bowdler argues that any thematic good Angelo serves is offset by his fate.

Despite the good they do, both Falstaff and Iago pay a proportional price for their objectionable, wasteful, or reprehensible actions. The antics of the former eventually earn him rejection and indifference, leaving him to die offstage, ignored by the mainstream cast. It is implied that the latter is executed for the destruction he fosters, supposedly affirming that evil acts are punishment. By contrast, Bowdler believes that Angelo is insufficiently disciplined for his conduct:

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

Angelo betrayed the trust reposed in him by the Duke; he threatened Isabella that if she would not surrender her virtue, he would not merely put her brother to death, but make his death *draw out to lingering sufferance*; and finally, when he thought his object accomplished, he ordered Claudio to be murdered in violation of his most solemn arrangement.³⁴⁶

Bowdler uses this list of outcomes to justify his protest over the judgement that the sum of Angelo's crimes constitutes only "a little bad" in the eyes of the cast.³⁴⁷ With deceit, blackmail, and attempted murder as Angelo's legacy, the editor is confused as to what type of moral precedent Shakespeare is establishing. His expectations seem reasonable in lieu of the play's audience, which is effectively being shown a pyrrhic victory for virtue and morality rather than an affirmation of their strength. Though Bowdler acknowledges that execution is too severe a punishment for Angelo, he argues that it would at least be more appropriate for the Duke to exile him.

Bowdler adds that the apparent indifference towards Angelo's conduct is not the only instance where *Measure for Measure* provides a poor lesson against bad behaviour. He argues that even some characters that appear to have good intentions end up relying on duplicity or acting cruelly. Taking this observation into consideration, one can see the selfish, trifling nature of the Duke. He intentionally engineers conflict out of a desire to convenience his rule and maintain his popularity. Bowdler also argues that he needlessly manipulates Isabella's emotions, allowing her to believe her brother is dead so that her reactions facilitate his grander plans. Additionally, the character disguises himself as a friar, distorting sacramental trust to gain the intimate confidence of others for his own motives. This combination of selfishness and use of religious manipulation challenges Bowdler's reverence for morality and faith in a manner unlike any play previously analyzed. Many of

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 2: 2.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

Shakespeare's characters are self-motivated, and some have incorporated Christianity into oaths and insults. However, the Duke betrays the very people that trust him to lead justly and honourably in order to amuse himself and ensure his future preservation. He perverts the trust inherent in faith's authority figures, using it as a veil to cover his schemes. Though his intentions and ends eventually prove to be benevolent, his means remain reprehensible to Bowdler.

Bowdler also dislikes Lucio, claiming the character is "inconsistent as well as profligate."³⁴⁸ His attitude reflects his mercenary nature, which motivates him to consistently shift his allegiances between Claudio and Angelo whenever it is to his greatest benefit. In doing so, he shows that he lacks the senses of duty, honour, or loyalty that the editor admires in Isabella. Like Angelo and the Duke, he is an example of behaviour that should not be imitated. Compounding the antics of these "bad" characters are several unspecified "indeencies" that Bowdler says are interwoven with the main story. Though he never defines these moments, the majority of them are likely tied to Angelo's enthusiastic sexual pursuit of Elizabeth, which delves into the realm of carnality. Precedent has established that this is a topic that Bowdler prefers to expurgate altogether.

Measure for Measure's compounding offensive elements test the limits of Bowdler's ability to compromise with content that he considers objectionable. However, he is unable to deny readers of *The Family Shakespeare* the opportunity to behold such details as the plights and familial affection of Isabella and Claudio. The emotion that he attaches to their relationship and conduct fortifies him against the presence of morally reprehensible antics of other *dramatis personae*, such as Angelo and the Duke. Despite feeling unable to edit and redeem the play for household

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

readers, the editor still appreciates the morally didactic potential of its content, and he has too much admiration for Shakespeare to exclude it.

4.8 – Conclusion

Thomas Bowdler's Shakespeare editing in *The Family Shakespeare* has been defined as a form of literary castration for nearly two centuries. However, this chapter has shown that the accepted concept of bowdlerization is not an accurate representation of the specific editorial conditions of his adaptation methods. Bowdler's work is not an exercise in arbitrary cutting, but has defined standards for content inclusion and expurgation. Though many of his measures are reminiscent of those used in similar adaptation projects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they also have a distinct versatility that shows a willingness to break from precedent and make exceptions to their own conditions.

When presented with characters and circumstances that challenge his standards, Bowdler compromises between his conservative ideology and his intense respect for the content of Shakespeare. He does not redraft the events or conclusions of the plays to either accommodate his morality, as Tate does, or abide by the demands of his audience, as Kemble does. He does not eliminate main characters, but filters their objectionable traits through the omission of selective details. While he does erase one character from *Henry IV*, it is a comparatively minor instance compared to Garrick and Coleman's deletion of an influential cast member from *King Lear*. Finally, as his use of a substitute play for *Measure for Measure* demonstrates, Bowdler is also willing to admit the limitations of his editorial skills rather than risk producing a truly mutilated adaptation. *The Family Shakespeare* reconciles Bowdler's morality with his respect for the playwright's work, making it a text built on the principles of editorial balance, and not butchery.

Chapter 5: The Lambs' and Bowdler's Adaptation Legacy

5.1 – Introduction

This thesis has focussed on establishing the reasons why *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare*, unlike many other adaptations published during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, have maintained notoriety for the past two hundred years. Previous chapters have shown that their current reputations are partially owed to infamy associated with their respective creators. Analyses of *Tales from Shakespeare* are often distracted by their critics' captivation with Mary Lamb's mental health history, while *The Family Shakespeare* is frequently stigmatized by the misrepresentative notion of Bowdlerization. Both chapters three and four emphasize the need to look beyond such misconceptions and sensationalism to consider the unique characteristics of each text.

This chapter expands upon their respective arguments to provide perspective on the Lambs' and Bowdler's legacy among Shakespeare adaptations. It offers an overview of the texts that followed the examples of *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* during the nineteenth century, as well as two very significant adaptations featured among the plethora of material that they inspired during the twentieth century: Lin Shu's 1904 *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu* (*English Poet Reciting from Afar on Joyous Occasions*), and the 1992 *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales*. Each of these examples is an editorial milestone within the legacy of the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts, respectively demonstrating the cultural and technological transitions that they have undergone during this century. The former marks the successful assimilation of didactic Shakespeare for children into Chinese social values and literary tradition, while the latter shows the consequences of transforming household adaptations text into a series of motion picture animations.

However, before exploring either of these radical projects, much consideration is due to the adaptations of the previous century. These texts are descended from the Lambs' and Bowdler's efforts, and form the basis of their legacy. Their content proves that *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* have done much more for Shakespeare studies than offer scandalous historic anecdotes or contentious editing philosophies.

5.2 – Household Shakespeare Adaptations of the Nineteenth Century

Discussions of nineteenth-century Shakespeare adaptations often focus on the burlesque productions that dominated the English theatre during that period. These parodies added physical comedy and bawdy humour to the plays for entertaining audiences while incorporating an undercurrent of social commentary. John Poole's 1810 *Hamlet Travestie* not only features a title protagonist who goes into comically exaggerated convulsions at the sight of his ghostly father, but also conveys its editor's intense contempt for popular actors Robert Elliston, John Philip Kemble, and Henry Siddons. Maurice Dowling's 1837 *Romeo and Juliet, as the Law Directs* adds humorous musical performances that contain lyrics criticising the monopolies that patent theatres held on Shakespeare's plays due to the 1737 Licensing Act. Robert and William Brough's 1848 *The Enchanted Isle, or Raising the Wind*, transforms *The Tempest* into a critique of republicanism by remaking Prospero into a monarchist academic and Caliban into a comically inept revolutionary.

While generations of nineteenth-century theatre audiences beheld these performances, a very different Shakespeare tradition was developed for reading at home. The playwright's work was adopting elements native to the educational children's narratives of the eighteenth century, resulting in the manifestation of several didactic household Shakespeare adaptations. The second chapter of this thesis argued that *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* mark the beginning of the merger between Shakespeare adaptations and household reading for children. This became more apparent as several subsequent household Shakespeare adaptations imitated, borrowed, challenged, or otherwise altered content from the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts. Some have clear relationships to the two collections, establishing links through references to one or both of them. Others lack these explicit

connections, but still feature editorial similarities with them. At the very least, *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* encouraged an interest in editing Shakespeare for reading at home, which led to the creation of the nineteenth century adaptations that form the basis for their editorial legacy.

Elizabeth Wright Macauley's 1822 *Tales of the Drama* is one of the first didactic adaptations of theatre plays for children to follow *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare*. Neither Macauley nor her publisher, the latter being responsible for the text's preface, makes specific reference to the Lambs or Bowdler. However, there are enough overt similarities between *Tales of the Drama* and its predecessors to consider the text an early part of their editorial legacy. Like the Lambs and Bowdler, Macauley's objective is to render "the real beauties of the British stage more familiar and better known to the younger class of readers" by "extending that knowledge to family circles where the drama itself is forbidden."³⁴⁹ This last point harkens back to the adversarial relationship that Bowdler establishes between burlesque Shakespeare adaptations and those designed for home reading. Though Macauley attempts to distance her text from the moralizing "objections that well meaning Christian sects make to the *Stage*," she admits that her editing focuses on placing "truth and good morals" in "an attractive point of view."³⁵⁰ Further analysis of her work reveals that this is a tremendous understatement.

Macauley edits the content of *Tales of the Drama* in a manner similar to Mary Lamb's abridgement style, though there are several distinctions between her text and the content of *Tales from Shakespeare*. The most obvious is that not all of her twenty adaptations are of dramas by Shakespeare. She attempts to encapsulate the entirety of

³⁴⁹ Macauley, Elizabeth Wright, ed. *Tales of the Drama: Founded on the Tragedies of Shakespeare, Massinger, Shirley, Rowe, Murphy, Lillo, and Moore, and the Comedies of Steele, Farquhar, Cumberland, Bickerstaff, Goldsmith, and Mrs. Crowley*. (London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1822), v.

³⁵⁰ Macauley, *Tales of the Drama*, vi.

English theatrical history within her project by presenting a range of works that appeared on stage between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, the attention that Macauley gives to Elizabethan satirist Philip Massinger, Restoration tragedian George Lillo, Irish comedy writer Oliver Goldsmith, and others, is overwhelmed by her great enthusiasm for Shakespeare. Six of the collection's stories are adapted from his plays, making him the largest single contributor to *Tales of the Drama*. These adaptations are accompanied by their own special, poetic introduction that praises "the immortal Avonian Bard" while also providing additional insight into Macauley's specific methods for adapting his plays.³⁵¹

Macauley frames her intentions for Shakespeare around extravagant figurative language that lauds his writing abilities and emphasizes her humility as she attempts to transform some of his work into short stories:

T'is a star should trace a comet's track,
At humble distance trace; o'ertaking not!
T'is as a painter should portray the Sun
Bedazzled by his beaming radiance.³⁵²

Like the Lambs and Bowdler, Macauley idolizes the playwright, and declares her own writing and editing to be inferior to his. However, she subsequently claims that her "delightful task" of creating Shakespeare adaptations not only involves transforming plays into narrative prose, but also using their content and themes "in new forms moulded to my fancy's will."³⁵³ These fancies are represented by her frequent tendency to rearrange and re-contextualize elements of Shakespeare to accommodate her insertion of specific moral lessons, among other changes. Macauley's alterations to her adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* demonstrate the extent of her willingness to take editorial liberties with the dramas.

³⁵¹ Ibid., viii.

³⁵² Ibid., 70.

³⁵³ Ibid., 71.

Recall that *Tales from Shakespeare*'s adaptation of this play, and others, presents events in the same order as they appear in Shakespeare. Mary Lamb's narrative begins with Antonio arranging a loan with Shylock in order to assist Bassanio's proposal to Portia. Though the couple's marriage is given attention, it serves as means of attaching Portia to Antonio's legal conflict with the Jewish merchant. However, Macauley's adaptation does not begin with the circumstances of Antonio's plight. Instead, it starts with a direct quotation from the play that describes the gold, silver, and lead caskets that are designed by Portia's father to test the character of her potential suitors. This is followed by a fictional history of the challenge, which notes that participants require a minimal amount of wealth, as well as two princes' failed attempts to beat it.

Portia's unfavourable opinion of these circumstances offers the first signs of the tale's moralization:

But Portia's life was one of great anxiety, notwithstanding her gaiety and good humour: her mind was too delicate not to be uneasy at the idea of becoming the property of a knave, a fool, or a tyrant: and amid all the numerous suitors who had visited Belmont, none had yet struck her fancy.³⁵⁴

In attempting "to save his beloved child from being the prey of avarice," the text notes that Portia's father has inadvertently imprisoned her within a circle of vain, greedy, and corrupt noblemen who value her as a lovely prize rather than as a lover or partner.³⁵⁵ Bassanio, while not suited for the financial expectations of the challenge, is revealed to be her ideal match because he is "an honest man" with modest expectations, firm morals, and substantial integrity.³⁵⁶ His qualities eclipse those of his rival suitors and trivialize the need for Portia to obey the test. However, the lessons gained from these events, such as the superiority of virtue over materialism as

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 285.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 281.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 286.

well as the feminist protest against the necessity of the caskets, are minor points compared to didacticism of Macauley's subsequent contextualization and additions.

Despite the negative connotations attached to it, Macauley's Bassanio still undergoes the casket challenge after receiving the necessary finances he needs to participate from Antonio. The latter's acquisition of a bond from Shylock is used to reorient the tale's focus from the love story to the agreement and imminent legal battle between the two merchants. The adaptation's final conflict, between Shylock and Antonio, is then heavily moralized.

Macauley's Antonio is initially presented as a generous and selfless man "whose benevolence and integrity reprobated the idea of taking advantage of his fellow creatures' necessities," though his aid is reserved only for Venetian Christians.³⁵⁷ It is confirmed that he "evinced no mercy or forbearance towards the Jew," but inflicted "every indignity" that he could conceive purely out of irrational hatred for his religion.³⁵⁸ His specific actions against Shylock are drawn from the latter's accusations in Shakespeare: "[Antonio] had disgraced him, spit on his beard on the Rialto, hindered him by half a million of money, called him a dog, laughed at his loses, mocked his gains, scorned his nation."³⁵⁹ Like Mary Lamb, Macauley confirms that these points are all true, and uses them to portray the Jewish merchant sympathetically. The characterization of the latter's Shylock leads to social and religious commentary that critiques the conduct of the story's Christian characters and challenges the morality of the final outcome shared by the play and adaptation.

Though Macauley's Shylock demands Antonio's imprisonment and trial after the latter fails to repay his bond, it is noted that the Jewish merchant did not pursue the arrangement with malicious intent:

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 288.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 302.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

Shylock, when he took the bond from Antonio, had no intention of devising against his life; his only idea in case of forfeiture was, to bind him down under restrictions, that he should never again interfere with his mercantile traffic.³⁶⁰

Macauley's Shylock is a patient businessman who forces himself to focus on the financial implications of his dealings while coping with the cruelties inflicted upon him by Christians. This is not to suggest that he is a complete innocent in this adaptation. He does not look upon Christian Venetians favourably, though he tolerates their unwarranted abuses. His resolve rapidly deteriorates after his daughter, Jessica, converts to Christianity and elopes with Lorenzo. Rather than show sympathy, other Christian Venetians "made jest of [Shylock's] misery," especially after hearing of Shylock's initially frantic accusation that his daughter had been deceived and kidnapped.³⁶¹ Incessant Christian mockery finally encourages him to seek retribution for the repeated injustices he has endured by pursuing a murderous legal case against Antonio.

However, Macauley maintains a sympathetic perspective on Shylock even after he unsuccessfully petitions for a pound of flesh for his bond. This is achieved through new content and contextualization that is added to the adaptation following the merchant's forced conversion to Christianity. As the tale's Shylock exits the Venetian court, he is seized by a mob and beaten until merciful guards drag him home. Grief-stricken, humiliated, and mortally wounded, he dies "after a few hours of the most exquisite suffering both mental and corporeal," forgiving his daughter with his final breath.³⁶² The injustice of his fate is highlighted by Macauley's subsequent evaluation of his motivations. His anger is contrasted with the tremendous, and ultimately fatal, prejudices inflicted by Christians:

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 295.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 296.

³⁶² Ibid., 301.

The stoutest heart will shrink from contempt. The brave man who fearless would meet death, even in the hottest danger of the fight, would shrink abashed, if the finger of scorn were pointed at him; if he were rebuked for the sins of his forefathers, or disgraced for the faith he followed. If therefore the Jew was without mercy – little of mercy had been shown to him to teach him the bright example of

CHRISTIAN CHARITY !!!³⁶³

It is explained that Shylock did not act out of prejudice towards Christians. Rather, his behaviour is portrayed as the natural response that any human being, regardless of nobility, integrity, or faith, would render to such treatment. Furthermore, Macauley adds a forceful critique of the Venetians' conduct, saying that their actions were "not the forbearance taught by the great Master of the faith, which we profess to follow," and thus not representative of true Christian values.³⁶⁴

The entire scenario provides young readers with a morally didactic warning against mistreating others. Shylock's case shows the potentially disastrous consequences that can result from foregoing mercy and charity based upon petty differences, regardless of one's origins. The bold capitalization, indentation, and exclamations of the final line emphasize both the absence of charity in Shylock's situation, and Macauley's disappointment that the sanctity of the term has been betrayed. Under normal circumstances, she believes that charity and mercy should permit Christians to be a "bright example" of morality rather than instigators of tragedy. This moralizing is reminiscent of Charles Lamb inserting didactic messages into his tales' narration, such as his *Macbeth* adaptation's commentary on the devastating nature of relentless ambition, or his *King Lear* adaptation's focus on the importance of familial loyalties. Though Macauley expresses her didacticism more explicitly than Lamb does, this transparency is beneficial to young and inexperienced Shakespeare readers.

³⁶³ Ibid., 302.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 301.

Macauley's version of *The Winter's Tale* also reorganizes a portion of its source material's plot and adds new details. However, her use of these measures is not encouraged by the kind of moral rationalization found in the previous example. *The Winter's Tale* opens with the Clown's desperate journey home during a tempest rather than in Leontes' turbulent royal court. Macauley names the character Polidor, after a Greek noun referring to an individual that possesses many talents. Ironically, Polidor remains "a simple clown," helpless, buffoonish and subservient to his shepherd father.³⁶⁵ Amid the storm, he discovers the shipwrecked Antigonus grappling with a ferocious bear. Polidor is too petrified to help the nobleman and watches as "the savage beast tore out his heart."³⁶⁶ Returning home, he discovers that his father has found the infant Perdita inside a chest of riches salvaged from Antigonus' vessel. The pair resolves to keep the valuables and adopt the child, leaving the mystery of her true identity and the circumstances of her abandonment lingering.

From this point, the story transitions to a flashback that gives a full account of Leontes' accusations of infidelity against Hermione and banishment of his infant daughter. All of these details are presented with dialogue and accompanying exposition, rather than as a brief summary. Yet, after this scene, the story returns to presenting events in the order in which they appear in Shakespeare's play: Perdita develops a romantic interest in Florizel and discovers her origins; Leontes grows despondent within his Sicilian court; Polidor becomes entangled in the humorous antics of the roguish Autolycus; the entire cast gathers for Hermione's awakening and the conflict's resolution.

These examples have shown that, unlike many other Shakespeare adaptors, Macauley does not edit her work using a single adaptation style. However, this is not

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 131.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

necessarily detrimental to her text. In fact, it is another similarity between Macauley's work and the Lambs' *Tales from Shakespeare*. Recall that the two siblings responsible for the latter each have their own adaptation methods. Charles Lamb tends to create heavily moralized stories that centre on the events involving their title protagonists. Additional details and subplots, such as the conflict between Edmund and Edgar in "King Lear" or the emotional decline of Lady Macbeth in "Macbeth," are only mentioned briefly. On the other hand, Mary Lamb abridges the entirety of her source plays into short stories that lack overt moral commentary, leaving such conclusions to the preferences of young readers. Though different from one another, Macauley's "Merchant of Venice" and "Winter's Tale" each abide by standards similar to Charles' and Mary's respectively.

The extent of the similarities between the Lambs' work and Macauley's strengthen the implicit connection between their two texts. Even if the resemblance between *Tales from Shakespeare* and *Tales of the Drama* is by coincidence rather than design, the timing of the latter's appearance is not. Macauley's publisher confirms that her work is a part of the rapidly growing "novelty" of creating didactic household drama adaptations specifically for children.³⁶⁷ This means that *Tales of the Drama* represents one of the first major steps in the expanding legacy of texts that followed *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare*. However, as Caroline Maxwell's 1828 *Juvenile Edition of Shakespeare* proves, not all adaptations within this legacy have obvious editorial similarities with the Lambs' or Bowdler's works.

Maxwell argues that Shakespeare's plays offer young readers a "polite education" in both beautiful poetic language and self-improvement.³⁶⁸ The language is drawn from the unedited content of his dramas, while the didacticism comes from

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, v.

³⁶⁸ Maxwell, Caroline, ed. *The Juvenile Edition of Shakespeare; Adapted to the Capacities of Youth*. (London: C. Chapple, 1828), iii

the examples set by the characters of their respective stories. However, Maxwell also notes that “the perusal of the whole of Shakespeare’s dramatic works might be deemed improper for juvenile readers.”³⁶⁹ She argues that the ability of Shakespeare’s plays to teach youth is impeded by the complexity of their language and chosen scenarios. This assessment motivates her to edit Shakespeare’s plays into a “most simple and easy style” that will be “most likely to impress on the youthful mind a perfect recollection of the incidents of each piece.”³⁷⁰ While her intentions are reminiscent of the Lambs, her editing style is different. Instead of abridging the plays into short tales, Maxwell presents a series of plot summaries. These include quoted extracts from each play, as well as moral and didactic commentary on specific characters and events.

For example, her adaptation of *King Lear* commences with a description of how the title character questions his three daughters’ love for him. Lear’s words are extracted from the source material, while his daughters’ replies are presented as exposition. Maxwell states that this is meant to introduce young readers to “some of the most beautiful passages each [play] contains, for study or recitation,” supplementing them with descriptions and explanations that are meant to minimize confusion over the language.³⁷¹ Similarly to the Lambs’ use of drama quotations, Maxwell chooses samples that highlight major story events while they familiarize young readers with Shakespeare’s language. This helps facilitate a child’s later transition into reading other versions of the plays. It is also repeatedly noted throughout Maxwell’s version of *King Lear* that Cordelia is a woman of “great

³⁶⁹ Maxwell, *Juvenile Edition*, iii.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

modesty, and simplicity, yet with energy” and patriarchal devotion that overshadow the immodestly “extravagant professions of affection, which her sisters had done.”³⁷² These additional details are a part of her moral agenda, which involves portraying Shakespeare as a champion of “the superiority of virtue, of honesty, discretion and goodness of heart.”³⁷³

The greatest criticism of the *Juvenile Edition of Shakespeare* is tied to the text’s historic anecdotes, contextualization, and moral commentaries. Despite their didactic value, these elements can predispose children toward specific readings of the plays at the exclusion of others. This has particularly alarming consequence on occasions when Maxwell provides only a simplified overview of a character. For example, she portrays *King Lear*’s Edgar as a devilishly treacherous individual who commits evil against his father and brother for its own sake. She does not explore his vindictive motivations, nor make substantial reference to his anger over his treatment as an illegitimate child. Instead, he is a transparent villain who deceives other transparent villains; even less sympathy is given to Goneril and Regan.

In some adaptations, such as *King Lear* and *Henry VIII*, Maxwell cautions against regarding Shakespeare’s plays as factual history lessons. In the latter case, she reminds her audience that the play should be read as a compliment to Queen Elizabeth rather than a true account of her father. She warns that the playwright may have been prone to embellishment in hopes of garnering a positive response from the monarch. However, in other plays, such as her adaptation of *Anthony and Cleopatra*, she declares that “all the historic dramas of Shakespeare are remarkable for being most faithful representations, of the story they delineate, according to the circumstances

³⁷² Ibid., 228.

³⁷³ Ibid., iv.

recorded.”³⁷⁴ This contradiction not only weakens the credibility of the text’s commentaries, but is potentially confusing for young audiences that are learning about Shakespeare’s work for the first time.

Yet, these characteristics do not make Maxwell’s *Juvenile Edition of Shakespeare* a failure, nor do they distance it from other didactic adaptations. Adaptation readers are hard-pressed to find a text that is not written without some added bias or contradictory elements. Recall that Charles Lamb’s stories incorporate moral readings of several characters and events. Bowdler rationalizes his editing by arguing that bawdiness, and other offensive elements, have absolutely no place in the playwright’s work. However, chapter four of this thesis also highlights several exceptions to this assessment, such as Bowdler’s argument that it is virtually impossible to expurgate content from *Measure for Measure* without irreparably damaging the play’s coherence. While Maxwell uses an editorial format that seems unique among her peers, her work is still connected to the legacy of didactic Shakespeare adaptations started by the Lambs and Bowdler.

Edward Slater’s 1836 *Select Plays From Shakespeare; adapted chiefly for the use of Schools and Young Persons* is another text that, despite its flaws, expands the adaptation legacy. Like other works in the genre, it begins by complimenting the playwright’s unequivocally “marvellous insight into the human heart” and the “predominant excellence” of his language.³⁷⁵ Specifically, Slater says that child readers can identify with the motives of tragic protagonists, particularly when they crave love, recognition, or wealth. Therefore, he limits his collection exclusively to tragedies, including *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, *King John*, *Coriolanus*, and *Julius*

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 101.

³⁷⁵ Slater, Edward, ed. *Select Plays From Shakespeare; adapted chiefly for the use of Schools and Young Person, With notes from the best Commentators*. (London: J. Souter, 1836), vii.

Caesar. Slater hopes that children recognize the cautionary didacticism that can be drawn from the plays' reckless or ambitious characters. He also argues that his chosen examples all feature settings that are of historical interest to young people. He believes that children will feel compelled to research each play's specific location and time period after encountering them through the dramatic context of Shakespeare. This encourages young readers to develop their critical abilities as they assess the historical accuracy of the plays.

Slater presents the plays as edited dramatic verse rather than abridged short stories, and is critical of the latter editing style, objecting to the Lambs' text in particular. Though he compliments their "beautiful" didactic intentions for creating *Tales from Shakespeare*, he argues that converting Shakespeare's writing to prose risks omitting or adding content that would make the material unsuitable for youth and family readers. Instead, he argues that all Shakespeare editors should prioritize the playwright's inviolability rather than condense his work or "cut him up piecemeal," and leave his work "disturbed in the least possible degree."³⁷⁶

Consequently, Slater refuses to amend or censor his chosen plays, and presents every act, scene, character, action, song, and piece of dialogue without interruptions or alterations. He considers most Shakespeare adaptations to be contaminated or compromised by the personal agendas of their editors. Recall the aforementioned examples that highlighted Charles Lamb's brief use of *King Lear*'s subplot involving the sons of Gloucester, as well as his minimalist treatment of Lady Macbeth's suffering. Slater argues that these types of alternations prevent young readers from perceiving the entirety of the plays' stories and the full grandeur of Shakespeare's writing abilities. He believes that the meaning and morality of Shakespeare's content

³⁷⁶ Slater, *Select Plays*, xii.

is subjective, and that all of his material should only be put forward for young readers to assess and define independently

Instead of expurgations or amendments, his adaptations feature footnotes that define difficult terminology, offer historical anecdotes to assist with forming context, and add examples of “elementary criticism” to help develop young readers’ insights into the dramas.³⁷⁷ For example, when Macbeth demands that the witches tell him “who can impress the forest; bid the tree unfix his earth-bound root?” in the first scene of Act four, Slater highlights the term “impressed,” noting that it refers to “command to service like an *impressed* soldier” rather than generally exciting or inspiring to action.³⁷⁸ Later in the same scene, as Macbeth observes the spectres of Banquo’s descendents, he declares “some I see that two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry.”³⁷⁹ Slater highlights this line and notes that it can be interpreted as “a compliment to James I, who first held two islands, and the three kingdoms, under one head; whose house too was said to be descended from Banquo.”³⁸⁰ However, this contextualization is cited as a comment from William Warburton rather than as absolute fact. Slater’s footnotes give young readers an appreciation for the symbolic capabilities of the playwright’s work, while the inclusion of the citation acknowledges the subjectivity of the assessment.

However, minimal editorial interference means that *Select Plays From Shakespeare* lacks the transparent didacticism, moralization and linguistic simplicity that facilitate children’s understanding of the plays. Slater’s text is left with the same difficulty that the Lambs attribute to all unedited Shakespeare: lack of clarity for young readers. His footnotes are inadequate compensation for absent preparatory

³⁷⁷ Ibid., xi.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 51.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

content; his edited plays still lack full contextualization. Slater's only alternative is to rely on parents to define "the great secret of Shakespeare's power" for their children by assisting their readings.³⁸¹ Yet, this is not an ideal solution as adults can potentially censor or bias readings, urging support for specific interpretations of characters and events. This contradicts the basis for the text's philosophy of minimal editing.

Despite this flaw, *Select Plays From Shakespeare's* appearance marks the strengthening of the legacy created from *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare*. Slater personally notes that, by 1836, such children's adaptations had gained popularity beyond the sense of novelty noted in Macauley's text:

For, notwithstanding that there are several 'Shakespeares' in existence, designed for Families and Young People, there is not one, I believe, conducted precisely to the plan of the present Publication, or that is eligible, in an economical point of view, for the extended Use to which this Work adventures its claim.³⁸²

Rather than portray his text as a unique editing project, Slater identifies *Select Plays From Shakespeare* as part of a rapidly growing genre. Furthermore, his citing his work as superior to the Lambs' *Tales from Shakespeare* reflects that text's recognition as a prototypical example of Shakespeare for children. There are also aspects of *Select Plays From Shakespeare's* purpose and editing style that share a sense of continuity with the adaptations that preceded and follow it. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the legacy had grown to include numerous examples of similar didactic texts.

John W. S. Hows' editing of the 1849 *Shakspearian Reader* is one work that was directly influenced by its predecessors, specifically *The Family Shakespeare*. Hows' editing is based on a policy of moral expurgation that, like Bowdler's work, is motivated by his conclusion that Shakespeare is overwhelmed with profanity and bawdiness. Though both men idolize the playwright, they each believe that no amount

³⁸¹ Ibid., viii.

³⁸² Ibid., v.

of inherent greatness with his dramas excuses the presence of material that is inappropriate for a didactic children's text.

Hows appreciates Bowdler's moral intentions and willingness to expurgate content to protect child readers. However, he also criticises the limitations of the latter's methods, arguing that Bowdler has not expurgated enough immorality from Shakespeare's plays. He uses this deficiency to promote the *Shakspearian Reader*, claiming that it is edited more thoroughly than *The Family Shakespeare*:

I have not hesitated to exercise a severe revision of his language beyond that adopted in any similar undertaking – 'Bowdler's Family Shakespeare' not even excepted – and, simply because I know the impossibility of introducing Shakespeare as a Class Book, or as a satisfactory Reading Book for Families, without this precautionary revision.³⁸³

Hows' process of "severe revision" consists primarily of cutting material rather than modification. Again, this appears similar to Bowdler's work in principle, but contrasts with it in both severity and consequences. Bowdler protests against the bawdiness of Falstaff in *Henry IV*, but argues that the character's involvement in the drama makes him impossible to remove. Instead, the editor makes a special exception to his own philosophy, expurgating many of Falstaff's bawdy accomplices, including Doll Tearsheet, to minimize offensive content. Hows' preface to his *Henry IV* adaptation similarly declares that Falstaff is a "marvel of [Shakespeare's] creative genius."³⁸⁴ However, this attitude does not prevent the editor from deleting the character from the *Shakspearian Reader's Henry IV*.

Hows has three reasons for this drastic example of expurgation. The first is to eliminate the character's sexualized antics, which he considers either offensive or incomprehensible for young readers. He rationalizes that no amount of artistic merit

³⁸³ Hows, *Shakspearian Reader*, ix.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 414.

can excuse the presence of these details in a text for children. The second is tied to his idealistic view of unedited Shakespeare drama. Hows believes that Falstaff should only be presented in his entirety or not at all. He argues that the uniqueness of the character is dependent on the total sum of his qualities, and that “an isolated extract could not do justice to this inimitable creation.”³⁸⁵ Hows’ third reason considers the didactic value of the remaining material in his *Henry IV*. Without Falstaff, the adaptation focuses on Bolingbroke. He believes that this results in a story that can double as an adequately didactic history lesson for children.

Despite his rationalizations, Hows’ emphasis on moral and educational presentation can be very damaging to the coherence of this work. For example, his adaptation of *Othello* ends abruptly after its third act. The remaining elements of the story are summarized in a very short epilogue that confirms Othello’s jealous murder of Desdemona, but adds that Iago was exposed as the crime’s instigator. No explanation is given for this adaptation method, which is surprising given Hows’ initial praise for “the beauties of this immortal drama” in his preface to *Othello*.³⁸⁶ The confusing nature of the editor’s choice is compounded by his aforementioned disdain for adaptations that use summaries, narratives, or extracts from Shakespeare.

The only plausible explanation is that Hows is attempting to spare child readers from direct exposure to Othello’s rage and violence. However, exclusion is not the most effective form of censorship in this case. Chapter four of this thesis notes that Bowdler defends the inclusion of content in *Othello* that is potentially offensive to children. He states that this material is necessary to convey and emphasize the lessons attached to of the play’s outcome. *Othello*’s intense tragedy, and the lessons associated with it, never manifests in Hows’ adaptation; the details are merely

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid 145.

summarized. The lack of substantial story development is detrimental to the text's didacticism, leaving young readers with a grossly incomplete impression of Shakespeare's play and the lessons associated with its characters. This editorial shortcoming demonstrates that not all of the adaptations inspired by the Lambs' and Bowdler's work can be counted as successful contributions to their legacy.

During the mid nineteenth century, the expanding popularity of didactic Shakespeare texts for children encouraged the creation of derivative projects such as Mary Cowden Clark's 1851 *Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*. As the text's title suggests, Clark presents a series of narratives dealing with the childhood background stories of several heroines featured in Shakespeare. Though they incorporate characters from their respective plays, the circumstances of their plots are the author's original creations. Lady Macbeth's entry, "The Thane's Daughter," establishes her as the child of the honourable Kenneth of Moray and Lady Gruoch. Gruoch is a shrewd woman who longs for a son to endow with "her ambitious spirit," though her daughter proves an ideal substitute who identifies more with the militant males than the elegant ladies of the court.³⁸⁷ The girl spends her youth sneaking about her father's armoury, becoming fascinated with its many implements of violence. Growing into a young woman of bewitching "imperial beauty," she uses her charms to manipulate the affections of a young Macbeth, and begins plotting ways to increase his power.

"Desdemona: The Manifico's Child," begins by describing how the title character's father, Brabantio, defied his father by prioritizing love over social propriety to marry far below his noble station. However, Brabantio is soon led to believe that his controversial bride is having an affair. He becomes murderously enraged, but calms down after the accusation is proven false. While no violence

³⁸⁷ Clark, Mary Cowden. *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines; in a Series of Fifteen Tales*. (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1851), 98.

occurs, lingering suspicious leave him bitter and protective of Desdemona, inadvertently nurturing her rebellious spirit and repeating the cycle of events.

While one could argue that these stories offer insight into the motivations of their respective subjects, Clark actually urges her readers to separate the circumstances surrounding her fictional heroines from the adult women that are depicted in the dramas. Her text is creative, but is neither an adaptation nor intended to be didactic. Her primary desire is to foster interest in the plays among young readers, particularly girls, and steer them towards reading actual adaptations. At best, *Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines* is a consequence of and supplement to the growing legacy established by Shakespeare children's adaptations, and not a genuine contribution to it.

The appearance and popularity of such derivative texts did not dissuade others from continuing to adapt Shakespeare's plays for children, particularly through the use of expurgation. Two very similar texts in this regard are the 1861 *Household Edition of the Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*, by William Chambers and Robert Carruthers, and Thomas Bulfinch's 1865 *Shakespeare Adapted for Reading Classes and the Family Circle*. As their titles suggest, both were created for the intention of being read aloud within the home. Their content is presented as dramatic verse rather than narrative abridgement. Both texts also have similar expurgation standards, but neither removes material to the same extent as Hows does in the *Shakspearian Reader*.

Expurgation in the *Household Edition* and *Shakespeare Adapted for Reading* is typically limited to words and brief extracts rather than entire characters or sections. The former also presents prefaces for each of its adapted dramas. These entries feature historical background on the creation of each play, followed by a selection of brief

criticism quotations that highlight dominant issues of the content. These are generally meant to inform young readers, drawing their attention towards key points for potential discourse. The collection's *Julius Caesar* begins with a summary of the story's presentation in Plutarch's *Lives*, followed by the play's performance history during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Concluding these points are observations quoted from critics Samuel Coleridge and Henry Hallam, each highlighting different observations concerning Brutus and his relationships with other characters. However, while these introductions are meant to educate young audiences, they do not offer any indications of the exact extent of each play's editing.

Bulfinch is similarly vague about his expurgations, though readers familiar with Shakespeare's unedited dramas will notice that he replaces material as often as he removes it. For example, in his adaptation of *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth's "damn spot" becomes a "crimson spot." These substitutions help maintain the coherence of the plays using words and phrases that are suitable for children.

Neither of these texts presents material that is distinct from children's Shakespeare adaptations by Bowdler, Maxwell, or Hows. However, their lack of originality should not be unexpected given the proliferation of texts with similar objectives that existed by this point in the nineteenth century. As Hows notes, Shakespeare had become a literary colossus whose fame had given rise to an extensive tradition of imitators and adaptors. These two examples reinforce the continuing presence of standard editorial practices among these works for children, many of which still bear striking similarities to the measures taken in the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts.

Though *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* inspired and influenced several children's adaptations, neither received substantial critical attention

during the second half of the nineteenth century. Previous chapters have noted that this was unsurprising in the former's case, as *Tales from Shakespeare* appeared to enjoy unilateral approval from the time it was first published. By comparison, *The Family Shakespeare* initially generated considerable critical scrutiny, though Bowdler's infamy appeared to have waned over time. Much of the new discourse addressing the adaptations consisted of brief editorial comments and published letters that appear in journals such as *Notes and Queries*.

Some of these discussions complimented or debated the texts' respective editorial strategies. Much of this attention focused on *The Family Shakespeare*, beginning with an 1852 letter from an anonymous author. Identifying herself by the pseudonym "A. Lady," she testifies to the editorial superiority of Bowdler's work over other adaptations and "proper," unedited Shakespeare editions.³⁸⁸ She argues that an updated *The Family Shakespeare* could provide English children with "invaluable" moral didacticism associated with the playwright's work. The next major reference is the praise for the 1870 Lockwood and Company edition of *Tales from Shakespeare* that was previously noted in chapter three of this thesis.

Not all these commentaries were so positive, particularly those focussing on *The Family Shakespeare*. Bowdler's text is not mentioned prominently again until an 1879 letter in the same publication. In it, writer B. Nicholson states that Bowdler's editorial philosophy is suitable in principle, but is employed overzealously in *The Family Shakespeare*.³⁸⁹ He argues that Bowdler's cutting is so disruptive to the coherence of the remaining material that it leaves the entire text "worse than

³⁸⁸ Lady, A. "Bowdler's *Family Shakespeare*." *Notes and Queries*. Vol. s1-V, no. 124. (March 13, 1852): 245.

³⁸⁹ Nicholson, B. "Shakespeariana: *Twelfth Night*, Act I. SC. 3, LL. 126-7." Vol. s5-XI, no. 268. *Notes and Queries*. (Feb. 15, 1879): 124.

ridiculous.”³⁹⁰ He cites Sir Andrew Aguechek’s appearance in the adaptation of *Twelfth Night* as an example. While Nicholson appreciates that Bowdler uses expurgation to avoid exposing children to the bawdy antics and crude dialogue of a “country ape,” he believes such elements are actually crucial to both the rogue’s characterization and the play’s humour.³⁹¹ Without them, he does not believe that the play is complete. However, he does not support exposing children to unedited content either, and is unable to reach a medium between including and excluding immoral details.

A similar reaction appears in an 1894 *Notes and Queries* letter credited to W.C.B., who argues that Bowdler’s methods are “dead and buried, and may remain so.”³⁹² The writer claims to be a member of a “country literary and musical society” who desperately sought “amusement” through *The Family Shakespeare*, only to discover that he objected to the extent of its expurgation.³⁹³ Despite a deeply conservative mindset, emphasised by his discrediting metropolitan liberalism for allowing “skirt dancing” and recognizing the gender equality of the “new woman,” he feels Bowdler’s work is generally ignorant and “amazingly stupid.”³⁹⁴ However, his specific rationale for these views is never identified.

Though *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* continued to generate published reactions, the direct attention that both texts received at the end of the nineteenth century can seem muted considering their integral role in the development of children’s Shakespeare adaptations. The legacy of these texts continued to influence various adaptations during the twentieth century, including international Shakespeare translations and adaptations, films, and as well as other

³⁹⁰ Nicholson, “Shakespeariana,” 124.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² W.C.B. “Bowdler’s ‘Shakespeare.’” *Notes and Queries*. Vol. s8-VI, no. 151. (Nov. 17, 1894): 386.

³⁹³ W.C.B., “Bowdler’s ‘Shakespeare,’” 386.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 387.

derivative projects. However, chronicling all, or even most, of these works is a feat far beyond the scale of this thesis.

Instead, subsequent sections isolate specific descendents of the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts to demonstrate not only the longevity of their influence but also the variety of material that they continued to inspire. Attention is focussed on two key works, one from the beginning of the twentieth century and another produced near its end. The first example, *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu*, appeared in turn-of-the-twentieth-century China. The second, *Animated Tales*, was completed in 1992 after a collaborative effort by several European contributors. As noted earlier in this chapter, each adaptation was a transitional and editorial milestone for the legacy of the Lambs and Bowdler. The former represents the movement of their traditions across cultures, while the latter demonstrates their evolution from household readings to modern media. Both are contemporary incarnations of the editorial objectives initiated by the *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare*.

5.3 – The Lambs in China

Lin Shu's *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu* not only has the honour of being one of the first twentieth-century Shakespeare adaptations to further the didactic legacy of the Lambs' and Bowdler, but it is also identified by Alexander Huang as one of the most influential Shakespeare texts ever produced in China.³⁹⁵ Huang says that, though Chinese writers had expressed interest in translating and adapting English literature since the middle of the nineteenth century, Shakespeare was "curiously invisible" prior to this text.³⁹⁶ An anonymous translation of *Tales from Shakespeare*, entitled *Xie Wau Qitan (Strange Tales from Beyond the Sea)* appeared in 1903, but did not generate substantial interest in the playwright. However, Lin's text became so enormously popular that it underwent eleven reprinting and three separate editions between 1905 and 1935.³⁹⁷ Furthermore, Li Ruru notes that all Chinese theatrical performances of Shakespeare during this period were adapted from Lin's versions of the Lambs' stories.³⁹⁸ Beijing actor Wang Xiaonong was so impressed by Lin's work that he wrote a set of twenty poems dedicated to the translation.

Huang identifies *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu*'s language and content as the source of its broad appeal in China. Li Ruru elaborates on this, noting that Lin wrote the tales in an elegant style of Chinese prose that was as attractive and accessible to casual readers as it was to members of the artistic community.³⁹⁹ However, Lin did more than repeat the Lambs' narratives in his native language. He also re-contextualized the stories and their European characters. The resulting content represents a cultural assimilation of the Lambs' work and the didactic legacy that it is

³⁹⁵ Huang, Alexander C. Y. "Lin Shu, Invisible Translation, and Politics." *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*. Vol. 14, no. 1. (2006): 59.

³⁹⁶ Huang, "Lin Shu," 58.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

³⁹⁸ Li Ruru. "The Bard in the Middle Kingdom." *Asian Theatre Journal*. Vol. 1, no. 12. (Spring 1995): 53-54

³⁹⁹ Li Ruru, "The Bard," 54.

a part of. The text retains portions of the various moral lessons present in *Tales from Shakespeare*, but also adds new didacticism that is influenced by Chinese traditions. Examining specific stories from *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu* sheds light on the nature and consequences of these alterations.

Chapter three of this thesis noted that the Lambs' adaptations of *King Lear* and *Hamlet* present abridgements of Shakespeare's tragic plays that emphasize the importance of familial love and filial piety. Charles Lamb's versions of Cordelia and Hamlet highlight the need for children to respect the desires of their parents while prioritizing the happiness and stability of their entire families. Both characters are praised for their determination to fulfil familial obligations, and their deaths are mourned for having deprived their countries of selfless, loving monarchs. A similar exhibition of love and respect appears in Lin's adaptations, though with a much stronger emphasis on the latter. This is unsurprising given that it is one of the central concepts of Confucianism, a prominent philosophy within Chinese culture.⁴⁰⁰

"Nu bian" ("Changed Daughters"), Lin's version of the Lambs' *King Lear*, begins with the old king's declaration that he will give the largest part of his territory to his most filial daughter. Though the narrative identifies Cordelia as the most loyal of the three, she objects to the request by arguing that true filial piety cannot be expressed in words. After she is banished for her outburst, she pleads for her sisters to dutifully serve their father with honour. Lear realizes his error and begs for Cordelia's forgiveness, but she protests against his admission. Lin's Cordelia argues that, even if the king is convinced of his error, his previous decisions and actions still demanded her respect. She states that filial piety dictates that it is not the child's place to identify their parents' choices as either right or wrong, but to accept and honour them. This

⁴⁰⁰ Huang, "Lin Shu," 62.

Cordelia feels significant shame after questioning her father's intentions, believing that she unjustly undermined his authority by challenging him.

This is a change in Cordelia's personality from her portrayal in *Tales from Shakespeare*. Though Charles Lamb also places emphasis on the importance of family love and loyalty, his version of the character is also commended for her personal strength and intelligence. She is neither subordinate to Lear nor does she feel ashamed for objecting to him. Lamb's narrative portrays her disobedience as an unrecognized act of love that is in his best interests, and confirms that the judgement of "King Lear's" monarch is addled by age. Yet, instead of showing confidence in her decisions and concern for her father's deteriorating mental state, Lin's Cordelia submits to his authority, even if he is not in his right mind. Filial loyalty and piety are also prominent in Lin's other adaptations of *Tales from Shakespeare*.

Lin's adaptation of *Hamlet* is more consistent with its presentation in *Tales from Shakespeare*. Lin's Hamlet in "Gui zhao" ("The Ghost's Command") "is known throughout the country for his filial piety."⁴⁰¹ When the ghost of the Chinese Hamlet's father appears, the young man is joyous and tearful, welcoming the spirit and pledging to obey his demand for revenge without any hesitation. He never questions the morality of this assigned vendetta or the sacrifice of characters like Ophelia and Polonius. The moral ambiguity and tragedy of these events is negated by the pride and satisfaction that he feels from fulfilling filial obligations. The Chinese protagonist's reactions are very similar to those in Charles Lamb's "Hamlet." Chapter three of this thesis notes that Lamb's narrative stresses that Hamlet's pursuit of Claudius is a quest for justice rather than a personal vendetta. Lin uses *Tales from Shakespeare's* interpretation of *Hamlet*, which agrees with his continuing emphasis on the filial

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 60-61. Article includes a translated quotation from "Gui Zhao."

loyalty that children are required to show their parents, particularly fathers. Like Lamb, he retains the story's tragic ending, and lauds Hamlet's death as a noble sacrifice. Additionally, he also emphasizes that the prince would have been a great and just king if he had been given the opportunity to rule.

In other cases, Lin's alterations are superficial, and contextualize elements of the story in terms of Chinese cultural motifs without altering events or characters. The distinction between the Prospero of "Ju yin" ("A Tempestuous Cause") and one found in Mary Lamb's *Tempest* is limited to the explanations of their supernatural abilities. Instead of a wizard whose power is derived from occult books and authority over spirits, Lin's Prospero is a Taoist priest who channels divine energies using specific ceremonies, scripture readings, and religious talismans. A printed list of supernatural beings called a fulu grants him control over the island's spirits, while a Taoist prayer called a zhou allows him to realize his wishes and change form at will. The remaining details and circumstances surrounding Lin's Prospero are identical to those presented in both the Lambs' text and Shakespeare's play. Taoism also penetrates "Zhu qing" ("The Tempering of Love"), Lin Shu's adaptation of the Lambs' *Romeo and Juliet*, where Friar Lawrence is replaced by a Taoist priest. Repeated references aggrandising or referencing symbols of Chinese faith are similarly incorporated into the narrative and dialogue. For example, when Lin's Romeo's first sees Juliet at the Capulet's party, he declares that he will hold her in as much respect as a Taoist altar.

The behaviour of the protagonists in "Zhu qing" also demonstrates Lin's tendency to deviate from the characterizations found *Tales from Shakespeare*. While Charles Lamb presents Romeo and Juliet as passionate lovers, Lin portrays them in the Chinese traditions of a young, courtly nobleman and maiden. His Juliet is outwardly passionless, concealing her emotions behind her delicate physical beauty.

As she stands on her balcony after the Capulet ball, a brief sigh is the only indication of her melancholy longing to see the Romeo again. However, she immediately conceals all traces of emotion when she spots him in the garden, and demands to know his purpose for trespassing.

Juliet's reactions do not discourage Lin's Romeo, but leave him in awe of the young girl's eloquence and self-control. Juliet eventually acknowledges that she is similarly impressed by Romeo's patience, virtue, and intellect, all traits that define him throughout the story. Even Juliet's father later compliments the son of his sworn enemy for being an intelligent and virtuous gentleman. Lin intends the characters to serve as imitable, didactic models that promote feminine beauty and politeness as well as masculine intellect and sophistication for his readers. Though his specific depiction of the characters contrasts with Lamb's, their goals are very similar. Charles Lamb also uses the protagonists in his adaptations of *Macbeth* and *King Lear* to encourage or discourage his audience from imitating their actions.

The same lesson on gender roles is evident in Lin's portrayals of several other male and female protagonists. In "Rou juan" ("Contract of Flesh"), his *Merchant of Venice*, Portia's most distinguishing traits are her delicate features, unflinching politeness and outward calm. Nothing is ever said of her intellectual capabilities or confidence. Her bid to acquit Antonio is successful through her physical loveliness distracting the court rather than her shrewdness outwitting Shylock. Similar to Romeo, Lin's Bassanio is consistently described as a polite, intellectual gentleman and scholar. Portia considers this to be his strongest and most attractive trait, and declares that she is intellectually inferior to him. This creates another contrast that further distances Lin's portrayal of Shakespeare's female characters from those in the Lambs' text. Recall that Mary Lamb's tales emphasize the intellectual strengths and

initiative of female characters as they triumph over various challenges. Lin's portrayal of Portia omits several of these qualities in favour of focussing on her physicality.

Like his Juliet, his Portia lacks the passion, wilfulness, and confidence that she exhibits in *Tales from Shakespeare*.

However, Lin does not just change female characters, but also revises several traits that male characters exhibit in *Tales from Shakespeare*, redefining their abilities and priorities. Like their lovers, Lin's Romeo and Bassanio are also outwardly passionless. Their respective relationships with Mercutio and Antonio are based upon respect for practical strength rather than genuine love or camaraderie. Their adoration for their lovers stems from their admiration of each woman's full conformity to a submissive, beautiful feminine ideal. Such pairings can appear emotionally limited compared to their depictions in the Lambs' text and Shakespeare. However, this does not mark *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu* as an inferior adaptation, but one that is written to be conscientious of its audience's cultural expectations.

This thesis has shown several examples of English Shakespeare adaptations that have altered or cut material in order to produce works that are suited to the personal values and goals of their editors. Like Lamb, Bowdler, Macauley, Maxwell, Hows, and others, Lin created a text that is meant to be accessible to his audience while promoting his specific didactic agenda. While Lin admired the content of *Tales from Shakespeare*, both Huang and Li Ruru note that he had no desire to subject his Chinese audience to purely Western literature. Despite their differences in cultural, location, and time, there are still similarities between his and the Lambs' general adaptation methods and objectives. Just as the Lambs used Shakespeare's plays, Lin uses *Tales from Shakespeare* as source material for didactic stories. Like Charles Lamb, he integrates moralizing narrative into his tales. However, his work emphasizes

traditional Confucian values rather than the Lambs' ideas or themes. He intensifies his characters' respect for filial duty, converts them from Christianity to Taoism, and consistently defines them using specific gender models.⁴⁰² Though he does not share Mary Lamb's specific perceptions of Shakespeare's female characters, he does portray them in a context that is considered ideal within his culture. The resulting content is less alienating to Chinese readers than the unfamiliar stories of a foreign nation. These adaptations also make *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu* representative of the cultural expansion of the Lambs' and Bowdler's didactic legacy, as the text carries on *Tales from Shakespeare's* and *The Family Shakespeare's* tradition of introducing new readers to Shakespeare while attempting to educate them.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 59.

5.4 – Shakespeare Films and Animation for Children

Following Lin Shu's *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu*, a variety of projects attempted to carry on the didactic traditions that originated with *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare*. It is impossible to analyze every single adaptation that can be derived from the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts to the present, especially considering Shakespeare's expansion into new media formats, such as motion pictures. Instead, this section singles out one example: the 1992 *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales*. Animation has the capacity to address, entertain, and educate children, all factors that not only distinguish it from other motion picture formats but make it an ideal didactic vehicle for Shakespeare.

Animated Tales is not a carbon copy of either *Tales from Shakespeare* or *The Family Shakespeare*. However, its goals are similar to both of these texts, albeit with a stronger resemblance to the former. Like the Lambs' and Bowdler, its creators celebrate the historical esteem surrounding the playwright and his work. However, they also argued that this sentiment transcended European cultural boundaries. They emphasized this international compatibility by noting the playwright's eclectic use of settings beyond the United Kingdom, including Greece, Italy, and Denmark. Though *Animated Tales*' creators recognize the benefits of commercial success, they are not solely motivated by this objective. Their adaptation's primary goal is identical to *Tales from Shakespeare*'s: to educate children using Shakespeare and to prepare them for future encounters with his plays. However, before exploring this adaptation in greater detail, it is beneficial to gain some brief insight into the development of Shakespeare film adaptations.

Shakespeare film adaptations have had strong financial priorities since the first was produced by Herbert Beerbohm Tree in 1899. Tree recorded a four-minute

extract from act five, scene seven of *King John*, delivering his personal performance of the dying monarch's final words to a camera that was set on a Thames embankment. The project was intended to generate excitement for his forthcoming stage production at Her Majesty's Theatre. Shakespeare subsequently became a common subject for film adaptations, though the majority were productions in themselves and not just advertisements.

A 1907 ruling by the United States Supreme Court that involved a twelve-minute film based on Lewis Wallace's 1880 novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale of Christ* contributed to Shakespeare's popularity as raw material for motion pictures. Wallace's publisher, Harper and Brothers, made copyright infringement claims against Kalem Studios of New York for creating the adaptation without the estate's permission. The courts ruled that, in future, studios were required to obtain approval from and pay royalties to any author whose work was not public domain. Shakespeare's dramas were free of copyright restrictions, and consequently became attractive to adaptors. Many productions were similar to Tree's work, and used extracts featuring combat, murder, humour, and love declarations to exploit the excitement of Shakespeare.

The Vitagraph Film Company in America created several of these films, starting with a 1908 adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* that consisted of the balcony scene from the of Act two, scene two. Their later production of *Julius Caesar* similarly began and ended with the title character's assassination. Over the next decade, Vitagraph used their extract formula to make adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello*, *Richard III*, *Henry VIII*, *Twelfth Night*, *King Lear*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. The Thanhouser Film Corporation and Britain's Hepworth Manufacturing Company, along with several other companies across Europe, also

imitated this adaptation style. However, during the 1920s and 30s, the growing popularity of alternate film genres such as westerns, noir crime stories, and science fiction drew filmmakers away from Shakespeare. It was conservative advocacy and another American legal change that later turned their attentions back to him.

In the 1930s and 1940s, American social conservative groups like the Legion of Decency claimed that the new film genres were both immoral and intellectually vapid. These political advocates argued the excessive violence and sexuality of film content needed to be replaced with increased censorship and moral didacticism. The protests led to the 1930 Motion Picture Production Code in America, a set of strict moral guidelines that outlined three essential conditions for all films: first, any character that perpetrated a wrongdoing was forbidden sympathy; second, films could not ridicule human or natural laws; third, films could not reference “repellent” subjects, the specific definition of which was unclear. Though this was an American policy, international films attempting to enter the country were also subjected to it.

However, several film studios in America and abroad noticed that many authors appeared to be shielded from the Code’s scrutiny due their purported artistic legitimacy, which allowed adaptations of their work to include illegal content. Shakespeare was a prominent film candidate due to his reputation for influencing English language while presenting moral and philosophical lessons of timeless relevance. Derek Longhurst elaborates briefly on this:

It is, surely, undeniable that the dominant figuration of Shakespeare within the institutions committed to the reproduction of the values of ‘high’ culture is articulated around his texts as embodiments of literary genius constituted in a coalescence of the ‘flowering’ of the English language and the (consequently) ‘universal’ truths of human experience.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰³ Holderness, Graham, ed. *The Shakespeare Myth*. (Manchester University Press, 1988), 60.

Longhurst's words imply his contention with his conclusions, his singling out of the proprietary institutions of "high" culture and their regard for Shakespeare's contribution to language's "flowering" suggesting contempt for the notions. However, regardless of his personal attitude, this belief was endorsed by filmmakers, who Shakespeare's name carried enough notoriety to exempt adaptations from judgements under the Code. While didacticism was not a priority for film studios, its presence was ironically their purported rationale for making Shakespeare adaptations.

In this new generation of Shakespeare films featured full-length stories rather than brief extracts from the plays. However, these features remained focussed on generating excitement through emotional and visceral spectacle. As expected, many of their elements overstepped the restrictions of the Code. For example, the protagonist of the 1947 psychological thriller *A Double Life*, an adaptation of *Othello*, is a violent schizophrenic whose obsession with imitating Shakespeare's play leads him to commit murder. The 1955 *Joe Macbeth* changes Shakespeare's tale of eleventh century Scottish regicide into a Chicago crime drama populated by selfish, yet very sympathetic, killers. The 1956 *Forbidden Planet*, based on *The Tempest*, focuses on a group of space explorers hunted by Doctor Morbius, a Prospero analogue that uses magic-like science to transform into an extremely violent monster.

It is important to note that filmmakers did not simply appropriate the playwright's name to bypass censorship. The content of these adaptations was still *from* Shakespeare, but not always identical to the plays. As with the theatrical and household adaptations from previous centuries, the parallels between the films and plays vary. Some are strong, as in the case of the protagonists of *A Double Life* and *Othello* both being victims of betrayal. *Othello* is manipulated by Iago while Anthony John is betrayed by his frail mind, each man allowing his paranoia over his lover's

suspected infidelity to finally erupt into murderous rage. However, even though Anthony's story is based upon *Othello*, they are not expected to be exactly the same. Othello is deceived, but still has the free will to act in accordance with his own conclusions. Anthony's schizophrenia leaves him with absolutely no control over himself as it irrationally compels him to believe that he is Othello, and must act like him. While such distinctions in detail do not interfere with the coherence of the adaptation, this was not the case for others

Robert F. Willson notes that *Joe Macbeth*'s difficulties with applying mafia elements to the circumstances of *Macbeth*'s story show that there are cases of thematic disruption between Shakespeare films and plays. Arguing that succession in a gangster "court" can be legitimately determined by a Darwinian pecking-order rather than a structured process of nominated or natural inheritance, he considers Joe's decision to murder Duca appropriate for that environment.⁴⁰⁴ The awkwardness of *Joe Macbeth*'s Shakespearean elements suggests that the film's adaptors may have been more concerned with appropriating the drama's reputation as a defence against the Code than with thorough editing. There are also times when adaptations defy the thematic expectations of plays they are based on. Like Prospero, *Forbidden Planet*'s Dr. Mobius is a marooned scholar living with a daughter, Altaira. Like Miranda, she has never seen another man before. Yet, despite these transparent allusions to Shakespeare, the film develops into a monster chase movie rather than a story of meticulous manipulation that culminates in reconciliation.

The Code was abandoned in 1968 after it became clear that its standards were antiquated and impossible to enforce on films made outside America. Though no longer legally necessary, Shakespeare adaptations continued out of financial interest,

⁴⁰⁴ Willson, Robert F. *Shakespeare in Hollywood: 1929 – 1956*. (London: Associated University Presses, 2000), 98.

resulting in over four-hundred films derived from the plays at present. Like their predecessors, some incorporate scenery, dialogue, and direction from the dramas while others feature varying parallels. There are those that just cut material to fit a budgeted amount of time, like Charlton Heston's 1973 *Anthony and Cleopatra*. The film uses most of the dialogue and stage directions from Shakespeare, but expurgates scenes such as the party on Pompey's boat to focus more on the interaction between the titular characters.

Other adaptations are reminiscent of *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu* due to their incorporation of cultural elements from their regions of origin. Akira Kurosawa's 1985 *Ran* mixes *King Lear* with the legend of a feudal Japanese warlord named Mori Motonari. Like Lin Shu, Kurosawa deviates from Shakespeare at certain points while attempting to maintain the themes that resemble those in the dramas. He elevates the rashness of his Lear analogue, making him a cruel and manipulative man who governs through threats and wanton brutality. Like Lear on the stormy heath, he also has a moment of mental instability, though he neither recovers nor learns from it. Instead, he is driven insane by visions of the men, women, and children he has slaughtered. Despite these details and the use of a historic Japanese setting, the remainder of the story follows the direction of *King Lear* as a destructive disagreement between the lord's heirs that culminate in the death of their entire family.

Some filmmakers place greater emphasis on the transparency of Shakespeare's presence within their adaptations. Though Baz Luhrmann's 1996 *Romeo + Juliet* is set in a beachfront district of Los Angeles where the warring Montagues and Capulets battle using street gangs and automatic weapons, the majority of words and actions are quoted directly from Shakespeare. Modernization is also used in Tim Blake

Nelson's 2001 *O*, an adaptation of *Othello* centred on Odin, the only African American student in an American school, and his girlfriend Desi. Unlike Luhrmann's adaptation, the dialogue in this film is not Shakespeare's, but the conflict remains identical to the play. Odin earns the fierce jealousy of Hugo, Iago's teenage counterpart, and is deceived into believing that Desi has been unfaithfully pursuing Michael Cassio. As in the play, the protagonist is enraged by these accusations, and strangles his lover out of misplaced revenge before killing himself in shame.

Shakespeare film adaptors cannot be faulted for prioritizing profit over didacticism, especially since it has been previously noted in this research that this practice dates back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Recall that both Davenant and Dryden took advantage of Shakespeare's public prominence during the Restoration in a similar fashion. The editors also credited many of their adaptations directly to Shakespeare rather than to themselves out of hopes of attracting audiences to theatres using the playwright's name. William and Mary Godwin's rationale for commissioning *Tales from Shakespeare* was its potential to alleviate their monetary difficulties and satisfy the loan conditions of debtors. Despite its didactic goals, the text still has some basis in financial need.

In contrast, *Animated Tales* proves itself to be the inheritor of *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* legacy. While the majority of Shakespeare films are focussed on generating entertaining spectacles, this production uses its visual effects to accentuate the lessons of its didactic narrative for the benefit of children. Chris Grace, the creator of *Animated Tales*, claims that his work was inspired by a comment attributed to Art Babbett, a Walt Disney company animator and director. Throughout his career, Babbett had contributed to and coordinated several of his employer's cartoon adaptations of children's fables and novels, *The*

Three Little Pigs, Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, and Alice in Wonderland

among them.

Despite the critical and financial success of these ventures, Babbett questioned Disney's desire to focus on adapting fairy tales to film. He argued that this commitment prompted the studio to overlook other historic and contemporary authors that possessed long-standing academic and cultural influence. According to Grace, Babbett eventually began openly disagreeing with Disney's choices of literature for film adaptations:

[Babbett] said, 'Why is it always *Beauty and the Beast*? Why not Moliere?' That stuck in my mind. Why not Shakespeare, Dylan Thomas, Verdi?⁴⁰⁵

Unfortunately for Babbett, the studio did not share his views at that time, and his arguments fell on deaf ears. However, this did not discourage Grace from investing in similar views. He also believed that there was rich potential in adapting the work of renowned European authors, playwrights, and even composers into a format suitable for children. Such projects could be an entertaining, educational, and culturally-conscientious competitor for the productions of Disney and their chief rival, Warner Bros. In addition, he argued that the adaptations would celebrate and teach Europe's unique literary heritage, evoking a sense of pride in youth who were otherwise unfamiliar with these texts and their writers.

Three main factors contributed to Grace selecting Shakespeare for animated adaptation. The first is the playwright's aforementioned historical notoriety. The second is a practical point that involves the animation's potential benefits for the United Kingdom's then newly-organized National Curriculum for public schools. A 1989 British government report on education entitled *English for Ages 5-16*

⁴⁰⁵ Bottoms, Janet. "Speech, Image, Action: Animating *Tales from Shakespeare*." *Children's Literature in Education*. Vol. 32, no. 1. (2001): 4

underscored young people's exposure to Shakespeare's plays as a necessity of personal growth. It adopted a perspective that is similar to the Lambs' and Bowdler's assertions that a fundamental awareness of Shakespeare's work offers insight into crucial life lessons. The report also recommended promoting the plays via non-traditional methods, such as film and recordings, rather than through the creation of new printed editions. It was believed that such modern visual mediums would better interest the current generation of students than a study of texts. With circumstances having generated this need for their proposed production, Grace and his associates confidently pursued the creation of their *Animated Tales*.

The third factor was commercial. Based on prior adaptations discussed in this chapter, it is naïve to assume that the *Animated Tales*' creation was bereft of any business influences. It is true that the hiring of Moscow-based Soyuzmultfilm Studios to oversee the animation process seems appropriate for Grace's populist vision of using the cartoons to promote a unified sense of European cultural heritage. In reality, it was also a cost-saving measure that spared his project from relying on the globally-established, but prohibitively expensive, North American-based talent.

However, though Soyuzmultfilm lacked the international prestige of its Western competitors, its domestic work had garnered enough recognition to earn it the nickname "Disney of the East" during the Cold War. Grace likely hoped this reputation would empower *Animated Tales* with enough commercial credibility to challenge the likes of Warner Bros. and Disney while maintaining distinctive animation aesthetics. The offer to the Russians was not one-sided, especially considering the political and economic transitions the latter's nation was still undergoing at the time. A Western contract gave Soyuzmultfilm an opportunity to advertise and market their animation expertise internationally, providing a crucial

foothold in a global market that was still alien to them. Along with these aforementioned financial gains for both sides was the marketable prestige of the project's benevolent educational goals. This included the esteem drawn from Shakespeare's name as well as the scholastic legitimacy of having Leon Garfield, a famous British children's author, serving as chief adaptor. However, not everyone involved in this international project was enthusiastic about *Animated Tales*.

Despite having full editorial control over the adaptation process, Garfield became dissatisfied with his work on the episodes, and critical of the production's very inception. He later published a critique of the limitations that he perceived in his contributions. Garfield declares that abridging Shakespeare's plays is impossible, likening the process to painting the ceiling of the Sistine chapel on a postage stamp; it cannot be done. His description of his editing and its consequences for the resulting adaptations is not only discouraging, but also extremely visceral:

In fact, every cut was to the play's detriment; all I could possibly hope to do was to staunch the flow of blood from the wounds, and leave a little life in the lacerated remains.⁴⁰⁶

Garfield believes that he created flawed and fragmented parodies of Shakespeare's plays. However, an analysis of *Animated Tales* reveals that his negative assertions are exaggerated. Laurie E. Osborne argues that Garfield fails to recognize that his cuts are a necessary concession for preserving the main elements of each play within the confines of its time-restricted format.⁴⁰⁷ Furthermore, she notes that the nature of Garfield's alterations combined with their visual medium assist *Animated Tales* in establishing an artistic identity that is distinctive among Shakespeare adaptations. Like many previously discussed adaptations, these animations are not attempting to replicate or replace Shakespeare in a manner similar to Bowdler, Slater, or Hows.

⁴⁰⁶ Bottoms, "Speech," 5.

⁴⁰⁷ Boose, Lynda E., ed & Burt, Richard, ed. *Shakespeare The Movie: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, and Video*. (London: Routledge, 1997), 103.

Instead, *Animated Tales* presents works that are *from* Shakespeare, such as the Lambs' and Macaulay's tales or Maxwell's plot summaries. Garfield's films lack some of the details and nuances from Shakespeare, but still contain cohesive content and significant didacticism.

Garfield includes most of Shakespeare's *dramatis personae* in his adaptations, though some are removed. In the animated *Macbeth*, the title protagonist, Lady Macbeth, Banquo, and Macduff all remain prominent, while minor characters, such as the castle porter, vanish. Likewise, though Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are absent from the adapted *Hamlet*, the remaining characters and circumstances surrounding the Danish prince are all accounted for: King Hamlet persistently haunts his son, pleading to be avenged; Ophelia undergoes emotional decline, her supposedly jilted childhood love leading to madness; Claudius' guilt is probed and confirmed using a staged recreation of his brother's murder. One of the few adaptations to break from this pattern is Garfield's rendition of *The Tempest*, which includes a full depiction of the play's various subplots and their participants. Its audience is exposed to Prospero's mystical revenge, to Caliban's comedic attempt at plotting insurrection alongside Stephano and Trinculo, as well the meeting and courtship of the young lovers, Miranda and Ferdinand.

Garfield balances his use of the main *dramatis personae* with the limited timeframe for each story using various strategies that condense Shakespeare's acts and scenes. Many conversations are replaced by narrated sequences that overlay animated scenes or static images. However, while heavily abridged, the resulting stories are not the incoherent mess that he claims they are. Several of the editorial choices that Garfield makes while adapting the plays to the animated format resemble adaptations measures that are used in *Tales from Shakespeare*. For example, like

Mary Lamb's adaptations, Garfield's films provide a thorough synopsis of key events from Shakespeare. They feature exposition for the history of each story's setting and situation, as well as commentary on how such details connect. Dialogue in *Animated Tales* is quoted directly from the verse lines of their respective source plays. These references balance the generalized summaries while assisting the production's didactic objectives by exposing young audiences to genuine samples of the playwright's language. Furthermore, the spoken lines often carry significant thematic importance, just as Mary Lamb's dialogue choices do, lending emphasis to each story's main themes and didactic goals. Occasionally, Garfield's films use a narrator to issue a clear and direct statement of the story's didacticism in a manner similar to the moralized narrative in Charles Lamb's tales.

In the animated *Romeo and Juliet*, the initial scenes from Shakespeare are replaced by the narrator's brief description of the Capulet/Montague feud and the threatening declaration of Verona's prince. The story then turns its focus to Romeo as the dialogue between him and Mercutio commences. These details are presented against an escalating cartoon street-brawl between several members of the two households, which emphasizes their adversarial state. The entire arrangement economizes time, allowing the film to segue rapidly into the love tragedy.

Garfield takes a similar approach in *Twelfth Night*. Following an unprompted depiction of Sebastian and Viola's ship sinking in a storm, the narrator briefly synthesizes recent events in the country of Illyria, including Orsino's unrequited courting of the mourning Olivia. Character interaction is suspended until this history lesson and household juxtaposition finishes. In the animated *Tempest*, the narrator informs the audience of the past exile of Prospero, his mastery of magic, and alludes to his plotted vengeance before any of the characters speak a word. The narrators of

these three animated tales vanish after their opening remarks, but return to confirm their respective story's conclusion by noting the protagonists' fates: the death of Romeo and Juliet, and the subsequent truce between their families; the happiness of the Illyrian newlyweds despite their obscure love chase; Prospero abandoning magic and returning to Milan.

However, there are times in *Animated Tales* where the narrator has a more persistent presence. In the animated *Hamlet*, short bouts of narration are used to summarize events and conversations throughout the entire production. As with the aforementioned film introductions, these explanations are given as voiceovers that accompany a series of static illustrations. In some instances, this narration is simply meant to speed plot transition; Ophelia's love for Hamlet and Laertes' concern for her is presented in this fashion. The narrator briefly announces both sentiments to juxtaposed images of the characters, followed by a third image of them speaking to one another. However, there are other moments where the narrator describes specific details of the story, such as explaining Hamlet's plan to conceal his investigation of Claudius under a façade of madness. This ensures that viewers unfamiliar with Shakespeare clearly understand the events transpiring in the adaptation.

The narrator has another additional role in the animated *Macbeth*, offering thematic information and emphasis rather than just confirming literal details. This transforms him from an explicator or facilitator into a moralizing educator. In addition, instead of remaining formless, he is given a tangible place amongst the cast as an elderly man in robes. Rather than limit his opening statements to factual background details, he notes that Scotland is a land "torn and bleeding" with betrayal, where "nothing is as it seemed." These comments are emphasized by accompanying

battlefield imagery of soldiers dismembering one another in combat. Together, these details highlight the significance of violence and deception in this story.

This narrator later reiterates the importance of these thematic notions following the climactic defeat and death of Macbeth, appearing alone to announce:

God's benison go with you, and with those that would
make good of bad and friends of foes.⁴⁰⁸

In the play, these lines are used to address a castle porter in scene three of the second act. However, in this adaptation, they are the very last words spoken. Their relocation heightens their thematic significance, attaching them to the animated *Macbeth's* moral didacticism. Like Charles Lamb's narrative, these lines directly address the audience with an explicit didactic message that cautions against the act of betrayal.

Narration offers significant assistance to audiences that are unacquainted with the various nuances of Shakespeare's plays. In addition, as motion pictures, the cartoon productions have another advantage over their textual counterparts: visual imagery. *Animated Tales* uses this trait to communicate and emphasize the key concepts and themes from Shakespeare. Some of the most potent visual symbolism in *Animated Tales* is manifested in the physical aesthetic design of its characters. The creation of a cast for an animated work typically involves the use of several stylistic archetypes. This leads to heroes that appear as well-dressed paragons of physical beauty, while villains are misshapen, grotesque, and surrounded by darkness. *Animated Tales* takes no exception to this tactic, using vivid, thematically-relevant imagery for its depictions of Shakespeare's characters. Garfield's *Macbeth* adaptation uses this imagery to highlight and emphasize the sinister intentions of several characters.

⁴⁰⁸ "Macbeth." *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales*. First broadcast 23 November 1992 by BBC2. Dir. Nikolai Serebryakov. Ed. Leon Garfield.

The animated versions of the play's three witches are depicted as intensely evil beings that wish to entrap their listeners. Their bodies are inhumanly malleable, constantly shifting shape and size. Pieces of their clothing come alive, randomly forming heads and faces to speak from while the past features are devoured by the new. They wear fur and feather headdresses that transform into living beasts and snarl out dialogue before receding back into their clothing. Even when they adopt a more standard, human appearance later in the play, their skeletal bodies appear to be rotting apart as they speak. This collection of details emphasizes the persistent otherworldliness of these characters, particularly their arcane and deceptive nature, not even their appearances can be trusted.

Macbeth himself is drawn differently from the majority of the cast. While the rest maintain standard human features and skin tone, he is comparatively unnatural. Though a tall and muscular figure, his skin is green while his eyes are perpetually framed in a broad, mask-like shadow that appears both sinister and indicative of severe fatigue. His eyes are coloured yellow, and kept continuously wide so that their pupils never dilate. The combination of these features creates an expression of continuously tense, almost savage, excitement, a look that radiates with the dichotomy of both Macbeth's murderous ambitions along with the terrible guilt and fear evoked by his vile actions.

The wildness in Macbeth's physical appearance is supplemented by the violent imagery and symbolism that he is repeatedly associated with. The story opens with his participation in a war against the Irish and Norwegian armies. During this battle, he slashes, stabs, and dismembers his way through the enemies of his king. However, these actions are significantly censored so that they are executed bloodlessly. His

victims fall over like dolls or mannequins rather than human beings, and fade from sight once they are struck down.

This portrayal of combat is not indicative of any censorship on Garfield's part. *Animated Tales* actually uses graphic violence frequently, despite being intended for children. Garfield does not seem overly concerned with any arguments involving age-appropriate content or desensitization. Rather than show sensitivity for the potentially impressionable nature of his audience, as many other producers of children's works do, he uses the inclusion or exclusion of violent acts as an editorial measure. Potentially grotesque images of war are removed from the combat scenes that are associated with *Macbeth's* Duncan in order to emphasize the nobility of his rule. While he is king, warriors use violence only to defend the interests of their monarch and the safety of their homes. His battlefield is an idealistic place where soldiers have the opportunity to fight patriotically and gain heroic recognition for their loyal service.

In contrast to Duncan's Scotland, the country under Macbeth is filled with gory, uncensored violence that extends beyond combat to permeate even the most mundane activities. This is best demonstrated during a musical interlude that depicts the preparations for Macbeth's coronation feast. The kitchen servants are portrayed as violent soldiers and merciless executioners, while their workspace becomes a literal abattoir filled with pleading, screaming animals. These victims are beaten, gouged, chopped, and thrown into the fire in an uncensored display that eclipses the violence of the tale's opening battle. The imagery punctuates the murderous means by which Macbeth came to power, and emphasizes that the foundation of his kingdom is bloodshed. This also foreshadows his continuing reliance on violence to maintain a hold on the crown.

Supplementing this violent symbolism is the increasing amount of literal darkness that surrounds Macbeth as the story progresses. This first becomes obvious during the feast, while he addresses Banquo and Fleance. Despite his use of cordial words, the shadows extending from Macbeth grow immense, enveloping father and son in total blackness that foreshadows their planned assassinations. The attempted murders, and all those subsequently ordered by Macbeth, are each followed by the appearance of a skeletal jester beating a drum. This macabre mockery of a typically vibrant and entertaining court figure aptly emphasizes the grotesqueness of Macbeth's kingdom; it is a joyless, malevolent, and murderous parody of Duncan's Scotland.

Later, the escalating darkness momentarily devours Macbeth himself, and endows him with the same malleability as the witches' bodies. His body and features contort into a troupe of assassins as he considers murdering Macduff's family. The creatures subsequently appear to enact his will, becoming a brief tableau of the killings as he reconciles his choice. Though there is no recognition given to this physical transformation, its symbolism is clear: Macbeth has shed his humanity, reason, and decency in favour of embracing the otherworldliness that validates his rule. This transition towards inhumanity peaks with a final disregard for mortality at the story's climax. His last words are not issued prior to his death, but from his severed head, which still lives and speaks as it is held aloft by the victorious Macduff. Macbeth's personal association with graphic violence is given one last dose of emphasis during this moment as, unlike the men that he dismembered in Duncan's service, his head is heavily scarred and continuously bleeding.

Despite its effectiveness, this visual imagery creates potential bias in the animated *Macbeth*. The usurper's transition from human being into a monstrous shadow creature negates a great deal of the sympathy of his situation. His physical

inhumanity can overshadow the tragedy of his moral decay, making him seem more like a villain or creature than a conflicted human being who is caught between morality and ambition. By the end of the story, he is a slumping, broken figure who is nearly as skeletal as the witches. Any redeeming elements of his character are easily overlooked, especially by an audience that is new to Shakespeare.

Visual aesthetics have various uses in *Animated Tales*' other adaptations. In some cases, they are used to simplify story elements and facilitate children's understanding of events. However, as in the animated *Macbeth*, this contextualization can predispose children towards specific readings of characters and the exclusion of alternate interpretations. In the animated *Hamlet*, the ghost of the deceased king is depicted in stark visual contrast to his living brother. Though a spectre, King Hamlet remains an athletically proportioned figure, while Claudius is his obese opposite, a swollen Henry VIII to his late brother's dashing Henry V. To emphasize his villainous nature, Claudius is drawn in a hedonistic context, either surrounding himself with excessive portions of food or making blatant sexual overtures to Gertrude, while King Hamlet's spectral walks are often conducted in armoured battle attire.

By depicting Claudius in this fashion, giving him a role reminiscent of a folk-tale villain, the adaptation seemingly erases any doubts concerning the morality of Hamlet's actions. As in Charles Lamb's adaptation, Claudius' despicable nature in *Animated Tales* initially places Hamlet's actions in a noble context. The prince's vendetta seems just because he is portrayed as a handsome and heroic agent of morality. However, this sentiment does not extend to the animated story's ending. Rather than have Hamlet depart in triumph, the cartoon preserves his death, the deaths of Laertes and Gertrude, as well as the suicide of Ophelia. Instead of defining these events as a just outcome, as Charles Lamb's tale does, the closing narration

emphasizes their tragedy and issues a didactic warning of the unilateral destructiveness of pursuing revenge.

Character aesthetics and visual symbolism are also prominent in the animated adaptation of *Julius Caesar*. In this case, however, these details are potentially disruptive and misleading. This version of the story focuses on portraying Brutus as a genuinely conflicted idealist rather than a potentially ambitious traitor. The adaptation's Cassius, on the other hand, is initially a devious manipulator who shrewdly takes advantage of Brutus' patriotism for the sake of personal prestige. To emphasize his corrupted nature, Cassius is surrounded by sinister aesthetics. While meeting with Casco and their fellow conspiring senators, the eyes of his nearby bust adopt a supernatural glow, as if possessed by some fiendish force. As Cassius passes his falsified note for Brutus to Cinna, the scroll momentarily transforms into a serpent, a creature symbolic of deception and evil, and slithers from one hand to the other. The other conspirators are physically repulsive; the inhuman aspects of their appearances detract from the credibility of their moral and political arguments. Casco, for example, is depicted as a grotesquely overweight man whose multiple layers of facial fat impede his speaking. Much like Claudius in the animated *Hamlet*, this lends him hedonistic overtones that negate support for his republican beliefs and sympathy for his subsequent death.

The problem with using these leading aesthetics in *Julius Caesar* is that, in Shakespeare, the assassination's motivation is subjective. The morality of the senators' actions in the play is not meant to be easily framed in absolute terms. The rationales behind it can differ depending on the characteristics found in the story's performance. For example, some theatrical renditions of the play prefer to portray Brutus as the chief conspirator rather than as a naive puppet. Others define the senate

as a group forced to kill out of democratic desperation rather than greed by suggesting that Caesar and Mark Anthony are dangerous, self-motivated imperialists.

There is nothing immediately wrong with following one of these interpretations over another. However, *Animated Tales* creates confusion by lacking consistency in its moral perspective. After Caesar's death, the adaptation puts forward several aesthetic changes that can interfere with readings of the story. Brutus transforms from a puppet of the senate's usurpation conspiracy into their steadfast leader. The villainous overtones attributed to the entire senate vanish in lieu of their democratic advocacy, while Mark Anthony becomes the new aggressor, taking advantage of the assassination for personal gain rather than pursuing the interests of justice.

This leads to a contradictory situation as civil war erupts in the story, with Brutus and the senate adopting a heroic role. No longer cloaked in sinister aesthetics, Cassius becomes Brutus' most trusted companion rather than his venomous manipulator. Garfield's inconsistent characterizations in this adaptation render the story more confusing than didactic. It is possible that he reverses some of the characters' attitudes and motivations midway through the story, turning heroes into villains and vice versa, in order to reflect upon the moral uncertainty surrounding the murder of Caesar and its consequences. Yet, neither the narrator nor the characters ever offers any supporting commentary to suggest that this is the editor's intention, that their actions are caught between good and evil. Furthermore, this lesson may also be too complex for young readers to intuitively recognize.

One can consider the ambiguous portrayal of the characters is an affirmation of Garfield's fears regarding *Animated Tales'* editorial limits, and argue that the film's format is unable to cope with the diverse political and moral complexities

motivating the characters. Adaptations cited in this chapter and previously have shown that some plays are just incompatible with certain adaptation methods, as is the case for *The Family Shakespeare's* versions of *Henry IV*, *Othello*, and *Measure for Measure*. However, this explanation is not applicable to Garfield's *Julius Caesar*. The production would have been better served by following Charles Lamb's example and adopting one consistent moral reading of the play for the story's entire duration. While a heroic or villainous perspective on Caesar's murder may not have been representative of Shakespeare, it may have made more sense to a young audience. In addition, it is not the responsibility of the adaptation to emulate Shakespeare, but to introduce him to an inexperienced audience.

Like many children's Shakespeare projects that are part of the legacy of *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare*, *Animated Tales* provides its young audience with abridged and moralized versions of the plays. However, it is clear that its content and overall goals have a stronger resemblance to the former than to the latter. Like the Lambs' work, these cartoons are not intended to replace the original plays, but to offer an interpretation of Shakespeare's work that is comprehensible and interesting to children of the present. These cartoons can serve as a means for guiding children on their path to reading and understanding Shakespeare and the vast library of editions and adaptations of his dramas.

5.5 – Conclusion

Tales from Shakespeare and *The Family Shakespeare* were both instrumental in popularizing the practice of creating household versions of the playwright's dramas for children's reading. Their longevity is reflected in the eclectic library of adaptations that they have inspired. Children's Shakespeare projects conceived during the nineteenth century often attempted to either imitate or amend the Lambs' and Bowdler's editing methods. In the former case, Macauley's *Tales of the Drama* emulates *Tales from Shakespeare* by adapting several plays into moralized short stories. In contrast, Slater objects to the Lambs' methods in his *Select Plays From Shakespeare*, saying that converting Shakespeare into short stories expurgates valuable didactic content. Instead, he presents the plays as dramatic verses that are supplemented by footnotes on key terms and brief examples of criticism.

Chambers' and Carruthers' 1861 *Household Edition of the Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare* and Bulfinch's 1865 *Shakespeare Adapted for Reading Classes and the Family Circle* resemble Bowdler's attempt to compromise between selective censorship and maintaining story coherence. However, Hows argues that Bowdler does not censor Shakespeare extensively enough for children. The plays in his 1849 *Shakspearian Reader* cut every potentially offensive reference that he can identify. The zealous extent of Hows' work is reflected in his adaptation of *Othello*, which attempts to spare children from exposure to infidelity and murder by ending the play at the third act.

In the twentieth century, the didactic legacy of *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* expanded beyond English literature to include both internationally-produced adaptations and modern media formats. Though this chapter has highlighted examples of each, two of the most noteworthy adaptations appeared

near the beginning and end of the century respectively: Lin Shu's 1904 *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu*, a culturally adapted translation of *Tales from Shakespeare*, and Chris Grace's 1992 *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales*, a cartoon descendent of the Lambs' and Bowdler's legacy. Both projects were milestones in their respective genres and publishing environments. *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu* was not only a didactic children's edition of Shakespeare, but was also the first text to successfully introduce the playwright to Chinese readers in their native language. The educational emphasis of *Animated Tales* contrasts with the content of most prior Shakespeare film adaptations, which were created as entertainment. Its editorial philosophy has many similarities with that of *Tales from Shakespeare*.

Together with their predecessors from the nineteenth century, these two adaptations testify to the continuity of the Lambs' and Bowdler work over the past two hundred years. The production of children's household adaptations of Shakespeare began with *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare*, evolved from a process of editorial imitation to an exploration of alternative methods, and expanded beyond the boundaries of printed English texts. Though its more recent products have adopted different languages and presentation formats, infiltrating new cultures and technologies as the opportunities arise, their fundamental methods and objectives have followed the didactic examples of the Lambs and Bowdler: celebrating Shakespeare while making his work accessible to children. Mapping their legacy not only provides us with a history of its progress, but also offers potential insights into the ways that it will continue to expand and change in the future.

Chapter 6: Conclusion to Thesis

6.1 – Closing Arguments on the Lambs and Bowdler

Shakespeare's dramas have achieved such celebrated status in English literature that they are often regarded as a cornerstone of the discipline. However, adaptations of his plays rarely receive the same degree of recognition. Various discussions in this thesis have shown that many of these derivative creations are surrounded by contention, sensationalism, and misinformation. While Roberta E. Pearson and William Uricchio treat the long history of appropriating Shakespeare as proof of his timeless relevance and indifference to national or cultural boundaries, others view the practice differently.⁴⁰⁹ Charles Marowitz acknowledges that adaptations, whether they are designed to be presented at home, on stage, or on film, can be innovative and insightful vehicles for communicating Shakespeare's stories and intentions.⁴¹⁰ However, he also believes that this potential is often squandered, and that most of these works are self-serving parodies of Shakespeare that are "like so many new glosses of an old painting."⁴¹¹

According to Marowitz, many Shakespeare adaptations are the products of an unofficial "cult of bardolatry" consisting of scholars, critics, and teachers that cling to the playwright's literary tradition out of professional and financial interest.⁴¹² They are more concerned with using Shakespeare editions and adaptations to induct themselves into the playwright's famous legacy than with contributing original material to it. Though these texts keep Shakespeare "sacrosanct" over the generations, they are often either derivative of previous adaptations or endorsements of nonsensical readings that Marowitz considers part of the "lunatic fringe" of

⁴⁰⁹ Holderness, *Shakespeare Myth*, 60.

⁴¹⁰ Marowitz, *Recycling Shakespeare*, 4.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² Ibid.

Shakespeare criticism.⁴¹³ Derek Longhurst elaborates on this last notion while presenting his contentions with the cross-cultural timelessness that Pearson and Uricchio associate with the dramas. He criticizes bardolatry supporters for using every conceivable topic and theme that they can generate as “grist to the Shakespeare mill,” from “fascism, Stalinism, Macbeth as Richard Nixon, and *vice versa*,” to the financial and celebrity arguments permeating popular culture.⁴¹⁴ Marowitz believes that this parasitic use of adaptations has endured for approximately two hundred years, and is capable of continuing for another five hundred.

Research from previous chapters of this thesis has shown that Shakespeare adaptations have received similar scrutiny since editors like William Davenant and Edward Ravenscroft started creating them during the seventeenth century. Charles and Mary Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare* and Thomas Bowdler’s *The Family Shakespeare* have both attracted criticism for their attempts to modify Shakespeare for children. However, this thesis has also shown that Marowitz’s views do not apply to all adaptations by highlighting the valuable innovations that the Lambs’ and Bowdler’s texts have each contributed to the playwright’s legacy.

The preceding chapters have provided an account of *Tales from Shakespeare*’s and *The Family Shakespeare*’s respective goals, content, and legacies. This includes a historical analysis of the many trends and texts in children’s literature and Shakespeare adaptations that shaped these publications, from John Earle’s 1628 study of childhood education in *Microcosmographie* to Vicesimus Knox’s 1784 collection of didactic Shakespeare quotations, *Elegant Extracts*. This was followed by an examination of the distinctive conditions and limitations of the Lambs’ and Bowdler’s respective editorial strategies. These discussions challenge the misinformation and

⁴¹³ Ibid., 17.

⁴¹⁴ Holderness, *Shakespeare Myth*, 61.

sensationalism that presently surrounds the texts, distinguishing their editorial connections to Shakespeare from the visceral details of the Lambs' personal histories and the misrepresentative definition for Bowdler's editing methods. They also identify the Lambs' and Bowdler's roles in influencing the development of Shakespeare children's adaptations over subsequent generations. Starting with Elizabeth Wright Macauley's 1822 *Tales of the Drama*, these publications expanded the genre, populating it with several contrasting philosophies and methods for modifying Shakespeare for young audiences. These developments established the basis of children's Shakespeare, and ensured that it was a field of study from its early years.

Over time, further derivatives of *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* have helped children's Shakespeare adapt to opportunities presented by cultural globalization and technological advances. Lin Shu's 1904 *Yingguo Shiren Yinbian Yanyu* and Chris Grace's 1992 *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales* expanded the accessibility and relevance of the genre. The former's use of Chinese language and integration of Confucian values represents the extension of children's Shakespeare into non-English-speaking countries and cultures, marking the genre's growth into an internationally viable didactic phenomenon. The latter incorporates children's Shakespeare adaptation methods into a cinematic production that represents the technological evolution of the genre. As chapter five highlights, the film takes extensive advantage of audio and visual elements to both appeal to and to teach its young viewers. Both adaptations represent the transitions that the Lambs' and Bowdler's texts, as well as children's Shakespeare, have undergone in order to extend beyond their textual limitations and into new environments. These experiences have

been vital to the genre, allowing it to keep increasing its presence and to maintain its relevance to the present.

The first chapter of this thesis noted that the Lambs' and Bowdler's motivations for creating their respective adaptations were both rooted in an intense admiration for William Shakespeare's dramas. Though the specific objectives of *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* contrast, their creators had the same desire to instil their appreciation for the playwright in others, especially children. Their individual contributions can seem small within the enormous scope of Shakespeare studies, just two specialized adaptations from the early nineteenth century. Yet, they have each had a significant influence over subsequent generations of adaptors, authors, and editors. Recognition of *Tales from Shakespeare's* and *The Family Shakespeare's* contributions and influence over children's adaptations has been buried by two centuries of misconceptions and distractions. However, their present reputations do not diminish their invaluable contribution to expanding Shakespeare's presence from the theatre to the household, integrating his plays into the pastime of family reading, and ensuring the continuous development of children's Shakespeare adaptations for generations of audiences to come.

Bibliography

- Aiken, John and Barbauld, Anna Laetitia. *Evenings at Home; or, the Juvenile Budget Opened*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1868.
- Anonymous. *A Comparison Between Two Stages*. Edited by Staring B. Wells. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942.
- Austen, Jane. *Mansfield Park: A Novel*. London: T. Egerton, 1814.
- Avery, Emmett L., ed. *The London Stage 1660 – 1800: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments & Afterpieces, Together with Casts, Box-Receipts and Contemporary Comment*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968.
- Barbauld, Anna. *Lessons for Children, Part I: For Children from Two to Three Years Old*. London: J. Johnson, 1801.
- Barbauld, Anna. *Lessons for Children, Part II: Being the First for Children Of Three Years Old*. London: J. Johnson, 1801.
- Bate, Johnathan. *Shakespeare Constitutions: Politics, Theatre, Criticism, 1730 – 1830*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- Bevington, David, et al. *King Lear*. London: Bantam Books, 1980.
- Boose, Lynda E., ed & Burt, Richard, ed. *Shakespeare The Movie: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, and Video*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Bottoms, Janet. "Speech, Image, Action: Animating *Tales from Shakespeare*." *Children's Literature in Education*. Vol. 32, no. 1. (2001): 3-15.
- Bowdler, Henrietta. *Sermons on the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity*, 23rd ed. Bath: Cadell and Davies, 1810.
- Bowdler, Jane. *Poems and Essays by a Lady Lately Deceased*. Bath: R. Cruttwell, 1786.
- Bowdler, John. *Select Pieces in Prose and Verse by the Late John Bowdler, Junior, Esquire*. London: G. Davidson, 1816.
- Bowdler, Thomas, ed. *The Family Shakespeare, In Ten Volumes*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster-Row, 1818.
- Bowdler, Reverend Thomas. *Memoir of the Life of John Bowdler, Esq.* London: A. and R. Spottiswoode, 1824.
- Bradford, J. Kenneth. "To Be or Not to Be: Issues on Changes in Literature Anthologies." *The English Journal*. Vol. 75, no. 6. (Oct. 1986): 52-56.

- Branam, George C. *Eighteenth-Century Adaptations of Shakespearean Tragedy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956.
- Brown, Penny. *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsleaf, 1993.
- Burton, Sarah. *A Double Life: A Biography of Charles & Mary Lamb*. London: Penguin Books, 2003.
- Cavallo, Guglielmo, ed. and Chartier, Roger, ed. *A History of Reading in the West*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 1999.
- Cibber, Theophilus. *Theophilus Cibber, to David Garrick, Esq; With dissertations on theatrical subjects*. London: W. Reeves and J. Phipps, 1759.
- Ciraulo, Darlene. "Shakespeare and Education in the Lambs' *Poetry for Children and Tales from Shakespeare*." *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*. [electronic journal] Vol. 2, no. 1. (2006): available from borrowers.uga.edu; Internet.
- Clark, Mary Cowden. *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines; in a Series of Fifteen Tales*. New York: G.P. Putnam, 1851.
- Codwell, Joan, ed. *Charles Lamb on Shakespeare*. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe Ltd, 1978.
- Dodd, William, ed. *The Beauties of Shakespeare, Selected from each play: with General Index Digesting Them Under Proper Heads*. London: John Bumpus & Holborn Bars, 1822.
- Downes, John. *Roscius Anglicanus*. Edited by Judith Milhouse and Robert D. Hume. London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1987.
- Dugas, Don-John. *Marketing the Bard: Shakespeare in Performance and Print, 1660 – 1740*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006.
- Earle, John. *Microcosmographie; or A Piece of the World Discovered; in Essays and Characters*. Edited by Philip Bliss. London: White and Cochrane, 1811.
- Fielding, Sarah. *The Governess, or The Little Female Academy. Being the History of Mrs. Teachum and Her Nine Girls. With Their Nine Days of Amusement. Calculated for the Entertainment and Instruction of Young Ladies in their Education*. London: A. Millar, 1749.
- Freehafer, John. "Formation of the London Patent Companies in 1660." *Theatre Notebook*. Vol. 20, no 1. (1965): 6-30.

- Garrick, David, ed. *Florizel and Perdita. A dramatic pastoral, in three acts. Alter'd from The winter's tale of Shakespear. As it is performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane.* London, J. and R. Tonson, 1758.
- Godwin, William. *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Modern Morals and Manners.* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976.
- Goldsmith, Oliver. *The History of Little Good Twoshoes; Otherwise Called Mrs. Margery Twoshoes.* Worcester, Massachusetts: Isaiah Thomas, 1787.
- Grenby, Matthew O. *The Anti-Jacobin Novel.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Harbridge, Alfred, ed. *Shakespeare: The Comedies and Romances.* Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1969.
- Hateley Erica. "Of Tales and Tempests: Feminine Sexuality and Shakespearean Children's Texts." *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation.* [electronic journal] Vol. 2, no. 1. (2006): available from borrowers.uga.edu; Internet.
- Hazlitt, William Carew. *Lectures on The Literature of the Age of Elizabeth and Characters of Shakespeare's Plays.* London: Bell & Daldy, 1870.
- Holderness, Graham, ed. *The Shakespeare Myth.* Manchester University Press, 1988.
- Hows, John W. S., ed. *The Shakspearian Reader: A Collection of the Most Approved Plays of Shakspeare; Carefully Revised, With Introductory and Explanatory Notes, and a Memoir of the Author.* New York: D. Appleton & Co, 1849.
- Huang, Alexander C. Y. "Lin Shu, Invisible Translation, and Politics." *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology.* Vol. 14, no.1. (2006): 55-65.
- Jeffery, Francis. Review of *The Family Shakespeare*, by Thomas Bowdler. *Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal.* Vol. 36 (Oct. 1821): 52
- Lady, A. "Bowdler's *Family Shakespeare.*" *Notes and Queries.* Vol. s1-V, no. 124. (March 13, 1852): 245.
- Lamb, Charles. "Witches and Other Night-Fears." *The Essays of Elia.* Edited by Geoffrey Tillotson. London: Dutton, 1962.
- "Let it Live or Perish." *The Christian Observer.* Vol. 7. (1808): 326.
- Levinson, Nan. "Bowdler Revisted." *Index on Censorship.* Vol. 19, no 2. (March 1990): 20-21.
- Li, Ruru. "The Bard in the Middle Kingdom." *Asian Theatre Journal.* Vol. 12, no 1. (Spring, 1995): 50-84.

- Locke, John. *Some Thoughts on Education*. Edited by J. A. St. John. London: J. A. Hatchard and Son, 1836.
- Logan, Maureen F. "Star-Crossed Platonic Lovers, or Bowdler Redux." *The English Journal*. Vol. 74, no. 1. (Jan. 1985): 53-55.
- Lucas, E. V. ed. *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb: Volume III, Books for Children*. London: Methuen & Co., 1903.
- Macauley, Elizabeth Wright, ed. *Tales of the Drama: Founded on the Tragedies of Shakespeare, Massinger, Shirley, Rowe, Murphy, Lillo, and Moore, and the Comedies of Steele, Farquhar, Cumberland, Bickerstaff, Goldsmith, and Mrs. Crowley*. London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1822.
- "Macbeth." *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales*. First broadcast 23 November 1992 by BBC2. Directed by Nikolai Serebryakov. Edited by Leon Garfield.
- Manguel, Alberto. *A History of Reading*. London: Flamingo, 1997.
- Marowitz, Charles. *Recycling Shakespeare*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1991.
- Marrs, Edwin W., ed. *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975.
- Marsden, Jean I. "Shakespeare for Girls: Mary Lamb and Tales from Shakespeare." *Children's Literature*. Vol. 7 (1989): 47-63.
- Maxwell, Caroline, ed. *The Juvenile Edition of Shakespeare; Adapted to the Capacities of Youth*. London: C. Chapple, 1828.
- McGavran, J. Holt Jr., ed. *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth Century England*. London: University of Georgia Press, 1991.
- "Miscellaneous Notes on Boots, Etc." *Notes and Queries*: . Vol. s4-IV, no. 151. (Nov. 19, 1870): 450.
- Milhouse, Judith, and Hume, Robert D. "New Light on English Acting Companies in 1646, 1648, and 1660." *Review of English Studies*. Vol 42, no. 168 (November 1991): 487-509.
- Milnes, Tim. "Charles Lamb: Professor of Indifference." *Philosophy and Literature*. Vol. 28, no. 2. (October 2004): 324-341.
- "Miss Bowdler." *Notes and Queries*. Vol. s2-VII, no. 180. (June 11, 1859): 484.
- More, Hannah. *The Works of Hannah More*. London: Fisher, Fisher and Jackson, 1834.

- Newbery, John. *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book, Intended for the Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy, and Pretty Miss Polly*. Worcester: Isaiah Thomas, 1787.
- Newbery, John. *Mother Goose's Melody: or Sonnets for the Cradle*. New York: Kraus-Thomas, 1975
- Newey, Katherine. "Shakespeare and the War of the Playbills." *Victorian Shakespeare, Volumes I & II*. Edited by Gail Marshall & Adrian Poole. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 13-28.
- Pearson, Jacqueline. *Women's Reading in Britain: 1780-1835*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Percy, Thomas, Bowdler, Elizabeth S., and Harper, W. *The Song of Solomon: paraphrased with an introduction, containing some remarks on a late translation of the sacred poem; also, a commentary, and notes critical and practical, written in 1769*. Edinburgh: Drummond, 1775.
- Perrin, Noel. *Dr. Bowdler's Legacy: A History of Expurgated Books in England & America*. Macmillan & Co. Ltd: London, 1970.
- Pittman, John Rogers, ed. *The School-Shakespeare; or, Plays and Scenes from Shakespeare, Illustrated for the Use of Schools with Glossarial Notes*. London: J. F. Dove, 1822.
- Plumptre, James. *A Collection of Songs, Moral, Sentimental, Instructive, and Amusing*. London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1806.
- Plumptre, James. *Four Discourses on Subjects Relating to the Amusement of the Stage*. Cambridge: Merrs. F.C. and J. Rivington, 1809.
- Poole, Adrian. *Shakespeare and the Victorians*. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2004.
- Pope, Alexander, ed. *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*. London: Jacob Tonson, 1725.
- Porter, Jane. *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. New York: Charles Wells, 1834.
- Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folktale*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968.
- Quinlan, Maurice. *Victorian Prelude: A History of English Manners, 1700-1830*. London: Frank Cass and Company, 1965.
- Reed, Isaac, ed. *The Plays of William Shakespeare. In Twenty-One Volumes. With the Corrections and Illustrations of Various Commentators. To Which Are Added, Notes, By Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, With a Glossarial Index*. London: J. Nicholas & Son, 1813

- Review of *Tales from Shakespeare*, by Charles and Mary Lamb. *The Gentleman's Magazine*. Vol. 78, no. 2. (1808): 1001.
- Review of *The Family Shakespeare*, by Henrietta Bowdler. *British Critic*. Vol. 30 (Oct. 1807): 441-442.
- Review of *The Family Shakespeare*, by Henrietta Bowdler. *The Monthly Review; or Literary Journal, Enlarged: From September to December, inclusive*. Vol. 54. (1807): 211-212.
- Review of *The Family Shakespeare*, by Thomas Bowdler. *The Monthly Review; or Literary Journal, Enlarged: From January to April, inclusive*. Vol. 91. (1820): 433.
- Richardson, Alan. *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Rosenberg, Marvin. "Reputation, Oft Lost Without Deserving...." *Shakespeare Quarterly*. Vol. 9, no. 4. (Autumn, 1958): 499-506.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Émile or On Education*. Translated by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1979.
- Sanders, Julie. *Adaptation and Appropriation*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.
- Sherburn, George, ed. *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1956.
- Slater, Edward, ed. *Select Plays From Shakespeare; adapted chiefly for the use of Schools and Young Person, With notes from the best Commentators*. London: J. Souter, 1836.
- Steevens, George, ed. *Twenty of the Plays of Shakespeare, Being the whole Number printed in Quarto During his Life-Time, or before the Restoration, Collated where there were different Copies, and Published from Originals*. London: J. and R. Tonson, 1766.
- Taylor, Gary. *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History, from the Restoration to the Present*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Todd, Janet, ed. & Butler, Marilyn, ed. *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*. New York: New York University Press, 1989.
- Trimmer, Sarah. *An Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature, and Reading the Holy Scriptures. Adapted for the Capacities of Children*, 10th ed. London: T. Longman and O. Rees, 1799.
- Trimmer, Sarah, ed. "Introduction." *The Guardian of Education, A Periodical Work*. Vol. 1, no. 1. (May 1802): 1-16.
- Trimmer, Sarah. "Preface." *Family Magazine*. Vol. 1. (1788): 1

- Vickers, Brian, ed. *Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
- Ward, William. "Some Aspects of the Conservative Attitude Towards Poetry in English Criticism, 1798-1820." *PMLA*. Vol. 60, no. 2. (June 1945): 386-398.
- Watson, Kathy. *The Devil Kissed Her: The Story of Mary Lamb*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004.
- W.C.B. "Bowdler's 'Shakespeare.'" *Notes and Queries*. Vol. s8-VI, no. 151. (Nov. 17, 1894): 386.
- Willson, Robert F. *Shakespeare in Hollywood: 1929 – 1956*. London: Associated University Presses, 2000
- Woodberry, Bonnie. "The Mad Body as the Text of Culture in the Writings of Mary Lamb." *Studies in English Literature*. Vol. 39 (Autumn 1999): 659-74.
- Yonge, Stanley. "Two Thomas Bowdlers, Editors of Shakespeare." *Notes and Queries*. Vol. 203. (Sept. 1958): 383-384.
- Yung, Kai Kin et al. *Samuel Johnson, 1709–84*. London: Herbert Press, 1984.