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Cross-Dressing Shakespeare

Contemporary Japanese Performances and Adaptations

Par

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A été évaluée par un jury composé des personnes suivantes

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Résumé

Malgré le fait que beaucoup de travail ait été réalisé autour du phénomène « Shakespeare japonais », cette dissertation se positionne autrement dans cette conversation en examinant les performances et adaptations de Shakespeare au Japon par le théâtre féminin Takarazuka Revue. Ceci est accompli au moyen d'une analyse critique des traditions du théâtre Kabuki, de l'histoire prémoderne et postmoderne du Japon et de la culture populaire japonaise.

Cette dissertation se concentre sur les œuvres de Shakespeare et sur la manière dont celles-ci permettent au Japon d'examiner ses propres réalités sociale, culturelle, historique et politique. Pour ce faire, j'examine donc les pratiques de théâtres prémodernes de l'Angleterre et leur emploi du « boy actor » pour jouer les rôles féminins et je compare ce phénomène à celui du théâtre Kabuki et à son utilisation d'acteurs « onnagata » pour jouer des rôles semblables. Par la suite, j'aborde le fait que le théâtre de Takarazuka approprie ses traditions et subvertit les normes en n'ayant que des actrices pour jouer les rôles masculins et féminins dans ses performances. Le Takarazuka est souvent vu comme étant un défenseur d'idées patriarchales au Japon à cause de ses politiques internes. Cependant, selon moi, ce théâtre offre également une forme d'émancipation pour les femmes et d'autant plus lorsqu'il est combiné avec les œuvres de Shakespeare.

Shakespeare est donc analysé dans ce contexte par lequel le Japon peut examiner son passé ainsi que ses idées contemporaines sur le genre, la sexualité, et la féminité. J'étudie donc cinq performances de Shakespeare qui suivent le développement de la cause féminine à travers les époques, en commençant par l'époque Edo jusqu'à l'ère postmoderne. Le théâtre au Japon a évolué de son état premier initialement réservé à la noblesse pour éventuellement être accessible au peuple commun par l'intermédiaire de la religion. En alliant ces traditions et cette histoire culturelle avec Shakespeare, ainsi que son influence positive sur le théâtre japonais, je démontre que Shakespeare et le Japon sont reliés historiquement et dans les arts à travers les performances et adaptations de Takarazuka.

Mots-clés : Shakespeare, théâtre, Japon, performance, adaptation, traduction, genre et sexualité, féminisme, Takarazuka, Kabuki.

Abstract

While much work has been done on the topic of Japanese Shakespeare, particularly as it relates to the playwright's influence over traditional theatre arts since the Meiji era, this dissertation breaks new ground by looking at the all-female Takarazuka Revue's adaptations and performances of Shakespeare with a close examination of Kabuki traditions, Japanese early modern history, and popular culture.

This dissertation highlights how Shakespeare's works act as a critical lens through which Japan examines its own social, cultural, historical, and political realities. To achieve this, I examine England's early modern practice of employing boy actors to play the roles of female characters and highlight the similarities with Japan's Kabuki and its use of *onnagata* actors to enact the same role on stage. From this point, I draw links to Takarazuka's appropriation of these traditions and its subversion of norms through the employment of an all-female cast in all of its performances. While Takarazuka has often been regarded as a reinforcer of patriarchal values due to its strict inner politics, I argue that it also offers a form of emancipation for women in theatre when combined with Shakespeare's plays.

Shakespeare is analysed in this context to show how his works act as vehicles through which Japan's historical past can be examined and its contemporary ideas of gender, sexuality, and womanhood can be considered. I look at five distinct performances of Shakespeare to explore the development of female agency in Japan, spanning the centuries from the Edo era to a postwar society in which Shakespeare is re-Westernized for a modern world. Theatre in Japan has always held a special place in how it evolved from being religion-driven, to aristocratic, and then accessible to the masses. By combining this rich tradition with Shakespeare and examining his positive influence over the revival of these arts, Shakespeare and Japan become intrinsically linked throughout history and in the arts as shown through Takarazuka's adaptations and performances.

Keywords: Shakespeare, theatre, Japan, performance, adaptation, translation, gender and sexuality, feminism, Takarazuka, Kabuki.

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Note on Japanese Names and Spelling

Romanization in this dissertation follows the Modified Hepburn style for all words of Japanese origin except for commonly accepted spellings in English (e.g.: Tokyo instead of Tōkyō, Noh instead of Nō.)

All Japanese names are written using the traditional word order of surname followed by name. This is true for actors and actresses, directors, scholars, and others. The only exception to this is with ancient Japanese names that follow a different pattern of 'surname-no-name' (e.g.: Izumo no Okuni).

Long vowels are denoted by the use of the macron (¯) over the affected letter rather than the doubling of the vowel (e.g.: shōjo instead of shoujo).

Words of Japanese origin that are perhaps unfamiliar to English readers are italicised, while better-known terms are left in regular script (e.g.: *onnagata* and Kabuki).

For added clarity, I have included original Japanese script (kanji, hiragana, and katakana) as well as the romanized transliteration following specific terms or names of people, places, and plays (e.g.: Takarazuka Revue (宝塚歌劇団 *Takarazuka gekidan*)). Some terms are further broken down in the footnotes when it is important to highlight their transliteral meaning.

There may be discrepancies between spelling from quoted sources and my own choices. This is due to the fact that there are different approaches to the romanization of Japanese words. However, both methods are acceptable and refer to the same thing (see examples above).

Unless otherwise stated, all translations in this work are my own.

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Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for their continued support: my mother, Gloria, who never faltered in her encouragements and diligently read and edited my chapters well into the night, my father, Terence, who pushed me to “get ‘er done” on a weekly basis and who took pride in my accomplishments, and my grandmother, Gloria Gracia, who always believed in me when sometimes I did not. Thank you all for your unwavering love and support. Finally, thank you to my beloved furry companion, Kahlua, who faithfully stayed up late at night with me, who shared my snacks, and who comforted me more than anyone else. You are sorely missed.

Foreword

Many of the elements discussed in this dissertation are informed by my personal experiences of living in Japan, from living beneath U.S. military flight paths, to climbing to the summit of Mt. Fuji. My cultural experiences in Japan are wide-ranging in themes and affect my reading of Shakespeare in this context. My introduction to Japanese theatre was accidental, but it created a decade-long passion for the topic that hopefully transpires in the following pages. I was fortunate enough to attend many Takarazuka performances, both in Tokyo and in Takarazuka city, as well as Kabuki performances at the famed Tokyo Kabukiza Theatre and the Osaka Shochikuza Theatre. I became a regular in Takarazuka's theatre culture, integrating fan groups, attending private events, and getting to know the extent of the theatre's influence first-hand. My foray into traditional Japanese culture included attending Sumo competitions, joining a *kyūdō* hall, and learning how to play traditional *koto* and *wadaiko*, to name a few, but it is the theatre that affected me the most. I attended numerous festivals across Japan and even participated in local ones where I lived, carrying *mikoshi* (Shintō shrines) or pulling *dashi* (festival floats) in the streets and dancing to traditional music as actors in colourful costumes, wigs, and makeup played short scenes born out of Japanese mythology on the sacred festival stage.

I have always had a love of Shakespeare, and even though the first few theatre performances I saw in Japan were not Shakespearean in nature, the seed of examining the two in tandem was planted from that moment on. As a foreigner in Japan, I was both shocked and in awe at the rich culture that continues to live and thrive in a country that is often seen as futuristic in its technological advancements. The clash between the old and the new is everywhere in Japan and is reflected in the approach I take when analysing Shakespeare in the Japanese context.

When I returned to Canada to pursue graduate studies, I knew I wanted to combine everything I had learned in Japan with the literary and theatrical traditions I had studied for many years. Shakespeare and Japan have contributed to who I am today, and this work is a reflection of those influences and passions.

Introduction

The words 'Shakespeare' and 'Japan' are rarely used in conjunction in Western academia; however, there is an important connection between the two: Shakespeare's literary influence in Japan is particularly of value because his works helped revitalise an ancestral form of Japanese theatre that was on the brink of extinction. This is in part due to the writer, translator, and English teacher Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859-1935), who introduced his country to Shakespeare's words in the late Meiji period. Before Tsubouchi, Shakespeare had been performed a few times in Japan by travelling companies (Kobayashi 2006), but it was Tsubouchi who made Shakespeare's works accessible by translating the canon into Japanese and adapting the plays into a Kabuki style. From the moment that the plays were translated, Shakespeare has known fame in a land far away from his native England. Since Tsubouchi, Shakespeare continues to be translated, performed, and adapted into a variety of mediums. The term "Japanese Shakespeare"[1] has since been adopted in modern criticism to examine this unique relationship between Shakespeare, Japan, and popular culture.

This dissertation positions itself at the crossroad between East and West; very few Western scholars have focused on Japanese Shakespeare, yet notable scholars in Japan have produced work in this field. Minoru Fujita and Leonard Pronko's *Shakespeare East and West* (1996), for example, is a great source of Japanese Shakespeare in English, as is Minami Ryuta's research on Shakespeare and Japanese popular culture. Similarly, Shakespeare translator and scholar Shoichiro Kawai has written extensively about Shakespeare's role in his translated form, and Daniel Gallimore's research on Tsubouchi Shōyō's work discusses the relationship between Shakespeare and his first Japanese translator. This dissertation not only examines Shakespeare's influence in Japan within such traditions, but it also does so explicitly through the frame of gender studies. To accomplish this, I use theories and criticism from both Eastern and Western perspectives to inform my analyses of Shakespeare performances in Japan. Furthermore, my primary examination is how women's theatre in Japan reinterprets Shakespeare by culturally

[1] I use a variety of terms throughout this dissertation to refer to this phenomenon, namely japanified Shakespeare, japanized Shakespeare, and Japanese Shakespeare.

assimilating his works into a frame that resonates with Japanese audiences and reinvigorates scholarly discussions about gender and sexuality in Shakespearean studies. During the early modern period, Shakespeare's characters, both male and female, were played by male actors on stage. A similar and contemporary example of this exists in Japan where some theatres still adhere to an all-male or all-female binary when producing Shakespearean narratives.

In this dissertation, I look at a Japanese theatre company, the Takarazuka Revue (宝塚歌劇団 *Takarazuka kageki dan*), that performs Shakespeare, among other playwrights, with an all-female cast. Since its inception in 1913, Takarazuka has known great success across Japan and even abroad. Takarazuka is subdivided into five troupes: Flower (花組 *hana gumi*), Moon (月組 *tsuki gumi*), Snow (雪組 *yuki gumi*), Star (星組 *hoshi gumi*), and Cosmos (宙組 *sora gumi*).[2] Each of these has its own specialty and produces different shows, and adaptations and performances of Shakespeare can be found in any one of them. As a defining characteristic, the company trains and employs only women performers and this since its very beginning.[3] Scholarship addressing Takarazuka tends to focus on the basic history and formation of the theatre and on its gender politics both on and off stage (see Stickland 2004; J. Robertson 1998; Brau 1990), but it does not address the historical significance of this theatre in terms of its post-war emergence and focus on women actors, nor its place in society as both a form of resistance and of reinforcement of patriarchal values, depending on the play that is performed. Scholarship on Takarazuka also ignores or mentions in passing the theatre's adaptations and performances of Shakespeare since the academic focus tends to be geared towards the representations of masculinity and femininity through an all-female approach. Despite the academic overlook, Takarazuka is a household name in Japan with a wide-ranging presence in Japanese society:

> In addition to its six-week runs at the 3,000-seat Grand Theatre in Takarazuka [city], and month-long runs at its 3,000-seat theatre in Tokyo, Takarazuka performs all over Japan, and all over the world. What began as a local tourist attraction, a hot springs "side show," has itself become a big business

[2] There is also a sixth group called Senka (専科) that is made up of the most experienced Takarazuka actresses. Senka members can join in on any performance, regardless of the troupe.

[3] Except for a very brief time in the company's history in January of 1919 when men were brought in to play as male Senka (男子専科 *danshi senka*). This decision to bring in men was unpopular, and the program was closed in November of the same year in favour of maintaining an all-women environment ("Takarazuka Timeline").

> promoting its own side shows and merchandising-recitals and dinner theatre featuring top stars; fan club tours to Takarazuka Familyland, the amusement park where the theatre is situated; TV broadcasts of performances and other TV appearances for stars; and Takarazuka souvenirs and publications. The company numbers about 400 performers … [who] take turns performing the repertoire at the Tokyo or Takarazuka theatres, or on tour. (Brau 79)

Takarazuka has a long history in Japan as being a successful musical revue that puts on bodies of plays in three distinct categories: Japanese (和物 *wa mono*), contemporary (現代物 *gendai mono*), and Western (洋物 *yō mono*) (Kato 2012). Shakespeare's plays fall into the latter category and, while not all Western plays are Shakespearean, a good number of them are. Takarazuka's first performance of Shakespeare is a 1926 adaptation of *Hamlet*, called *Death of Ophelia* (Yoshihara 2007), and, since then, there have been at least 28 separate show runs inspired by Shakespeare's work ("List of Musicals Based on Foreign Literature").[4] Berlin Zeke writes that "Shakespeare, over the years, has been a particular favorite at Takarazuka" (40). This relationship is exemplified by the fact that in 2016, to celebrate Shakespeare's 400th anniversary, Takarazuka created the show *Shakespeare: The Sky is Full of Endless Words* (Shakespeare ～空に満つるは、尽きせぬ言の葉～ *sora ni mitsuru wa, tsuki senu koto no ha*) that presented a biography of Shakespeare's life as a playwright, actor, and theatre owner. The show also portrayed Shakespeare's family life and how this mingled with his professional life.

[4] The exact number is unclear as these statistics change every season.

Figure 1. – A Takarazuka actress as Hamlet, Flower Troupe, 1949 ("Takarazuka Forever")

In 1999, the company's junior members from the Bow Hall performed eight plays as part of a set entitled *Bow Shakespeare Series*. The purpose of having Bow Hall performances rather than at the main theatres in Takarazuka City and Tokyo is usually to test out new shows and, depending on their success, they might be restaged by senior members of the company at the larger venues. Junior members consist of actresses newly out of the Takarazuka Music School (宝塚音楽学校 *Takarazuka ongaku gakkō*) who use these Bow Hall performances to improve their craft. Bow Hall actresses eventually get promoted to performing at the large theatres in major productions. As such, the *Shakespeare Series* was performed by these actresses and were not replicated at the larger Takarazuka city and Tokyo theatres. The eight plays in the *Shakespeare Series* are as follow:

1. *The Winter's Tale* (冬物語 *Fuyu Monogatari*)

2. *Much Ado About Nothing* (から騒ぎ *Kara sawagi*)
3. *Romeo and Juliet '99* (ロミオとジュリエット９９ *Romio to Jurietto 99*)
4. *Twelfth Night* (十二夜 ～またはお望みのもの *Jūniya: mata wa onozomi no mono*)
5. *Dream Shakespeare* (夢・シェイクスピア *Yume: Sheikusupia*) [*A Midsummer Night's Dream*]
6. *TEMPEST* (TEMPEST～ 吹き抜ける九龍 *Tempest*: *Fuki nukeru kūron*)
7. *SAY IT AGAIN* [*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*]
8. *Epiphany* (エピファニー *Epifanī*) [*Twelfth Night*]

For the purpose of this dissertation, I chose four plays from this series, namely *Twelfth Night* (十二夜 *Jūniya*), *Epiphany* (エピファニー *Epifanī*), *The Winter's Tale* (冬物語 *Fuyu Monogatari*), and *Say It Again*. My reason for choosing these performances is to illustrate the experimental nature of these adaptations and how they subvert the original plays to create a new, japanified Shakespeare. The fifth play, examined in part II, chapter 1, is a recent adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* called *PUCK* (2014) that is not part of the original *Shakespeare Series*. *PUCK* reimagines *MND* in an English context and relates to *Say It Again* in how they both portray a more Westernized Japanese Shakespeare. Each of these takes on attributes proper to Japanese culture by utilising the themes in Shakespeare and modifying, adding, or removing scenes and subplots. *Twelfth Night* navigates homoeroticism within the purview of the ultra-feminine *shōjo* cultural phenomenon, *Epiphany* takes the same play as its basis to explore the idea of women's right to become actors in Kabuki theatre, and *The Winter's Tale* relates to *Epiphany* in how it 'kabukifies' Shakespeare's play, setting it firmly within the bounds of traditional Japanese theatre.[5] By way of comparison, *PUCK* brings Shakespeare back to England by focusing on the eponymous fairy's transformation into a mortal human and, finally, *Say It Again*, based on *The Two Gentlemen of*

[5] According to Eric Hobsbawm, "'Tradition' in this sense must be distinguished clearly from 'custom' which dominates so-called 'traditional societies. The object and characteristic of 'traditions', including invented ones, is invariance. The past, real or invented, to which they refer imposes fixed (normally formalized) practices, such as repetition. 'Custom' in traditional societies has the double function of motor and fly-wheel. It does not preclude innovation and change up to a point, though evidently the requirement that it must appear compatible or even identical with precedent imposes substantial limitations on it. What it does is to give any desired change (or resistance to innovation) the sanction of precedent, social continuity and natural law as expressed in history" (2). In the context of this dissertation, the word 'tradition' is used to indicate the resistance to changes and the adoption of new ideas.

Verona, jumps back in time to the American South in the 1950s where male-male friendship is deconstructed by relying more heavily on heteronormative relationships and where the women of the play are given more agency. These last two plays highlight the postwar period and the re-Westernization of Shakespeare following the history of Japan's own encounter with the West in the late Meiji period and again in the 1940s.

As with the popular media adaptations born out of Shakespearean narrative, Shakespeare is often 'japanified' or 'japanized,' as Jennifer Robertson calls it, by having "Japanese names being given to the various characters," such as in *Epiphany* and in *Fuyu Monogatari*, "and Japanese fairies replacing English fairies"—a nod to the Shintō pantheon—in a 1940 performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (131). This phenomenon of japanized Shakespeare is presented through an array of methods, ranging from the high brow Kabuki and Noh performances to elements of popular culture like *manga* and *anime* to discuss Shakespeare's plays in a different sociohistorical context. In order to examine these performances in a context of cultural assimilation, i.e., japanified and Kabukified Shakespeare, and Takarazuka's constant subversion of gender norms and expectations, I rely on various areas of research, namely Japanese theatre, performance, adaptation, and translation studies, and women's theatre. The following subsections will offer greater detail of this methodology.

Japanese Theatre Traditions

Japan boasts a long history of theatre and cross-dressing on stage, yet Western scholarship on the topic is scarce. While Kabuki is especially central to this subject, the combination of Shakespeare and contemporary Japanese theatre is one that sparks discussions in terms of what gender is on stage. Leonard Pronko explains that "the real reason for Kabuki Shakespeare is that it is exciting, explosively non-realistic, and, perhaps most surprising of all, a step in the direction of authenticity, of recreating the theatre world of Shakespeare's day" (24). Shakespeare's theatre was unique and often groundbreaking during the early modern period, and it still captures the imagination today. Having the opportunity to relive those days through Japanese theatre is an alluring perspective as it allows for an exploration of questions of gender through unisex

performances in Kabuki, or from a reversed perspective like in Takarazuka's shows. Even though Shakespeare helped revitalise Kabuki theatre, Kabuki, in turn, also reignited an appreciation for Shakespeare's works by restructuring them through different perspectives and theatre techniques. Pronko says that "[t]he stages of Shakespeare, Kabuki and Noh reveal this: they all represent places which are free-flowing, in which locations can change at a moment's notice, simply because the actor says it has" (26). To this statement, I would like to add the gender dimension to the discussion. Shakespeare, Kabuki, and Noh all have in common the ability to blend genders on stage through mechanics both in the text and as played by the actor.

In the same way that the locations can change, a character's gender can transform instantly on stage through a simple costume change, a linguistic choice, or from a direct reveal to the audience. Historically, "Kabuki actors in Japan have played Shakespeare for years, but until recently their every effort was bent towards imitating Western actors and forgetting all their Kabuki technique, since they were convinced that Shakespeare had nothing to learn from the Orient" (28). Today, however, thanks to Tsubouchi's translations and performances of Shakespeare in a Kabuki style, important Japanese stage directors like Ninagawa Yukio and filmmakers like Kurosawa Akira adapt Shakespeare to fit the socio-historical context of Japan as opposed to being Euro-centric. Ninagawa and Kurosawa, as well as the Takarazuka company, push back against the inherent Englishness of Shakespeare through an act of appropriation that is both beneficial for Japan and for Western scholarship that seeks to renew Shakespeare through contemporary perspectives. The use of traditional theatre to explain and modernise Shakespeare is therefore needed to maintain the relevancy of both.

To add to these considerations, I examine the link between traditional theatres and Shakespeare through a particular lens that looks at actors' places in these plays. As the following chapters will discuss, the dichotomy between the Kabuki *onnagata* (女形) and the Takarazuka *otokoyaku* (男役) is at the heart of these analyses. Ozaki Yoseharu encapsulates the essence of these gender-bending roles in the following explanation:

> It is, indeed, unnatural for a man to act as woman, but art, by definition, is unnatural, and is opposed to nature. It is not art for a woman to be on the stage

> as a woman. This is not acting; she merely is. She acts only when she becomes somebody other than herself. She must therefore first obliterate the woman within herself, as onnagata must do the man within himself, before she becomes the woman for the theatre, it does not matter, therefore, whether it be a man or a woman who plays the woman's part. What matters is how best to play a woman, or to be more precise, how best to represent such a character as the audience willingly takes to be a woman. A player, whether male or female, is a shadow, to use Shakespeare's favourite word, or a code, which itself should ideally be nothing, but exist only to represent something else. (9-10)

The actor as a shadow of him or herself is something that Shakespeare also believed in, as shown in several of his plays, as well as the idea of reversing genders on stage to accomplish something different than simply 'a man playing a man' or 'a woman playing a woman.' With lines such as "a woman's face, with Nature's own hand painted / Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion" (sonnet 20.1-2), Shakespeare is all too aware of the androgyne and his or her role in theatre. This is partly why Shakespeare and Japanese theatre share such a deep bond. Androgyny in Shakespeare often results in sexual confusion for the characters in the vicinity of the androgyne. Rosalind as Ganymede in *As You Like It*, for example, 'cures' Orlando of his lovesickness by having him woo her in her disguise as a man, thereby questioning Orlando's perceived heterosexuality. A similar phenomenon is repeated in *Twelfth Night* in which Viola-as-Cesario becomes the romantic focus for both Orsino and Olivia. In terms of traditional Japanese theatre, the androgynous male Kabuki actors, in particular the *onnagata* actors, achieve a similar effect on stage when asked to cross-dress, or even double cross-dress, to fit Shakespearean narratives. The same is true for Takarazuka actresses who also become androgynous figures on stage, further confusing the complicated relationship between actor, character, and spectator.

The combination of these ideas culminates on the Takarazuka stage where plays are coloured not only by gender reversals, but also by Japanese culture and history. Ōtani Tomoko argues that Takarazuka "does not aim to produce a canonical and authentic Shakespeare, which requires a 'faithful translation of the text' and express[es] 'the English point-of-view on Shakespeare'" (qtd. in Motoyama et al. 19), yet the theatre has employed Shakespeare experts to guide their

productions and has also made use of contemporary and scholarly translations of the plays to inform the dialogue. Even though Takarazuka diverges from more straightforward adaptations of Shakespeare, this does not mean that the productions are any less serious, valuable, or worthy of examination. Unfortunately, this all-female theatre in particular is often dismissed in the context of Shakespeare or is mentioned only in passing in literature on contemporary Japanese theatre,[6] which is a blind area in terms of Japanese Shakespeare research. Furthermore, most of the performances I examine in the following chapters have very little to no critical writing about them, both in Japanese and in English-language scholarship. In most cases, these performances have never been discussed in an academic frame, let alone in the West. To add to this difficulty, these performances do not exist in translation, meaning that I must translate the works myself by watching the performances and reading the scripts, when available, in their original language, as well as cross-reference with fan translations, as is the case with *Epiphany*, for the purpose of drawing attention to these Shakespeare productions.

In the subsequent chapters of this dissertation, I discuss in greater detail how the connections between Shakespeare, traditional theatre, questions of gender, and popular culture occurred, and what the result is in terms of contemporary Japanese theatre in a postwar age. Takarazuka's take on Shakespeare highlights these connections through the lens of an all-female cast whose primary purpose is to put out an idealised and dream-like society for women's benefit. Shakespeare, as a wordsmith and infinitely attuned to human sentiment, unknowingly contributed to theatre practices all around the globe. While his influence stretches out to the far reaches of the world, I focus on his contribution to Japanese theatre by examining how contemporary theatre companies, especially the all-female Takarazuka, adapt and interpret Shakespeare's works to fit the sociocultural frame of Japan's history by appropriating and subverting his well-known narratives.

[6] As an example of this, the recent Arden Shakespeare publication *Re-Imagining Shakespeare in Contemporary Japan* (Motoyama et al. 2021) mentions Takarazuka in a short paragraph in the introduction and then quickly moves on to focus on other theatre companies in Japan. Even though the authors admit that "Takarazuka has performed numerous adaptations" (19) and proceed to name a handful, they do not consider the theatre beyond this short mention in their exploration of contemporary Japanese adaptations of Shakespeare.

Performance and Adaptation

Some of the most internationally famous Japanese Shakespeare adaptations are not stage productions; Kurosawa Akira's three films, *Ran* (1985), *Throne of Blood* (1957), and *The Bad Sleep Well* (1960) are some of the most critically acclaimed Shakespeare adaptations to come from Japan. However, Shakespeare's fame in Japan is not limited to Kurosawa; Shakespeare is present in a number of mediums, from traditional like stage and film, to atypical as in comics and videogames (Minami 2019). Shakespeare adaptations permeate all forms of entertainment in Japan despite him "[having] no place in any part of the government's curriculum guidelines for elementary and secondary education" (Minami "What's in a Name?" 292). As such, Shakespeare adaptations in Japan tend to stray from fidelity[7] to instead embody ideas proper to Japanese culture. Ninagawa's critically acclaimed stage adaptations, for example, are of particular value *because* of their Japanese-ness that all but drown out Shakespeare as an English fixture. Both Kurosawa and Ninagawa's works are deeply Japanese, relying on the country's turbulent history to modify and appropriate Shakespeare's narratives for a contemporary audience. These effects are equally observable in the works of other producers of Japanese Shakespeare.

Performance and adaptation studies seek to understand the processes of transformation and recreation that enables us to revisit narratives through different cultural, historical, and social lenses. As Linda Hutcheon writes, "art is derived from other art; stories are born from other stories" (2), thereby establishing that adaptation is a necessary part of creation. Furthermore, on the basis that adaptation is a form of intertextuality, Julia Kristeva also "[makes] the case … that all texts invoke and rework other texts in a rich and ever-evolving cultural mosaic" (Sanders 17). When discussing adaptation in a cross-cultural frame, the story changes yet again and audiences are then confronted with particular scenes, ideas, and representations on stage that they might

[7] Fidelity to a source text is a concept that is subjective to each person who receives the adaptation. Hutcheon writes that: "One of the central beliefs of film adaptation theory is that audiences are more demanding of fidelity when dealing with classics," yet "although our imaginative visualizations of literary worlds are always highly individual, the variance among readers is likely even greater in fantasy fiction than in realist fiction" (29). Regardless of the genre, however, one thing remains: Fidelity is usually understood as being as close as possible to the original source. While this is achievable in some instances, it is rarely a reality in theatre where plays are continuously readapted into different time periods, genres, and sociocultural contexts.

not have considered beforehand. Furthermore, ideas of fidelity to the source material are always involved in adaptation, especially when the work being adapted holds a certain level of common cultural currency, such as with Shakespeare's plays. In fact, "[i]f an adaptation is perceived as 'lowering' a story (according to some imagined hierarchy of medium or genre), response is likely to be negative" (Hutcheon 3). This is in part due to our understanding of 'good' and 'bad' adaptations, although these labels are extremely subjective and partial to each person's preferences.

Hutcheon explains that, when "seen as a *formal entity or product*, an adaptation is an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works" (7) and that "telling the same story from a different point of view, for instance, can create a manifestly different interpretation" (8), which is what we find in *Jūniya*, for example. While Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is not told from a particular point of view, as with all dramatic texts, the performance of *Jūniya* clearly is, and this from the very first scene in which Viola is presented as the central and dominating voice of the narrative. This is because this adaptation of *Twelfth Night* finds its roots in *shōjo* (少女) manga culture which "recreate[s] Shakespearean plays from female characters' perspectives according to its own conventions" (Minami "What's in a Name?" 294). The female-centric perspective is what affords *Jūniya* a very different performance of *Twelfth Night* in which Duke Orsino becomes a supporting character to Viola and is no longer the central figure.

This kind of adaptation differs from what Hutcheon identifies as the second type, the "*process of creation*" that relies on (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation" (8). Plays that depart significantly from Shakespeare's established narratives such as *PUCK* and *Say It Again* use these mechanisms of restructuring well-known stories into new forms of discourse. While *PUCK* combines the themes of coming-of-age alongside environmental issues in a postwar age, *Say It Again* sees a deconstruction of male-male friendship in favour of developing stronger female characters.

Hutcheon's third classification of adaptation is the "*process of reception,*" which she defines as how "we experience adaptations (*as adaptations*) as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation" (8). This process is illustrated by the two

performances in this dissertation that rely most heavily on Japanese cultural knowledge, *Epiphany* and *Fuyu Monogatari*. Both combine Shakespeare with Kabuki traditions, albeit in different capacities, and both depend on the audience's knowledge of Japanese sociohistorical markers to create a unique version of Japanese Shakespeare. Memory of the past becomes essential in these adaptations as the collective consciousness is called upon to inform the significance of the plays.

When discussing adaptation, one will naturally mention performance in conjunction, yet what is meant by these terms, and how do they differ? Adaptation is "very difficult to define, in part … because we use the same word for the process and the product. As a product, an adaptation can be given a formal definition, but as a process—of creation and of reception—other aspects have to be considered. This is why those different perspectives … are needed to discuss and define adaptation" (Hutcheon 15-16). Similarly, performance can be understood as being part process and part product, too. The debate around these two terms depends on the perspective of the critic, as to whether adaptation and performance are two separate theoretical entities, or that they are interrelated and, at times, even interchangeable. Hutcheon sees that "[a]daptation is repetition, but repetition without replication" (7) which is, I argue, in part due to performance—at least as far as the theatre is concerned. Theatre performances are, by nature, impossible to replicate, therefore making each performance of a show unique and a different adaptation than the previous one. Hutcheon's three classifications for adaptations exist only because there is an observable product to showcase these differences in adaptations. The observable product is the performance itself since it exists as its own non-reproducible entity. This is not to say that adaptation and performance are two in the same, but rather that they are closely related and codependent.

However, there is also the need to consider the dramatic text on its own, minus the performance aspect of it. Martin Puchner writes that "we can think of the dramatic text as a set of instructions given by a writer to actors. … Unsurprisingly, this model has frequently been used by playwrights seeking maximal control over how their plays are being performed against the self-assertions of directors, designers, and actors" (293-294). However, while this may be true for playwrights who include extensive information about scenes, décor, or costumes, this is not the case for

Shakespeare who rarely uses stage directions, leaving these decisions up to the actors instead; this is what Puchner terms as "the dramatic text as an incomplete artwork" (295) since it relies on the cooperation between playwright, actors, and director. Furthermore, when the dramatic text is considered whole—in other words, that it is a piece of literature that can be read and that does not necessitate performance to exist—it then becomes a process of "transformation and adaptation" (296). On the process of adaptation, Puchner writes:

> How this adaptation is done depends on a variety of factors. There is nothing in the text, complete though it is, to give definite instructions. The agency of adaptation, in other words, resides with the adaptor, even though this adaptation occurs within a set of constraints. Some emanate from the (complete) text, others from the context of the adaptation, including the conditions of production, the nature of the actors, the theater space, the ideas about theater circulating in a given culture or subculture, and finally the nature of the two media—text, performance—between which the adaptation occurs. (296).

According to this, adaptation is an in-between state that combines elements of both the text and the performance. However, this limits the definition of adaptation since it implies that both text and performance are necessary to create it. There is an argument to be made that adaptation can also be text-based or performance-based only. A cross-medium adaptation, from a novel to a dramatic text, for example, does not automatically invoke a performance of the text. In theatre, the stage performance also relies on a text—the script—yet this text can be seen as an adaptation of another text, as is the case with Shakespeare's plays presented in the subsequent chapters. Hence, adaptation and performance are mutually dependent when in the same space, but one does not necessitate the existence of the other to function independently if need be.

For Richard Schechner, there is an intimate relationship between script, drama, theatre, and performance, which he defines as follows: "the drama is the domain of the author, the composer, scenarist, shaman; the script is the domain of the teacher, guru, master; the theater is the domain of the performers; the performance is the domain of the audience" (70). Based on this definition,

adaptation is, then, an amalgam of all these elements, a combination of the script, drama, theatre, and performance that make up a work. These four elements are subject to an infinite possibility of minute changes and interpretations, which then in turn influence the result of what is created. For Hutcheon, this adaptation is often cross-medium, from page to screen, for example, but adaptation also exists within a given medium, from page to page, or stage to stage, to name a few. While there are problems with how we accept adaptations in terms of whether they are considered faithful to the source material or divergent from it, "recognition and remembrance [of a story] are part of the pleasure (and risk) of experiencing an adaptation; so too is change" (Hutcheon 4). This change is exactly what connects adaptation to performance, especially when dealing with cross-cultural interpretations. Ultimately, fidelity to the text is perhaps not what is most crucial in the conversation about adaptation, but rather how we interpret canonical works, like those of Shakespeare, and appropriate, recreate, and reimagine his stories for sociocultural contexts that are different from his early modern English one.

Shakespeare, who is one of the most adapted and performed playwrights worldwide, has seen his fair share of good and bad refashionings of his stories. Yet, Shakespeare himself was an adaptor for many of his famous plays; from *Hamlet* to *Romeo and Juliet*, and many more, Shakespeare borrowed, rewrote, and adapted other texts to create his works. Douglas Bruster explains that "whether called source, borrowing, appropriation, or intertextuality, this overlap can reveal a mosaic-like textuality. … such overlap is especially evident in the patchwork of early modern plays—among the most thoroughly social of all literary texts, and ones that have assumed a special place in our understanding of early modern England" (4). This constant act of rewriting previous texts to fit the cultural expectations of early modern England can be understood in the same way as how today we rely on rewritings of Shakespeare to present themes and topics that are more culturally relevant to our times. For Shakespeare and his contemporaries, "imitation of great works of art, in particular, was not intended only to capitalize on the prestige and authority of the ancients or even to offer a pedagogical model, though it did both. It is also a form of creativity…" (Hutcheon 20). Furthermore, "like classical imitation, adaptation also is not slavish copying; it is a process of making the adapted material one's own. In both, the novelty is in what one *does with* the other text" (20). Whether it is Shakespeare's appropriations of the classical

writers, or our appropriation of him today, adaptation is important for the reinvigoration of old texts since it creates new dialogues around topics of contention.

However, we must not forget the source material when analysing its adapted biproduct. In fact, in recent criticism, "it no longer seems important to know which books authors used to produce their own—something that can leave us with a very vague, and even misleading, sense of the past. We therefore need a criticism that pays attention to what authors read and to how they used and replied to precursors and their texts" (Bruster 5-6). By understanding how and why Shakespeare borrowed and rewrote from other writers we also come to understand why today we go through the same process with regards to his works to adapt them within the frame of our twenty-first century version of humanity.

One can argue that the reason why Shakespeare's plays are more popular and better known than the originals from which he borrowed is because, effectively, Shakespeare was a very good adaptor. T.S. Eliot once scathingly reviewed *Hamlet*, calling the play "an artistic failure," and expressing that "we must simply admit that here Shakespeare tackled a problem which proved too much for him. Why he attempted it at all is an insoluble puzzle; under compulsion of what experience he attempted to express the inexpressibly horrible, we cannot ever know" (Eliot). Yet, despite Eliot's vocal dislike of the play, it is nevertheless Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that is remembered and endures today as a landmark of literature, not Saxo Grammaticus' medieval version *Amleth* that is rarely discussed outside of academic circles, nor the lost *ur-Hamlet*. In the same sense, today's adaptations of *Hamlet*—and every other play—often override the source text by creating clear images about characters and scenes in the audience's mind. In keeping with the *Hamlet* example, we see this phenomenon the most with the image of Hamlet holding a skull and reciting his "to be or not to be" soliloquy. This melancholic image of the prince has become common knowledge, yet this association was never a part of Shakespeare's text. Thus, Shakespeare's success and subsequent survival throughout the ages is directly correlated to how his stories appear in collective memory. The act of adapting his works, as well as bringing them to life on stage through performance, ensures his continued survival in an ever-evolving world.

In this way, adaptation stands as a separate component from performance, yet the two are interconnected and are integral parts of the theatre experience. One is indissoluble from the other, yet their definitions and roles are inherently different. As aforementioned, adaptation is paramount to the survival of drama as "the drama is, by definition, that which can be passed on through successive sociocultural transformations. The original vision is tied to the original matrix, and decays with it" (Schechner 78). In order to survive and to maintain its relevancy, texts must continue to evolve through adaptations so that their parts can become recognizable cultural markers in future literature. Not only are adaptations essential to this survival process, performances, too, contribute to this effect:

> The performance mode teaches us that language is not the only way to express meaning or to relate stories. Visual and gestural representations are rich in complex associations; music offers aural "equivalents" for characters' emotions and, in turn, provokes affective responses in the audience; sound, in general, can enhance, reinforce, or even contradict the visual and verbal aspects. (Hutcheon 23)

Theatre and musical theatre in particular illustrate Hutcheon's point about different modes of storytelling outside of the textual. Through spoken, aural, and physical representations of the text on stage, we obtain a definition of adaptation that considers elements of performance, trans-lingual, transcultural, or trans-medium translation, as well as appropriation, all with the express wish to recreate and reinterpret. Takarazuka's musical performances (and adaptations) accomplish this task by combining these elements within the distinctive purview of japanified Shakespeare, which is the focus of my analysis throughout this dissertation.

Literary Appropriation

Alongside the terms of performance and adaptation, we often find 'appropriation' as a word to designate cross-cultural adaptations of, oftentimes, canonical works. Julie Sanders writes to this effect that, "as the notion of hostile takeover present in the term such as 'appropriation' implies, adaptation can also be oppositional, even subversive. There are as many opportunities for

divergence as adherence, for assault as well as homage" (9). The adaptations of *Twelfth Night, The Winter's Tale, A Midsummer Night's Dream,* and *The Two Gentlemen of* Verona presented in the following chapters all oppose or subvert certain expectations that come with either the source text or the historical periods of the Edo, Meiji, and postwar eras in Japan that they explore. As previously mentioned, Shakespeare constantly reworked old myths and other literary works by borrowing from them and rewriting them to fit his needs. It is no surprise, then, that we should continue to rework his plays in the same way so that they fit with current discussions of race, gender, sexuality, and more. In fact, the plays analysed in this dissertation utilise Shakespeare as a basis for discussion from a different cultural perspective. These analyses are not only a case of adaptation and performance studies, but also clearly within the frame of literary appropriation. What is more, "appropriation carries out the same sustained engagement as adaptation but frequently adopts a posture of critique, even assault" (Sanders 4). Shakespeare may not be "the sole focus of transpositional adaptation, … [but] his works do provide a cultural barometer for the historically contingent process of adaptation" (21). Even though Shakespeare becomes a vehicle for these discussions, he is never truly erased from the resulting works. The appropriation of Shakespeare, in this case, is more of a symbiotic relationship between the source text and the adapted piece: Shakespeare relies on these appropriations to survive and maintain his relevancy in the twenty-first century, and the adaptations in turn rely on his cultural legacy to gain traction and recognition.

Shakespeare's name is a form of currency in literature and media as he is an instantly recognizable figure. He attracts audiences on the grounds of being a well-known cultural icon, regardless of the country or period in which he is presented. Michael Bristol writes in *Big-Time Shakespeare* that "Shakespeare's works are not closed discursive formations, nor are they limited to expressing the concerns and interests of a narrowly circumscribed historical period. They have potential for generating new meanings in successive epochs" (8), which is what contributes to Shakespeare's

universality[8] and contemporary adaptability. In this context, Japanese Shakespeare, which does not necessarily concern itself with fidelity to the source text, seeks instead to recreate Shakespeare and model his narratives to represent Japanese cultural realities. What is more,

> [b]etween the two extremes of adaptive and hollow Shakespeares lie narrative-oriented Shakespearean works and various character-oriented derivative artifacts with nominal references to Shakespeare. Some of these Shakespearean artifacts are media-specific and others are intermedial, floating from one media platform to another, changing their forms and staying further away from their provenance known as Shakespeare. (Minami "What's in a Name?" 300)

Takarazuka's adaptations of Shakespeare are firmly non-English because of the theatre's reliance on Edo notions of agency, in *Fuyu Monogatari*, Meiji-era ideas about women, as seen in *Epiphany*, as well as the cultural impact of *shōjo*, such as in *Jūniya,* and its need to create happy endings for the main characters of their plays, like in *PUCK* and *Say It Again*. Although these examples are technically appropriations of Shakespeare, they are also refashionings of canonical literature with a new audience in mind.

Despite the negative connotation, appropriation within this work is considered to be a positive phenomenon that "affects a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain" (Sanders 26). Even though the plays in this dissertation are inspired by Shakespeare, most of them depart significantly from the source text to become new culturally significant works within the Japanese context, yet Shakespeare's presence is not fully erased. Sanders explains that "stage and film musical[s] … [are] inherently adaptational form[s], often reworking canonical plays, poems, and novels into a mode that deploys song and dance to deliver its narrative" (27) and, when combined with the traditions of native Japanese theatre

[8] Bristol adds that: "Universality in both its anthropological and axiological usages has been subjected to a withering critique, although this criticism does not always do full justice to the complexity of the idea. The 'complex unity of human culture' to which Bakhtin refers in these cryptic notes is neither abstract nor totalizing. Human cultures and indeed individual human voices are characterized not by a shared essence or common underlying structure but rather by otherness and outsideness" (9).

forms, these adaptations and appropriations become inherently Japanese rather than Shakespearean or English. In Japan, Takarazuka in particular befits this aural and physical way of performing Shakespeare since it is first and foremost a musical revue. Many of Shakespeare's plots are told through songs or via choreographed dancing that serves to enhance the text in another dimension than simply through the spoken word. This phenomenon is also present in opera and ballet renditions of Shakespeare's plays in which music and dance are the primary methods of communication for the themes expressed in the narratives.

In terms of these effects in Japan, Minami adds that "Shakespeare has provided many media products with an inexhaustible repertoire of plots and characters to be appropriated or utilized and circulated in variegated forms in Japan" ("What's in a Name?" 290) and that he "permeates the contemporary mediascapes of Japan" (291), thereby firmly positioning Shakespeare as a popular culture icon in Japan. Because of this positive phenomenon in Japan, this act of appropriating Shakespeare should be seen as "creating new cultural and aesthetic possibilities that stand alongside the texts which have inspired them, enriching rather than 'robbing' them" (Sanders 41). The japanification of Shakespeare—or, in other terms, the adaptation of Shakespeare into a different culture—is a means to use "'Shakespeare' [as] a resource, bits of which are repurposed as part of content that flows across multiple media platforms" (Minami "What's in a Name?" 291). The Japanese appropriation of Shakespeare therefore stems from a place of respect for a 'universal' canon and its relationship to the cultural progression of Japanese society.

With Shakespeare's own history as an adaptor of old tales, the refashioning of his plays is a similar type of work as he has now become a source of myth like Ovid before him. Though Shakespeare's stories are not myths per se, they convey the same kind of feeling due to their cultural and historical endurance. On this topic, Sanders writes:

> There are particular bodies of texts and source material, such as myth, fairy tale, and folklore which by their very nature depend on a communality of understanding. These forms and genres have cross-cultural, often cross-historical, readerships; they are stories and tales which appear across the boundaries of cultural difference and which are handed on, albeit in transmuted

> and translated forms, through the generations. In this sense they participate in a very active way in a shared community of knowledge, and they have therefore proved particularly rich sources of adaptation and appropriation. (45)

We can see from this description the importance of myths in communal culture and how it resonates with Shakespeare's works, too. Bristol also touches upon this idea when he writes: "Shakespeare, in this view, has become both an enduring institution and a source of cultural authority not by virtue of cheap and meretricious celebrity but because the works produced are already richly dialogized and thus answerable to unforeseen social and cultural circumstances" (8). The mythologization of Shakespeare is thus related to his cultural currency and influence in our contemporary societies.

The Japanese adaptations in these chapters provide a look into Sanders' "community of knowledge" (46) in twofold: 1) the Japanese historical knowledge that is unique to this culture and not as easily grasped by outsiders, and 2) the Shakespearean legacy that informs the background for the adaptation and is equally difficult to parse at times. The adaptations are in equal parts homages to the source material and a subversion of norms through the process of the japanification of Shakespeare. This combination of two contrasting ideas is what constitutes the basis for this analytical and inquisitive dissertation that explores the two-way process of converting Shakespeare to Japanese modes of thinking, and how Japanese-centric ideas about women, gender, and sexuality are developed through Shakespeare's narratives. As Hutcheon explains:

> We engage in time and space, within a particular society and a general culture. The contexts of creation and reception are material, public, and economic as much as they are cultural, personal, and aesthetic. This explains why, even in today's globalized world, major shifts in a story's context—that is, for example, in a national setting or time period—can change radically how the transposed story is interpreted, ideologically and literally. … In shifting cultures and therefore sometimes shifting languages, adaptations make alterations that reveal much about the larger contexts of reception and production. (28)

In terms of this dissertation, it is through this perception of appropriation that I examine five Shakespearean adaptations and subsequent performances to glean new insight into the Bard's plays and how they are appropriated into a different medium—that of musical theatre—and into a different culture for the purpose of discussing sociohistorical issues in Japan while maintaining a place in contemporary popular culture.

Translation and Tradaptation

Shakespeare's 'life' in Japan begins with the translations of his works, both linguistic and in terms of performance. Without the arduous work of his translators, Shakespeare may not have had the same impact in Japan that we see today. With this tradition in mind, it is important to note that I am working within the frame of Shakespearean translations, from English to Japanese, and, more importantly in this context, in the reverse, from Japanese to English. This method takes place through two processes: 1) the performances that I analyse in the subsequent chapters are based on Japanese translations of the English-language works (that in themselves have been transliterated from early modern to modern English) and 2) my work takes these translated pieces and re-translates them into English for the purpose of this dissertation. This act of re-translation, that Takiguchi Ken terms as a "'reverse' translation from Asian languages into English" or a "translation *of* Asia" (450), considers both the Japanese stage script and the original English-language text as 'source.' In these terms, "the second 'reverse' translation from the performance scripts in Asian languages into English takes the first 'original' translation from Shakespeare into account through the translation and editing process" (450). This is the process that I follow in my own translations to ensure that both the original Shakespearean texts and the adapted Japanese texts are respected, and to show the relationship between the two. According to Roman Jakobson, the three main modes of translation are interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic (Hoenselaars 2012). In the case of this dissertation, my translations are of an intralingual nature, from Japanese to English. However, the Japanese translations are themselves important in how I

interpret these performances of Shakespeare through a different cultural lens than an early modern English one.

As a field, translation is central to the experience of accessing world literatures. Ton Hoenselaars notes that "translation crosses more than just the conspicuous frontiers of language and negotiates less obvious distinctions of gender, class, race and nation" (3), which is especially true for this dissertation in which I develop ideas around these topics through the translations of Shakespeare from Japanese to English. Furthermore, the translation process is an intrinsic part of how the plays are understood and experienced on stage. To this effect,

> … Japanese theatre director Tetsuo Anzai's view of theatrical translation … noted that the theatre maker's primary goal is 'not the communication of the literal meaning of the original text, but the re-creation of the theatrical experience embodied there'. In their work for the theatre, practitioners like Déprats, Hamburger and Anzai … seek to translate the text with a primary sense of its theatrical and physical purpose…. (qtd. in Hoenselaars 13)

Since there is an obvious link between the translation and the theatrical reception of a play, it raises the question of whether or not translation can be considered as a form of adaptation that is culturally motivated. Considering the fact that the theoretical concerns raised so far are centred on adaptation, performance, and appropriation, it is only natural to add translation to this list and consider how these terms interrelate and coalesce in the context of the theatre. According to many scholars of translation, the act of translating and re-translating a piece also enters the territory of adaptation and, as some argue, "translation is not just the transfer of texts from one language into another, it is now rightly seen as a process of negotiation between texts and between cultures, a process during which all kinds of transactions take place mediated by the figure of the translator" (Bassnett qtd. in Marinetti 33). Furthermore, "[r]ecent translation theory argues that translation involves a transaction between texts and between languages and is thus 'an act of both inter-cultural and inter-temporal communication.' This newer sense of translation comes closer to defining adaptation as well" (Hutcheon 16). While it is true that "the borderline between translation and adaptation is extremely difficult to draw" (Hoenselaars 15), it is also a

fact that, “in recent years, translation itself has come to be looked upon as a form of adapting or rewriting” (15), thereby blurring the distinctions between the different theoretical approaches. Vandal-Sirois and Bastin write that, “an adaptation might well be an intrinsic part of a successful translation” (23); as such, the act of translating these works for the purpose of this discussion is in effect a work of interlingual translation as per Jakobson’s classification. Vandal-Sirois and Bastin further define adaptation as an element that “seems to be part of a process of linguistic transfer of a document, created in one source culture and then aimed at another culture. In spite of the adjustments and modifications, often imposed by the language of the source text or deemed necessary by the translator, an adaptation still shares a very strong link to the source text” (23). With this in mind, my linguistic choices reflect this necessity to link both cultures for a clearer understanding, and they are often expanded upon in explanatory footnotes.

The Japanese translations of Shakespeare are imbued with cultural codes that, once re-translated into English, are lost unless they are thoroughly explained from a linguistic point of view. This of course is true for any target language, but my concern in this work is the Japanese perspective of Shakespeare and I therefore do not address translation issues in other languages. My other consideration during this process is the idea of fidelity in translation, which differs from the debate around fidelity in adaptation. Hoenselaars explains how,

> [i]n the Romantic tradition, Shakespearean translation was long judged by the criterion of equivalence between the source and the target text. However, since every language represents a complex reality of its own and belongs to a separate socio-cultural system with its own historical specificities, absolute equivalence is really a fiction. … A world in which absolute equivalence were a reality would by definition also be a world without the need for translation. (10-11)

However, because my need for translation stems from an obligation to disambiguate terms and linguistic distinctions that do not exist in English, my work tries to be as accurate to the original language as possible so that the nuances are maintained and further analysed. My linguistic choices thus must be carefully articulated in this dissertation to avoid misrepresenting the

Japanese-language work. For example, as I discussed in a previously published article on Japanese translations of *Hamlet*, "… the [Japanese] language itself is gendered, [and] it is interesting to see how it is then wielded by actors and actresses who specialize in portraying the opposite sex on stage" (Maxwell 101). This important linguistic factor sets Japanese translations of Shakespeare apart from the original English because of its encoded gender distinction. Moreover, "because Shakespearean markers of gender, for example, refuse to be converted into Japanese, the Japanese translator is faced with a number of vital decisions of a sociolinguistic nature that, in turn, make us see a play like *Twelfth Night* in a rather new light" (Hoenselaars 23). The same is true for the reversed process of re-translating Japanese Shakespeare into English with considerations for linguistic differences.

For example, the Japanese language has at least eight[9] common pronouns to denote the first-person singular: *atashi* (あたし)*, atakushi* (あたくし)*, watashi* (私)*, watakushi* (私)*, washi* (わし)*, jibun* (自分)*, boku* (僕)*,* and *ore* (俺). These pronouns not only categorize the person according to their biological sex, but also by their age, the level of politeness, and the social relationship between speakers and listeners. For instance, the masculine pronouns *boku* and *ore* are typically used by boys and men, respectively, though there are some variations to these distinctions. Men may choose to call themselves *boku* to express humility or youthfulness rather than the more informal and presumptuous *ore*, but the gender-neutral pronoun *watashi* is the best option in many social situations. Needless to say, these minute distinctions do not exist in Germanic or Latin languages, despite them also being gendered. Compared to gendered European languages, Japanese is gender neutral in everything else outside of pronouns—as with English, nouns and verb conjugations are neutral. Once these complex pronouns are expressed on stage, "actors can then use the strict conventions of the language and subvert them by attributing the gendered-pronouns to themselves without fear of social judgement because, on stage, it is an expected –

[9] There are, in fact, more than eight in total, but the ones listed here are the most common. There are as many as 70 pronouns, not counting the regional variations of the ones here, as well as pronouns that can act as both singular and plural, such as *uchi* (うち) and *waga* (我). This also does not account for obsolete pronouns that are no longer used in modern Japanese. Another common pronoun is the use of one's own first name in place of "I." This is most frequently used by young children, but adults also use this method to refer to themselves. Lastly, people in a position of power over the listener, such as a teacher speaking to a student, may use their job title as a pronoun. In this example, the first-person pronoun would be *sensei* (先生).

and accepted – process" (Maxwell 101). This point is further examined in part 1, chapters 1 and 2 when discussing Viola's way of addressing herself in Japanese and how it affects the understanding of the narrative.

Because of these gendered distinctions, I have to translate these adaptations into English to facilitate the communication between the two. However, I am conscious of the difficulties involved in translating these works, as I am aware of the possibility of self-insertion and biases influencing my linguistic decisions. In order to diminish these possibilities, I base my method on translation theory that considers the relationship between the source text, in this case the Japanese script, and the target audience, an anglophone readership. This, I believe, limits artistic interpretation by focusing instead on the literal meaning of words and expressions. This also limits the chance of misunderstandings once translated into English, which is especially true for gender expressions and cultural references.

Seeing as how this dissertation is not meant to be purely a work of translation, the interpretative quality of translation does not apply, nor do I approach the topic from a creative perspective. However, translation is important for both the performances and my approach to them, since "… plays that have been taken out of their dialect and out of their native cultural contexts unexpectedly yield valuable insights into numerous processes of cultural transfer, between texts and between cultures" (Hoenselaars 21). Through my use of translation techniques, and with the theoretical concerns surrounding adaptation and performance in mind, I examine how Takarazuka reshapes and appropriates Shakespeare as informed by both traditional theatre in Japan and contemporary popular culture through five distinct performances of his plays. Translation is therefore used in this work as a tool to further communicate these ideas in a cross-cultural and transnational sense.

Women in Theatre

Women's place in Shakespeare's theatre, both on stage and on the page, has been a source of interest for many scholars of early modernity. Even though the theatre that I examine belongs to another country and time period, it is important to examine the history of women in theatre to

understand the cultural impact of an all-female contemporary company such as Takarazuka. Women historically have been shunned from the stage in many parts of the world, including England and Japan. In both places, the solution to the self-imposed lack of women was to create a subculture of female impersonators—the boy actors of early modern England, and the young men of early modern Japan. In both cases, this removal of female agency at the hands of exponents of patriarchal concepts created a pocket in time that continues to fascinate today. Takarazuka, as a company that subverts this history by its very existence, is the perfect contemporary example of the opposite effect observed in early modern England and Japan; the women who impersonate men on stage are imbued with the same androgynous qualities as that which was observed so many centuries ago with the boy actors. As a result, Shakespeare's female roles are given back to women, but his male roles are now the ones that undergo a transformation through the use of male impersonators. This reversal and its effects are essential to this discussion as England and Japan share a long history of using drama to question gender under the guise of entertainment.

Early Modern England

As history dictates, the English stage during Shakespeare's time was populated with boy actors who played the parts of women. Davies Robertson writes that, though more readily associated with the early modern period, "the tradition of boy actors in England extends from the beginnings of drama in the Middle Ages, when church liturgy fathered the mystery and morality plays, and the choir-boys assisted the clerks in their presentation" (3). Even though boys were seen as more acceptable on stage than women, Stephen Orgel comments that "there were many polemical debates in England about the dangers to public morality of transvestite boy actors; but none that argues in favor of the introduction of women as an alternative" (3), showing the imbalance in the genders despite the moral-based fear of both in the public eye. Robertson explains how,

> Classical precedent, also, forbade the appearance of women on the stage, and Aristotle's classification of women as inferior beings for the purpose of drama doubtless carried weight with those playwrights who sought salvation in the classic form. Women had never appeared upon any stage which the English actors considered worthy of imitation, and to them there seemed no reason

> why women should act as all, except in masques and those entertainments which were arranged for private display. (9)

To say that women never participated in performance during the early modern period would be false, as many took part in various dramatic arts (Orgel 1996; Korda 2011), but the fact remains that boy actors were somehow seen as 'safe' replacements for women in stage productions. The important factor for women was that "so long as they did not do it as a profession" (Orgel 4), they were not condemned for an alleged lack of morality. In fact, "Elizabeth's England, then, did in fact from time to time see [foreign] women on the professional stage. What they apparently did not see was *English* women on the professional stage: the distinction they maintained was not between men and women but between 'us' and 'them'—what was appropriate for foreigners was not appropriate for the English, and women on display became increasingly associated with Roman Catholicism" (11). Despite this, Natasha Korda argues that "women's work nonetheless [had] a shaping influence on dramatic literature and its staging in Shakespeare's time" (53) due to their involvement offstage and in various economic functions that helped sustain the theatre.[10]

In terms of clothing, the same moral-based distinctions were used to control women's appearance off stage as well. The 1620 *Hic Mulier* (or The Man-Woman) and *Haec Vir* (or The Womanish-Man) pamphlets are interesting examples of this: the former being an anti-crossdressing and anti-women's rights declaration, while the latter is a pro-women response to the first that is written as a conversation between *Hic Mulier* and *Haec Vir*. Prior to 1660, while women were banned from performing on stage, they were equally chastised for their choice of clothing according to the pamphlets, calling for decency and morality in the public sphere. Due to religious dogmas and precepts, women were considered to be created from a "more pure and refined metall" than man, "a substance much more worthy … in whom all the harmonies of life, the perfection of symmetry, the true and curious consent of the most fayrest colours and wealthy Gardens which fils the world with living plants" (*Hic Mulier* 22–23). On this principle, the early

[10] For example, women were involved in procuring second-hand costumes for players, moneylending, and collecting ticket fees from patrons (Korda 2011).

modern idea of gender in performing arts was that women should not debase themselves by dressing in mannish styles or by playing on stage for an audience. Though the pamphlets postdate Shakespeare by several years, it is clear that they present social anxieties related to women who project outwardly masculine traits. The same is not true, however, for the boy actors of the stage who were not disgraced for their portrayals of women.

In his 1660 prologue to *The Moor of Venice*, Thomas Jordan describes the first female actress, Margaret Hughes,[11] to play on stage legally since the prolonged ban:

> I Come, unknown to any of the rest
> To tell you news; I saw the Lady drest;
> The Woman playes to day; mistake me not,
> No Man in Gown, or Page in Petty-Coat;
> A Woman to my knowledge, yet I cann't
> (If I should dye) make *Affidavit* on't.
> Do you not twitter Gentlemen? I know
> You will be censuring; do't fairly though;
> 'Tis possible a vertuous woman may
> Play on the Stage, where all eyes are upon her;— (Jordan)

Jordan points out virtuousness as a marker for good or bad women, and though he makes a case that 'virtuous' women can also be in the public eye, this prologue problematically implies that other women on stage were seen as non-virtuous. Jordan knows that the men "will be censuring," further damaging women's rights to be performers and putting their careers at risk.

Because of Shakespeare's love of cross-dressing heroines, the boy actors who played female characters often had to play young men from a feminine perspective, creating a triple layering of gender on stage. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the boy actor's existence becomes a source of anxiety for the queen who expresses her discomfort at being turned into a mockery on stage: "Antony / Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see / Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness / I' th' posture of a whore" (*Ant* V.ii.214-217). Shakespeare shows awareness in these lines that the

[11] Margaret Hughes appeared on stage at the Vere Street theatre on 8 December 1660 and portrayed Desdemona in *The Moor of Venice*, an adaptation of *Othello*.

boy actor, women, and prostitution are all interrelated themes on the early modern stage. For Orgel, "women are dangerous to men because sexual passion for women renders men effeminate: this is an age in which sexuality itself is misogynistic" (26). Thomas Nash's account in *Pierce Pennilesse* (1592) of European actresses supports these links as he writes about "whores and common courtesans [that] play women's parts and forbear no immodest speech or unchaste action that may procure laughter" (31), which further connects the theatre to prostitution practices. Orgel points out that:

> … the very fact that women are prohibited from the stage reveals the true etiology of theatre: what the spectator is 'really' attracted to in plays is an undifferentiated sexuality, a sexuality that does not distinguish men from women and reduces men to women—the deepest fear in antitheatrical tracts, far deeper than the fear of a universal effeminization. In this anxiety, the fact of transvestite boys is really only incidental. (29)

The early modern male theatregoer's fear of emasculation because of his attraction to "the youth beneath the woman's costume" (27) is one of the reasons that contributes to the fear of women on stage as their presence would engender an introspective questioning of sexuality that goes against the religious ideas at the time. Shakespeare in particular toys with these ideas as "… a significant group of [his] plays require the woman to become a man for the wooing to be effected. The dangers of women in erotic situations, whatever they may be, can be disarmed by having the women play men, just as in the theatre the dangers of women on the stage (whatever *they* may be) can be disarmed by having men play the women" (18). While the exact reason behind women's ban in early modern England is still nebulous, it is clear that men's religious, moral, and psychological fears of "playing the woman's role themselves" (27) contributed to the development of female impersonators to replace women actors.

Theatre in Asia

Around the same time as in Europe, Asian countries also effected bans on women as performers. In China, the famous Beijing opera was masculinised through such an act, which spurred on a long

and prized culture of female impersonators.[12] Similarly in Japan, the act of cross-dressing or cross-gendering on stage was born out of a necessity to have men exclusively play on stage due to the governments discomfort and fear surrounding women actors. In 1603, Izumo no Okuni founded Kabuki theatre, and "… audiences were very enthusiastic about this new type of performance with enticing women not hiding, but showing their faces openly" (Torigoe 2). Following Okuni's success, many female troupes, known as women's Kabuki (女歌舞伎 *Onna kabuki*), performed and danced for audiences. However, in 1629, "… because of the enormous popularity of kabuki, the government issued a decree that banned kabuki performances. … This prohibition, in fact, applied to all activities of female performers. Therefore, kabuki continued with young male actors [*wakashu*] who, at a glance, looked like women. Eventually, these performances were also banned…" (2). The young *wakashu* (若衆) actors were more acrobatic than the women dancers, but they were still too alluring in the eyes of the government, as were the women before them. The word *wakashu* also served to denote homosexual young men as well as homosexual prostitution, and the link between Kabuki and 'loose morals' was reinforced by the presence of young men on stage. While this connotation is now archaic, the initial link between young men, Kabuki, and prostitution coexisted in the same way as for the women performers of early modern Japan and England alike.

[12] Beijing (or Peking) opera has a long history in and of itself regarding female impersonators. I am aware that these traditions are complex and require deep examination to fully understand their cultural impact. However, it is important to highlight the resemblances between nations during the same historical period, in particular where women's roles in theatre are concerned.

Figure 2. – *Onnagata* actor Bandō Tamasaburō V, deemed a Living National Treasure in Japan for his contribution to Kabuki © 日本びより *Nihon Biyori*

The early modern concept of masculinity, threatened by the presence of women on stage, is replicated in the Kabuki tradition as the government's anxieties were made clear through a series of bans. Ann Thompson writes that "male actors were (and still are) seen as effeminate, and the process of acting or impersonation can constitute a threat to male identity. The association with prostitution has not gone away; for a man to act or dance can still mean signalling a 'feminine' kind of sexual availability" (24). How ever erroneous or problematic this point of view can be, it is nevertheless a fact that both England and Japan once linked theatre to homosexuality, in the case of the female impersonators, and prostitution, for both men and women on stage.

The idea behind the ban was the same in Japan as elsewhere: women actresses were associated with prostitution and immorality, which made the government uncomfortable.[13] Because of this, women were not allowed to perform again until 1868 with the arrival of the Meiji Restoration, but by then, they had been replaced by *onnagata* (女形)—kabuki female impersonators.[14] As Torigoe (2006) and Ozaki mention, the first *onnagata* who were young boys "of eleven to sixteen years of age" were also banned from the stage for the same reason as the women (Ozaki 9). Women and boys soon came to be replaced by adult male actors (野郎歌舞伎 *yarō* Kabuki) to avoid moral corruption, which led to the formation of traditions that we now associate with Kabuki, such as dramatic and complex plays, singing, dancing, and, of course, the female impersonator.

The connection between Kabuki and Shakespeare's theatre is obvious; the use of boys, and later adult men, to portray female characters in an effort to limit women's involvement with the stage is virtually identical for both theatres and locations. What is more, both were highly influenced by religious concepts that saw women as very different beings than men. However, because of these bans placed on women, some theatre traditions flourished, and new perspectives on gender emerged as a result of the creation of all-female theatres in later centuries.

Takarazuka's actresses fulfill a subversive role in Japanese society since they are encouraged to embody their male persona (男役 *otokoyaku*) or female persona (娘役 *musumeyaku*) outside of the realm of theatre. Despite the company's adherence to the principal of "Good Wives, Wise mothers," which promotes a return to heteronormative roles in society post-retirement, the women of Takarazuka represent a postwar emancipated generation entrenched in ideas of the popular. In the same way as how "manga for female readers can address contentious or controversial issues in contemporary Japan" (Minami "What's in a Name?" 294), the same is true

[13] However, women found ways to circumvent this ban. During the *wakashu* period of Kabuki, "some actresses surreptitiously joined young men's kabuki and performed with them dressed in female attire, so that in August 1642, Sakai Tadakatsu, a member of the Shōgun's Council of State, suggested the prohibition of men from playing women" (Ozaki 8).

[14] Britannica states that: "… women's participation was officially banned in 1629 by the shogun (military ruler) Tokugawa Iemitsu, who thought that the sensuality of the dances had a deleterious effect on public morality. Not only were the dances considered suggestive, but the dancers themselves earned extra money by means of prostitution" ("Okuni").

for the *shōjo* Takarazuka that prides itself on offering a dream to its audience through its all-female performances, part of which entails the creation of the 'perfect man' through the mechanism of cross-dressing on and off stage. Takarazuka's very existence is a form of resistance against the Meiji era's idea that women cannot and should not perform on stage. This reality resonates with early modern England where the banishment and reinstatement of women on stage is central to the development of theatre.

In order to explore these complex mechanisms in Japan and Shakespeare's role in the discussion on gender, this dissertation can be separated into two parts: the first is focused on the japanization of Shakespeare through a close examination of Japanese theatre history and traditions, while the second half focuses on the re-westernization of Japanese Shakespeare by reintroducing Shakespeare's plays into Western locales. Therefore, I examine five Takarazuka performances of Shakespeare that exemplify the aforementioned discussions on adaptation, performance, and translation studies, as well as gender and historical considerations of women's roles in theatre. Chapter 1 discusses the phenomena of *shōjo* culture in conjunction with a production of *Twelfth Night* (hereafter known as *Jūniya*) by examining religious traditions in Japan and their influence on theatre productions, as well as *Jūniya*'s reinforcement of Meiji-era patriarchal concepts while simultaneously portraying socially unconventional ideas about same-sex relationships. Chapter 2 looks at *Epiphany*—another adaptation of *Twelfth Night*—as a basis for discussions centred around Kabuki theatre traditions and Shakespeare's connection to this art form via the prominent Meiji-era translator, Tsubouchi Shōyō, and Kabuki actors such as Ichikawa Danjurō IX. This chapter also discusses the relevancy of using Shakespeare's play to discuss cultural and historical issues related to women as Kabuki actresses. The third chapter tackles *The Winter's Tale*, titled *Fuyu Monogatari* in Japanese, and its usage of both early modern stage techniques and Kabuki influences to reimagine Shakespeare's romance into an Edo-style story with historical and cultural symbols proper to Japan. The following chapter looks at *PUCK*, a more recent adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which the story is overhauled in favour of a Puck-centric narrative that speaks to the postwar realities and social progress in Japan. I derive my analysis of *PUCK* from Bakhtinian ideas about the grotesque and the carnivalesque to explore a coming-of-age narrative set in England. Finally, the last chapter examines an early and

controversial play, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, rebranded as *Say It Again*, and how Takarazuka reimagines the story as more empowering for the female characters in the age of postwar prosperity. I use the psychoanalytical theory of masquerade as well as philosophical theories about friendship to analyse this production in its Japanese context. These five plays combined paint a picture of the evolution of Japanese Shakespeare through the ages. Furthermore, by adapting and appropriating Shakespeare for a Japanese audience, his plays become vehicles through which questions of gender, sexuality, and women's agency in Japanese society are developed and explored.

Part I: Japanese Shakespeare

1. Jūniya (*Twelfth Night*)

This chapter examines the intersection of popular culture and tradition by looking at the roles of religion and *shōjo* culture, in conjunction with Takarazuka's 1999 Bow Hall performance of *Jūniya* (十二夜: またはお望みのもの *Jūniya: mata wa o-nozomi no mono*), an adaptation inspired by Morikawa Kumi's 1978 *shōjo* manga of the same name. *Jūniya* is the fourth play in the *Shakespeare Series* performed by Takarazuka juniors of the Tsuki troupe. It ran for ten days in Takarazuka city, between July 17 and 27, 1999. As the first of two *Twelfth Night* adaptations analysed in this dissertation, *Jūniya* follows the Shakespearean play very closely by keeping the original names of the characters, by having the actors dress in western-style clothing,[15] and by following the literal translation of the text into Japanese. Compared to this adaptation, Takarazuka staged another performance of *Twelfth Night* in the same year, entitled *Epiphany* (エピファニー), that takes on a very different, kabukified approach to the play. In her article "Gender and Homosexuality in Takarazuka Theatre: *Twelfth Night* and *Epiphany*," Yilin Chen explains that "in the Tsuki's troupe's *Twelfth Night*, Viola/Cesario was played by a *musumeyaku* while in the Hoshi troupe's *Epiphany* Otaka/Takagorou (equivalent to Viola/Cesario) was played by an *otokoyaku*" (58). The distinction between the two adaptations lies in the fact that the type of actor who plays Viola/Cesario changes the perception of the character, from very feminine in *Jūniya*, to more masculine in *Epiphany*. Since Viola is an androgynous woman, Takarazuka's portrayal of her can go either way based on who is playing her part. The feminized Viola in *Jūniya* plays into the company's ideals, based on Meiji era concepts of womanhood.

[15] The costumes are not exactly renaissance fashion but are more akin to a pseudo late 1800s romantic style. Still, the actors wear European-inspired outfits as opposed to Japanese traditional dress (as is the case of the second play, *Epiphany*, in which the characters wear *kimono* and *hakama*.)

Very few scholars have looked at this play in conjunction with gender politics in Japan, let alone the effects of Japanese popular culture and aesthetics on this 400-year-old play. Of these notable scholars, Chen's article is especially relevant to this chapter as it provides a good comparative overview of Takarazuka's two 1999 *Twelfth Night* productions. Also, Jennifer Robertson's seminal work about the Takarazuka Revue, entitled *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (1998), is of particular interest. Unfortunately, the sources on this topic are scarce or decades old, such as with Robertson's research,[16] making my work one of the few of its kind in the Western hemisphere. Of course, there is a lot of current research on the topics of theatre in Japan, Shakespeare, and translation,[17] but few scholars tackle all these topics in combination with the Takarazuka Revue in particular.

In terms of resistance, I propose that Shakespeare's plays offer an interesting opportunity for this company, its members, and its fans to subvert cultural expectations of gender and sexuality while on stage and this, through the medium of an all-female troupe. *Jūniya* is especially relevant to this conversation as it utilises concepts found in manga culture to discuss gender and sexuality. Even though the company is sometimes criticized for its adherence to patriarchal notions, I offer an alternative point of view by examining Shakespeare in this context. Shakespeare's plays are regularly adapted and performed in Japan, and Takarazuka's take on them is especially compelling since it relies on a reversal of early modern English theatre practices to create a uniquely gendered japanized Shakespeare. To Chen and J. Robertson's works I add my interpretation rooted in Japanese theatre history and popular culture to further the discussion concerning this theatre's place and, more specifically, Shakespeare's presence and influence in Japan, gender dynamics on stage, and the cultural blend of English and Japanese traditions via religions and their influences. With this in mind, this chapter therefore focuses on the influence of the *shōjo* genre

[16] J. Robertson herself notes that "there is far too little on Japan in Anglophone literature, and much less on the revue theatre, sexuality, and gender in that country ... by the same token, the comparatively small Anglophone literature on Japanese mass and popular cultures calls for a premium to be put on the inclusion of more Japanese 'stuff'" (23). Seeing as how Robertson wrote in the late 1990s, the situation today has hardly changed. The research available on this topic stems from the same time period as Robertson or earlier (see: Minoru Fujita and Leonard Pronko (1996), and Minoru Toyoda (1968)).

[17] Daniel Gallimore and Minami Ryuta, for instance, are scholars who work on Tsubouchi Shōyō's translations of Shakespeare and who discuss the issues that arise from translating from or into Japanese. However, they do not discuss Shakespeare in the context of Takarazuka productions.

and how this specific cultural element simultaneously strengthens patriarchal concepts in Takarazuka's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and destabilises them by putting forward the underlying non-heteronormative narrative in the play through added scenes and modified dialogue.

1.1 Religion, Kabuki, and Popular Culture

In 1629, Kabuki, one of the three classical theatres of Japan, was snatched away from the women who created it and became associated with male-only acting (Suzuki 1963). Today, women struggle to rejoin Kabuki troupes as there are some orthodox thinkers who believe that "a woman's voice would mar the harmony [of samisen music and singing voices]" (Onoe, qtd. in Kusano 121). The men who act in Kabuki theatre are known to "portray a 'more womanly woman than any ordinary woman' on the stage," which is what makes Kabuki so unique, and what convinces performers and theatregoers alike that it is a male-only art form (Yoshizawa, qtd. in Kusano 120). Even though there are some modern Kabuki troupes that accept women or that are exclusively made up of women, these performances are never considered in Japan to be legitimate Kabuki. At one point, "[t]he profession of *onna-yakusha* had a long tradition of performing *kabuki* plays in all-female companies" (Mori 29); however, despite their ability to perform in these plays, "they were not considered as actresses in the true meaning of the word" (29). Today, orthodox Kabuki troupes continue to shut out women, firmly adhering to the "*onna-gata* system" (Kusano 118). Because of this, Kabuki remains a male-dominated art form that is most well-known for its elaborate costumes and makeup, stylized femininity, and dancing.

Modern-day Kabuki is not only limiting to women, but also to men who would wish to enter the profession without a background in this art form. As Kusano notes, "actors who play important roles are born into Kabuki families of distinction; a leading Kabuki actor's son appears on the stage from infancy… and eventually [succeeds] his father as the head of the troupe or family which acts the important roles" (126). Children of Kabuki families go through rigorous training, especially if they are to become *onnagata*–male actors who perform as women on stage. Part of this training includes extensive singing and dancing practice. In fact, Kabuki dances are central to the

narratives portrayed on stage and are born from a long tradition of theatre performance. Okuni, the first Kabuki actress, as well as a *miko* (Shintō priestess), created Kabuki with this in mind; by borrowing techniques from Noh theatre, and combining them with her dancing, Okuni created the very tradition that Kabuki actors today so vehemently defend against the intrusion of women, as "it became the task of *onna-gata* actors to do the dancing" (127). Indeed, the stage[18] is first and foremost a place dedicated to dancing, and dancing has traditional ties to religious ceremonies. Since Kabuki borrowed from Noh, in which plays often portray Buddhist and moral stories, these ideologies and religious traditions seeped into its popular theatre form, as opposed to the high-brow Noh that was enjoyed by the elite of society.

The concept of 'popular' in Japan is closely linked to Buddhism by the very history of the term. As Jennifer Robertson explains, the term *taishū bunka* (大衆文化), meaning popular or mass culture,[19] "was first used centuries ago in a Buddhist context; pronounced *daishū*, it referred to acolytes and all sentient beings" (32). Now, the term is used in conjunction with aspects of the popular. Thus, 'popularity' in Japan begins with the introduction of Buddhism and its influence over the arts. In ancient Japan (倭 Wa or Yamato),[20] the primary religion was an unstructured compilation of *kami* (spirits/gods) [21] (Kitagawa 1984; Yoshida 2003) that eventually amalgamated into the organized religion of Shintoism after the introduction of Buddhism[22] in the sixth century. However, as Kitagawa notes, "Japanese Buddhism overshadowed indigenous Shinto and established itself as the dominant Japanese religious tradition" (137). Shintoism is still practiced today alongside major world religions, mainly Buddhism and Christianity, but "indigenous Shinto

[18] In Japanese, the word for stage (*butai*) is written with the characters meaning 'dance' (舞) and 'place' (台).
[19] While there is a minute distinction between the terms 'popular culture' (*minshū bunka*) and 'mass culture' (*taishū bunka*), J. Robertson blends the two (c.f. pp.28-34).
[20] As a note of interest, the Chinese character 倭 *wa* was eventually replaced with 和 *wa*, which is now used to denote anything related to Japanese tradition/style (e.g.: 和物 *wamono*、和食 *washoku*、和室 *washitsu*).
[21] Here, *kami* (神) stands for the various gods of Shintoism such as Amaterasu, the sun goddess, and Ebisu, the god of fortune, to name a couple. Shintō *kami* are especially relevant when discussing Shakespeare adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (see Yoshihara 2007).
[22] Joseph M. Kitagawa writes about early Buddhism in Japan, saying that "[w]hen Buddhism was introduced, the Buddha was understood as a foreign *kami*. In the course of time, the early Japanese recognized many types of *kami* …" (129). Furthermore, Japanese Buddhism is very different from Indian Buddhism: "Japan accepted Buddhism solely in its Chinese form and took little interest in its Indian origin. Thus, unlike the Chinese Buddhists, who had translated the Buddhist scriptures into their own language, the Japanese Buddhists made no effort to translate the scriptures into Japanese" (136).

tradition was not immune to Buddhist influence. Even *norito*, the stylized Shinto liturgical prayers, were influenced by the format of Buddhist sūtra recitation" (137). Japanese Buddhism is a descendant of Chinese Buddhism that was brought to Japan via China and Korea. At first, the two religions stood on opposite sides: Shintoism being polytheistic, and Buddhism technically atheistic[23] and being perceived as the religion of a "foreign *kami*" (Kitagawa 129).[24] However, "in the 8th century there emerged tendencies to interpret Shintō from a Buddhist viewpoint. Shintō *kami* were viewed as protectors of Buddhism; hence, shrines for tutelary *kami* were built within the precincts of Buddhist temples" (Hirai). Shintoism and Buddhism combined to create a "religious culture known as the 'amalgamation of kami and buddhas' (*shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合)" (Yoshida 15). Despite this combination, "Buddhistic Shintō was popular for several centuries and was influential until its extinction at the Meiji Restoration" (Hirai), leading to a separation of the two once more. Today, both Shintoism and Buddhism are practiced side by side and in harmony. For example, the musical duo Shinbutsu Kyōdai (神仏兄弟), formed of a Buddhist monk and a Shintō priest, is a modern take on this age-old inter-religion tolerance. Together, the monk and the priest support one another's doctrines through their music and encourage listeners to participate in prayers and religious activities. Their 'cool' demeanor shows that religion does not have to be an outdated institution, which is replicated in its integration into modern popular culture through manga.

This religious history is relevant to the conversation surrounding Kabuki and performance in Japan since the period of Buddhistic Shintō coincides with the creation of manga in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as well as the distinct formation of the Kabuki traditions that still prevail

[23] Although this is a difficult topic to condense into a few lines, scholars tend to agree that "Buddhism does not technically feature its own gods. Instead the religion teaches that even gods are bound within the 'worlds of desire', as the universe is termed, and therefore subject to the cycle of rebirth. Gods from most religions can be subsumed into the Buddhist worldview, because they are limited beings, bound by their own existence…" (Frydman).

[24] The theological status of Buddhism is, and always has been, in question depending on which sect of the religion is practiced. While some critics see Buddhism as atheistic (Hayes 1998), others perceive it as mono or polytheistic, such as in the Mahāyāna branch (Harvey 2019). Considering the fact that the Buddha was seen as a single foreign *kami* in ancient Japan (Kitagawa 1984, see footnote 23), I chose to identify Buddhism as monotheistic in this specific context. Modern interpretations of the Buddha's deity status in Japan are not under consideration in this argument since I discuss sixth century concepts of Buddhism that were directly influenced by Chinese Buddhism and Confucianism.

today. The first manga[25]—a somewhat loose term in this context— called the *Chōjū jinbutsu giga* (鳥獣人物戯画) (traditionally shortened to *Chōjū-giga*) is attributed to the Buddhist monk Kakuyū (Toba Sōjo)[26] of the Heian period (794-1185). Although the exact genre classification of this piece is contested, it is generally accepted that these scrolls are the earliest form of sequential art in Japan. The scrolls feature anthropomorphic animals performing everyday activities such as playing games or hiding from the rain—a very Shintō-esque theme reminiscent of *yōkai* (妖怪 folkloric, often mischievous spirits) and the more benevolent *kami*. The illustrations, combined with the fact that the scrolls were created by a Buddhist monk, further illustrate the close relationship between the two religions. Unlike modern manga, the scrolls are wordless and rely only on images to convey the narrative since *giga* "means pictures drawn in jest—that is, pictures drawn just for entertainment" (Inoue 187). The connection here is clear: narrative art was originally a Buddhist activity, which then evolved and expanded into what we know today as popular manga. As discussed earlier, Kabuki theatre is directly related to religious traditions due to its link to Noh theatre, which has repercussions to this day. For example, the contemporary Kabuki company, the Gekidan Chōjū Giga (劇団鳥獣戯画), relies on these connections in its very name, as well as by having its repertoire consist of "a variety of musicals that parody movies, Shakespeare, and *kabuki*, as well as straight plays" (Inoue 137). Japanese religions, Kabuki, and Noh all combine with Shakespeare in a surprising way since his plays are regularly converted into these mediums.

Despite the seemingly contrasting ideas of religion and popular culture, however, Buddhism, Shintoism, and even Christianity are often part of or central to manga narratives. Since the *Chōjū-giga*, manga popularity has been on the rise, especially in postwar Japan. Contemporary manga deal with an array of topics, but some still rely on the religious past of this narrative form. For example, the 2006 ongoing series *Saint Young Men* (聖セイント☆おにいさん *Seinto Oniisan*)

[25] The word 'manga' appears many centuries later when the famous ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) invented the word around 1814 to designate his cartoon-like drawings (Canivet-Fovez 2014). However, Hokusai's manga is not to be confused with today's understanding of the genre. The *Chōjū-giga* is much more of a manga that Hokusai's art.

[26] Even though Kakuyū is commonly thought to be the creator of the scrolls, it is unclear whether he truly is. Kakuyū is a well-known artist of the period, so it is likely that he was involved in the creation of the *Chōjū-giga*.

by Nakamura Hikaru features Jesus and Buddha as ordinary citizens in Tokyo who navigate life as friends and roommates. Other notable examples of this phenomenon include *Buddha* (ブッダ *Budda*) by Osamu Tezuka (1928-1989), and *Record of Ragnarok* (終末のワルキューレ *Shūmatsu no Warukyūre*) by Umemura Shinya and Fukui Takumi (2017).[27] While these narratives portray religion and religious figures in more masculine subgenres (少年 *shōnen* and 青年 *seinen*), the *Chōjū-giga*—which is not about religion but still depicts monk characters in some scenes—is *kawaii* (可愛い cute) in its theme—an important affect when discussing manga in Japan, especially the *shōjo* genre.

Figure 3. – Jesus (left) and Buddha (right) in *Saint Young Men* by Nakamura Hikaru (2006) © Toho Company

The first magazine of the *shōjo* genre appeared in 1903, some 700 years after the *Chōjū-giga*. However, it is not until post-war Japan that the first real *shōjo* manga made its appearance. In the 1960s, women artists (*mangaka*) started writing and illustrating manga, and the first anime, *Sally the Witch* (魔法使いサリー *Mahōtsukai Sarī*) by Yokohama Mitsuteru was the first of the magical

[27] As a further note, *Record of Ragnarok* in particular is an interesting example of the blend between religion and popular culture and media. In this manga, several gods from various religions and mythologies battle against one another and against a few chosen humans to decide the fate of humanity. What is more, Buddha in particular is represented in the manga as an androgynous figure, in reference to Buddha's dual nature as both man and woman.

girl genre (魔法少女 *mahō shōjo*). *Mahō shōjo*, although a relatively new subgenre, has connections to the Buddhist concept of *henshin* (変身 transformation), which is also replicated on the stages of Kabuki and Takarazuka. In fact, "the conventions of the magical girl genre, especially the elaborate description of metamorphosis that enables an ordinary girl to turn into a supergirl, have been widely imitated across various genres and media categories. … [The] genre has been an active site of contesting ideas surrounding gender roles and identities" (Saito 144-145). Similar to how religion affected the mystery plays of the medieval period in Western culture, *shōjo* and Buddhism (and even Shintō) are powerful driving factors in how the narratives on stage are developed in Noh, Bunraku, and Kabuki theatres. *Shōjo* culture was first created as a need for women to express themselves in a male-dominated society; thus, *shōjo* is predominantly associated with young women and is often seen as transformative. In traditional forms of Japanese theatre, the idea of *henshin* is deeply embedded in the performances and is central to the plays; it has ties not only to religious/spiritual communion, but also to gender emancipation and exploration.

This is a similar effect to what we observe in early modern England with the frequent inclusion of Ovidian mythology in literature of the time. Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson, and many more frequently made use of the myths in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, showing the prevalence and importance of these tales in world literature. *Metamorphoses*, as its name indicates, presents stories of transformation, from human to non-human, and vice versa. In the classical understanding of the phenomenon, these transformations were mostly forms of punishment inflicted by the gods onto hapless humans. By comparison, the Japanese *henshin* in the context of theatre refers specifically to the transformation of gender rather than the animate into the inanimate. In the Buddhist sense, it is also not related to punishment or wrongdoing, but it is rather a form of upgrade—especially for women who can 'become' men through transformation (enlightenment).

In Takarazuka, these concepts align to create a unique experience that is gender-based and that caters to a female audience in keeping with the *shōjo* tradition. Originally, *henshin* was something seen in Kabuki plays whereby male actors 'transformed' into women on stage (J. Robertson 1998).

Comparatively, “female bodies are regarded in Buddhist doctrine not only as polluted but also as representative of a lower form of existence, [in which] enlightenment is not possible for them unless they manage to metamorphose into male bodies” (J. Robertson 54). Because of this, the negative effects of Buddhist thought still echo today in modern performances in which the female body is transformed into a male one through the magic of stage work. In Takarazuka, actresses undergo such transformations, thereby combining the effects of the Buddhist *henshin*, as well as the *mahō shōjo* in a contemporary setting. Audiences who witness these transformations also partake in transformations of their own as they enter the dream world of the stage.

Takarazuka Politics

As a response to the patriarchal Kabuki, Kobayashi Ichizō created in 1913 the *Takarazuka shōjo kageki yōseikai* (宝塚少女歌劇養成会), which would later become the Takarazuka Revue (*Takarazuka kageki dan*). Despite its initial appearance as a pro-woman, empowering device, the Revue has faced criticism both internally and externally for adhering to the Meiji era’s governing philosophy of “Good Wives, Wise Mothers.” According to this motto, women were encouraged and expected to conform to specific roles of child rearing and household management. In fact, “[u]nlike men, who were identified as members of the nation by their productive capacity and military service, women were recognized as citizens for their domestic support for those male activities and for producing the next generation” (Koyama 31-32). Even though Takarazuka’s creation coincides with the end of this period, and that postwar Japan recognized that “women no longer existed as only mothers and wives” (32), the company held fast to the idea that actresses on its stage were meant to use their work experience to understand *how* to be conventional women in society.

Education for women became increasingly more important at the beginning of the twentieth century, and society “viewed the advancement of women more as a necessity than not, [arguing] that a new image of the ‘good wife and wise mother’ was necessary. Instead of strengthening traditional values, society moved to modify the norms for women in response to the current of the times” (36). Despite the advancements in women’s rights and their entry in the workforce, “it was considered necessary to avoid the ‘masculinization’ of women as they moved forward into

male society" (37). Takarazuka directly contradicted this idea by encouraging half of its members to become men on stage for the purpose of entertainment. Still, Kobayashi himself made sure that his actresses respected gender roles. In a letter to the *otokoyaku* actress Ashihara Kuniko, Kobayashi "[asked] her to make sure that new students understood that they were not to use masculine words or to behave in a manly fashion in their daily lives. For Kobayashi, the most problematic 'male' words were *aniki* (elder brother), *boku* (a self-referent denoting 'male' gender), and *kimi* (a masculine form of 'you')" (J. Robertson 73). This confusing and contradictory behaviour contributes to why Takarazuka is seen as both a challenger and reinforcer of "Good Wives, Wise Mothers." Today's actresses are not as concerned with pronouns and clear gender distinctions, but the company and Japanese society at large still struggles with these concepts. This clear segregation of men's and women's roles in society, rooted in Buddhist doctrine, has barely evolved as society has progressed; however, due to the rise in popularity of the *shōjo* manga and its influence on the perception of the Self, Takarazuka has come to embody societal changes in Japan in terms of sexuality, gender, and performance.

Takarazuka's ability to manipulate gender (Stickland 2004) both on and off stage is unique to this company, as Kabuki actors do not continue to 'act' beyond their prescribed role. The same is not true for Takarazuka actresses who present themselves to their fans in their stage personas. After a show, actresses exit the theatre, known as the *demachi* (出待ち*)*,[28] to crowds of adoring fans who shower them with flowers, letters, and gifts.[29] During *demachi*, *otokoyaku* actresses in particular are very popular with the fans, thereby creating a division between them and *musumeyaku* actresses. Some of the criticism has been directed at this imbalance and how *musumeyaku* are disregarded in favour of the masculine *otokoyaku*. In terms of how the actresses train for their roles, "the *otokoyaku* are actively encouraged to study the behaviour and actions, or *kata* of male celebrities in order to more effectively represent ideal men on stage" (J. Robertson 12) while the *musumeyaku*'s "femininity is staged in order to make the player of men's roles appear more masculine by contrast" (200). This contributes to a stronger fanbase centred

[28] The same event also happens as actress enter the theatre before a performance (known as *irimachi* 入待ち). Fans can wait outside the theatre for several hours before and after a show to see their favourite performer.
[29] This is especially true for top *otokoyaku* stars who are "often overwhelmed with offerings" (J. Robertson 164).

around the male-performers since their aesthetic is reinforced through the presence of the overly feminized *musumeyaku*. In terms of the fan culture surrounding this company,

> … it is clear, from the efforts of the publicity machine that surrounds and sustains Takarazuka, that girls and women are given both implicit permission and active encouragement to love other women—specifically, the male-role players—under the pretext that this affection is not (homo)sexual in nature, because the object of their love is 'male', and therefore does not compromise the subjects' 'normal' sexuality. … these female fans can enjoy performing femininity (or, in some cases, masculinity) specifically for the sake of other women. (Stickland 10)

Stickland's point is especially observable in *Jūniya* in how the two pairings, Orsino/Cesario and Olivia/Cesario, are represented and treated by the audience. The former is, as Stickland says, "not (homo)sexual in nature" because of Orsino's *otokoyaku* status, while the latter clearly is because of Viola's true identity. In the same way that the Kabuki *onnagata* represents the perfect woman, the Takarazuka *otokoyaku* has a similar effect of being the perfect man for a predominantly female audience and fanbase. This, however, creates patriarchal problems since it once again encourages fans to turn their attention towards the 'men' in the troupe and disregard the women by their side. Even though Takarazuka competes with Kabuki in terms of its gender performance, its initial purpose of subversion in theatre simultaneously reinforces and destabilises patriarchal concepts through the existence of the *otokoyaku*.

Since its foundation in 1913, the Takarazuka Revue has held public interest for both its populist style and its blurring of social, sexual, and gender roles. In the same way that Kabuki features unisex performances, so too does Takarazuka, except that it proudly showcases women instead of men who make use of these transformations both on and off stage. Despite the similarities between Takarazuka and Kabuki, the former has been lauded as being "superficial, florid, gaudy, dreary, banal, and cheap (Arnott qtd. in J. Robertson 26). This over stylized and dramatized theatre is known to produce "kitsch musical adaptations" (Motoyama, Fielding, and Konno 19) and has been called "nylon Kabuki" (J. Robertson 26), which contrasts with how traditional Kabuki

is viewed. Where men's Kabuki is highly praised and marked as a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage, Takarazuka is disregarded as being a women's theatre.

Even though Takarazuka is a well-known company, its inner world is incredibly closed-off and secretive.[30] Regardless of its secretiveness, the company puts out an outwardly image that is attractive to acting aspirants and starstruck fans alike. This theatre's appeal remains as it combines various elements of Japanese culture and society that are greatly appreciated by the masses. As discussed earlier, actresses, known as Takarasiennes, are separated into two distinct roles, either *musumeyaku* or *otokoyaku*, and the two rarely crossover.[31] The actresses are known as 'students' (生徒 *seito*)[32] throughout their career and have their *shōjo*-hood prolonged by staying in the company for as long as necessary. Upon leaving the company, actresses become 'graduates' (卒業生 *sotsugyōsei*) and are then symbolically ready to join society as grown women. This technique is reminiscent of finishing schools in the West, in which young girls learned how to become good housewives while in school and were then expected to be perfect ladies once they graduated. In 1960s Switzerland, for example, finishing schools were intended for elite young girls from good families, and the purpose of such establishments was to have the girls learn specific skills: "la jeune fille vient apprendre le français tout en s'initiant à la vie communautaire, aux bons usages de la société et aux secrets de l'art de la parfaite maîtresse de maison [the young girl learns French all the while familiarising herself with communal life, social etiquette, and the secret arts of being the perfect housewife]" (Bertron 67). Takarazuka's music school does not

[30] J. Robertson writes: "my own first glimpse into the charged history of the Revue's sexual politics was also my first encounter with the company's almost impenetrable defense of Takarazuka's public image. It was June 1987, and I had been given permission to peruse and order photocopies from the otherwise noncirculating scrapbooks maintained by the Revue's archival staff. … it became obvious to me the next day that my choice of subject—actually one among many—had touched a nerve. … Clearly my interest in the sexual politics of the Revue was viewed by the administration as provocative. … I was not perceived by [the administrators] as one of the 'friendly' foreigners whose work extended the Revue's public relations agenda" (42-43).

[31] There are actresses who occasionally swap performance genders. Usually, this happens early on in their career when the company sees that an actress fits better in one role than the other. However, there are exceptions, and some *otokoyaku* can sometimes play as *musumeyaku* in some productions. Such is the case in *Epiphany* (see chapter 2 for more details).

[32] In the early days of the company, "the term not only justified [Kobayashi] paying them less than fully professional actors but reflected his belief that a wedding ceremony marked the start of a woman's real career, whereupon she became a full-fledged actor, with the conjugal household her stage, and her husband and children her audience" (J. Robertson 67).

teach housekeeping skills, but students were once expected to practice traditional arts (J. Robertson 1998) alongside the development of their acting, dancing, and singing skills. To this day, the company adheres to its principles of developing accomplished women through stage arts. The school's website showcases this mentality perfectly: "We at the Takarazuka Music School emphasize the importance of acquiring the decency and etiquette encapsulated in our school motto: 'Purity, Honesty, Beauty'. We are convinced that this emphasis will significantly help students develop their own sophisticated personalities even further, as women and as respected participants in society" ("Takarazuka Music School"). The emphasis on gender-based respectability is a remnant of the Meiji era inception of the company and still dictates its values, regardless of how actresses and fans act and feel outside the confines of the company.

In order to fulfill the motto of "Good Wives, Wise Mothers," actresses are expected to leave the troupe and acting all together, and to trade it in for a 'standard' and socially conforming lifestyle. Kobayashi, the company founder, wished for his 'students' to perform gender roles to the best of their abilities. By 'performance' here we can compare the social version of this action to what happens on stage. As per Judith Butler's theory on gender performativity, the 'performance' is a direct consequence of perceptions of gender, as well as cultural norms and learnings that serve to reinforce—albeit unknowingly—patriarchal values. Furthermore, as she writes in *Gender Trouble*, "gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts …. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out 'gender' from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained" (Butler 3). For Takarazuka, the understanding of women's place in Japanese society is directly related to the government's political agenda to maintain a hierarchy of power that promotes masculinity. The fact that "identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (25), Kobayashi's first postwar 'students' contributed to this performance of gender by learning *how* to become women *through* playacting as men or as highly feminized versions of women—both false, forced versions of Woman. Deborah Cameron says that "as active producers rather than passive reproducers of gendered behaviour, men and women may use their awareness of the gendered meanings that attach to particular ways of speaking and acting to

produce a variety of effects" (329). Kobayashi wanted his 'students' to become perfect women, and this was to be accomplished by their ability to perform the opposite sex. In fact,

> he theorized that by performing as men, females learned to understand and appreciate males and the masculine psyche. Consequently, when they eventually retired from the stage and married, which Kobayashi urged them to do, they would be better able to perform as Good Wives, Wise Mothers, knowing exactly what their husbands expected of them. In other words, the actors were trained to perform gender roles that would facilitate their postretirement reentry [sic] into a more conventional lifestyle. (J. Robertson 67)

It is this exact idea that we see replicated in *Twelfth Night* in which Viola indirectly learns how to be a good wife to Orsino through her disguise and playacting as a man, as I will discuss below. In reality, many Takarasiennes continue their acting and go on to have illustrious careers with other companies instead of following the Revue's antiquated expectations. Statistically, in 80 years of Takarazuka history, only 33% of *otokoyaku* graduates have gone on to marry after leaving the theatre. What is more, *otokoyaku* in their early 30s are statistically less likely to marry (65.4%) than those who are in their late 30s (76.1%).[33] The actresses' situations are comparable to Kabuki actors who are encouraged to marry and have sons so that they may be trained for stage work and continue both the family and theatrical traditions; however, in Takarazuka, children of former actresses do not follow the same pipeline to success as their male Kabuki counterparts do.

Language of Transformation

Linguistically, the term 男役 *otokoyaku* is limiting in nature because of the 役 *yaku* (act, role) part in the word. Takarasiennes are not allowed to 'become men' in the sense that Kabuki actors are encouraged to become women.[34] Where *henshin* is liberating for the *onnagata* who 'becomes Woman,' it is restrictive to the *otokoyaku* who merely 'performs man.' This is related to the archaic religious implications of *henshin*, which dictate that women are so low in status on the

[33] See "Takarazuka: Who got married? Is it true that otokoyaku Top Stars cannot get married!?" (2019).
[34] The word *otokoyaku* translates directly to "man" (男) and "role" (役) while the word *onnagata* is, in the literal sense, "woman" (女) and "shape/form" (形).

road to enlightenment, that the application of *henshin* to women is not the "creation of an androgyne, but rather a female's total transformation into 'the opposite' sex: in short, rebirth as a male over the course of several generations" (J. Robertson 54). Naturally, seeing as this is impossible, the Takarasienne *otokoyaku* can only ever 'perform' and not 'become.' On this topic, Cameron draws on Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler to argue that "'becoming a woman' (or a man) is not something you accomplish once and for all at an early stage of life. Gender has constantly to be reaffirmed and publicly displayed by repeatedly performing particular acts in accordance with the cultural norms (themselves historically and socially constructed, and consequently variable) which define 'masculinity' and 'femininity'" (329). Beauvoir herself in *The Second Sex* sees Woman as a construction since "one is not born a woman, but rather, becomes one" (283), and Butler furthers the point by adding that "… one 'becomes' a woman, but always under a cultural compulsion to become one. … There is nothing in [Beauvoir's] account that guarantees that the 'one' who becomes a woman is necessarily female" (8). This is exemplified in Kabuki theatre, but the same can be said about the performance (or construction) of maleness in both society and in art. The repeated behaviour raised by Cameron, in the context of the stage, is marked by a constant reaffirming of gender through stylization and clothing.

Indeed, attire plays an important role in how the actors are perceived as either performers or 'real' men or women on stage. For Shakespeare's actors of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages, they reused out-of-fashion, often expensive dresses and wore wigs to accentuate their femininity (Bradbrook 1966) and, as Susan Cerasano notes, "players kept costs to a manageable level by buying second-hand garments and purchasing new costumes for only the major actors (or the unusual characters)" (qtd. in Korda 45). In Japan, the *kimono* takes on the same role as an every day garment transformed into a stage prop. Takie Sugiyama Lebra likens the effects of stage costumes to *kimono*-wearing when he writes that the art of "*kimono* dressing, taught in specialized kimono schools and demonstrated on stage," is a "kata-motivated transformation through clothing, as seen also in kabuki and bunraku" (59). In other words, the 型 *kata* (type,

style)[35] helps in the transformation of the body from one gender into another through, in this case, costuming. This transformation affects the perception of the Self and, for the *onnagata*, it represents the

> … ideal feminine form, and also one who embodies that ideal, i.e. the not simply an imitator of a living woman but a creator of the woman in ideal form both physically and spiritually; ideal, that is, from the viewpoint of a man in the particular society of the particular time, in which the necessity of this female impersonation first came into being, that is, when neither a woman nor a youth, but an adult actor had to play a woman. (Ozaki 5).

When applied to Takarazuka, even though the actresses are only ever *yaku*, the act of dressing in rhinestone studded suits and men's clothing contributes to the transformation, regardless of the restrictions of the language as discussed in the previous section. However, as Chen points out, "in order to appear asexual, the front fly line in the cut of the *otokoyaku*'s trousers is omitted while their breasts are hidden underneath their male costumes" (57). That being said, since Takarazuka actresses are also professional dancers, the absence of a fly line (or other features such as buttons) could be attributed to the fact that the clothing needs to be flexible to allow for movement. A stiff zipper could be a hindrance to the dancers; therefore, its absence makes sense. By comparison, male classical ballet dancers also wear featureless trousers such as leotards to lend more ease of movement. Chen's analysis of the lack of a fly line does not take into account the need for flexibility in these costumes, but the androgynous nature of this clothing that Chen mentions contributes to the erasure of one gender in favour of another.

[35] *Kata* (型) is not to be confused with *kata* (形), which is another reading of the character that forms the compound *gata* in *onnagata.* The first of the two refers to style or type, such as in martial arts, while the latter is the shape or form of something (e.g.: 人形 *ningyō* (doll) is literally "human" and "shape.")

Figure 4. – *Otokoyaku* actress Sagiri Seina in her finale outfit for *Dramatic 'S'!* (2017) © Takarazuka Revue Company

This is in a way similar to the *kimono* outfits of Kabuki actors that also hide the body and make it appear more streamlined. The *kata* of an actor only needs to be properly "adopted and acted out, whether the singer is 'naturally' male or female does not matter. In these ways, *kata* can work like a mask to dissimulate self" (Lebra 57). The idea of the *mahō shōjo* as a vehicle for transformation, then, becomes an interesting stage device to achieve the full transformation of the Self, rather than merely masking it. While stage costumes act as visual markers for characters and help to create cues as to a character's personality, these transformations—from actor to

character—are stage-bound and temporary since they cease to exist after a performance. Takarazuka's relationship to costuming transcends the stage as every day life becomes the stage for the actresses. The transformation is permanent, insofar as the actress is an active member of the company. What happens to her after 'graduation' is a complicated question as the social re-entry of an actress is typically a 'return to normal' as though her whole career was one long-running performance. Again, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* draws points of comparison with this mechanism, and *Jūniya* in particular shows how the shedding of the mask in the form of clothing forces a reaffirmation of gender norms.

The performativity transcends the social connotations because the purpose of modifying the *kata* of the actor is the complete transformation from one gender into the other. This is supported by the fact that Revue actresses embody their roles as 'men' or 'women' off stage as well; instead of having a 'return to normal' after a performance, which would include a shedding of the costume, hair, and makeup, the actresses maintain their feminine or masculine persona into their everyday lives. In a way, it can be said that the stage extends itself into real life, and the performance never truly ends. The actresses, who have replaced their birth identity with a stage one, including a false name and false outward performance, are always considered *yaku* until the day they retire from the company. This effect is especially visible with those who perform male roles, the *otokoyaku*. Actresses who are selected in school to become *otokoyaku* are typically tall, have short, cropped hair, and drop their vocal timbre to sound more masculine. This is not dissimilar to the phenomenon of the boy actors of early modernity who were chosen to play female characters because of their naturally high voices, small stature, and delicate features. Ozaki writes that both the *onnagata* of Kabuki and the boy actor of Shakespeare's stage,

> … use a *kata* (style of acting) and both begin by observing and imitating a living woman, of which both make a *kata* but with a difference: an adult actor cannot end with this realistic *kata*, but has to create, and still improve, the *kata* of the woman as the ideal pattern of female beauty, both physical and spiritual, which he can continue to act however old he becomes, … whereas the boy-actress can still go on mimicking, taking advantage of youth…. (14-15)

By contrast, the *otokoyaku*, who is actively encouraged to emulate male movie stars like Marlon Brando, Elvis Presley, and Clark Gable (J. Robertson 1998), is akin to the boy actor who could only ever mimic and not 'become,' unlike the Kabuki *onnagata*. The *kata* is an important element of theatre study and practice that enables these specialised actors to fully embody their stage gender, whether male or female, to its full capacity.

Genre Crossovers

Among Takarazuka's most often performed plays, *The Rose of Versailles* (ベルサイユの薔薇 *Berusaiyu no Bara*) is a story that embodies these varied concepts of gender transformation and *shōjo*-ness. The play is an adaptation of the very popular manga of the same name, written by Ikeda Riyoko. First published in the 1970s, *Berubara*, as it is known in Japanese, is objectively the most popular Takarazuka play (Minami 2019) as it allows the themes previously discussed to coalesce on stage and showcase Takarazuka's talents as a gender-bending troupe. This should come as no surprise, as it features an androgynous heroine, Oscar, who was raised as a man and who acts as Marie Antoinette's personal guard during the French Revolution. The manga series features a famous love square that creates tensions between gender, sexuality, and social expectations. Oscar François, the cross-dressing heroine, loves Count Fersen, while her best friend André is madly in love with her. Added to the mix is Rosalie, a young woman who falls for the masculine Oscar. This plot has many similarities with Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, which, as previously mentioned, has also been performed by Takarazuka many times. Due to its themes of mistaken identity and love, *The Rose of Versailles* is very popular with fans of Takarazuka and, because it is removed from the Japanese context, the ideas around gender and sexuality shown through the various characters' relationships to one another contrast with the expected norms in Japan, which is why they take place in a European context from which it is 'safe' to discuss them. This is a common trick employed in *shōjo* manga of the golden age of the 60s and 70s. The characters are often European, and these taboo love stories or gender representations happen in foreign countries that do not (presumably) hold the same social values as Japan. These more 'open minded' views contrast with the moralistic values of the religious plays typically portrayed

in Kabuki and Noh theatre. That being said, *The Rose of Versailles* phenomenon coincides with important social changes in Japan. Indeed,

> … as the author Ikeda observes, this manga was consciously produced under the influence of the women's liberation movement (Oshiyama 2007: 209), and conveyed liberationist messages to its readers. Liberationists sought more options for women's lives than being mothers and wives. Likewise, in her manga, Ikeda went against the social structure that did not allow women's autonomy. She writes that she wanted the French Revolution in this manga to be "the inner revolution of Japanese women" in an age when they could not choose their own lives (Ikeda, qtd. in Anan 121).

This female liberation from gender norms and restrictions continues to resonate today through Takarazuka productions. In fact, "since 1974 Takarazuka has produced various versions of *The Rose of Versailles*. As of June 2014, the total number of performances of these adaptations is about 2,100, and the audience attendance is over five million" (Asahi Digital, qtd. in Anan 137). Seeing how *The Rose of Versailles* holds such an important cultural significance, it is not surprising that a play like *Twelfth Night* should find the same kind of reception in Japan.

In the Buddhist play *The Straw Millionaire* (わらしべ長者 *Warashibe Chōja*), for example, the transformation that takes place is one that is much more in line with the religious traditions and the original meaning of *henshin.* In the play, the protagonist trades his way up from a humble piece of straw all the way to a farm; this is an allegory for Buddhist enlightenment. The magic here is one of virtues being applied and rewarded rather than from an external, metaphysical source like in *Berubara*. Interestingly, *The Straw Millionaire* is performed annually alongside other famous Buddhist plays by the Gion district[36] geisha and maiko, which is yet another break from tradition as the male characters are performed by women. In these performances, the combination of religious themes, women actors, and *shōjo* are all the more apparent.[37] However, that is not to say that Takarazuka does not accomplish similar results in this regard. They, too,

[36] Gion is the old entertainment quarter in Kyoto that is most famous for its geisha, but is also home to theatres, *ochaya* (tea houses), and sumo halls.

[37] In these performances, male roles are typically performed by maiko, young women in training to become geisha, while established and more mature geisha take on the roles of musicians, narrators, and singers.

perform old Buddhist plays from time to time, but the combination of the glitzy Revue and the stiff morals of old creates a new genre of theatre that flips expectations and subverts religious and patriarchal values by placing at the forefront women who take control of these codes by becoming the men who think them unworthy. Still, "the popularity and attraction of the *Shōjo* … is ascribed to such resistance to the constraints of adulthood and the popularity of this cute, little-girl fashion among teenage girls and women in their twenties is associated with an obsession with prolonging their childhood" (Chen 55), as testified by the company's reluctance to see their actresses as anything other than 'students.' As such, the *shōjo* subgenre prevails and continues to dominate the dream world of the stage upon which women of all ages can escape the realities of their harsh society. However, even though it may seem like escapism at first glance, I argue that this theatre in particular offers a space for women to empower one another through the means of a closed-off, intimate community with all of its intricacies—a sort of secret society for women, if you will.

Ultimately, the history of theatre in Japan has seen many changes ever since the introduction of Buddhism as the main religion of the country. Upon its addition to Japanese society, Buddhism has shaped theatrical traditions by barring women from the stage—the very women who created the theatres that are so prized today—and limiting certain types of men from becoming actors because of the fear of corrupting morals. The *shōjo* subgenre permeated different aspects of popular culture, and this forced the Buddhistic ideals to fall away slowly and to leave place for a more liberated form of theatre for women. During the Meiji period, the government positioned the emperor as the highest symbol of manly existence, thereby creating tension with the gender-breaking existence of *otokoyaku* (Miura 2019). Takarazuka continues to this day to challenge these traditions by its very existence, yet it still struggles internally from patriarchal values that seek to infantilize adult women by keeping them as 'girls' and 'students' for as long as possible, all with the specific intent to one day have them fill heteronormative roles in society. Even though these aspects of women's theatre in Japan could benefit from revisions, it seems that Takarazuka, amongst others, has successfully contributed to the emancipation of women in the theatre arts. Shakespeare, as a vehicle of transmission, allows the theatre to express these complex ideas of female agency by shaping the narrative to fit the cultural need. Even though Shakespeare is far

removed from the Japanese context both in terms of historical presence and language and culture, his plays offer an opportunity to showcase socially divergent ideas under the guise of art and performance that resonate with Japanese postwar hopes.

1.2 Shakespeare, the *Shōjo* King

When discussing Shakespeare in conjunction with manga, Western scholars tend to focus on the English phenomenon of the popular *Manga Shakespeare* series by the UK publisher, SelfMadeHero, which ignores the long history of Japanese Shakespeare in popular culture. However, Shakespeare's relationship to manga begins in Japan, where the narrative genre was first created. Shakespeare's works during the Meiji era and up until the early Showa era (1926-1989) predominantly appeared in magazines geared towards young women rather than young men (Miura 2019). Furthermore, the popularity of Japanese children's literature, inspired by Western Romanticism, contributed to the development of *shōjo* narratives in the early 1920s. According to Minami Ryuta, "the earliest manga rendering of Shakespeare was done by Osamu Tezuka" ("What's in a name?" 292), the artist of the aforementioned *Buddha* manga. Osamu's Shakespeare manga is an adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1959 in which "Bassanio is a young doctoral student who asks Antonio for financial support" (292). Shakespeare's association with the *shōjo* genre started in the 1970s (Minami 2019) and, unlike with the religious manga discussed in section 1.1 that are more often sold as boy's manga, Shakespeare's stories are more often 'feminised' by focusing on his female characters.

The market for Shakespearean plays transformed into sequential art and sold as graphic novels or manga under the *shōjo* label is not dependent on the type of play or genre.[38] Shakespeare's tragedies and histories are as popular for young women as the comedies, which poses an interesting question: why are Shakespeare's more violent works not targeted towards a *shōnen* or even a *seinen*[39] audience? According to Cohn, "what distinguishes *shojo* from other genres such as *shonen* (for boys) is their special focus on emotions and psychological conditions while

[38] Although, there are some exceptions where Shakespeare's plays are published under different labels. However, the vast majority are labelled as *shōjo*.
[39] *Shōnen* (少年) and *seinen* (青年) are genres primarily directed at boys and young men, respectively.

their style can vary to a great degree" (qtd. in Henke 88). In terms of Shakespearean stories, the reliance on emotional response and the exploration of human psychology are at the forefront of the narratives, which could explain why his plays fit more with the *shōjo* genre. Furthermore, "*shojo* mangas primarily feature romantic relationships, often in form of love triangles. More importantly, most of them display strong notions of gender-bending; the protagonists are usually female, sometimes rebellious heroines, who engage in cross-dressing" (Henke 88). Naturally, this resonates with Shakespeare's comedies especially, but the same is also true for his histories and tragedies. For example, the currently ongoing manga series *Requiem of the Rose King* (薔薇王の葬列 *Bara ō no sōretsu*, 2013), written and illustrated by mangaka Kanno Aya, is a 'mangafied' version of the War of the Roses and of Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part 3* and *Richard III.* This manga features an intersex Richard who finds himself[40] in a love triangle with both King Henry and Edward of Lancaster. This twist departs from Shakespeare but, because of Richard's ambiguous gender and sexuality, the manga is firmly placed in the *shōjo* genre despite the violence of the narrative—a characteristic that should normally place the manga in the *shōnen* or *seinen* category. Similarly, *The Rose of Versailles*' author, Ikeda Riyoko, wrote a *shōjo* version of *Othello* in 1969 in her manga by the same name (オセロー *Oserō*), which again shows how the traditional theatre genres do not affect the plays' *shōjo* adaptations.

Regardless of the genre of writing, however, the structure of the industry comes into play in how these types of narratives are published and consumed. For *shōjo* manga, the "corporate editors are primarily men and the artists are all young women" (Prough 6). The exact same division of labour is true for Takarazuka, where the writers, directors, and production staff are all exclusively male, while the actors themselves are uniquely female (J. Robertson 1998). As a male playwright, Shakespeare fits well into this gender division; to have his plays performed by women matches with what is observed in Takarazuka and *shōjo* manga. Furthermore, the *shōjo* cultural narrative encourages an aesthetic that demands for a higher level of femininity for both men and women than what is observed in other styles. Shakespeare's plays, when transformed into *shōjo* narratives, need an all-female touch to actualise their full potential in the Japanese context. The

[40] Richard refers to himself with masculine pronouns, which is why I do the same.

removal of violent masculinity from the stage leaves space for a softer, feminised masculinity as portrayed by Takarazuka. This indirectly emulates early modern masculinity that was equally feminised through clothing, jewellery, and hair styles. Stanley Wells explains that "undeniably the appearance of men, especially of the aristocracy, in relation to clothes as well as to the length of hair resembled that of women. The Earl of Southampton was proud of his long swathes of hair, which is conspicuous in a portrait painted around the time that Shakespeare dedicated poems to him" (71). Even though this style was common practice at the time, Wells is careful to say that "it does not necessarily denote effeminacy" (71). The fact remains, however, that men and women had similar aesthetics during Shakespeare's time. In terms of the theatre specifically, David Cressy writes that:

> Dressing boy actors for female roles, for example, was … a scandalous 'source of homoerotic attraction' arousing 'deep-seated fears' of an 'unstable monstrous' and feminized self. Where in real life or in literature, by this account, cross-dressing involved struggle, resistance, and subversion, as well as modification, recuperation, and containment of the system of gendered patriarchal domination. (Howard qtd. in Cressy 438-439)

Despite the fact that Shakespeare's theatre used boy actors to play the female roles, the erasure of masculinity in this context is comparable to the all-female adaptations of his plays. The transformative effect of clothing, in this case, pings back to the discussion centred around the *otokoyaku* actress and her performance of feminised masculinity.

Inasmuch as "the magical girl narratives often revolve around the magical freedom of adolescence prior to the gendered stage of marriage and motherhood, suggesting the difficulty of imagining elements of power and defiance beyond the point of marriage" (Saito 148), so too does the *shōjo* subgenre once translated to theatre rather than in manga. The "Good Wives, Wise Mothers" motto of Meiji Japan is reflected mostly in Shakespeare's comedies, which makes them the perfect staging material for a society that is familiar with these conventions. Shakespeare's habit of ending his comedies with marriages, whether more purely motivated, such as in *Much Ado About Nothing*, or questionable, such as in *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Measure for*

Measure, results in the same outcome: heteronormativity is achieved and order is restored—that is, after a usually long and convoluted series of events that serve to question this so-called normativity. In terms of the Revue, this translates into a reinforcement of gender norms on stage as the performances of these plays tend to follow Shakespeare's format and include wedding scenes at the end. According to Yoshihara Yukari,

> [t]he Revue has a long history of Shakespeare productions. The earliest Shakespearian work by the Revue, titled *Death of Ophelia*, was performed in 1926. The official list of Shakespeare performances in Takarazuka style show that twenty-eight Shakespearian plays were performed between 1926-1999, of which *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet* are the most popular. (131)

With such a long history, it is no surprise that the Revue continues to stage Shakespeare even today which, at the time of writing this dissertation, the most recent Shakespeare play is yet another production of *Romeo and Juliet* directed by Koike Shūichiro and performed in 2021. The relationship between Japan and Shakespeare is one that runs deep, which makes the Revue an interesting point of intersection between these two seemingly contrasting worlds. Shakespeare is important to the Revue as he often becomes a vehicle for political discussions and, as Yoshihara points out in her discussion of *Julius Caesar*,[41] "if [the *musumeyaku*] lack some lustre in comparison with the otokoyaku players performing Caesar, Brutus and Cassius, it could be argued that they serve only to highlight the idealised masculinity of the *otokoyaku*" (133), an effect that is equally observable in any number of Shakespearean adaptations. Unlike with the comedies, the tragedies and histories feature more prominently male characters and, in Takarazuka where the *otokoyaku* dominates, "the homosocial bond between men, rather than heterosexual love, is the central theme" (133). In terms of *shōjo*—and by extension, the comedies—the emphasis is placed on the relationship between the lead *musumeyaku* and *otokoyaku* pair, but the homoerotic tension tends to remain as there is a close cultural relationship between the genres of *shōjo* and *shōnen-ai* (少年愛 boy's love). In *Twelfth Night*, this is even more so apparent as the heroine,

[41] Directed by Shinji Kimura, 2006.

Viola, uses the common stage trick of cross-dressing to infiltrate a masculine world. Her physical transformation on the Japanese stage is marked by her change of clothing, hair, and speech patterns. Furthermore, Viola's actions as both herself and her masculine alter ego Cesario especially define her in her relationships to her two possible romantic interests: Olivia and Orsino.

1.3 Double Standards: Orsino/Cesario and Olivia/Viola

Unlike with Shakespeare's opening scene of Orsino's monologue on love, Takarazuka's *Jūniya* opens with a shipwreck[42] and the separation of the siblings, Viola and Sebastian (Hanase Mizuka and Kaji Yūki, respectively).[43] This immediate introduction to Viola places the emphasis on her and not Orsino, which diverges from Shakespeare's introduction of the characters. In *TN*, Viola appears in act I scene II following Orsino's lovesick opening lines, but the *shōjo* genre demands that the heroine be the focus of the story, which is why Viola is the first to be seen. However, this opening scene in *Jūniya* is shown in a non-traditional way: instead of being enacted on stage, the shipwreck is briefly alluded to through a short black and white video in the style of the silver screen's silent movies. Though not yet physically on stage, Viola's distress is the focus of this opening. This sets the tone for the play, but mostly for how Viola's character should be perceived. In these first few minutes, Viola is positioned as a victim of the storm and of fate as she is torn apart from her brother, whose face is not shown in the opening sequence. Viola is given the appearance of a Hollywood star of the cinematic golden age, with blonde curls and a soft lens effect. Instead of speaking, Viola and Sebastian exchange a short dialogue on title cards that flash briefly on the screen. The short opening film starts with a series of shots of a ship on stormy seas, and the twins' panic is palpable in their short exchange. Viola calls out to Sebastian, "brother!," followed by a shot of the twins' interlocking hands with Sebastian's title card saying, "hold on!! Viola!" (00:01:23-00:02:02). The classical Hollywood style applied to *Jūniya* departs even from Morikawa's manga in which Orsino is the first character to appear, as with Shakespeare.

[42] Interestingly, this resonates with Trevor Nunn's film comedy *Twelfth Night* (1996) that "[works] through a '*Titanic* trope' … with Viola and Sebastian cast into the perilous seas from the 'passenger vessel on the edge of doom'" (Rothwell qtd. in Atkin 146).
[43] See appendix 1 for the complete cast list.

In keeping with Shakespeare's play, Viola comes to an agreement with the captain to ensure her safety and survival. To protect herself, she declares that "[she] will become a man" and approach Duke Orsino "to be his pageboy" (00:09:45-00:09:50) by disguising herself as her presumably deceased brother. Viola expresses that she "leaves [her] fate in [the duke's] hands" (00:10:03-00:10:05), yet her appearance immediately recalls the *shōjo* style of the 1960s and 1970s with her large curls and exaggerated eye makeup and lashes,[44] and her determinacy reflects that of the typical *shōjo* heroine who refuses to leave her life up to other people's whims. Even though her words and her appearance seem to be in opposition, this contradiction befits the *shōjo* aesthetic of the strong heroine who still needs to rely on a male figure to save her from whatever troubles she may have. As with Shakespeare, this Viola is also portrayed as a strong woman who fearlessly takes on the world after a devastating event.

Immediately after Viola and Sebastian's separation, we see Orsino (Yamato Yūga) sprawled on stage, melancholic and lovelorn, as he recites his opening lines. Orsino's appearance also fits the *shōjo* aesthetics as he is shown to have long, curly blonde hair and wears a floor-length, purple overcoat lined in a hot pink fabric. Chen explains that *Jūniya*'s aesthetic draws from Morikawa's manga "… in which Orsino is an androgynous hero with long wavy hair and Viola is a 'feminine boy' in her disguise as Cesario" (55). The *shōjo* style encourages this feminization of men and frequently portrays this type of aesthetic as the social ideal of masculinity. Duke Orsino is the first to appear physically on stage before any other character, and immediately breaks into song to represent Shakespeare's opening lines: "If music be the food of love, play on, / Give me excess of it" (*TN* I.i.1-2). As such, the initial image of Orsino is that of a *bishōnen* (美少年 pretty boy),[45] which is typical of male characters in the *shōjo* genre. These types of characters are described as being "positioned outside of traditional heteronormative sexuality" and "[are] a means of exploring a range of sexual and gender identities" (Christopher 75) through non-traditional

[44] On the topic of *shōjo* depictions of gender: "Manga characters are not portrayed realistically and they function only as signs. For example, the shape and size of eyes signify characters' sex and age; female characters' eyes are rounder while male characters' tend to be oval, and younger characters' eyes are bigger than older ones'" (Anan 117).

[45] Although the terms *biseinen* (美青年 pretty youth) or *binan* (美男 pretty man) may be a more appropriate qualifier for Orsino, I chose to use *bishōnen* to describe him since this is a word that is more commonly understood in English and among *shōjo* manga readers.

representations of masculinity. Orsino's clothing, combined with the singing and dancing, feature him as a romantic and love-sick hero. This aesthetic asks that men be portrayed with a soft femininity, while the women should have a more androgynous look. As opposed to *shōnen* and *seinen* manga in which men "are usually hypermasculine figures who are highly competitive and aggressive," the *bishōnen* of *shōjo* manga "usually have long hair, slender limbs, and few muscles" (McLelland 80). One of the defining traits of the *shōjo* style is to have a mix of genders embodied in men and women, which ties in with the Takarazuka *otokoyaku* who is "an analogous figure to the bishōnen, who is neither man nor woman" (McLelland 83). Furthermore, this type of masculinity through a feminised lens is directly related to the *bishōnen* characters who "are not only represented as feminine but are also inscribed in typically female situations because the primarily female readership sees itself depicted in these stories" (87). *Jūniya*'s Orsino embodies these concepts in the flesh as the actress who plays him stands on stage before an audience, bringing the manga *shōjo* hero to life. Therefore, this adaptation[46] of Shakespeare's play carries within its very first scene the long history of Japanese gender aestheticism, feminism, and popular culture.

[46] As a note of interest, Morikawa Kumi also wrote and illustrated a manga that centers around Beijing opera and its actors. For more on this topic, see chapter 2.

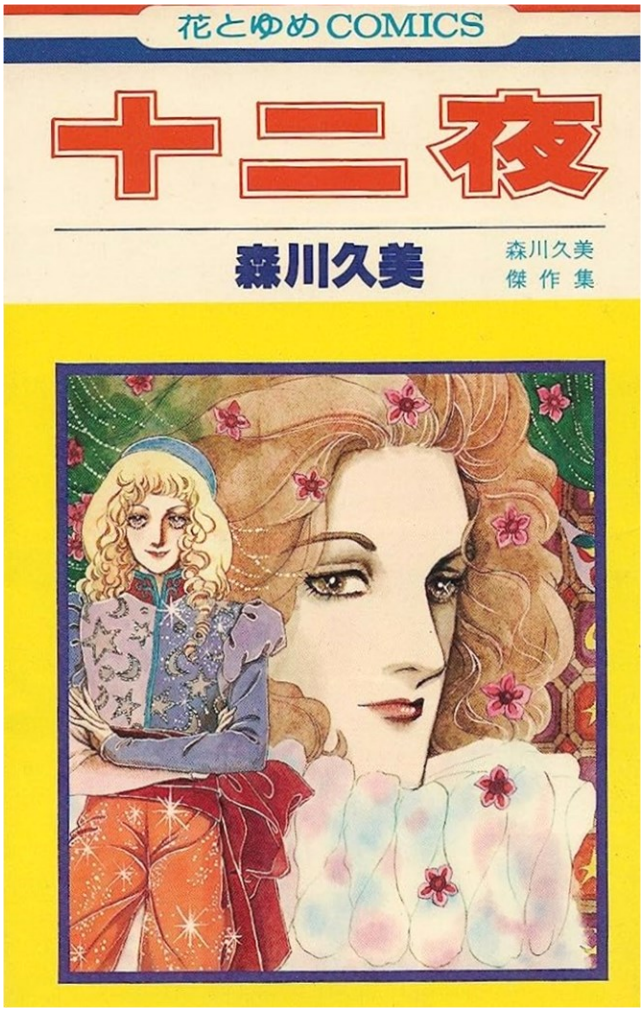

Figure 5. – Viola disguised as Cesario (left) and Duke Orsino (right) on the cover of *Twelfth Night* (*Jūniya*) © Morikawa Kumi (1978)

Seeing as how Takarazuka male-performing actors are perceived as being neither women nor men while on stage, "the lack of secondary sexual characteristics in the *otokoyaku* exerts an alternative attraction to Japanese women, and this attraction seems to be correlated with the Japanese *shōjo* subculture" (Chen 57), which is all the more embodied in the opening scene in

which Orsino sings about love and dances in high-heeled, thigh-high boots.[47] The *otokoyaku* is inherently romantic for the audience who sees her, and she represents a 'perfect man' in the same sense as how the Kabuki *onnagata* is the 'perfect woman.' The emphasis of the play is therefore placed on the *otokoyaku* in any performance, firmly positioning Takarazuka "… as belonging to *shōjo* culture" (Ohtani qtd. in Chen 57). Based on this principle, "the *otokoyaku* must seduce the audience" (57), which is even truer for the Top Star[48] of the troupe. This goal of seduction is rapidly achieved when Viola next appears on stage, cross-dressed as Cesario, and welcomes the duke home. Orsino asks Viola/Cesario to woo Olivia (Natsukawa Yura) on his behalf and launches into a short monologue about Viola/Cesario's perceived femininity of "ruby red lips" and as having a "voice that is as high and gentle as a young woman's" (00:18:45-00:18:48), which leads Orsino to declare that Viola/Cesario "was born this way to perform the role of [his] messenger" (00:18:53). Shakespeare's lines lend themselves to the portrayal of Viola as the masculine *shōjo* heroine who is as beautiful as a maiden yet is perceived as a gentleman and, by mirroring this effect, the male heroes are more feminine in appearance. However, despite Orsino's visual appearance, he uses a very masculine form of address in these lines, referring to Viola/Cesario as *omae* (お前 you), which initially marks him as virile but clashes with later, softer pronouns[49] as the play progresses. Orsino's comment on Viola/Cesario's appearance emphasises her superiority as an androgynous figure, and the fact that she was "born to perform" (演ずるのためこのように生まれてきた *enzuru no tame kono yō ni umarete kita*) relates back to the idea

[47] When discussing popular culture in Japan, one must also mention subcultures that are directly related such as in this case; the phenomenon of Visual Kei, a highly performative type of Japanese rock music has ties to the Revue in how the men in Visual Kei are often androgynous or feminized (due to makeup/hair/clothing), just like in this description of Orsino. This style of music and showmanship is comparable to punk and glam rock aesthetics in the West.

[48] Each troupe in Takarazuka has a Top Star, who is also the main *otokoyaku* performer, as well as a leading *musumeyaku*. The pair is always given the main roles in a production and are usually referred to as the 'golden combi.' However, in the context of this performance, Yamato Yūga was not yet known as a Top Star at the time of her role in this play. She became a Top Star in 2007 after switching troupes, from Tsuki to Sora. Yamato was given this role despite this tradition because this performance of *Twelfth Night* was performed at the Bow Hall by the junior members of the company.

[49] Orsino uses other forms of the 2nd and 3rd person singular "you" and "he/she" to address Viola/Cesario, namely *kimi* (君) and *ano ko* (あの子) (see footnote 54 for more on this distinction).

of performativity—in this case, as both a man and a messenger. The meaning is that to be born as both male and female in appearance equates to "performing" based on one's looks.

Yamato Yūga's performance as Orsino enhances the duke's immediate attraction to Viola-as-Cesario despite his request to have Olivia wooed. During this scene, Orsino sits daintily on some steps next to Viola/Cesario and gently holds her face in his hands, effectively seducing both Viola and the audience who watches it all unfold. For Orsino, who believes at this point that Viola is a man, his actions come across as uncharacteristic of a seemingly heterosexual man, and naturally imbues the tender scene with a homoerotic undertone. Unlike Shakespeare's Viola, this version of her maintains a part of femininity, which is picked up by the other characters. As Jonathan Crowe posits in his introduction to *Twelfth Night*, "Orsino responds to her with considerable erotic intensity in her guise as a young man, but also bonds with her as a male confidant despite her feminine traits; in both these respects, Orsino is unconsciously and perhaps dangerously deviating from social norms" (xxxix). Despite the slight differences between the two Violas, the tension remains: Orsino and Viola/Cesario's relationship, already complicated, is further confused by Olivia's and, somewhat later in the play, Sebastian's presence.

In *Jūniya*, Viola and Olivia's first meeting is coloured by the duke's desire to win Olivia's affection. At this point, Viola is fully devoted to Orsino and, despite her initial dislike of the lady, she puts the duke's feelings first and tries to convince Olivia of the duke's affection, stating: "Even if you [Olivia] were a demon, my master loves you deeply" (00:26:20-00:26:25); however, Olivia does not care about Orsino's feelings and asks Viola instead: "What would you do [to prove your love]?," to which Viola/Cesario says that she would sing loudly and call out Olivia's name to get her attention (0:26:54-00:27:13). It is at this moment that Olivia falls for Viola/Cesario, ignoring the fact that she is only visiting her on behalf of Orsino. Viola/Cesario leaves the scene angrily, calling Olivia a "beautifully cruel person" for refusing the duke (00:27:50). Viola's parting words convince Olivia even more that Viola/Cesario is the perfect gentleman for her because of her perceived sensitivity and emotional loyalty to Orsino, showing that Viola/Cesario is a passionate and caring youth.

Viola and Olivia are juxtaposed to one another in how the men in the play perceive them. Sebastian describes his sister to Antonio (Narumi Jun) in flattering terms: “We were born at the same time; we were twins. If possible, we would have liked to die together. … Contrary to me, everyone used to say that my sister was beautiful. … My sister had a beautiful heart. That [beautiful] sister is now gone” (00:29:52-00:30:19). Viola is portrayed by her brother as a gentle and loving person—a perfect example of a *shōjo* heroine—whereas Olivia is associated with being “cruel” and a “demon,” traits that are later explored in the subsequent scenes. The repetition of ‘beautiful’ serves to emphasise the differences between Sebastian and his sister, as he believes himself inferior to her. Similarly, Orsino treats Olivia with the same reverence, but Viola in her disguise as Cesario sees Olivia negatively. Here, disregarding the sibling relationship between the two, Sebastian is portrayed as a romantic youth who places the beauty and grace of a woman above all else—yet another trait plucked out of the *shōjo* aesthetic and that also recalls the conventions of medieval courtly love still prevalent in Shakespeare’s time. Sebastian is set up as the perfect romantic hero to match Orsino as both men will eventually win Olivia’s and Viola’s love, respectively.

However, the masculinised Viola does not adhere to these conventions and rather applies a woman’s gaze onto Olivia to qualify her as her antithesis. Kevin Goddard argues that “[t]he dominant ideas about the male gaze emerging from the feminist movement are that any gaze that appropriates the other in its scope is by definition ‘masculine’—whether by a man or by a woman, that gaze is based on a hierarchy of power relations in which the male is always dominant” (24). In this perspective, Viola-as-Cesario’s perception of Olivia is rooted in masculinity, yet her femaleness differentiates her from Orsino and Sebastian. Seeing as “most of the gaze, both male and female, is determined by archetypal images of what the sexes are” (25), Viola unconsciously compares herself to Olivia, hence creating the diametric opposition of their personalities. Olivia’s rejection of Orsino is at the basis of this opposition, as Viola feels that the lady is unfair, and perhaps even ungrateful, for rejecting the duke.

Comparatively, Olivia perceives the masculine Viola as a candidate for her love. Viola fits the stereotype of the masculine and aggressive male, especially when compared to the feminised

Orsino. As mentioned earlier, *Jūniya* puts forward these ideas through Viola's and Orsino's clothing and mannerisms; Orsino's feminised look and Viola's boyish disguise contrast and create a contradicting image of what is typically considered feminine and masculine. However, Olivia is aware that Viola/Cesario is not fully male; not because she knows of Viola's true identity, but because her youthfulness marks her as not-quite a man in the sense that Orsino is. Olivia's gaze is also coloured by her personal expectations for the opposite gender, as the female or male gaze is "the expression of the ideal each gender holds for the other and for itself" (26). Olivia idealises an image of masculinity that is more youthful yet less feminine than what Orsino displays. Because of this, Olivia refers to Viola as a 'young man' (青年 *seinen*) rather than the standard 'man' (男 *otoko*) when she says: "Before I knew it, the beautiful young man seems to have caught my eye" (00:28:14-22) in a short monologue following their encounter.

Linguistically, the word *seinen* relates back to the word *shōjo*[50] (which designates Viola early in the play) as opposed to the *otoko*/*onna* (man/woman) binary. The word *seinen* here plays an important role in how the dynamics will develop in the play since Viola/Cesario is perceived as a 'youth' instead of a man. Her androgyny and *shōjo* persona are pushed further, creating a clear distinction between herself and Orsino, who is older than her. From Olivia's perspective, the 'young gentleman' is more romantically interesting than Orsino because of the perceived softness and femininity afforded to not-quite matured young men. Here, Shakespeare's dialogue exemplifies this idea even more:

> DUKE
> O, then unfold the passion of my love;
> Surprise her with discourse of my dear faith;
> It shall become thee well to act my woes.
> **She will attend it better in thy youth**
> **Than in a nuncio's of more grave aspect**. (*TN* I.iv.24-28, emphasis added)

[50] In this case, the *shōjo* designation does not refer to the manga genre, but rather the gender qualification. The same is true for the words *shōnen* and *seinen*.

Orsino believes that another messenger from his household may not be able to relay his feelings, but Viola-as-Cesario, being a delicate young man with feminine traits, has better odds of wooing Olivia on his behalf. This reasoning is based on the idea that the serious, and possibly older, servant does not have the same appeal as the young and energetic Cesario, and that the servant cannot communicate Orsino's feelings convincingly. *Jūniya* plays on this idea by having a *musumeyaku* play Viola's part. Since the *musumeyaku* actress has an exaggerated femininity to contrast with her *otokoyaku* partner, Viola's youth is automatically associated to femaleness, thereby creating an interesting dynamic with Olivia as she is attracted to a feminine young man.

In act II, scene III, Viola/Cesario realises that Olivia is in love with her. In a monologue, she explains that "the duke loves Lady Olivia; I was sent to convey his feelings to her, and Olivia mistook my words and is now obsessed with me" (00:33:09-16). Just as Viola/Cesario comes to this realization, Orsino appears in a more sombre outfit in black, marking the change in him from a love-sick man to a jilted one. The pair sing and dance together to the theme song of the show with Viola still in her male disguise. Viola/Cesario lies at Orsino's feet as he dominantly stands over her, after which she kneels by his side in subservience, showing the audience that their relationship is still one of master and servant despite the romantic tension that is slowly building up with each new scene.

Figure 6. – Center: Viola/Cesario (left) and Orsino (right) © Takarazuka Company

Orsino's moodiness in this scene is rooted in the tradition of the *bishōnen* hero. The next time that Orsino and Viola/Cesario appear on stage together, they dance again, but something has changed: Orsino has yet another costume change and appears all in white, emulating the white knight trope of any given romance.[51] In Shakespeare's version, when Orsino has Feste sing for him, the white costume takes on a different meaning:

> CLOWN
> Come away, come away death,
> And in sad cypress let me be laid.
> Fly away, fly away, breath;
> I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
> My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
> O, prepare it.
> My part of death, no one so true
> Did share it. (*TN* II.iv.51-58)

Feste's song is melancholic as it equates death to unrequited love, and the white funerary shroud that is meant to envelop the broken-hearted lover contributes to the image of the passionate youth in love. The purity of innocent love is contrasted to the stark whiteness of the shroud, a motif that acts as a recognizable literary element in early modern poetry. This song, which takes place right before Viola/Cesario's (indirect) love confession in both the written play and in the performance, conveys a very different feeling. In Takarazuka's version, Orsino dances silently to an upbeat instrumental track and, even though he is dressed in white, the impression is not one of death, as Feste describes, but rather purity and innocence, especially once Viola/Cesario arrives on stage and joins Orsino in his silent dance. Shakespeare's line about the "fair cruel maid," although absent from *Jūniya*, recalls Viola/Cesario's earlier conversation with Olivia during which she called her "beautifully cruel." Even though the second instance of this line is removed from

[51] In Arthurian legends, the white knight is a saviour figure, such as Sir Galahad. Another appellation for this type of character is a 'knight in shining armour.'

the performance, it is felt when Orsino confides in Viola/Cesario and asks her to approach Olivia once more. Viola/Cesario asks him: “What would you do if that lady said she did not love you?,” a thought both unbearable and unlikely in Orsino’s mind who firmly replies: “I don’t want to hear that” (00:46:27-00:46:31). Nevertheless, Viola/Cesario drives him to face this reality and uses herself, through the anonymity of her made-up sister, as an example of what unrequited love can do to a young woman. When Orsino asks “did your sister die of love?” (00:48:23), Viola/Cesario’s answer departs from Shakespeare’s. Instead of saying “I am all the daughters of my father’s house, / And all the brothers too, and yet I know not” (*TN* II.iv.120-121), she says in *Jūniya*: “I am the only one left in my father’s house; I do not know” (00:48:30-00:48:40). This answer gives a different kind of ambiguity to the scene as she avoids the gendered language of “daughters” and “brothers.” Viola’s dual nature is removed from the Japanese lines and is replaced by a more neutral self-designation, which instead reinforces the image in Orsino’s mind of her being ‘all man.’ This erasure of gender in these lines contribute to the androgynous status of the character especially since in Shakespeare, Viola hints at her identity by mentioning “daughters” first, and then her masculine persona with the “brothers” comment. *Jūniya* foregoes this hint in favour of a more explicit love confession that is imbued with homoeroticism.

Jūniya adds an extra romantic scene between Orsino and Viola/Cesario in which they share a kiss. Where Shakespeare’s act II scene IV ends with Orsino asking Viola/Cesario to “give [Olivia] this jewel. Say / My love can give no place, bide no denay” (II.iv.123-124), which reinforces Orsino’s infatuation with Olivia, *Jūniya* shows at this point how Orsino’s feelings have transferred onto Viola/Cesario, thereby shifting the focus of the story much earlier than in the play. Seeing that Viola is heartbroken, Orsino proceeds to console her with a song as she cries about her unrequited love. Orsino kisses Viola/Cesario on the cheeks, and Viola/Cesario takes this opportunity to kiss him on the lips before running away. At this point, Orsino makes a split-second decision to run after Viola/Cesario, yelling: “Wait, Cesario, where are you going?” (00:51:25). What should be perceived as a romantic, heteronormative scene between Viola and Orsino is coloured by the fact that Orsino still believes Viola to be a man. His decision to pursue Viola/Cesario without hesitation indicates a departure from heteronormativity and social norms. The tender scene is meant to solicit support from the audience for this pairing, and the homoerotic subtext is amplified by the

intimacy of the moment. This will later contrast with scenes between Olivia and Viola/Cesario, in which the former's affection for the pageboy is ridiculed both on and off stage. Orsino and Viola/Cesario's kiss is seen as sweet and innocent, and for a moment, gender performances and distinctions are forgotten about. As McLelland notes, "there are a number of reasons why women's interest in love between boys should be greater than that of love between girls" (83). In terms of *shōjo* manga, "… female readers [might find] the idea of girls kissing disgusting but would [find] boys kissing somehow safer…" (83). Furthermore, McLelland adds that,

> [r]epresentation of female sexuality that show women in control are often marginalized in Japanese media, lesbianism being no exception. … an all-girl scene would seem a little strange as it would be unclear who should 'take the lead' (*riido wo shite*) in initiating a sexual encounter. It is not surprising then, that some women interpolate themselves in the ambiguously gendered figures of beautiful boys [*bishōnen*]. (83-84)

These ideas are present in *Jūniya*, yet they are also coloured by the fact that the audience is well aware of the mechanisms at play due to the all-female cast. When Olivia/Cesario is presented as a possible pairing later in the play, the audience remembers Cesario's true nature as a woman, thereby triggering the repulsion mentioned above. However, Orsino/Cesario does not incur the same reaction, despite the fact that here, too, we are faced with two women actors beneath the costumes. Orsino and Cesario's kissing scene is therefore more 'acceptable' since it is easier for the audience to picture the *otokoyaku* as an actual man in the relationship, rather than the *musumeyaku* who plays Cesario in her relationship with Olivia. This indirectly reinforces heteronormativity since it promotes the relationship that features the only *otokoyaku* in the trio of characters.

Takarazuka departs from Shakespeare's text to include a non-heteronormative kissing scene between Orsino and Viola/Cesario to beguile the audience and to reinforce Viola's femininity through her portrayal of masculinity as Cesario—an effect that falls in line with the "Good Wives, Wise Mothers" motto and the company's ideas about gender roles. Chen argues that because

Viola is played by a *musumeyaku* in this performance,[52] the scene's "potential of sexual tension [turns] into adolescent infatuation. … [Hanase Mizuka's] feminine appearance caused her to be limited to the use of female modes of expression in the Japanese language" (61) and, I would add, of Japanese popular *shōjo* culture. Chen believes that "by assigning a *musumeyaku* to play Viola/Cesario, the Tsuki troupe's *Twelfth Night* did not set a goal of challenging the traditional Japanese patriarchal perspective on femininity and masculinity. By contrast, this production reinforced the traditional gender stereotypes" (61). However, despite Viola/Cesario's obvious femininity, the point remains that Orsino believes her to be a man for the entirety of the play. Although it is true that, at first glance, the stereotypes seem to be reinforced, there was no need to include a romantic scene between Orsino and Cesario if the object of the show was to promote heterosexual values. Furthermore, there would have been no point in also including tension between Olivia and Cesario as "[Hanase Mizuka's] portrayal of the effeminate Cesario compromised the credibility of Olivia's attraction to Viola in heterosexual terms" (59). Hanase Mizuka's Viola/Cesario straddles the line between what is acceptable and what is too risqué. Like the masculine Oscar in *The Rose of Versailles*, Viola's duality puts into question the perceptions of gender and sexuality in this play. *Jūniya*'s Viola's femininity plays in her favour as it successfully attracts both Orsino and Olivia. Harold Bloom believes that "any handsome young man without aggressive affect might have done as well as Cesario" (235), which is reinforced by Natsukawa Yura's performance as Olivia. She proves that the *musumeyaku* Viola's femininity is not a detriment to their relationship.

The ambiguity continues when, after a short comedic scene featuring Malvolio (Ritsu Tomomi), Sir Toby (Ōzora Yūhi), Sir Andrew (Shijō Rui), and Feste (Mayama Haru) takes place, Orsino runs onto the stage looking for Viola/Cesario. Finding her discarded hair ribbon, Orsino sings the theme song once again and seems to realize when he interrupts the lyrics: "Love, o love / Flowers, moon, birds, wind / At the end of a far distant star—Cesario!" (00:59:14-00:59:42). The curtain closes on Orsino's smiling face, which leads the audience to think one of two things: 1) Orsino knows that Viola/Cesario is a woman or 2) Orsino realizes that he is in love with Viola/Cesario, regardless of

[52] See chapter 2 on *Epiphany* for a more in-depth analysis of the differences between *otokoyaku* and *musumeyaku* actors.

her gender. The latter of the two options turns out to be the right answer as shown in a subsequent scene in which Orsino confesses to the audience:

> VIOLA. Because I was attracted to your beauty, I said something I shouldn't have. Please forgive me.
> ORSINO. Don't worry about it.
> VIOLA. I will go see Olivia.
> ORSINO. Cesario… you don't have to go today.
> VIOLA. I want to go. If it's for your sake, I'll go anywhere.
> ORSINO. All right, then, go.
> *Viola leaves the stage*.
> ORSINO. Whoever is loved by him is surely happy. Even a man dreams of living with him. If anyone can fall in love, then surely I love him.[53] (01:07:52 01:08:50)

These two scenes are added to Shakespeare's act II, scene V and serve to develop the relationship between Orsino and Cesario. It is important to note that, because of the nature of Takarazuka theatre as being first and foremost a *shōjo* theatre produced by women for women, the resulting productions should adhere to the *shōjo* principle of "what girls like" and have "'plots driven by human relations and romance' … [with] stories filled with the interiority, intimacy, and emotions" (Prough 3). Even though the majority of the audience consists of mature women, the productions reach out to a generation of women raised on *shōjo* principles and who are familiar with its

[53] To avoid misunderstandings, I chose to use the masculine pronouns he/him for Viola/Cesario even though Orsino refers to her as あの子 (*ano ko* — that child) rather than the more masculine 彼 (*kare* – he/him) in the original Japanese audio. I do not want the readers to think that by having Orsino use the word "child" that it means that Viola/Cesario is a literal child, or that Orsino perceives her as one; as with Shakespeare, she is a young woman in this story. In Japanese, the term *ano ko* is akin to a term of endearment and a cultural expression directed at someone who is younger than the speaker and is primarily used by women. Orsino's use of the pronoun further characterises him as a feminized man since the term is used by women when addressing women. Despite the fact that this is a feminine pronoun, my choice of the English masculine pronouns reflects the fact that Viola's true identity as a woman has not yet been revealed. As far as Orsino is concerned, she is still a man. This chapter often mentions the idea of childishness or childlike behaviour due to the *shōjo* genre, but that does not mean that there are actual children involved in this discussion. The exact definition for *ano ko* is as follows: "あの子、あの娘。子供の遠称ではなく、女の子の遠称。同世代か年下に対して使い、年上には使わない。主に女性同士が使う。男性同士の場合は「あいつ」を使う" [That child, that girl. It is not the pronoun used for a child; it is the pronoun used for a young woman. It is used for people in the same generation or younger, not older. It is mainly used by women. Men use "aitsu" instead] (Weblio Jisho).

dynamics. In this sense, the addition of these romantic scenes between Viola/Cesario and Orsino makes perfect sense for the audience that receives them. Ōtsuka Eiji writes that:

> [g]irls who read *Ribon* [one of the leading *shōjo manga* magazines] learned from the magazine's supplements (*furoku*) that "things" were not only useful, but could be cute as well. Then they went out into consumer society as consumers with the "girls" drawn by Mutsu Ako as role models. In the late 1980s some of them who pursued financial technology careers and remained unmarried were referred to as selfish *Hanako-sans*, but their home remained within the ambiance of *Ribon*. Or, rather, they represent grown-up *Maruko-chans* who make their way in consumer society, taking their cues from the ambiance in which Mutsu Ako's "girls" exist. (Qtd. in Prough 9)

These women who grew up in this cultural environment now make up the bulk of today's Japanese society—and fill the seats at Takarazuka productions. As such, when Olivia appears on stage once more in her sombre garb, looking every part the dignified lady, she represents the matronly woman as opposed to the *shōjo* Viola.

When the Olivia/Viola pairing is given its equal opportunity on stage as a romantic possibility, the effect is the opposite as with Orsino/Cesario: where Orsino/Cesario is seen as a romantic, *waku waku*-inducing[54] pair, Olivia/Viola is comedic and laughed off due to its impossibility.[55] As with the kissing scene analysed earlier, the dominating relationship is, and must be, Orsino/Cesario because of the underlying knowledge that Cesario is actually a woman, thereby using the homosexual relationship as a mask for the heterosexual one. Viola's transformation back into her feminine self is only a question of time, meaning that her masculine persona cannot remain as a cover for much longer, especially now that Olivia is involved. Interestingly, Morikawa's manga does not take this route with the Olivia/Cesario pairing. Instead, it portrays a gentle yearning in Olivia and a genuine sadness when the truth about Viola's gender is revealed.[56]

[54] Exciting

[55] The audience is aware of Viola's true gender, and, by default, this makes the scene more so comedic than serious because, in keeping with heteronormative codes, two women could not possibly be together when there is a rich and passionate man waiting on the sidelines.

[56] By comparison, this is closer to the conclusion in *Epiphany* (see chapter 2).

Following Orsino's declaration scene, Viola/Cesario visits Olivia again but, this time, she is confronted with an "aggressive suitor" (Chen 59) who disrobes on stage, throwing aside her mourning clothes to reveal a short, red dress meant to entice or attract Viola/Cesario. Olivia has a physical and literal moment of *henshin* as she morphs from being a restrained lady in mourning to a passionate, sexualized woman. Her new appearance stands in stark opposition to Viola's demure and boyish look throughout the play, and places both women as antitheses of each other: where Olivia is an older woman who knows what she wants and chases after it, Viola is a pure young woman who runs away after lightly kissing the man that she loves. This juxtaposition owes once more to the *shōjo* tradition; the heroine is always pure and innocent, while the secondary female character is typically villainous.

The effect of this transformation scene is one of comedy as Viola/Cesario desperately tries to escape from Olivia, and Olivia behaves irrationally and in a way that can only be described as a caricature of a woman in love with an uninterested party. Olivia runs after the retreating Viola/Cesario with her arms flailing about her and manages to latch onto her arm. When Viola/Cesario breaks away from her, Olivia falls to the ground and walks on her knees across the stage, drawing laughter from the audience. Grabbing hold of Viola/Cesario once more, Olivia tells her: "Cesario, I will give you my everything. Please, tell me, what do you think [of me]?" (01:12:47-52) in a desperate plea to win her affection. Olivia's exaggerated movements on stage during this scene is a visual and physical representation of the typical secondary female character in any given *shōjo* manga that elicits laughter rather than sympathy for the heartbroken character. Unfortunately for Olivia, this portrayal damages the audiences' feelings towards her. Instead of seeing her as a possible suitor for Viola/Cesario, on equal terms with Orsino, she is immediately rejected as something ridiculous and impossible. The message is clear: the audience must support Viola/Cesario and Orsino; Olivia is not an option. To drive this point home, "the production removed Olivia's line, 'I love thee so' to Cesario/Viola (Act III, Scene i) … to avoid having a woman say 'I love thee so' to another woman on the stage" (Chen 59). Instead, Olivia's love for Cesario is reduced to a mockery as Viola/Cesario rolls her eyes at Olivia's words and actions and does not take her love seriously.

Figure 7. – Olivia (left) and Viola/Cesario (right) © Takarazuka Company

The next musical interlude features a 'return to normal' with Orsino center stage, dancing with a variety of ladies who shower him with praises and highlight his popularity with women. In a 'Cinderella moment' foreign to Shakespeare, Orsino's last dancing partner is shown to be Viola, disguised as one of the dancing maids. As Orsino wonders why he feels sad even though he is surrounded by beautiful women who compliment him, Viola tells him that: "there's nothing to feel sorry about. To me it seems you had no choice but to be sad" (01:19:13-01:19:16) as a reference to Olivia's second rejection of his feelings. Orsino recognizes the voice and calls for "Cesario" to be brought before him, yet Viola/Cesario was never actually there. Orsino thinks he saw Viola/Cesario wearing a white rose as a marker, signifying her purity and innocence that recalls Orsino's all-white outfit when he was completely in love with Olivia. Orsino's momentary daydream/hallucination forces him to face the fact that he "called out for Cesario" and that, "whether it is love or loyalty, both feelings are overflowing" and that he "must see Cesario right now, no matter what" (01:20-45-01:21:01). In this scene, there is an interesting play on words in Orsino's lines. The word for 'loyalty' happens to be pronounced the same way as 'androgyny,'

chūsei.[57] J. Robertson explains that "describing someone as *chūsei* [suggests] that she [has] a childlike naïveté about anything beyond a passionate friendship between *shōjo* sisters" (71) and that *chūsei* connotes the qualifier of 'childish.' This has everything to do with the historical need for women to cross-dress to find employment, such as is the case with Viola who decided to cross-dress so that she can work for Orsino (Tomioka 1938; J. Robertson 1998). Now that Orsino is sure that he loves Cesario, it does not matter whether s/he is *chūsei* or not. Besides, as previously examined, Orsino himself skirts the edge between man and woman due to his *bishōnen* and boyish appearance. However, unlike Viola/Cesario, Orsino shows a slow and steady transformation from being a feminine playboy figure in act I to a more manly and assertive man in act II and this, until the end of the show. This is especially exemplified in a fight scene during which Orsino takes on five assailants on his own to protect Viola/Cesario. As any good *shōjo* hero, Orsino becomes once again the white knight, reinforcing his position in the play as the only true suitor for Viola/Cesario.

Meanwhile, Sebastian finally has his moment to shine in the play, but his first meeting with Olivia is given a comedic twist. Olivia confuses him for Cesario and, still determined to win Cesario's love, she takes Sebastian's hand and places it over her breast instead of her heart so that he may feel how Sir Toby's antics have "made her all excited[58]" (01:48:01). Sebastian's following line of "What happened? Did I become strange, or am I dreaming?" (01:48:02-01:48:09) has him questioning his sanity due to Olivia's forwardness rather than focusing on the mistaken identity fiasco highlighted in Shakespeare's lines. This, again, positions Olivia as an aggressive suitor as she pulls Sebastian towards her mansion: "then, come this way, come along… come along…" (01:48:19). Like with the previous scene in which Olivia chased Viola/Cesario, Olivia's aggressive mannerisms in this scene can be compared to that of a spider luring a fly into her web rather than

[57] However, and this is very important to note, the two words are written differently: 忠誠: loyalty; sincerity, and 中性: sexlessness; androgyny. By comparing the sounds of these two words, I do not mean to say that they are the same thing, nor that they both fit within the context of the sentence. I merely point out the fact that the sonority of one is reminiscent of the other and that because this is a play that tackles the subject of cross-dressing and androgyny, I thought it fitting to make the comparison.

[58] Olivia uses the word *doki doki*, which is an onomatopoeia for the sound of a beating heart. The term expresses excitement or nervousness. In the context of this scene, "excited" makes more sense than "nervous" in terms of Olivia's emotions.

a gentlewoman in love with a servant. She begs Sebastian to follow her to her mansion and, when he agrees, screams loudly "I'm so happy!" (01:48:21) in a falsely high-pitched voice that is meant to sound cutesy. Her luring of Sebastian, by dragging him by the hand and coaxing him to follow her to her mansion, leads the audience to continue to see her as desperate woman. Again, this is perceived as comedic because of Olivia's exaggerated actions and manner of speech, but in reality, it reveals a double standard when compared to the Orsino/Cesario pairing. Where Orsino is seen as romantic and even chivalrous, Olivia is portrayed as desperate and a trickster. Olivia's social standing is used to exert her power over the person whom she thinks is Cesario, a younger and socially inferior person, and she believes that she can win his love by either sexually enticing him or offering him monetary goods. When Sebastian emerges from Olivia's mansion, he is covered in red lipstick marks and seen carrying pearls and jewels that he received from the lady. Instead of presenting their relationship as something serious, the interpretation is that Olivia buys Sebastian's love rather than earning it. This scene is a direct reminder of when Olivia offered a ring to Cesario upon their first meeting, and it reinforces the idea that she is willing to bribe him for his affection.

When Orsino and Olivia finally meet face to face, she is once again transformed, but this time her mourning clothes are traded for a ball gown, indicating that her mourning period is truly over now that she is happy with Sebastian (whom she believes to be Cesario). In an act of jealousy against Olivia, Orsino asks Viola/Cesario to "stay if [he] wishes to, or to follow [him/Orsino]" because he "will go on a trip and doesn't plan on returning to Illyria" (01:57:22-01:57:45). Naturally, Viola/Cesario decides to "follow the person [she] loves" (01:57:49), thereby sealing their fate. Olivia, not to be outdone, calls Viola/Cesario her "husband" since she spent the night with Sebastian and continues to confuse the twins for one another. Finally, Sebastian and Viola reunite in what Crewe qualifies as "the single most romantic moment in the play" when the long-lost brother crashes onto the scene and the misunderstandings are clarified (xxxiii). When it is established that Olivia/Sebastian and Orsino/Viola are the final pairings in the play, Olivia's previous feelings for Viola switch from being those of a lover to those of family as she announces that she "has always wanted a sister" and runs to embrace Viola (02:03:50). The conclusion of the play is as expected: the main and secondary couples are formed and complete a picture of perfect

happiness, regardless of all the hardships they have had, including the not-so-subtle homoerotic subtext between Orsino/Cesario and Olivia/Viola. Even though Olivia's love is quickly forgotten, the same cannot be said for Orsino's. Indeed, the following dialogue indicates that Viola's duality as both man and woman remains even though Orsino knows the truth:

> VIOLA. [Tomorrow] I shall be dressed as a woman.
>
> *Sebastian and Olivia exit the stage*.
>
> ORSINO. Let's go, Cesario. No, that's not right.
> VIOLA. Please call me 'Cesario' tonight.
> ORSINO. Then, [when] in an attractive man's appearance, I will call you Cesario, and if you have a different appearance, you'll be Orsino's wife and beloved queen. (02:06:32-02:06:58)

The mood in Orsino's lines in *Jūniya* match with Shakespeare's, and the wording in Orsino's last line is interesting as it points to a reluctance to identify Viola as a woman by using the non-gendered "different appearance" (別の姿 *betsu no sugata*) descriptor. Furthermore, the conditional "if" (～になれば *ni nareba*) offers Viola a clear option as to whether or not she wants to be in her feminine persona compared to Shakespeare's more definitive use of 'when' in the line "but when in other habits you are seen" (*TN* V.i.380). For Shakespeare, Viola's transformation back into her feminine self is a factual certainty dependant on time (when), rather than *Jūniya*'s expression of uncertainty (if). Similarly, the first half of the line in Japanese implies certainty with "then" (でわ *dewa*), and contrasts with Shakespeare's "for so you shall be while you are a man" (*TN* V.i.379), which indicates an impermanence to Viola's masculine state (while). The two halves of the same line take different approaches to Orsino's understanding of Viola's gender. Shakespeare reinforces the female side of her, while *Jūniya* focuses on the male.

To further this point, Orsino does not refer to her by her true name, preferring instead to remain vague with the moniker "Orsino's wife and beloved queen." For Orsino, she can be either Cesario or his nameless wife, but not Viola. In *Jūniya*, Viola's added lines are interesting in how she chooses for herself to have one more night with Orsino as her alter ego, Cesario. Viola's voice is

clear in *Jūniya*; she will continue to be Cesario whenever she pleases, and Orsino evidently agrees to this arrangement since he will swap between names when necessary. This implies that regardless of Viola's identity, Orsino's love for her is not based on gender. However, the linguistic choice of using the female-coded words of "wife" and "queen" create a clear distinction between Viola's two personas: Cesario is to remain in the world of servants and confidants, while Viola will be known as Orsino's partner. The "different appearance," in this case, is not necessarily feminine, as Orsino pointedly avoids gendered language that could clarify the sentence. Even though his female-coded "wife" and "queen" point towards a feminine identity for Viola, her androgyny is to remain as a part of her and Orsino's relationship because she is either 'male' or 'other,' but never fully 'female.'

Instead of Feste singing at the close of the play, the end of the show diverges from Shakespeare's finale with a wedding scene. During the parade[59] portion of *Jūniya*, Orsino and Viola are given an extra scene that Shakespeare originally denied them as they appear in their wedding clothes while Olivia and Sebastian are still in their regular costumes. The end of the play allows the audience to see Viola in women's clothing, which is something that was not part of Shakespeare's text. This change of clothing, according to Crewe, is a sign that "individual identity depends on belonging to, and being recognized in, one or more social groups that may be signified by dress, manners, language, and a host of other defining traits" and this, when applied to *Twelfth Night*, means that "Viola cannot be 'herself' again until she changes back from men's clothing into women's" (xxxvii), thus keeping her forever locked in an in-between state of pageboy and wife to Orsino. Furthermore,

> [t]he fact that things never fully return to 'normal' in the play after this androgynous interlude, not even after identities and genders have been sorted out and the marriage of the favored principals is anticipated, indicates that socially mandated heterosexual marriage cannot resolve all issues of desire and identity, restoring everyone to his or her supposedly proper self (xl).

[59] In Takarazuka productions, the parade takes place right after the last scene and features the main *otokoyaku* and *musumeyaku* pair as they dance and sing on stage. They are then followed by the second leads, then the rest of the cast who all take a bow before the curtain call.

In the source text, even though the truth about Viola is revealed, Orsino continues to codifier her as male, calling her “boy” and “Cesario” after the revelation (*TN*, V.i.262; 378). Shakespeare further denies Viola her ‘normality’ by ending his play with Feste’s bittersweet song—a reminder that life is filled with hardships “for the rain it raineth every day” (*TN*, V.i.385). The happy couples at the end still have to face many difficulties post-marriage, and Shakespeare’s Viola is at the centre of these future troubles because of her double identity.

However, Takarazuka’s version of the play allows Viola to return to herself—as well as to the expected roles for her gender. What is more, one of Viola’s final poses is of her kneeling next to Orsino in a similar fashion to the dance scene previously discussed. During the dance, Viola/Cesario was still subservient to Orsino as his pageboy, but in this final wedding scene, Viola can be seen as subservient to him as his wife.

Figure 8. – Viola (left), Orsino (centre), and Sir Toby (right) © Takarazuka Company

What an unfamiliar audience might not know is that this final presentation of the characters is a standard format for a Takarazuka production. The main *otokoyaku* stands in the middle of the stage, flanked by the main *musumeyaku* and the *nibante* (the second lead *otokoyaku*) while the rest of the cast completes the line on either side before the curtain drops. Still, given the context of the play and everything that was presented thus far, having Viola kneel at the end reinforces the *shōjo* idea that, now that there is no need to cross-dress anymore and that she has her 'happy ending' with Orsino, her *shōjo*-hood and initial androgyny is replaced by a more mature, married woman. It is understood through this conclusion that Viola will shed her childishness and *chūsei* qualities in favour of something more akin to what Olivia is. Similarly, this development reflects the old Buddhist traditions that controlled pre-Meiji society. Viola will, from now on, adhere to the morals and beliefs that reinforce gender stereotypes and perceived normality despite her ambiguous desire to maintain her identity as Cesario.

This ending of *Jūniya* is in line with the promoted qualities of "Good Wives, Wise Mothers," and yet, the various non-conventional plot elements oppose and contradict the motto's values. Orsino may be happy that he has gained a wife, but everything in the show pointed to the fact that he loved Viola/Cesario regardless of gender, and his final lines support this fact through his grammatical choices. Olivia's forceful nature was ridiculed throughout the play, and this made her 'unfeminine,' but her feelings for Viola/Cesario were genuine as testified by her transposition to Sebastian. Ultimately, like with most Shakespearean plays, the ending seems happy at first glance with its 'return to normal,' but there is always an underlying unease as to how these characters can change their opinions and feelings so quickly. Even though this production of *Twelfth Night* by Takarazuka follows the original story fairly closely, the added scenes that are deeply embedded in *shōjo* culture and dripping with symbolism add a new opportunity for interpretation and analysis to a 400-year-old play. The addition of key scenes in this production, such as Orsino's love declaration and Orsino and Viola/Cesario's kiss, strengthen the already present homoerotic subtext in Shakespeare and firmly places the play in the *shōjo* cultural realm.

2. Epiphany (*Twelfth Night*)

At the onset of the Meiji era, when Shakespeare was first introduced to Japan via travelling companies, and through Tsubouchi Shōyō's work as the first translator of the canon, Kabuki theatre had gone through a number of significant changes, from its creation in 1603, to the banning of actresses in 1629, and the slow decline of its popularity due to the Tokugawa Shogunate's restrictions. Tsubouchi's revival of Kabuki through his use of Shakespearean narratives connects both theatres through a long, shared history in Early Modern Japan. Takarazuka's adaptation of *Twelfth Night*, *Epiphany* (エピファニー *Epifanii*),[60] is set some 200 years before Shakespeare was ever known in Japan, and it discusses women actresses' presence on stage through the use of Kabuki traditions, all the while relying on Shakespeare's contribution to the revival of this theatre. Ayami Oki-Siekierczak writes that, "in the 1970s, the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) embarked on their first tour of Japan; it is possible that by watching English productions the Japanese began to appreciate and understand Shakespeare within their own cultural context" (224). This ignited a desire amongst Japanese theatre company owners and stage directors to reinterpret Shakespeare within the Japanese cultural frame. Takarazuka's 1999 production of *Epiphany* plays into this desire to appropriate Shakespeare into a more culturally familiar context. *Epiphany* therefore appropriates Shakespeare's well-loved comedy to discuss women's historic return to the stage combined with the beginnings of the Westernization of Japan in the late Meiji period.

In this chapter I examine how Takarazuka reinterprets *Twelfth Night* (*TN*) by setting the narrative in a historical period that saw many important social changes, including the Kabuki reform and the inclusion of women in theater. As opposed to *Jūniya*, *Epiphany* departs from the traditional interpretations of *TN* by focusing on representing Japanese theatre history through Shakespeare's narrative. Contrary to *Jūniya*'s feminine Viola/Cesario, *Epiphany*'s Otaka/Takagorō is much more masculine in her role as her brother, which is supported by the historical significance of her role

[60] The play was first performed by the Star troupe (星組) at the Bow Hall Theatre between 4 and 12 December 1999. For the purpose of this chapter, I rely on an unofficial fan translation of the play along with my own translations. The fan translation is referenced in parenthesis when in use.

as a cross-dressing Kabuki actress rather than a duke's pageboy. Furthermore, *Epiphany* places a strong emphasis on Mari's (Olivia) role as a naïve young woman who confuses her strong feelings for the theatre with her love for Otaka/Takagorō, which further complicates the gender and sexuality dynamics set forward in *TN*. Takarazuka's approach to the Viola/Olivia relationship in this play reveals yet again the need to emphasise the heteronormative conclusion of the play by establishing Mari's feelings as celebrity infatuation rather than same-sex love.

Where *Jūniya* is deeply embedded in *shōjo* culture, *Epiphany* does not rely on popular culture references, focusing instead on the historical context of the Meiji period to discuss specifically women's right to perform on stage. Even though *Jūniya* and *Epiphany* approach the source text differently, they both present a Japanified Shakespeare by relying on cultural and historical markers that are proper to Japan. *Epiphany* embodies qualities proper to traditional Japanese theatre and perceptions of gender roles in society and on stage because of its portrayal of women in Kabuki. Instead of being crushed beneath the weight of the 'ghost of Shakespeare'[61] and all it represents, *Epiphany* stands out with few resemblances to the early modern Shakespearean text. *Epiphany* is a snapshot of a specific time and location that is paramount in the discussion about the evolution of theatre in Japan as well as questions of gender and sexuality in an age of rapid social progress.

This chapter argues that the heroine of the play, Otaka (Viola), gains agency as a woman and as an actress through the undertaking of her brother's role on the Kabuki stage. *Epiphany* takes place around the same period as the Theatre Reformation Movement (演劇改良会 *engeki kairyō kai*) that lifted the ban on women in the theatre. As such, Otaka carries with her the long history of women on the Japanese stage and promotes the Meiji era opinion that women should be on stage just as much as men. Her journey, from disguising herself as her Kabuki actor brother, to becoming an actress in her own right, illustrates this important social change for theatre in Japan. To prove this idea, I provide a broad historical scope of Kabuki in Japan, as well as other forms of theatre that employ similar cross-dressing techniques as represented in *Epiphany,* which highlight

[61] Modern performance theorists consider Shakespeare's influence over the text and performance as being overbearing and restrictive in terms of creativity and narrative constructions on stage (Bulman 1996).

the unique combination of male and female Kabuki during this period. Following this overview, I then look at the adaptation within its cultural context to showcase how Western and Eastern ideas about the theatre mingle and come to represent the shifting perceptions about theatre in Japan. Finally, I examine the portrayal of Shakespeare's characters in *Epiphany* from the perspective of gender roles in Meiji society, as well as from within the Takarazuka theatre itself, with a particular focus on Otaka and Mari as antitheses of one another.

According to Minami Ryuta, "*Twelfth Night* was drastically rewritten and interwoven with Japanese literary texts as if to delete the powerful presence of Shakespeare while implicitly retaining the sign of Englishness in the title. Such an ambivalent attitude towards Shakespeare is closely related to the way that the West was staged as the Other in the adapted text" (" Shakespeare for Japanese Popular Culture" 121). This phenomenon is observable in Takarazuka's first 1999 performance of the play, *Jūniya*, whose title translates directly to "Twelfth Night." However, *Epiphany*'s title departs from this format to create an independent work whose focus is Kabuki theatre history rather than Viola's (mis)adventures in a foreign land. This is an important change in terms of how Shakespeare is adapted in Japan since the attention is directed at creating a narrative that centers on themes and values that are significant for a Japanese audience. The Othering of Shakespeare in this case relates back to the idea of appropriation and how his stories become vehicles through which non-Anglophone cultures can express their own theatre history.

Through this adaptation of *TN*, director Ono Takuji explores how Shakespeare's Viola would survive in the male-dominated culture of Kabuki theatre. Born into a Kabuki family, Otaka faces the discriminations against her sex when she is obligated to replace her brother on stage and perform in his place. Not unlike the Viola in Shakespeare's play, this heroine also resorts to cross-dressing to hide her gender both on and off the Kabuki stage; however, her disguise holds a deeper cultural significance since it represents a whole era of repressed women in terms of the theatrical arts. Indeed, due to the 1629 ban on women performers, Otaka's role as her brother's double plays with this idea of repression and, in her case, the reclaiming of women's ownership and rightful place in theatre. This is illustrated by Takarazuka's reinterpretation of the historical return of women to the Kabuki stage in Japan. In fact, famous actresses such as Kawakami

Sadayakko (川上貞奴) (1871-1946)[62] made their return to the stage in the exact period represented in *Epiphany*. As such, Otaka stands as a figurehead for Meiji women in theatre. Contrary to the Viola portrayed by the Moon troupe in *Jūniya*,

> [Star] troupe's *Epiphany* Otaka/Takagorou (equivalent to Viola/Cesario) was played by an *otokoyaku*. To distinguish one sex from the other in the all-female cast, the *otokoyaku* emphasizes masculinity as she plays the male role whereas the *musumeyaku* highlights femininity as she plays the female role. This approach to gender roles resulted in fundamental differences between the portrayal of Viola/Cesario in *Twelfth Night* and the representation of Otaka/Takagorou in *Epiphany*. (Chen 58)

Therefore, Otaka embodies an interesting role of double—even triple—layering of gender performance: the female Takarazuka actress, who usually performs as a male *otokoyaku*, plays the role of a woman, who in turn cross-dresses as a man in order to perform on a male-dominated stage. Furthermore, the actress Ayaki Nao plays both the male and female roles of the pair of siblings—an unusual occurrence in Takarazuka theatre. This overlapping of gender and the notion of performing a play-within-a-play would make Shakespeare proud; it is a complex weaving of cultural significance for a modern Japanese audience. Moreover, the title of the play, *Epiphany*, implies a moment of revelation or enlightenment for one or more characters. Contrary to *TN*, however, the 'epiphany' is not as strongly reliant on Viola's transformation from woman, to man, to woman again. Instead, Otaka's epiphany is her realisation that the theatre is where she wants to be regardless of the gender restrictions placed on the stage.

2.1 Performing 'Woman'

The origins of Kabuki theatre can be traced back to a single woman: Izumo no Okuni (出雲阿国) (1572-1613). Okuni was a Shintō priestess at a temple in Kyoto when she developed the art of Kabuki by dancing in the dry riverbed of the Kamo river in 1603 (Date 2003). Okuni formed the first all-female troupe to dance and sing in this new art form. Seeing as how "women had been

[62] Often simply referred to as Sada Yakko (or Yacco).

prohibited by Buddhist precepts[63] from appearing on stage," they were forced to "… travel around the country, mixing prostitution with their work as performers" (Inoura 217). Although based on ancient Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, having made its way to Japan via China and Korea, Japanese Buddhism differentiates itself in a number of ways, such as the inclusion of the principle of Zen (or *Zazen*) into its basic dogma.[64] Even though the original precepts are part of every branch of Buddhism, their specific application, such as in the case of women in theatre, is more so specific to the Japanese culture of the late sixteenth century. Therefore, forced to perform in unsavoury places due to the ban,

> Okuni, in male attire, performed the role of a man frequenting teahouses, which had just come into vogue (forerunners of the gay quarters), and dallied with the women there or danced a version of the Buddhist *nembutsu* chant clad in the manner of the newly arrived Christian fathers, wearing rosary and cross around their neck. These completely new presentations, her popular songs, and her dances took spectators by storm. (218)

Okuni's theatre was very popular with the common people, and her portrayal of the male *kabukimono*—young men who were socially divergent and defiant of social norms—was entertaining for the masses. According to Galia Todorova Gabrovska, "[w]hat matters most in Okuni's exploration from gender perspective, however, are her cross-dressed performance, the embodiment of *kabukimono*, the male hero of the day, the emphasized eroticism of both the male and the female body, and the staging of the *chaya asobi*[65] scene, using its potential for achieving a humorous and sensual effect" (392). Okuni's brand of entertainment flourished between 1603 and 1629, inspiring many women to copy her and create plays in a similar style ("Onna Kabuki"). This theatre, known as *onna kabuki* (women's kabuki),[66] came to an end in 1629

[63] Of the eight Buddhist precepts, the third (abstinence of unchastity) and the seventh (abstinence from dancing, music, visiting shows, flowers, make-up, the wearing of ornaments and decorations) were especially damning for women actors.

[64] "Zen is the Japanese development of the school of Mahayana Buddhism that originated in China as Chan Buddhism. While Zen practitioners trace their beliefs to India, its emphasis on the possibility of sudden enlightenment and a close connection with nature derive from Chinese influences" (Hammer).

[65] Gabrovska describes the *chaya asobi* (茶屋遊び) as being Okuni's "trademark" performance about "a customer dallying with a courtesan at the tea house" (389).

[66] Also sometimes called *shibai* (play) or *Okuni-kabuki* (Okuni's Kabuki).

due to the Tokugawa[67] shogunate's fear of the morally corruptive nature of these performances. Women were then replaced by "good-looking boys" who also "relied on sensual beauty for the appeal of their dances," forcing the shogunate to ban them as well in 1651 (Inoura 218). Finally, in 1664, Kabuki began to resurface as an all-male theatre along with a long set of rules and traditions still employed today (Inoura 1981).

Historically, Shakespeare and Kabuki theatre have had a long-standing relationship in Japan. With the initial importation of European theatre in the eighteenth century came the Shakespearean canon and, to prevent a disconnect between the Japanese audience and the English plays, the latter were often performed in the traditional style of Japan—in either Noh or Kabuki forms. Tsubouchi Shōyō, Japan's most eminent Shakespeare scholar, wrote plays in the *shin kabuki* (new Kabuki) style that were influenced by Shakespeare's plays. This was then further explored by proponents of *shimpa* (new school) Kabuki in 1888 which adapted melodramatic plays from Shakespeare and other Western playwrights. Minoru Toyoda details in three parts how Shakespeare affected the Japanese stage:

> If we disregard the moot question of Shakepearian [sic] influence in a play … performed in Yedo[68] in 1810, the first period begins with the performance of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1885 and ends with the organisation of the Literary Association in 1906. The second period covers the last few years of the Meiji era and the best part of Taisho, down to the Great Earthquake of 1923. The third is the period of fifteen years from 1924 to [1939]. (154)

In fact, Shakespeare's works went through major transformations as soon as they entered Japan; Toyoda explains how "this was all the more natural in Japan, because the Kabuki tradition was all in all to the Japanese theatre of those days, and foreign characters played by Kabuki actors, with strange make-up and an unpractised style of acting, would have looked ridiculous" (154). Instead, Shakespeare was performed according to Japanese acting methods—as shown through

[67] Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616), best known for winning the Battle of Sekigahara, was the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603-1867) that ruled over Japan until the start of the Meiji era.
[68] Old name for Tokyo. Traditionally romanized as Edo.

Tsubouchi Shōyō's translations and performances—which characterises this early period of Japanese Shakespeare and is replicated in contemporary performances, such as in *Epiphany*.

Beyond the eighteenth century's kabukified performances, Shakespeare garnered more appreciation as a universal playwright. In fact, "after 1892 or thereabouts, British and American travelling companies performed some of Shakespeare's plays in Yokohama, and thus no doubt gave some idea of foreign acting to those Japanese [people], such as Dr. Tsubouchi, [who] were earnestly interested in the art of the theatre" (154–5). Then, the year 1909 saw the rise of *Shingeki* theatre, which "took as its basis the concepts and styles of contemporary Western theatre, with the incidental result that Kabuki was made into a 'classic' dramatic form" (Inoura 222). Much later, after these performances led by travelling merchants had graced the Japanese stage, Shakespeare's presence in Japan increased even more. According to Oki-Siekierczak, "the past 130 years have witnessed the increasing prominence of Shakespeare in Japan, and although there has been no official dramaturge to assist this development, translators have assumed this role and been principally responsible for Shakespeare's reception in Japan" (224). In this respect, James C. Bulman proposes that,

> the very act of translation subverts the authority of Shakespeare's text; and in the past twenty years, the option to translate Shakespeare afresh for each new production has enabled directors such as Mnouchkine, Ninagawa, and Zadek to explore the plays more freely, to focus more imaginatively on visual elements of performance—on physical over verbal expression—than their British and North American counterparts. (7)

This is a different development from the context of Shakespeare's original Japanese translator, Tsubouchi Shōyō, who tried to translate Shakespeare's iambic pentameter rhymes into Japanese by relying on the classical *haiku* rhyming scheme—a feat of immense proportions due to the structure and format of the target language (Gallimore 2016). Moreover, the shift from wanting to faithfully reproduce Shakespeare in Japan to reinterpreting his work is, in part, due to the realisation that imitation is unwarranted, and recreation is instead much more exciting on foreign stages. By recreating Shakespeare for a Japanese audience, this causes Shakespeare to become

much more in-line with the culture and customs of this country; a concept known as Japanese Shakespeare. This is exemplified in the West's desire to use and even emulate "'foreign' theatrical styles which, though they may at first seem alien to the received inflections of Shakespeare's language, in fact revitalize the plays for contemporary audiences" (Bulman 7). Regardless of the difficulties of translation into Japanese, however, Shakespeare remains popular in Japan and has had hundreds of interesting and original adaptations and reinterpretations by Japanese directors and theatre companies. Where the first engagement with Shakespeare's works focused on translating the texts and keeping them 'authentic,' the following crop of theatre directors began narrowing in on more Japan-centric adaptations, disregarding the 'authenticity' of Shakespeare's texts. In other words, they began adapting the works in a way that suited the culture of Japan—not a Western one. Hence, Shakespeare gained a distinctive Japanese aesthetic and melded into native theatre forms.

First, a brief explanation of Kabuki traditions is necessary to understand how this art form combines with Shakespeare's works. In the traditionally male-dominated Kabuki theatre, female characters are played by men known as *onnagata*. The concept of *onnagata* is deeply embroiled in Japanese Buddhism in which the concept of *henshin* (transformation) is central. The word itself composed of the kanji[69] for 'change' (変) and 'body' (身) expresses how the transformation that occurs is physical in nature. Indeed, the concept of *henshin* relates back to the *shōjo* culture discussed earlier in chapter 1. The *shōjo* heroine usually undergoes a transformation either as a cyclical event (like Usagi in the manga/anime *Sailor Moon*) or as a singular occurrence, usually at the climax of the scene in which the heroine reveals herself for who she truly is (like Lady Oscar in *The Rose of Versailles*). The latter type of revelation is much more in-line with the transformations that usually take place in Kabuki theatre—and in Shakespeare's plays. This allows for a single, shocking moment to take place on stage, cementing the fact that the protagonist's transformation is central to the development of the plot. Kabuki *henshin* "refers specifically to the received process by which an *onnagata* becomes Woman, as opposed to impersonating a given woman. … the woman's role player [is] not 'a male acting in a role in which he becomes a

[69] Sino-Japanese characters used in the Japanese language alongside the two syllabaries, *hiragana* and *katakana*.

'woman,' but rather as 'a male who is a 'woman' acting a role'" (Imao qtd. in Robertson 54), whereas in Buddhism, "deities [assume] a human form in order to better promulgate Buddhist teachings among the masses of sentient beings" (Robertson 53). This relationship between the two forms of *henshin* is displayed in the Kabuki *onnagata* who is particularly Buddhistic in his transformation because of his relationship to Amida[70] due to his androgynous nature. Paul G. Schalow writes that,

> The fact that onnagata were identified with Amida, who represented neither male nor female, but an intermediate blend of the two, indicates that the kabuki audience did not react to onnagata as an image of womanhood but, recognizing the man beneath the costume, saw a third and new creation produced by women's clothing and style superimposed on a male body. The audience's response, then, was not to a woman or to a man in woman's clothing, but to an intermediate figure, which the audience equated with that most intermediate of Buddha figures, Amida. (61)

Thus, the Kabuki *onnagata* was all but deified through his dual nature as both man and woman. According to theatregoer accounts of Kabuki plays during the early modern period, "the electrifying effect of the onnagata is captured … with Buddhist metaphors: the onnagata is equated with a carved image of Buddha covered in gold leaf, with Amida welcoming believers to paradise, and with a Buddha-like love for all mankind" (*Yodarekake* qtd. in Schalow 62). The female impersonators become living Buddhas through their art, and "the audience [positions] itself as worshipper" (63) of these androgynous figures. With this zealous love of *onnagata*, it is easy to understand why so many people were against the inclusion of women in Kabuki, since "the beauty of onnagata acting lies in its formalized grace. Women in these roles appear too natural, too realistic. … Actresses become plausible only when they play their parts, not by miming women, but by imitating onnagata" (Shively qtd. in Thompson 29). This concept is both complex and fascinating since it essentially differentiates between gender and biological sex. The idea in Kabuki is that highly trained male actors can come to a point in their career when they not only

[70] Amida is the Japanese name for Amitābha, the Buddha of Pure Land in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

perfectly emulate women, but also 'become' women through this process of bodily transformation. In the reversed perspective, we can observe a similar phenomenon with Takarazuka's male impersonators who become idealised versions of masculinity via femininity by 'becoming' men. Similarly, Shakespeare's comedies often make use of a comparable mechanism such as in *Twelfth Night* when the heroine 'becomes' a man in an idealised—if feminised—form.

Conversely, this serves to push the limits of the physical body to become the perfect woman on stage. As Frank Episale explains, this type of role in Japanese theatre "came into existence after women (1629) and then boys (1652) were banned from playing [female characters]" (90). Following these bans, adult men were then trained as *onnagata* with an emphasis on perfecting their craft on stage. Due to this training and meticulous attention to their craft, "*onnagata* became highly skilled at producing a high-pitched falsetto for many hours a day, all their lives. Despite an actor's proficiency, however, pushing a man's voice so high inevitably produces strain, harshness, and tension" (Cavaye qtd. in Episale 92-3). This vocal training is reminiscent of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European *castrati*—castrated opera singers who found fame due to their unusual voices. Although this practice can be traced back to Constantinople, nowadays these voices are replaced by countertenors and the *castrati* no longer exist.[71] While the European *castrati* were medically altered to produce this particular vocal range, Kabuki *onnagata* did not undergo such procedures. Their voices were, and still are, products of hard work and dedication to their art. In fact, the techniques employed by these actors were usually passed down through generations, from father to son. In contemporary Kabuki, some ancestral acting families still follow this formula.

In the same vein, one can see a similar phenomenon in Chinese opera.[72] Indeed, such as with Japanese theatre, "Chinese theatre was to a significant extent constituted in and through gender b(l)ending" (Li 1). These notions of gender 'bending' and 'blending' expressed here are interesting in how they colour the meaning of cross-dressing on stage: not necessarily queer-related representation, but rather a melding of gender which creates a new type on stage—same as with

[71] "castration was made illegal after the unification of Italy in 1861" ('What Was a Castrato?').
[72] Specifically, the Peking or Beijing opera singers. To clarify, "the theatre known to the West as Peking opera is more accurately translated as capital drama (*ching hsi*)" (Chang et al. 183).

the Japanese *henshin* and the *onnagata* as a personification of Amida. Likewise, the traditionally male opera singer has always had to resort to costuming and voice altering training to achieve this new type of gender.[73] This, then, pushes the male actors' bodies to adapt to female qualities such as having a high-pitched singing voice and walking across stage in a demurer way. In fact, "when women were totally banned from the Beijing stage, Wei Changsheng (1744-I820), a male actor of *dan* (female roles), perfected the art of female impersonation by inventing the *cai ciao* (false-foot skill) … [by] simulating women's bound feet in order to imitate the manner in which women walked. In his performance, Wei emphasized foot binding as a sign for 'woman'" (Chou 136). Interestingly, similar practices are also observable in historical Kabuki performances in which men adopted 'feminine' traits to play female roles. Certain postures and gestures, such as hand movements and walking or standing on stage, became signs for Woman, and Kabuki experts perfected these traits to a point where, according to some, real women could no longer compete with this stylized version of themselves.[74]

Nevertheless, despite the negative effects of this training on the body, "appreciation of the *onnagata* voice is a very important part of Kabuki, making performance by women impossible because this strange but remarkable element would be lost" (Cavaye qtd. in Episale 92-3). This explains why even today Kabuki still refuses to have women on stage. As such, some critics believe that "the return of women to the kabuki stage would rob kabuki of its 'essence'"—an idea that is abhorrent to many who would wish to see women return to the art form (Episale 91). It is important to note how perceptions of gender and sexuality differ greatly in Japan. For example, LGBTQIA+ "lifestyles are deeply discordant with Japan's narrow and marriage-based definition of sexuality, thereby shaking the dominant ideology of fixed gender roles" (Sugimoto 275), and since Kabuki was often associated with homosexuality and/or prostitution, it was always on the fringes of society. Within the realm of Japanese theatre, each style has its own set of ancestral rules—even though Kabuki may not allow women on its stage, there are other theatrical schools who do not accept men such as the Takarazuka Revue. Still, born from centuries of practice and

[73] In Chinese opera, the *dàn* (旦) equates to the main female role of a performance; however, due to the prohibition of women on stage, men played the *dàn* roles—known as *nándàn* (男旦)—resulting in a similar effect to the Japanese *onnagata* in Kabuki.
[74] See Shively in *Studies in Kabuki* (1978).

refinement, the Kabuki *onnagata* developed a highly manufactured representation of women with "knees [bent] to reduce body height, shoulders [drooped], and arms and hands [kept] near the body" (93). This, combined with the trained voice, makes the *onnagata* a representation of an ideal of woman—an unattainable beauty on stage, surely creating unrealistic expectations in the minds of some. As Robertson explains: "the original Woman is a male invention: an amalgam of signifiers of ideal femininity embodied by the Kabuki specialist" (54). Therefore, what many consider as the defining trait of Kabuki—colourful makeup and particularly high-pitched voices—turns out to be a point of contingency for scholars of gender and sexuality. When these ideas are combined with Shakespeare, we see how his gender-bending characters can be used and even repurposed to address these topics of idealised femininity (and masculinity). Otaka in *Epiphany* plays with this concept since her inclusion in an all-male theatre troupe requires the exact opposite training than the *onnagata*: instead of portraying Woman, Otaka becomes a stylised and idealised version of man, for whom Mari is quick to fall.

Drawing from Judith Butler and Maki Isaka's works on performativity, feminism, and womanhood, L. Edelson explains that, in the context of Japanese theatre and culture, "*onnagata* and women of the Tokugawa period were caught up in an endless circle or citationality, so that it was impossible to distinguish the 'original' from the 'copy'" (18). Moreover, Isaka states that, "*onnagata* artistry was measured by the criterion of verisimilitude in everyday life. Being able to pass as a woman in places crowded with women, such as restaurants and bathhouses, was considered crucial to evaluating an actor's achievement as an *onnagata*" (qtd. in Edelson 18). This idea of 'passing' is naturally problematic in terms of gender acceptance in society since it implies that a person must look a certain a way in other to be integrated into a specific social group; however, it is still a feat and a credit to the artists who were able to achieve this illusion of Woman both on and off stage. By entering typically feminine spaces, the *onnagata* was able to perfect his art and then bring this skill to the stage. In today's perception of women in Kabuki, "… it can therefore be said that the *onnagata* are the ideal models of traditional Japanese femininity" (Inoura 189) with regard to Westernised concepts of womanhood in contemporary Japan.

2.2 Kabuki as Portrayed in *Epiphany*

Set during the Meiji era, *Epiphany* provides a snapshot of history in Japanese theatre. The setting of the play portrays a specific time during which the government sanctioned a reformation of the arts. As Minami explains: "various fictional and historical narratives of Meiji Japan (1868-1912) are interwoven into *Epiphany*, and one of the most identifiable historical signs is the Theatre Reformation Movement organized by the government officers and journalists … the 1870s and 1880s saw the rise of severe criticism of Kabuki as an uncivilized, vulgar art from those who blindly admired Western culture and wished to carry out radical westernization" (124). Nonetheless, for some, like the young Mari in the prologue of the play, Kabuki was to be honoured and admired as a native art form. This contrast between East and West is present throughout the play, like when the German Elise appears and disappears from the stage to allow for Otaka to rise to glory. Historically, the 1886 Theatre Reformation Society (演劇改良会 *engeki kairyō kai*)[75] was created in response to an increase of the Westernisation of the arts because, "if Japan was to influence those nations that held all the power, it would have to have its own respectable theatre … so that it could fulfil a similar social function to theatre in the West" (Powell 9). What is more, Japan believed at the time that it was necessary "to show off Japan's progress towards civilization and to impress foreign powers favourably" (Tschudin 83). To achieve these goals, the founder of the movement, Suematsu Kencho (1855-1920) introduced three aims of the reform in his manifesto:

> 1. To reform the evil conventions of hitherto existing theatre and cause the realisation of good theatre.
>
> 2. To cause the writing of plays for the theatre to be an honourable profession.
>
> 3. To build a properly constructed auditorium which will be used for theatre performances, music concerts, song recitals, etc. (Matsumoto qtd. in Powell 10)

These goals were put in place with the expectation that Japanese theatre would be improved from its initial, pre-Westernised self. The purpose, therefore, was to encourage theatre to "be

[75] Also known as the Theatre Reform Society.

watched by upper-class ladies and gentlemen who perceived it necessary to be shielded from obvious manifestations of sex and violence … all this had to take place in a new theatre building, which was probably envisaged as like a European opera house" (10). This affected how Kabuki was played and perceived since it did not show the 'sophistication' of Western theatre. Nevertheless, once the Emperor and Empress had seen and enjoyed a performance, Kabuki was once again popularised (Powell 2013). Ichikawa Danjūrō IX (1858-1903), a famous Kabuki actor from the Meiji period, proposed a reform of his theatre that would include women actresses on stage. Indeed, "in July 1888 … he publicly announced his intention not only to train his two daughters as kabuki actresses, but to adopt Iwai Kumehachi (later, Ichikawa Kumehachi) as a member of the Naritaya house. This was nothing less than a radical break with the all-male performance tradition of training only male heirs for the kabuki stage" (Edelson 17). It is in this climate that the heroine in *Epiphany* attempts to thrive and overthrow gender restrictions on stage.

Naturally, this perception of *Epiphany*'s 'duty' to its Japanese audience is deeply rooted in the theatre culture of the country. The theatre critic Barbara Hodgdon "interrogates the processes by which a performance achieves meaning(s) for spectators in a specific sociohistoric moment" (qtd. in Bulman 5). She also adds that "rather than conforming to the previous ideal of merely interpreting Shakespeare, such performances make their own meanings and so invite, even demand, different ways of seeing, of saying—and of writing" (Hodgdon 5). Though it may seem obvious, a performance such as *Epiphany* requires knowledge of Meiji-era theatre traditions. Even though the background of the performance is clearly Shakespeare, and *Twelfth Night*'s motifs are recognizable, the nuances are equally clearly Japanese. As Bulman explains, "in any criticism of performance, it must be recognized, we are bound by the perspectives of our own time and place" (3). Hence, *Epiphany* stands in an imaginary place in which both the historical context of Meiji Japan is reproduced—much like Danjūrō IX's historical theatre—and where the Shakespearean ghost is present in the narrative threads. In the same way as how *Twelfth Night's* Illyria becomes an isolated area where the characters can try out and partake in various social activities that would typically be sanctioned or criticized in society at large, *Epiphany's* portrayal of Meiji Tokyo

enables a similarly socially safe sphere in which characters readily accept socially divergent ideas of allowing women on stage, for example.

While many modern critics balk at the idea of 'historical authenticity' and that "when 'Shakespeare' appears in contemporary literary studies, the name often summons a kind of critical ghost, a fiction, an openly rhetorical convenience labeling a network of discursive practices, legitimating strategies, and institutional pressures" (Worthen 13), the historical attachment is nonetheless crucial to the development of the narrative in *Epiphany.* In other words, even though the play relies upon a long-gone time and place, its message resonates with its modern audience, and Shakespeare becomes a vehicle for this message. Indeed, the focus of the play is placed on the history of theatre in Japan, and how women's roles changed in society through the use of a well-known and loved Shakespearean play. Viola's light-hearted adventures in Illyria become a form of subversion for Otaka who dreams of the stage in the place of her brother. Her only way to achieve this is by disguising herself, which is not only a mechanism of survival in a masculine society, but also an emancipation and form of freedom in a world where she is legally barred from performing.

The play opens with a short prologue showing seven couples waltzing across stage, dressed in tuxedos and evening gowns. The dancers move to the back of the stage to make way for Mori Shintarō (Natsumi You) and his daughter, Mori Mari (Ayame Hikaru), who discuss the topic of *Maihime* (舞姫), or, *The Dancing Girl*—a popular short story written by Mori Rintarō (1862-1922).[76] This opening scene sets the tone for the play to come: Shintarō explains how "… in foreign countries, women called actresses perform on the stage in beautiful dresses" (Minami " Shakespeare for Japanese Popular Culture" 123) as opposed to the Japanese tradition of men playing women in Kabuki plays. Despite her father's comments, Mari believes that "Hanshiro [a Kabuki *onnagata*] was beautiful [on stage]" ("*Epiphany*" I, 00:03:50) which further solidifies the idea of moving away from Western theatrical principles in favour of the native Japanese ones. Interestingly, the *Maihime* short story draws links with Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904). In the Japanese story, a beautiful German dancer, Elise, is abandoned by her Japanese

[76] Also known as Mori Ōgai (森鴎外).

lover in favour of his career. According to Minami, “the opening seconds of the scene thus remind the audience of this well-known biographical novel … suggesting both [Elise’s] absence and the absence of actresses on the Japanese stage, the dominant themes of the play” (" Shakespeare for Japanese Popular Culture" 123). Mari’s naïve belief that the traditional *onnagata* is enough to create ‘good theatre’ injures Otaka’s efforts in carving out a place for herself in this masculine world. While both are women who live in a patriarchal society, Mari and Otaka stand on opposite sides of what is necessary for the theatre to grow: Otaka’s forward thinking and progressiveness is not only uncharacteristic for her time period, but also undoubtedly frightening for women who seek to maintain proper social traditions. By contrast, Mari believes in tradition and is reticent to the changes happening around her.

In the following scene, seven years after the events of the prologue, Otaka (Ayaki Nao) and some of her attendants discuss the disappearance of her brother, Raikōya Takagorō (Ayaki Nao). Otaka and the others wait for Takagorō by the seaside in Yokohama, but her brother never comes. Otaka expresses how “he is surely safe somewhere,” (I, 00:08:07) refusing to believe that his absence means death, and that “it is unthinkable that he would be separated from the stage” (I, 00:09:30) that he loves so much. The following morning, when Takagorō is still missing, Otaka faces the choice of either telling the theatre troupe the truth or taking her brother’s place as a Kabuki actor. Even though her servant opposes it, Otaka decides to impersonate her brother in Tokyo and is confident that, because they are twins and have trained together all their lives, no one will be able to tell them apart. Her servant tells her that the problem lies in having a woman on stage, but Otaka believes that “it is not a woman who is on stage, but rather Takagorō” (I, 00:11:35) thereby establishing the first occurrence in the play of the erasure of her gender and her identity on stage. Unlike the Viola in *Jūniya* who retains a certain form of *shōjo*-ness despite her disguise, Otaka sheds her feminine self to fully embrace her new personality as Takagorō. Many of the lines in *Twelfth Night* that address Viola/Cesario’s apparent femininity are erased from *Epiphany* since Otaka’s disguise leaves no room for doubts about her gender. Otaka’s ‘epiphany’ comes early in the play: by taking over her brother’s role in the troupe, she establishes herself as a role model for a generation of women actors. This character’s epiphany further highlights a larger one in the play since all the characters live through a transformation of sorts when faced with the question

of gender portrayal on stage: Mari believes in maintaining traditions and keeping the *onnagata* alive, Takagorō, although absent for most of the play, loves the stage more than anything else, and Rintarō feels torn between his country's culture and the West where he spent a lot of time.

Much like Otaka in the play, Danjūrō IX believed that "the gap between stage fiction and reality would close only by casting women in female roles," but for the latter, the female actress should act "… not [as] an ordinary woman, but one who (naturally) acted like an *onnagata* … in other words, like a woman playing a man as a woman" (Edelson 19). As such, the idea of women playing double roles while on stage can be traced back to Danjūrō IX's *katsureki geki* (活歴劇 historical theatre) but has since been developed on the contemporary stage as well. *Epiphany*'s Otaka thereby enters into a contract of sorts with the audience by playing the role of a man, who in turn portrays a woman. The traditional Kabuki audience's expectation of seeing a seasoned *onnagata* on stage forces Otaka to adhere to this convention of depicting the expected woman and not the real one. In truth,

> a woman was infinitely closer to the female model exemplified by the 'pure *onnagata*'; she instinctively would know how to sit properly, to stand with her knees inward, to bend slightly so that she appeared smaller than her male partner, to behave modestly, and to paint her face with the perfect hue of milky-white cream. (19)

As with the Kabuki *onnagata*, Otaka is able to play the role of the stylised woman on stage—a feat that her brother would have approached very differently. Still, Otaka's representation of Woman remains firmly embedded in the unrealistic dream-world of the stage, further exemplifying the idea of a third, stage gender, neither fully female nor fully male; but rather a blend of these two concepts. This is exemplified by Otaka when she appears on stage for the first time.

2.3 The Stage Gender

Following the first aria, Otaka disappears briefly from stage and returns dressed like a man, wearing a *hakama*[77] and sporting a new, short hair style. Singing in a deep, booming voice, this masculine Otaka contrasts with the one from the first part of the act in which she was called "young lady" by the servants and showed a demurer and more feminine demeanour. The next time she appears on stage, her fellow Kabuki actors believe her to be Takagorō, her brother. Her disguise is therefore a success but, as Shakespeare would have it in *Twelfth Night*, she soon becomes embroiled in a complicated love story. After having performed on stage, Iriya Shigeyoshi (Tsukasa Yūki), Duke Orsino's equivalent in the play, asks her to deliver a letter to Mari, the writer's daughter featured in the prologue. This interesting blend of Shakespeare's characters and plotlines mixed with real life historical figures enriches the performance on a cultural level. As mentioned earlier, Mori Rintarō was a writer during the Meiji period—as was his daughter, Mari—and, interestingly, was involved in a literary dispute with none other than Tsubouchi Shōyō, Shakespeare's translator (Marra 2001). To have these two Japanese literary figures present both directly and indirectly in the narrative further pushes the idea that Shakespeare is not only central to the evolution of Kabuki during the Meiji era, but also remains an undeniably adaptable and universal playwright since he is afforded the same respect as native literary figures. Furthermore, the implication in this dispute is that Shakespeare was worthy enough of consideration in the late 1800s for two great Japanese authors to discuss academically. Though it may seem obvious today that Shakespeare is adaptable, it was not the case in Japan since the country had been closed to the West until 1853 with the arrival of Commodore Perry. Christopher Goto-Jones explains how "before [Perry's] arrival, Japan looked like a feudal monarchy that had been hiding in self-imposed isolation from the world for 250 years; within 50 years of his visit Japan had literally undergone a revolution…" (14). Tsubouchi's early translations of parts of Shakespeare in the 1890s (Gallimore 2016) is a good example of the Perry-induced Westernization of Japan, and Mori Rintarō's

[77] A type of traditional *kimono* trouser worn by men, but also used in martial arts by both men and women. Nowadays, *hakama* are worn on formal occasions, but at the time represented in the play, it would have been common, everyday wear for men.

involvement in literary discussions at the time further strengthens Shakespeare's position as an influential foreign figure in Meiji Japan.

As with Viola when she laments that "[she'll] do [her] best / To woo [Orsino's] lady. *[Aside]* Yet a barful strife! / Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife." (I.iv.40-43), Otaka is also torn by Iriya's request to deliver a love letter to another woman. Naturally, Iriya is unaware of her true gender, which only amplifies the awkwardness of the situation. Upon visiting Mari to deliver the letter, Otaka is faced with a second problem: Mari and her friends ridicule the fact that Otaka is a Kabuki actor as though she were of a lesser kind than them. Furthermore, the issue of gender is raised when Mari asks Otaka to describe Iriya to which the latter replies "I am a man" (I, 00:34:48), implying that she does not have an opinion on Iriya and thereby, once again, fosters the erasure of her true gender from the stage. Otaka quickly embraces her new role as a man off stage as well since she visits Mari while dressed in men's clothing. Like a true *onnagata*, Otaka portrays her assumed gender and 'passes' in society, further establishing her as a quality actor. This disregard for her gender, combined with her struggle to be understood and taken seriously as an actor provides an important dichotomy for the rest of the play. Meanwhile, Mari's friend and suitor Fukunaga Osuke (Asazumi Kei) proposes a reform—the famed *engeki kairyō kai* (演劇改良会) mentioned earlier in this chapter, which revolutionised the Japanese theatre world—and suggests that women should be allowed to play on stage. Although excited by this prospect, Otaka is conflicted. While Otaka desperately wants to represent her brother and become a good Kabuki actor, she also wants her feelings to be known and for everyone to see that women do indeed belong on stage. As Chen details, "the sexual desires that [*Twelfth Night*] explores depend on the ambiguity of Viola's gender identity" which, for Otaka, is intrinsically linked to her profession as an actor.

When Otaka tells Iriya about her 'sister' who has died of unrequited love, Iriya is touched by her story and, grasping her hand tightly, he slips up slightly into a half confession of his own: "Holding your hand like this, I can feel your kindness from the tip of your fingers. … If you were a woman, I would—ah, no, what's wrong with me?" (I, 00:57:00-57:31). Iriya startles himself with his own conflicting feelings for who he perceives to be a fellow man, and retreats from the situation. In

the same scene in *Jūniya,* Viola/Cesario had been the one to pursue Orsino and then escape after kissing him, but in *Epiphany*, we see the opposite as Iriya is the one who indirectly confesses but soon after flees from Otaka, leaving her confused. Moments later, Otaka receives a bouquet of flowers from Mari—from a fan to an actor—but Otaka quickly understands that there is more to it than simply admiration. *Jūniya*'s Viola was not as quick to see Olivia's love for her and mocked her for her feelings, but Otaka is much more sensitive and kinder since she finds herself in a complicated love triangle.

Figure 9. – Otaka as Takagorō (left) and Iriya (right) during the confession scene. © Takarazuka Company

Mari includes a card with her bouquet, asking Otaka out to dinner after her performance and, when Otaka shows up, she immediately clarifies the situation for Mari to avoid accidentally leading her on:

OTAKA. Thank you for the flowers.
MARI. I heard from my father that stage actors in the West receive flowers.
…
OTAKA. I can receive your flowers, but I cannot accept your heart.
MARI. Why not?
OTAKA. Because your heart should go to someone else.
MARI. The only person I want to give it to is you. Like you told me on that day, I found courage and told you—
OTAKA. Even if you love me, it is only an illusion. It's the same as loving a character on stage. I am an actor. (II, 00:13:55-15:05)

Otaka's initial refusal of Mari's feelings is not gender-based since she believes that the lady should love Iriya instead of her. As Iriya's agent, Otaka is conscious that her initial suit for Mari's love was on behalf of another person. However, Otaka also clearly states that her nature as an actor is a form of deceit. Naturally, she means that her perceived gender is not her true self, but her comparison to a character in a play reinforces this clear distinction between her role as her brother and her desire to be recognized in her own right. This echoes Viola and Olivia's exchange in *Twelfth Night*:

OLIVA. Stay.
I prithee tell me what thou think'st of me.
VIOLA. That you do think you are not what you are.
OLIVIA. If I think so, I think the same of you.
VIOLA. Then think you right. I am not what I am.
OLIVIA. I would you were as I would have you be. (*TN*, III.i.137-141)

Viola's declaration of "I am not what I am" is the closest she comes to revealing herself for the sake of alleviating Olivia's confusion, and in *Epiphany*, Otaka employs a similar trick by relying on her acting background as an excuse to refuse Mari. Otaka's line "it is only an illusion" is similar in tone to Viola's cryptic line, but Otaka leans into the idea that Mari cannot discern between love for a regular person and infatuation for a celebrity.

In a way, this scene speaks to the fan culture surrounding Takarazuka and its *otokoyaku* in particular. The Takarazuka actresses are no strangers to receiving flowers, gifts, and letters from adoring fans, which is interestingly represented in this scene between Otaka and Mari. The same way as when Edo era theatregoers were tantalised by first the women, and then the young men on stage, the same can be felt in the Takarazuka theatres in which the audience becomes complicit in the illusion of, in this case, the 'perfect man.' As with Kabuki, the magic lies in having same-sex actors throughout the play to create this illusion of perfection. The links between the Kabuki *onnagata* and Takarazuka's *otokoyaku* is more so evident when applying the notion of the new 'stage gender' explored at the beginning of this chapter to the scene in which Iriya displays a brief attraction to Otaka in her disguise as her brother. Unlike the *musumeyaku* Viola in *Jūniya*, Ayaki Nao is successful in her role as Otaka because of her capacities as on *otokoyaku* actress. As Chen explains,

> the homoerotic attraction [is] especially intriguing because both characters [are] played by women playing male roles. The scene [looks] like a man-to-man attraction while the heavy eye shadows and long thick eyelashes [betray] the fact that the attraction [is] accomplished by two women. Therefore, the sex appeal of this scene projected could be ascribed to the androgynous charms of the *otokoyaku* rather than to any implication of male homosexuality. (63)

While both actresses (Iriya and Otaka's) fulfil specific gender roles from within their community, their characters—especially Otaka—develop in a way that is typical for the Kabuki stage; that is, by providing a dream both on and off stage, and both in the play and in reality. Moreover, this dream-like quality of both the narrative and the way in which it is enacted reminds the audience of the link to Japanese Buddhism's *henshin* concept. Indeed, Richard Schechner says that:

> performers specialize in putting themselves in disequilibrium and then displaying how they regain their balance, psychophysically, narratively, and socially…. Theatrical techniques center on these incompletable transformations: how people turn into other people … either temporarily as in a play or permanently as in some rituals…. All these systems of performative transformations also include incomplete, unbalanced transformations of time and space. (xviii)

Otaka's *henshin* is therefore related to the performer's own *henshin*; that is to say, since the performers live in a precarious world of incomplete transformations, both in time and space, so too do the characters that they portray. The world framed within *Epiphany* leaks out onto the stage where the boundaries between the two become unstable, creating this dream-like feeling. Not only do the characters live according to the sociohistorical constraints of their narrative, but the audience also connects with this historical past-self and are henceforth 'transformed.' What is more, the particularity of this type of theatre adds another layer of transformation to the time-space binary: gender transformation.

Undeniably, Otaka has her physical—and emotional—transformative moment when she reveals herself to Iriya, but her revelation is still marked by the speech pattern of her male persona: a deep voice and use of gendered language. Unlike in English, Japanese language uses different pronouns and grammatical formulations to convey the gender of the person who is speaking or writing. At the beginning of the play, when Otaka is her feminine self, she refers to herself as *watashi*, the Japanese neutral "I" pronoun, whereas in her male form, she uses the male first-person pronoun *boku*. Interestingly, *boku* is often used by young men and conveys a feeling of youthfulness and softness compared to the much more masculine *ore* pronoun. As for the *watashi* pronoun, although it is favoured by women, it is not the ultimate expression of femininity; this is rather reserved to the ultra-feminine pronoun *atashi* that Mari uses to indicate herself. Additionally, the Japanese equivalent of sir and madam are also pointedly gendered. Iriya calls her Takagorō-*kun* in her male disguise, yet again an indication of youthfulness and maleness, while she calls him Iriya-*san*, a more polite and neutral appellation. When Otaka is a woman, her servant uses the very polite and neutral *sama* to address her, but never is she called *chan*, the only truly feminine designation (unlike Mari who is the ultimate representation of femininity in the play); however, in her male disguise, her fellow Kabuki actors call her Takagorō-*chan*, which in this case denotes her youth. This differentiation of pronouns remains when she tells Iriya that she is a woman, which places her in a particular balance between her real self and her assumed persona. This balance—or rather imbalance, as Schechner proposes—resonates with the aspects

of performance theory discussed earlier. While Otaka is seen as perpetually on the cusp of both womanhood and manhood, Mari stands as a stark opposition to this unstable sociocultural position.

Despite this struggle, Fukunaga later realises his plans of having women on stage and Otaka becomes the first actress to join, allowing her to finally claim her place in the world of Kabuki as herself and not the shadow of her brother. Then again, where Otaka has a happy ending all around, gaining both her right to perform as a woman and Iriya's affection, the same cannot be said of Mari who, by this point in the story, is completely enamoured with Otaka. After the reveal of her true self, Otaka has a heart-breaking conversation with Mari:

> MARI. …You can't really be a woman.
>
> OTAKA. I'm sorry. You were hurt. If I had spoken frankly sooner, this wouldn't have…. That's right, because I knew how serious you were, miss.
>
> KIMIKO. … Hey, there wasn't anything that could be done. After all, when we heard the story, there were all kinds of circumstances, weren't there?
>
> TAMA. That's right! To say you were playing a man at that late point was impossible, so it couldn't be helped.
>
> MARI. It's not really about saying you were playing a man… I just….
>
> OTAKA. I understand. I can guess what's in your heart. If there's anything I could do, anything to atone—
>
> MARI. Well then, become a man. (Translation from "*Epiphany*")

Luckily for Mari, Otaka has a twin brother, which enables the narrative to wrap up neatly; but, in reality, would she have so easily abandoned her ideal, Otaka, in favour of a copy? Daisy Murray writes how, in the Early Modern period, "the multiplicity inherent in the twin relationship is celebrated" and that in Shakespeare's comedies in particular, this multiplicity is "[turned] … to comic purpose, augmenting the confusion of his plays through the inclusion of twin likeness"

(143). Murray, drawing on Stephen Greenblatt[78], argues that in early modern medicine, twins and hermaphrodites were likened to one another, but the latter are not integrated in *Twelfth Night*. Viola may not be a hermaphrodite, but she is clearly androgynous, which is why her disguise into another gender is so successful as it "suggests an interchangeability and potential for deception within identity" (163). Though Mari's (and Olivia's) transfer of feelings is difficult to accept, Otaka's male twin is nevertheless "the proper object of her affection—namely, Viola's male counterpart" (164). Even though the male-female pairing that forms after Otaka's revelation is deemed the 'proper' one, the question of Mari's feelings remains ambiguous. Greenblatt discusses in *Shakespearean Negotiations*,

> What if Olivia had succeeded in marrying Orsino's page Cesario? And what if the scandal of a marriage contracted so far beneath a countess's station were topped by a still greater scandal: the revelation that the young groom was in fact a disguised girl? Such a marriage—if we could still call it one—would make some sense in a play that had continually tantalized its audience with the spectacle of homoerotic desire: Cesario in love with "his" master Orsino, Orsino evidently drawn toward Cesario, Antonio passionately in love with Sebastian, Olivia aroused by a page whose effeminacy everyone remarks. … [H]ow could the play extricate itself from the objectification of illicit desire in a legal marriage? (66-67)

While such questions are easily resolved by looking at the sociohistorical context of early modern England, the answers are more complex within the frame of the play. Much of this rests on Olivia and Cesario's 'marriage' in the play and, were it not for Sebastian's timely arrival, Olivia would have been faced with a serious legal problem, as Sebastian points out: "You would have been contracted to a maid; / Nor are you therein, by my life deceived: / You are betrothed both to a maid and a man" (V.i.256-258). Comparatively, *Epiphany* never nears this topic. Instead, it has Otaka clearly refuse Mari during the restaurant scene discussed earlier, which avoids this awkward situation from ever arising. Still, Otaka feels responsible for Mari's heartbreak, and even offers to do "anything to atone," but Mari's wish is unreasonable and impossible to grant. Luckily,

[78] See *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (1988).

Otaka's twin brother can step into that role in her place, thus alleviating the emotional burden on both women. Playing on Sebastian's line in IV.i, Mari sees the real Takagorō and says, "was it all a dream?" (II, 01:00:48), thinking that the brother is in fact the sister. Mari initially confuses the two, but then realises that the one in front of her is indeed the male Takagorō, adding "you really are identical" in reference to the twins (II, 01:01:17).

Figure 10. – Mari (right) meeting Takagorō (left) for the first time © Takarazuka Company

Unlike in *TN*, Otaka does not attempt to hide her family background entirely. Viola adopts a new name to play the role of a pageboy, thereby hiding her lineage and disallowing the other characters from finding out her ruse. Otaka, on the other hand, borrows her brother's name directly rather than using a pseudonym, fully embracing her role as her brother, and even assimilating him into her own identity. Like with the medical phenomenon of the vanishing twin syndrome, in which one twin absorbs the other in vivo, Otaka 'cannibalises' her brother's identity and comes to fully embody him by disregarding herself. This is in part because of the narrative

changes in *Epiphany*, and how Otaka initially enters the Kabuki troupe to uphold a meeting agreement between her brother and Iriya. When Takagorō is finally introduced at the end of the play, the name and person confusion is lessened since Otaka simply declares: “I am not Takagorō. I am Raikōya Takagorō’s sister. I am a woman” (II, 00:46:56-47:06). Furthermore, the impact of Otaka’s revelation is further diminished when Iriya tells her he already heard the truth from Takagorō himself. Iriya is not surprised by this disclosure at all, and he even calls her Otaka before she can tell him her true name herself. The only person in this version of the story who is truly shocked and disheartened by this turn of events is Mari, whose feelings for Otaka-as-Takagorō remain unresolved.

Mari is in disbelief that the person she loves turns out to be somebody completely different and declares that “no one understands [her] at all” ("*Epiphany*"). Mari’s clear distinction between Otaka as a male and as a female plays into the hands of patriarchal constructs which would push her to seek a heteronormative end to her dilemma which is why, when Takagorō appears in front of her, Mari can hardly believe her eyes. Takagorō explains that “it’s unfortunate, but in reality, my sister is a woman. It is precisely because it is reality that this is not a dream.” (II, 01:01:45-01:01:50). Mari remains confused for a few more seconds until she agrees to Takagorō’s suggestion of “[changing] her suffering into happiness” (II, 01:02:10-01:02:15). Despite Takagorō’s frequent reminders that this is their reality, Mari seems to cling to her previous homoerotic desires and closes the scene with a few cryptic lines:

> MARI. So it wasn’t a dream after all.
> TAKAGORO. No, unfortunately.
> MARI. No, it is not unfortunate, because if this were a dream, I—. (II, 01:02:18-01:02:33)

Though she ultimately seems happy with having Takagorō as a romantic partner rather than Otaka, the idea of dreams mixing with reality harks back to Otaka’s earlier declaration of “it is only an illusion. … I am an actor.” In essence, Takagorō is also an actor, but his off-stage persona is not misleading like his sister’s. Realistically, it is unlikely that Mari would be able to transfer her

feelings from Otaka to Takagorō since the latter is a complete stranger to her. Mari's history lies with Otaka, not with her bother, which translates into an impossibility. However, as with Shakespeare's Olivia, this reality is ignored in favour of a heteronormative conclusion where Mari and Takagorō are presumed to be happy, and all is well for all the characters.

The Westernization of Japan

After her dramatic revelation, Otaka reappears on stage in an elaborate costume lifted straight from the pages of *The Rose of Versailles*, which further amplifies her *henshin* at the end of the play. Like the masculine heroine Oscar, Otaka dons a princely outfit that wars with the reality of who she is underneath. However, unlike Viola in *TN* and in *Jūniya,* Otaka rids herself of her masculine persona entirely and retransforms into a woman to remain as such. The audience is once again confronted with the *shōjo* aesthetic at this point in the play; however, the concept is not as developed nor central as in *Jūniya*. Still, Otaka's final look in the play speaks to this tradition, especially since it is so vastly different from her opening look. Otaka is first shown dressed as a young Japanese woman from a well-to-do family, her hair is black and coiffed in the style of the Meiji period, and she wears a *kimono* and *hakama*. By contrast, Otaka at the end is clearly Westernized with her blonde hair and Renaissance-inspired costume. This transformation links back to the ideas expressed by Mori and his daughter at the beginning of the play when discussing theatre practices in the West.

Figure 11. – Otaka after her true gender has been revealed © Takarazuka Company

The Meiji period saw its first Westernization of the country, but major changes are more so associated with the postwar Taishō period (Tsurumi 1984). However, as evidenced by this performance of *TN*, the interest in the West during the Meiji era was a defining factor in how society should progress. Otaka's new appearance speaks to these changes, especially when combined with the fact that women were once again allowed to perform on stage, like in Europe. According to Sally A. Hastings, "Japanese women abandoned their lovely kimono" in the late 1800s, and "[e]ven the empress adopted Western clothing. The empress' adoption of Western dress was linked with, sometimes even given credit for, the short-lived popularity of such clothing" (677). Otaka is not the only character to wear Western clothing; in fact, Mari, and her upper-class friends all wear Western dresses and suits, and Otaka herself wears a man's suit when she visits Mari at her house. However, Otaka's shift from the *kimono* she wore throughout the play as an actress, to a clearly Western outfit signifies a greater shift in Japanese society by which

women slowly stepped away from the traditions that bound them in the Edo period. Furthermore, "The empress' Western clothes represented the importance of women in the transformation of Japan into a strong and wealthy nation. … The empress' modern dress was consistently associated with the contributions of women to the economic and political life of the nation" (678). Though Otaka comes to embody these ideas by the end of the play, she is contrasted to Iriya who maintains his traditional clothes up until the end. Historically, "Western dress for men was a symbol of the disestablishment of the samurai class and the equality of all Japanese" (680), but Iriya's resistance to this change is exemplified in his continued wear of the *kimono* both on and off stage. Otaka had also been a form of resistance to this Westernization for most of the play, but ultimately her revelation as a woman directly ties in with women's new roles in Japanese society. In fact, Hastings writes that:

> The empress' new clothes were one of the finishing touches in the creation of a revised and unified aristocracy for the new Japan. Her new clothes also coincided with the creation of important public roles for women: teaching, nursing, and military support, all roles that required uniforms. The empress' new clothes were a call to the women of Japan to make themselves available for service to the nation in the home, on the farm, or in the factory as well as in the Rokumeikan.[79] (689)

Though Otaka is not slated to partake in the war effort, she gains a new place in her society as she officially becomes a stage actress. At the beginning of the play, she could only ever be "the daughter of a Kabuki actor" (I, 00:11:25), forever restricted by her gender and her society, but the emancipated, Westernized Otaka at the end represents new opportunities for women and actresses alike.

Shifting the Focus from Primary to Secondary Characters

Unlike *Twelfth Night*'s focus on Viola and Orsino at the end of the play, the parade finale in *Epiphany* is dedicated to Mari and Takagorō who, as a reminder, is played by the same actress as

[79] Tokyo's Meiji era Western-style entertainment hall for foreign dignitaries

Otaka. Where *Jūniya* ended with a marriage on stage, we see in *Epiphany* the secondary couple take center stage. This is undoubtably because of Ayaki Nao's status as an *otokoyaku*. To have her dance at the end with Tsukasa Yūki (Iriya) would mean to have two *otokoyaku* actresses close the show, an unlikely scenario since Takarazuka always favours the male-female 'golden combi' pairing in any performance. This shift away from the primary Otaka/Iriya pairing offers a form of vindication for Mari who, although not her first choice, ends up being very happy with Takagorō by her side. The pair are seen singing and dancing in evening wear, a call back to the opening scene of the play where couples waltz across the stage.

On the contrary, Orsino's famous last lines to Viola in *Twelfth Night*, "Cesario, come – / For so you shall be while you are a man, / But when in other habits you are seen, / Orsino's mistress and his fancy's queen" (V.i.378-381), are changed to better fit the climate of the play. As actors, Otaka and Iriya first and foremost value their relationship to one another as stage mates rather than lovers. Instead of *TN*'s lines that speak directly to Viola's dual nature, Iriya and Otaka's final exchange in *Epiphany* relates to their roles on stage:

> IRIYA. Today, we work. Do not call me 'Iriya.'
> OTAKA. I understand. It's '*zamoto*,' [theatre proprietor] isn't it?
> IRIYA. Yes, and now it is time to practice.
> OTAKA. Yes, it is as you say, *zamoto*. (II, 00:54:52-55:20)

It is clear in *Twelfth Night* that Viola will continue to vacillate between her masculine and feminine personas, yet in *Epiphany*, Otaka's different roles are stage-bound only. Not only will she continue to be an actress now that women are allowed to perform, but she will also take on many more personas than Viola's limited pageboy role. Iriya's wish to be called by his professional title is a reversal of what we observe with Viola in *TN*. Orsino is only ever a duke in the play, and Viola is the one who has a duality as wife and pageboy, but *Epiphany*'s Iriya is the one to show that there is a need for a separation of his two selves, the professional and the private.

Iriya's strict adherence to tradition and social hierarchy is once again exemplified through his choice of clothing, as he wears a *kimono* throughout the play. This contrasts with Otaka's frequent

changes between Japanese and Western clothing, ultimately settling on the latter style. Visually, this choice of clothing for Iriya and Otaka creates a clear distinction between the traditional from the new, the old from the young, and the masculine from the feminine. Even though Otaka wears a masculine outfit at the end, she is very clearly female, and there is no indication that she will return to her masculine role outside of the theatre. While Viola in *Twelfth Night* and in *Jūniya* continues to balance her identity between her masculine and feminine selves, Otaka is redefined in *Epiphany* as a young woman who finds strength in her own gender and who manages to live her dream of being on stage.

By comparison, Mari's dream is broken by the reality that her society demands a heteronormative conclusion to her love life. As for Otaka, she is able to reintegrate into her expected role: a young woman in love with a man. Nevertheless, she retains a quality earned during her adventure as her brother's double. Furthermore, while Otaka is successful in securing a position for herself in the theatre, it is unclear what happens to her brother; that is, if he joins the troupe as initially planned, or if he disappears into the background, becoming Otaka's shadow in turn. In a way, what happens to Takagorō is irrelevant: it is Otaka's story that captures the heart and imagination. Even Otaka and Iriya's romance is toned down compared to *TN* and, even more obviously, in *Jūniya*. The romantic side story is given instead to Mari's character who becomes almost like a lead character in this adaptation, and whose journey of finding love pulls at the heartstrings. Otaka is not the *shōjo* heroine shown in *Jūniya*, nor is she the permanently dual and androgynous Viola in *Twelfth Night*; she is instead a mature, level-headed woman whose true purpose is to change the way people perceive women's place in the theatre. With the reformation of the theatre well underway, and Danjūrō IX's own beliefs that "because pure *onnagata* had ceased to exist, femininity should be performed on stage by women," (Edelson 19) Otaka is given the opportunity to revolutionise the stage that she loves, as well as people's perceptions of gender. In the end, Otaka gets to keep the agency of a man, especially with regard to the stage, while being fully woman.

3. Fuyu Monogatari (*The Winter's Tale*)

At the close of *The Winter's Tale*, when Perdita is restored to her family and her parents are once again united, Hermione asks her daughter, "Tell me, mine own. / Where hast thou been preserved? Where lived? How found / Thy father's court?" (*WT* V.iii.149-151), yet Perdita remains silent to this inquiry. Perdita's non-response not only mirrors her mother's lack of voice for most of the narrative, but also highlights a greater silence in the play on behalf of the women who populate it. Hermione, who "is absent from the play until the last scene and does not speak until the last few lines" (Neely 175), has the ultimate form of power and control over her husband through her extended play of a mock death, orchestrated by her friend, Paulina. Through this act of rebellion, Hermione's status as the perfect wife is augmented by her mock death and, "in her absence, her power is extended through Paulina's defence of her and through Perdita's recreation of her" (175). The absence and silence of these women force the men to internalise and re-examine their prejudiced beliefs and subvert patriarchal notions of marriage, fidelity, and parenthood.[80]

Through these ideas of women's silence, absence, and resilience, I examine the japanified *The Winter's Tale* and how these ideas are augmented by the historical context of the adaptation. Takarazuka's production of *The Winter's Tale* (冬物語 *Fuyu Monogatari*)[81] is the first play in the *Shakespeare Series* performed at the Bow Hall from March 4 to 14, 1999 and directed by Kodama Akiko. Unlike the two previous plays from this series that I examined, *Fuyu Monogatari* strays from Shakespeare's text as it portrays Japan's historical past and the ins and outs of Edo theatre. This play was performed by the Flower troupe (花組 *hana gumi*), the oldest of the five groups, and which is credited with having been the first to perform Shakespeare in the early years of the company. As with *Epiphany*, this play also features a Japanized Shakespeare with characters taking on new Japanese names and professions. Even though this play also presents Shakespeare

[80] As a note of interest, the RSC's statistics about the play state that Hermione's lines account for 6%, while Perdita's lines are 4%. Paulina, on the other hand, fairs slightly better at 10%, placing her second behind Leontes in terms of importance in the play (Bate, Rasmussen xxiv).

[81] To differentiate between Shakespeare's play and Takarazuka's adaptation, I will use the transliterated Japanese title, *Fuyu Monogatari*, when referring to the latter of the two.

through a Kabuki lens, it does so from much earlier than in Meiji-era *Epiphany*; the story takes place during the Edo period (1603-1867) before Shakespeare was ever introduced to Japan, and it also coincides with the banishment of women from the stage in Japan. However, despite this restriction, Osan (Hermione) is given a scene where she dances in a Kabuki style. Aside from this short moment, this representation of Kabuki is male-dominated, and the play integrates traditional Kabuki elements, such as music and speech patterns, within the overarching story. *Fuyu Monogatari* utilises the play-within-a-play device to create a division between the Kabuki world through the form of an inset play, and the characters' lives off stage. This play-within-a-play is reminiscent of Shakespeare's love of this technique in several of his plays, namely *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Tempest*. What is interesting is that there is no such device in *The Winter's Tale*, making *Fuyu Monogatari* unusual in its choice of adaptation. Furthermore, Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* presents contradicting scenes of tragedy interspersed with comedic moments that render it difficult to classify. Though it is traditionally perceived as a comedy, the play's tragic elements for the better half of the plot—from Hermione's and Mamillius' deaths to the abandonment of Perdita and the loss of a deep friendship with Polixenes—question this label and place it in the romance category. In *Tyrant,* Stephen Greenblatt writes that "the happy ending [in the play] is in keeping with the literary genre of romance, with its deliberate, playful violation of realistic expectations" (137) such as Hermione's magical revival by the end. Takarazuka's take on these contradictions is one that blends the inherently tragic Kabuki play with the upbeat 'outside world' of the theatre.

This highly japanified version of *The Winter's Tale* resembles the source text only in its general plot, yet it is still recognizably a Shakespeare play in its ode to family, friendship, and parenthood. This chapter therefore argues that through the sociohistorical context of Edo Japan, *Fuyu Monogatari* tackles the topics of adultery, betrayal, and murder in a way that highlights the injustices suffered by the women of the play through an exploration of the cultural norms surrounding Kabuki theatre.

3.1 The Play-Within-The-Play

Before the start of the play, lead *otokoyaku* actress Haruno Sumire mentions that "Shakespeare is a writer who seems to truly know human beauty and ugliness (*Fuyu Monogatari* 00:00:41), which is what informed her double performance as Tomigorō (Leontes), a Kabuki actor, and Izayoi (Perdita), a prostitute, in the reimagined and kabukified Shakespearean play. Similar to *Epiphany*'s character changes, the two lead male characters in *Fuyu Monogatari* are transformed from being kings of their own countries to being Kabuki actors from different companies. This modification of their profession sets the tone for the performance that follows as the overly dramatic Kabuki style lends itself well to the human conflict at the centre of *The Winter's Tale*. The rigid forms of Kabuki enhance the characters' distress and highlight Tomigorō's inner ugliness through his malevolent attempts to murder his friend on stage. Tomigorō's jealousy and fear towards his fellow Kabuki actor and best friend, Izaemon (Sena Jun), whom he perceives as a villain vis-à-vis his wife Osan (Sawaki Kurumi), is at the heart of this play, as were the dynamics between Leontes, Hermione, and Polixenes in *The Winter's Tale*.

Dieter Mehl explains in his article "Forms and Functions of the Play within a Play" that the mechanism of the play-within-the-play can be found "in comedies, histories, and tragedies. Similarly, the plays inserted can be anything from a short dumb show to a complete little tragedy. They can be pure entertainment, literary parody, or moral exemplum" (43). In *Fuyu Monogatari*, the device is used to mirror the tragedy of the characters' lives onto a Kabuki stage. In fact, in this adaptation, as with many Early Modern plays that employ the same trick, we have an "introduction of a company of actors within a play, who then perform some kind of play themselves before an audience made up of characters from the 'main' play" (Mehl 43) such as in *The Taming of the Shrew*. As such, Shakespeare's plot for *The Winter's Tale* unfolds behind-the-scenes of a Kabuki performance rather than on the inset stage. The scene that takes place on the Kabuki stage is short but poignant since it presents the attempted murder of Izaemon in a highly dramatized fashion. Though this scene is significant, it does not belong to Shakespeare, but the general plot of *The Winter's Tale* can be seen in the unfolding of the salient points in the play.

The story takes place at a Kabuki theatre, the Nakamura-za, in Edo. This creates a layering of plays since we are confronted with two stages, the Kabuki one where Tomigorō and Izaemon's feud is dramatized, and the Takarazuka stage upon which the play is enacted. The inner play, that of the Kabuki performance, depicts a separate plot from the outer play that happens 'backstage.' During a performance, Tomigorō confronts his old friend Izaemon and attempts to murder him for his alleged affair with Osan, conflating his role in the Kabuki play with his personal feelings. Mehl writes that the idea of having the characters play a double role in both an inner and outer play "enabled the dramatist to make the interrelation between the two planes of dramatic action far more subtle and intriguing" (46). The shift between inner and outer is displayed through the use of a Kabuki painted backdrop of a pine tree over a gold background as décor, costumes, makeup, music, and line delivery. Moreover, when Tomigorō and Izaemon perform the Kabuki play, their tone and gestures reflect the Kabuki style, yet when they are off stage, their attitudes change completely, signifying the switch to their regular lives. The audience is regularly reminded of the play-within-the-play mechanism because of the frequent backstage calls for the actors to return to the main (Kabuki) stage.

Figure 12. – Tomigorō (left) and Izaemon (right) during the Kabuki inset play © Takarazuka Company

When Takarazuka staged this play, they called upon Odashima Yūshi, a Shakespeare expert, and Mizuguchi Kazuo, a Kabuki acting advisor, to help render an accurate portrayal of both the text and the theatre tradition in their adaptation ("冬物語" [Winter's Tale] 宝塚歌劇団 1999). It is important to point out, once again, that while the audience is witnessing a Kabuki performance, it is still being performed within the parameters of Takarazuka. The two *otokoyaku* actresses who play these roles directly contradict the ideas of the practice of Kabuki as an all-male theatre, as discussed earlier in chapters 1 and 2. In this play, Takarazuka seems to be presenting the idea of all-female Kabuki under the guise of it being at its base a Shakespearean play. In terms of the politics behind the play, Takarazuka's production of a Kabuki-inspired performance is subversive in itself since these scenes are all portrayed by women. The fact that the company hired a Kabuki advisor to guide the actresses through these scenes highlights how Takarazuka continues to break with traditions by allowing for an all-female Kabuki to take place on stage.

The Kabuki stage in *Fuyu Monogatari* becomes a place of tragedy when Tomigorō plans to murder his friend Izaemon. This further resonates with the Early Modern device of the play-within-a-play, as it became closely associated with revenge tragedies (Mehl 1965). Even though *The Winter's Tale* is traditionally seen as a romance play, the revenge tragedy label fits its plot well, too, albeit while not being fully executed due to Tomigorō's inability to carry through with his plan of murdering first his friend, and then his wife. Furthermore, the main character's redemption and the relatively 'happy ending' saves the play from becoming a tragedy. The elaborate dramatic style of Kabuki lends itself to this murder-revenge plan as Tomigorō blends the role of his character on stage with his personal motivations for wanting to kill Izaemon. Ian Buruma writes in his memoir *A Tokyo Romance* that,

> [t]he artificiality of social decorum, the conformity to highly drilled forms of etiquette, can have the paradoxical effect of highlighting what is human and individual. The Kabuki theatre, which started in the early seventeenth century

> as a wild erotic entertainment performed by outcasts, later refined artificially into the most thrilling dramatic art. Actors actually imitate the movements of Bunraku theater puppets, for which many Kabuki plays were originally conceived. But they are not at all like robots. It is as though the more you press human passions into stylized conventions, the more dramatic they are when they burst into the open. (91)

The "human passions" that Buruma describes are brought to life in Takarazuka's play-within-a-play device. When Tomigorō and Izaemon share the Kabuki stage, their passionate natures are revealed in how they perform their roles. The strict form of the theatre puts a visible physical strain on the actors as both Tomigorō and Izaemon sweat profusely, the veins in their necks protruding from the effort. This effort to restrain their passions is pointless since we immediately understand that their long friendship and mutual respect is coming undone during the play-within-the-play due to Tomigorō's misplaced jealousy. In the context of early modern plays, "the inserted performances are often no more than a brief masque or dance; but all seem in some measure to be derived from *The Spanish Tragedy*, and all play more or less skillfully on the spectator's awareness of what is actually going on. They all use disguise and acting for purposes of deception and mischief" (Mehl 49). *Fuyu Monogatari* seems to rely on this tradition as it, too, uses the device of the play-within-the-play to control the narrative and the audience's perception of the characters' true intentions.

The actresses who played the two friends-to-enemies expressed how the Kabuki sections of the performance required much concentration, and that they were surprised by how it physically took a toll on them ("Takarazuka Star Room" 07:12-07:40). As discussed in the section about *Epiphany,* Kabuki requires rigorous and constant training to accomplish the difficult and physically demanding stunts that are required. *Fuyu Monogatari* showcases this physicality through poses (*mie*) and movements that signify whether a character is good or bad. By using this form of theatre in conjunction with Shakespeare, it creates a palpable tension between the physical strain of the actors and the emotional strain of the characters they portray.

Though Shakespeare makes use of the play-within-the-play device in several of his plays—most notably in *Hamlet*, he does not include it in *The Winter's Tale*. Takarazuka's decision to do so is at once a nod to Shakespeare's writing style, but it also serves to combine the narrative with a very Japanese setting. Even though there is a strong association between the play-within-the-play device and Shakespeare's writing, Dustagheer and Newman argue that,

> [p]laywrights [such as Shakespeare], however, are not the sole agents of metatheatre, a phenomenon which—like early modern drama more generally—is increasingly being recognized as a collaborative strategy, experience, or effect. Actors, audiences, prompters, and—in modern theater—directors and stage designers all have the potential to contribute to the self-consciousness of a performed play, or to display self-consciousness themselves. (9)

In this sense, Takarazuka's performance of *Fuyu Monogatari*, under director Kodama Akiko's guidance, shows awareness of Japan's history through its utilisation of cultural markers—such as the nod to samurai culture and the exploration of the 'floating world' of *ukiyo*—to separate Shakespeare's play from the message it wishes to convey about women's agency in an early modern setting. Ultimately, "by presenting action on more than one level, the dramatist can imply ambiguous and provocative comments on his characters and their deeds; he can give a detached view of certain dramatic situations and thus leave the audience unsure about their moral bearings" (Mehl 60). Such is the case with *Fuyu Monogatari* that uses the violence of the Edo period and the solemness of Kabuki to emphasise the themes of betrayal and loss in *The Winter's Tale*.

3.2 Transcultural Significance

Despite the theatrical need for inner plays to move the plot forward in complex storylines, there is also a psychoanalytical dimension to the mechanism of the play-within-a-play.[82] In 1960, Lionel Abel coined the term 'metatheatre' in relation to the idea of the play-within-the-play. Abel sought

[82] See: Gill Katz, *The Play Within the Play: The Enacted Dimension of Psychoanalytic Process*, Routledge, 2013.

to "… distinguish metatheatre as a distinct genre different from tragedy, arguing that whereas tragedy 'gives by far the stronger sense of the reality of the "world,"' metatheatre 'gives by far the stronger sense that the world is a projection of human consciousness'" (qtd. in Dustagheer and Newman 4). This projection is clear as the Kabuki actors in the play blend their acting dialogues with their own inner desires. What is more, the 'meta' aspect of the play takes on different connotations. Frank Zipfel explains that "[a]s a kind of metatheatre, the play within the play always has a meta-dramatic, meta-literary and meta-aesthetic potential, and lends itself to reflections on the technical, social and political preconditions and practices of production of and response to staged drama in particular and to literature and art in general" (205). In the case of *Fuyu Monogatari*, the meta-aesthetic element is especially interesting. The decision to make this play in part a Kabuki performance harks back to Japan's long tradition with this theatre. Even though the play is performed for a modern audience far removed from the Edo way of life, the aesthetic is that of a long-gone past where the characters' woes seem more at home in a stylized form than in a contemporary approach. Dustagheer and Newman write that "drama relates to other plays, to other art forms, and to culture. Metadrama, therefore, consists of moments where plays examine how drama functions, but also its interactions with itself, other art forms and culture more generally" (6). These interactions are highlighted through the portrayal of the narrative on a stage that is foreign to Shakespeare due to its different dramatic traditions. Unlike the performance of *Jūniya*, *Fuyu Monogatari* is far from *shōjo* in its aesthetic, and its genre is made much more tragic than Shakespeare's romance because of the combination of Japanese cultural history and the themes of the play.

The title *The Winter's Tale* itself evokes a particular feeling of storytelling since "winter's tales were strange and fanciful oral narratives intended to while away the long, cold hours of the dark nights of winter and, therefore, not meant to be taken seriously or to withstand the rigours of logical interrogation" (Snyder, Curren-Aquino 5). Shakespeare's play is definitely "strange and fanciful" as testified by Hermione's reappearance and revival at the end of the play that is dreamlike and unrealistic. Similarly, the adaptation of the play conveys similar unrealistic and romantic ideas through the overdramatic element of Kabuki. As with the idea behind these types of tales, Kabuki also was originally an oral art form as plays were not written down until much

later after its golden age. Thus, the oral quality of the narrative evoked by the title alone can be utilised and combined with the oral element of Kabuki traditions.

Family Tragedy and Ritual Suicide

Shakespeare starts his play with a short scene featuring Archidamus and Camillo, discussing Leontes and Polixenes' friendship. Camillo says that while they are geographically separated, "the heavens continue their love," to which Archidamus replies, "I think there is not in the world malice or / matter to alter it" (WT I.i.28; 29-30). Archidamus' assurance in the kings' friendship is ironic since the play quickly reveals how fragile this relationship truly is. By contrast, Takarazuka ignores this opening scene in favour of a dancing number that leads into what would be Shakespeare's act I, scene ii. Not unlike Shakespeare's plot where Polixenes visits his married friends Leontes and Hermione, Izaemon, who is from a different Kabuki family, also visits his best friend Tomigorō and his wife Osan. Though the two actors should be rivals because of their strict Kabuki traditions, it is established early in the play that they in fact support one another and admire one another's work. At the beginning of the play, Izaemon rejoices for Tomigorō's success as an actor because he has been awarded the position of troupe leader (座頭 *zagashira*). However, Tomigorō's first performance as troupe leader is postponed, so Izaemon expresses his wish to leave. Unable to convince his friend himself, Tomigorō has his wife change his mind to stay a while longer.

It is at this point, as with Shakespeare's play, that the misunderstanding takes place and Tomigorō suddenly sees his friend as a threat to his marriage. In Shakespeare, Hermione is credited with having changed Polixenes' mind very quickly, which is what triggers her husband's suspicion. In Takarazuka, however, the conversation between Izaemon and Osan takes much longer, and their relationship is tinged with sexual tension that is otherwise absent in the text. Even though Osan is still very much faultless in this play, some of the other defining features of the story depart from the Shakespearean text. In order to convince Izaemon to stay with her and her husband a while longer, she first establishes a bond with him, saying "I understand that you want to see your son, it's written all over your face. … Your Hidenosuke and my Jurota are the same age" (00:16:14-00:16:33). Having softened a bit more to the idea of staying, Izaemon reminisces about their youth and how Osan used to call him "Iza-san" (00:16:59). This denotes familiarity and closeness

instead of how she calls him today, Izaemon-sama, with the very polite suffix affixed at the end. Izaemon jokingly says that he had been her protector when they were young, but that he "was dumped when [she] fell in love with Tomigorō" (00:17:14-18). Tomigorō overhears this moment between the two, and he misinterprets it as lingering affection, which then plants a seed of doubt in his mind as to Izaemon and Osan's relationship.

Osan also reveals to Izaemon that she is pregnant but asks him not to tell Tomigorō because "right now is a crucial time for him at the theatre" (00:19:10). Tomigorō overhears this too, and although he is initially happy with the news, his expression changes to show how he immediately doubts that the unborn child is his. Following Tomigorō's attempted murder of his friend on the Kabuki stage, and after a brief scene depicting an Edo festival, we learn that Osan has given birth to a girl. No matter how much the servants try to convince Tomigorō to visit his wife, he refuses. We also meet Jurota (Fuzuki Miyo), Tomigorō's son. Tomigorō asks him if "people think he [Jurota] looks like his father," to which the boy replies "yes, everyone says we look exactly the same" (00:51:16-00:51:34). Although it seems like an innocent question, it reveals Tomigorō's anxiety regarding his children's legitimacy. Since he suspects that his newborn daughter is his friend's child, he now also doubts that Jurota is his biological child. Tomigorō declares to Jurota: "you are my child, no matter what people say" (00:51:35-00:51:45); however, when his son tries to hug him as a response, Tomigorō turns away from him, revealing that he still has doubts despite his confident words.

When the newborn is presented to Tomigorō, he acts surprised by the fact that he has a child, yet at the beginning of the play, he had overheard Izaemon and Osan discussing the pregnancy. Tomigorō asks "is this child really my child?" (00:55:34-00:55:38), expressing again his doubt, and when the baby is placed in his arms and begins to cry, he decides that "she is crying because she hates me" (00:56:03-00:56:10), a statement that the servants quickly rebuke. When it is shown that the child cannot stop crying while in his arms, he concludes that "this child is not [his] … she is Izaemon's [child]" (00:56:52-00:57:05). Despite the servant Hikosaburo's (Isono Chihiro) objections, Tomigorō becomes irate, repeating that the baby is not his, but this time, by using much more objectifying language. Until this point, Tomigorō referred to the child as *akago* (lit.

'baby'), but after he believes Izaemon to be the father, he refers to the child as *aitsu* (lit. 'that thing'), a derogatory term used when referring to people who are lesser or who are displeasing to the speaker. The servant is appalled, but he is powerless in trying to convince Tomigorō otherwise and, when his master orders him to kill the child, he has no choice but to comply.

It is at this point that Tomigorō decides to kill his wife. He picks up a sickle and hides it in his *kimono* as his wife begs him to return her child to her. The high point of the drama takes place when he says to Osan: "I will kill you, and I will die too" (01:0038-01:00:45). Jurota interposes himself between his parents, receiving the killing blow from the sickle instead of his mother. With his dying breath, Jurota pleads with his father to "please, somehow, save mother's life. That is [my] life's wish" (01:00:59-01:01:21). Realizing his grave mistake, Tomigorō begs for all to forgive him; Izaemon, Hikosaburo and, most of all, Jurota. To add to this trauma, the maid Osode (Kiyanagi Midori) tells Tomigorō that Osan has died from the shock of losing both her children. In an attempt to redeem himself, Tomigorō asks the maid to go after Hikosaburo and stop him from killing the baby so that "at least that child [can live]" (01:04:54-01:04:59). The first act of the performance ends with Hikosaburo leaving the baby in the forest. Unable to kill her, he leaves her bundled up with a *haori*[83] bearing the crest of her house, and he observes how the moon is in its 16-day phase, *izayoi*, from which the baby gets her name.

Shakespeare's romance is tragic in many ways. According to Robert Egan, Shakespeare wanted to establish "a vital relationship between the created world onstage and the surrounding world of the audience. As in *King Lear*, he accomplishes this end primarily through the representative attempts by characters within the play to cope with or alter the circumstances of reality in their own world directly through exercises of dramatic artifice" (57). Hermione in particular attempts to and succeeds in changing her situation through her and Paulina's trick of faking her death. This enables her to encourage self-reflection in her husband and to even be reunited with her long-lost daughter. *The Winter's Tale* presents many tragic themes in the first half of the narrative, from the death of a child to the abandonment of another, and the injustice faced by a good wife at the hands of an irrational husband. Takarazuka's version of these tragedies are saturated with

[83] A short jacket-like item of clothing, usually worn over a *kimono* or with *hakama*.

cultural elements that are significant to a Japanese audience. The death of Tomigorō's son is made to be heroic as he sacrifices his life to protect his mother from an intended double-suicide, a common tragic mechanism used in Edo Japan both historically and in the arts. This is often seen as an honourable act as a response to a shameful event (in this case, Osan's alleged infidelity). Seppuku,[84] the Japanese ritual suicide, is most closely associated with samurai warriors, as represented in several Heian and Edo-style movies such as *Shogun* (1980), *The Last Samurai* (2003), *47 Ronin* (2013), etc. However, even though the ritual itself of stabbing oneself in the stomach and cutting across one's abdomen is directly related to samurai, the idea behind suicide as a cleansing and honourable method is replicated by other people than just warriors. Sannar notes that,

> [a]long with other codified behaviors, suicide was depicted as a real option when duty called for it. Significantly, it was not only a behavior for members of the samurai class, but due to its dramatic presentation in a public forum open to people of various classes, suicide was presented as a viable choice for men and women of all societal distinctions. (48)

The depiction of murder-suicide in *Fuyu Monogatari*, however, is not complete: Tomigorō is stopped by his son's intervention and subsequent death. One tragedy is replaced by another, and the death of his only male child becomes significant within the social codes of the time. Not only is it important to have an heir to a family line, but it is also especially important to have one within a Kabuki family as the son will inherit his father's position in the troupe one day. This is shown later in the play when Izaemon's son succeeds him in the Kabuki troupe, a painful reminder that Tomigorō's son will never have the opportunity to do so. Sannar adds that "[o]f course in performance an actor returns home at the end of the play in which he/she commits suicide. But insofar as art imitates life, these same choices were made available to real Japanese men and women, many of whom witnessed suicide as a legitimate and sometimes justified option in kabuki performances" (49). While it is difficult to gauge the real-world audience's reaction to this event

[84] Seppuku (切腹) is also known as harakiri (腹切) in the West. The difference is thought to be due to a misinterpretation or mistranslation of the word seppuku by Westerners during the Meiji period. The characters seem to have been read from left to right rather than right to left, as is conventional in old Japanese writing.

in the play, the inner-world audience of the play reacts very adversely to this attempted murder-suicide and the death of the beloved son. As with Shakespeare, characters around the main players find themselves opposing direct orders to kill others or to accept Leontes' plans. In Takarazuka, however, because the deaths are culturally significant, the secondary characters' defiance takes on a very different meaning. It is inconceivable, at the time, for some one of a lower status such as a servant, to defy his lord's orders. The punishment for this, too, is death, which is why Tomigorō's servant Hikosaburo must flee to protect his own life.

In *the Art of the Samurai*, the Japanese warrior code, adultery and death are shown to be interconnected as the latter is a form of punishment for the former: "Some years back, when a secret love affair was discovered, the lord said: 'Violating someone else's wife is something I have never heard of. Because this is a serious crime, I order the death penalty.' In an extract from the *Kanzuiken shikimoku*, in the item on secret affairs it says, 'formerly such affairs existed, and one sees them in the *Genji monogatari*. Now there is no such thing'" (Tsunetomo 141). Though no one orders the suspected adulterer's death in *Fuyu Monogatari*, Tomigorō takes it upon himself to exact revenge by attempting to kill his friend Izaemon during the play-within-the-play. In her historical survey of the Tokugawa period, Amy Stanley further explains that:

> The penalty for infidelity depended on the specific circumstances of the crime. In one instance, Masakage ruled that an unfaithful wife whose lover had committed ritual suicide (*seppuku*) should be paraded around the streets of the mine holding her lover's head. This was a comparatively light punishment. If an act of adultery was combined with some other crime, however, the penalty was more severe. On two occasions, adulterous women who had conspired to murder their husbands were sentenced to death. The first was stripped naked, led around the mine, put out on display, and then beheaded. The second was burned alive. Conversely, in two instances, men who killed their adulterous wives and their lovers were judged innocent. Apparently, the husbands' anger was considered justifiable given the gravity of their wives' offense. (39)

Evidently, the law at the time made a gender-based distinction in cases of adultery. Seeing as how Osan is the accused party, and that Izaemon is the suspected offending lover, Tomigorō's attempt at murdering them is justifiable in terms of their culture and laws. That being said, there is an

obvious uneasiness at Tomigorō's readiness to kill his friend and his wife. Tomigorō's hot-headedness is difficult to accept, and sympathy goes out rather to his wronged wife than to him. To further Tomigorō's villainy, we are also confronted with the uncomfortable reality that he easily abandons his newborn daughter, Izayoi, on the basis that she may not be his child. Tomigorō's character in *Fuyu Monogatari* parallels Leontes' own as they both steadily devolve into violence and rage. Leontes comes to hate his friend and wife, but even more shocking is his language directed at his infant child as he threatens to kill her: "the bastard brains with these my proper hands / Shall I dash out. Go, take it to the fire" (WT II.iii.167-168). Paulina calls this his "tyrannous passion" (II.iii.31) and pleads with him to "look to [his] babe, … 'tis [his]" (II.iii.153), but Leontes is blinded by his belief of Hermione's infidelity. Leontes' anger and violence is shocking, and while Tomigorō directs the brunt of his jealousy to his friend and wife rather than the baby, he is no less perverse in his attempt to murder multiple people. Even though a few people in Tomigorō's household try to protect the child, Izayoi is nonetheless forced out into the wilderness by an emotionally volatile father.

The Unwanted Child's Fate

Although its veracity has been criticized,[85] Arthur Golden's 1997 novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* offers a portrayal of the treatment of Edo Japan's most unwanted: girls. As with the young Sayuri in Golden's novel, real cases of prostitution in Edo Japan "consisted of filial *daughters* being indentured *temporarily* into prostitution in order to help support desperately poor parents" (Sommer qtd. in Stanley xii). For Izayoi in *Fuyu Monogatari*, however, this is not the case. Born into an affluent Kabuki family, Izayoi should not have been anywhere near a brothel, but because of her father's steadfast belief in her status as an illegitimate child, she is reared in a brothel without any knowledge about her true lineage and this, for 16 years. Tomigorō's abandonment of his infant daughter takes a tragic yet period-appropriate turn; whereas Perdita is raised by caring shepherds after having been left in the woods, Izayoi is not afforded the same luxury. Considering the period in which the story takes place, it would have made no sense for Japanese

[85] In Japan, there is a clear distinction between geisha, highly qualified artists, and prostitutes. The novel sadly conflates the two, which is why it has not been well received in Japan (Dalby 1998; Akita 2023).

peasants to adopt an abandoned baby in the woods. In feudal Japan, peasants, which included grain farmers and animal herders, were considered as very important members of society, ranking immediately below samurai in terms of their societal value. However, despite this classification, “many farmers were taxed into poverty. Though they grew rice (the currency of the day), they were unable to keep much. Instead they lived meagerly on millet, wheat and barley. In certain areas the poverty was so intense that, after the birth of the first son, families killed off all subsequent male children. Girls were welcomed since they could be sold as servants or prostitutes” (“Japan: Memoirs of a Secret Empire”). Because of this reality, a family of Edo-era peasants would have most likely not adopted Izayoi and fed and clothed her for sixteen years. Takarazuka’s decision to have Izayoi adopted into a brothel makes much more sense culturally and historically. This small change in the narrative is impactful because of its departure from *The Winter’s Tale* to adopt a more culturally significant tone in the adaptation.

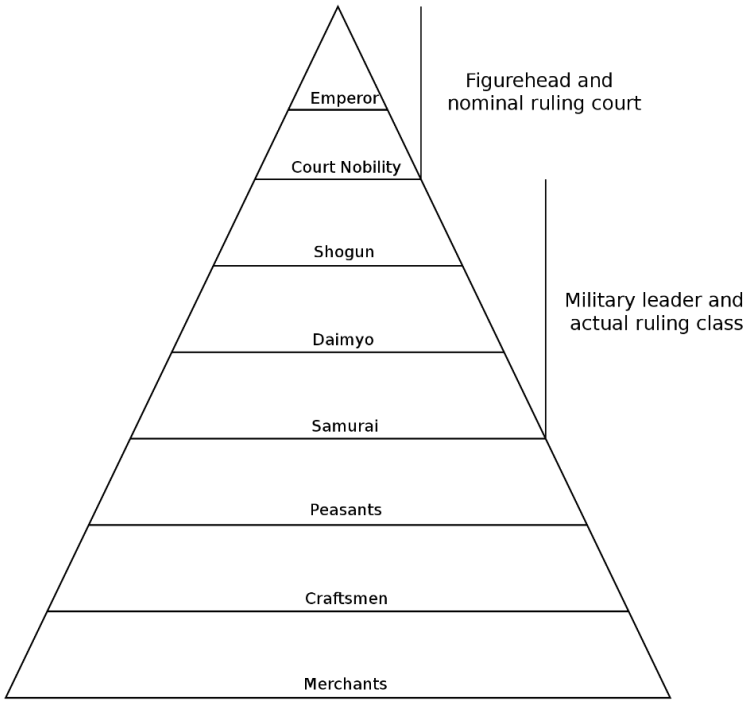

Figure 13. – Edo period social structure pyramid (Wiki Creative Commons)

That being said, this plot change bears resemblance to another of Shakespeare's plays, *Pericles*, in which the abandoned daughter Marina is kidnapped by pirates and sold into a brothel, all the while her mother lives as a priestess and her father is busy reclaiming his kingdom. Furthermore, Shakespeare's tragicomedies and romances tend to feature similar motifs of lost and found daughters, missing mothers, and unreliable fathers. In fact, Shakespeare's focus on family bonds, particularly that of the father-daughter relationship like in *King Lear* or *The Tempest*, for example, puts forward "conflicts, fears, and insecurities … [and] cast[s] new light on questions of moral development, male and female sex roles, traditional and progressive social norms" (Dreher 1). The exploration of these bonds adds a pre-Freudian psychological dimension to the plays, as "… Shakespeare's fathers and daughters reveal to us out eternal drama of identity, of what it means to be a man or a woman in this world, providing us with images of what we have been and the promise of what we may become" (3). Missing mothers, then, make way for these anxieties to unfold, yet the outcome is always in favour of the feminine triumph over the dominant male, like in *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*. As with the play-within-the-play device, it would seem that Takarazuka borrowed another of Shakespeare's motifs and transplanted it into *Fuyu Monogatari.* Given the context of the adaptation, Izayoi's induction into prostitution resonates with both Japanese history and Shakespearean narratives since this highly sexualised version of Perdita ties her more closely to her mother, the alleged adulteress. In Jungian psychology, "… men who cannot deal with adult women dominate their daughters, becoming authoritarian 'family tyrants'" (10) because of their own discomfort with regard to their and women's sexuality.

Within its historical context, however, prostitution was not necessarily perceived negatively: "During the Tokugawa period (1600-1868), an immense volume of cultural production surrounded the sex trade, making the imagined pleasures of the brothel accessible to a broad audience. … [Men and women] could lose themselves in the realm of fiction, where *yūjo* [prostitutes] appeared as the tragic heroines of short stories and kabuki plays" (Stanley 1). With Izayoi's status, her story ultimately is a happy one as she finds a protector—and, later, a husband—in Hidenosuke. Her personal tragedy is limited to her abandonment, and her subsequent life sets her firmly in heroine-territory. Even though she is never a part of the Kabuki play-within-the-play scenes, the fact that she is from a prominent acting family is in itself a motif

that is recognizable for Japanese theatregoers who might be more familiar with Kabuki play mechanics.

Figure 14. – "*Yokohama no yōkan no yūjo*" (Yūjo of the Western-style House in Yokohama). Woodblock print by Sadahide Utagawa (1861) (public domain)

Perhaps due to her background, Izayoi becomes a *yūjo* (游女) in the brothel where she lives, although this is not the highest rank—that honour goes to *Oiran* (花魁), high-class courtesans in Edo (Tokyo). Even though Izayoi and her brothel sisters wear *kimono* and elaborate hairdos, they

are not to be mistaken for geisha, as these are two very different professions.[86] In the Yoshiwara district of Edo, thousands of women worked as *yūjo* in brothels; however, male prostitutes were also popular amongst commoners and samurai alike. In *Fuyu Monogatari*, we are introduced to Izayoi while she is working at Satsukiya, a brothel in the play. Though it is not explicitly discussed or developed in the play, the history that Izayoi embodies is a very dark and sad one. The young girls who were sold or brought through various circumstances into brothels were, at first, attendants (禿 *kamuro*) to *yūjo*. They trained for their future jobs by following and accompanying older *yūjo* in their duties. De Becker notes that,

> [i]t was the custom originally that no *Kamuro* should assist at a wine party as she was expected to remain sitting by the side of her mistress in the same manner as the page of a feudal lord sat behind his master, but later on this custom was changed and now the *Kamuro* wait on guests and pour out the sake. When there was no available *ane joro*, the *Kamuro* used to wait on the master of the house, and if the latter found her smart, beautiful and likely to become a popular courtesan, he took her himself as a sort of adopted daughter and had her educated at his own expense so as to fit her for the calling. (qtd. in Sundberg)

This heavy history, carried through Izayoi in the play, hardly resonates with Shakespeare's version which, in comparison, is not such a bad outcome for Perdita. Being adopted into a loving shepherd's family seems infinitely better than what Izayoi has had to endure. By the time she is sixteen years old, she is already a well-ranked *yūjo* in her brothel, and it is only with the arrival of the young Kabuki actor that she is afforded a small chance at escaping this life.

[86] Prostitutes lived in brothels (*yūjoya*) while geisha lived in teahouses (*okiya*). Though the two shared the same spaces in the city (known as the *Hanamachi* (not to be confused with the *hanamichi*, the protruding section of the stage in kabuki theatre)) along with Kabuki theatre houses (*kabukiza*), they were considered as two very separate groups. Geisha entertained high-class guests as talented musicians, singers, dancers, etc., and were forbidden from engaging in sexual relationships with their clients. Today, geisha still practice this old form of entertainment, most notably in Kyoto, but *yūjo* have disappeared since the criminalization of prostitution after World War II.

Figure 15. – *Oiran* and their attendants, circa 1910 (public domain)

Izayoi's harrowing journey is, however, not the focus of the play. Even though her life has been quite difficult, the story is centred around Tomigorō and his growth into a repentant man who comes to accept responsibility for his own mistakes and wrongdoings. In this sense, it seems like a great injustice to his daughter who is meant to be happy and grateful for Hidenosuke saving her from the brothel, and her subsequent reunion with her estranged father.

Act two of the play opens at the Satsukiya, the brothel where we find Izayoi and her fellow courtesans. Izayoi is shown to be a high-ranking *yūjo* due to her elaborate *kimono* and hairstyle. This sets her apart from the other women at the brothel due to her status and relationship to Hidenosuke. While the inhabitants of the Satsukiya busy themselves in the background, the front of the stage is occupied by Izaemon and Hikosaburo. The pair go to investigate the rumours that Hidenosuke has become enamoured with a courtesan. When they meet the owner of the brothel,

Satsuki (Sho Tsukasa), she explains that Izayoi, as a high-class prostitute, is a very valuable member of the brothel. Hidenosuke believes that the anonymous samurai are interested in buying Izayoi, so he decides that "from this day forth, Izayoi is my wife" (01:25:00-01:25:04). Izayoi has very little say in the matter; her father's abandonment led to her forced prostitution, and Hidenosuke's decision to marry her out of fear that she may be taken away by other men is done without her input. Despite this unease, however, Izayoi follows Hidenosuke and flees the brothel with him, which leads to a visually rich fight scene in the play. Unwilling to lose their best asset, the brothel sends out men to capture Izayoi, and Hidenosuke is given a heroic moment in which he fights the attackers in a Kabuki style while accompanied by traditional wood clappers that set the rhythm of the movements. This Kabuki interlude recalls Izaemon and Tomigorō's earlier dispute. However, Hidenosuke's action-packed scene sets him as the hero and saviour of the defenseless Izayoi by contrast to the somber and motionless fathers in the play-within-the-play.

From Statues to Dolls

Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* is most well-known for its dramatic reveal at the end of the play. Hermione, who was thought to be long dead by all the other characters, suddenly reappears towards the end of the play around the same time as when her daughter is found, thereby overwhelming Leontes with feelings of guilt and obtaining a vindication for herself and her daughter. With Paulina's help, Hermione appears as a beautiful statue that comes to life once Leontes repents for his wrongdoings. This, of course, immediately recalls the Ovidian myth of the sculptor Pygmalion and his marble creation Galatea in how the statue gains life through divine intervention. Despite the Ovidian influence, Andrew Gurr points out how it "is a thoroughly unShakespearean theatrical shock tactic" (420) to have Hermione revived at the end in such a way. Despite this shocking reveal that ends in a happy resolution of conflict for all who are involved, "Hermione's life, once the statue moves and Leontes says she is warm, is indeed apparent, in the duality of a demonstrable truth and a stage illusion. Her life is demonstrable on stage in her movement, which a narrated 'old tale' cannot supply. But as a stage appearance it is only apparent life, not a reality. It is of a piece with the rest of the tale, a myth" (Gurr 425). In her

statue form, Hermione's life is illusory at best, yet with the suspension of disbelief, the audience can choose to believe that she has come back from the dead. Leontes calls the miracle of her awakening "magic" (V.iii.133) following Paulina's song—or spell—to infuse life into the statue Hermione. However, the explanation as to whether Hermione is truly well and alive, or that she has been revived through magic, is left off the page.

In *Fuyu Monogatari*, this device is approached very differently, with Osan presented to Tomigorō as a life-sized porcelain doll. Traditional *kimono*-wearing dolls are significant cultural markers in Japan. Heian-style dolls (*hina*) are the main feature of a Shintō celebration on 3 March, called Doll's Festival or Girl's Festival (雛祭り *hina matsuri*), and the more rudimentary wooden dolls, *kokeshi* (こけし), are popular traditional children's toys as well as collectibles. Dolls (as puppets) are also used in Bunraku theatre rather than stage actors, and the early modern *ishō ningyō* (衣装人形 costume dolls) were "made with a variety of themes, such as scenes from noh, kabuki and other Japanese traditional performing arts or the everyday lives of ordinary people. During the Edo period, popular *ukiyo-e*[87] woodblock prints were created with similar themes, and you could say that *Isho Ningyo* are three-dimensional versions of *ukiyo-e*" ("The History and Culture of Japanese Dolls"). *Hina* dolls became popular during the Edo period after some had been given to the emperor as a wedding gift. Many shops and craftsmen sold them to commoners or for the purpose of the *Hina* festival (Kyugetsu).

Fuyu Monogatari uses this motif to trade Shakespeare's plot device of the statue for a more culturally significant one. Osan is presented on stage in a decorative box labelled *kyō ningyō* (京人形 Kyoto doll) and dressed in an elaborate doll-like fashion. The household maid explains that she "had a doll made to resemble the late Osan as a gift [for Izayoi's wedding]" (01:52:25-44). When Tomigorō interacts with her, she imitates a puppet on strings that moves and dances around the stage until she fully 'wakes up' from this state and returns to being human. Tomigorō

[87] As a note of interest, the word *ukiyo* (浮世) is further significant in the context of this discussion as it is used to denote the art style of woodblock printing (*ukiyo-e)*, but it is also related to *yūjo* and geisha. The word is typically translated as "floating world" and connotes the intangibility and transience of art. Seeing as how Kabuki, *yūjo*, geisha, and art are closely related topics that comingled and relied on one another during the Edo period, it is interesting to see how dolls are also part of this illusory world.

is moved by the appearance of this doppelgänger for his wife; he cries and begs for it to be the true Osan and promises to care for the doll for the rest of his life. This reaction is in line with how dolls are perceived in Japan as possessing a sort of humanity despite their inanimate nature. Hayashi Naoteru, director of the Japan Doll Culture Research Laboratory, explains this close relationship between dolls and Japanese people:

> There is still today a strong idea in Japan that anything made into the shape of living creatures should not be mistreated. When someone is no longer able to hold on to a doll that they have cherished, they do not throw them away as garbage. Instead, they dedicate the dolls to shrines or temples and ask for a *ningyo kuyo*, or a doll funeral service, something that has happened since ancient times up to now.
>
> As you can see from these doll funeral services, to Japanese people, dolls are not simple objects. They are special, and treated as if the dolls themselves are alive in people's lives. I think this is an integral point in considering the relationship between Japanese people and dolls. ("The History and Culture of Japanese Dolls")

The beauty of the porcelain Japanese dolls is directly related to the beautiful Edo *hanamachi* dwellers. In the context of geisha, Lesley Downer writes that her first encounter with a young trainee was breathtaking: "With a rustle of silk and brocade, a creature like a painted doll appeared. … I was dumbstruck, as many people are, on coming face to face with a maiko. … I could not stop myself staring in amazement and curiosity at this extraordinary confection" (9). The same kind of amazement can be said of the *yūjo* as well, seeing as how they used to dress similarly to geisha. With this in mind, Osan's appearance as a doll has the same effect on the viewers both on and off stage.

What is more, Osan's clothing immediately recalls that of *oiran* and *yūjo* as, significantly, her *obi* (kimono sash) is tied in the front rather than the back. This is a particular style worn by Edo-era courtesans, as regular women wore their *obi* tied in the back, much like today. This has two main effects: 1) Osan's outfit reminds the audience of her alleged adultery as she is dressed in the

fashion of a courtesan rather than a married woman, and 2) Osan is likened to Izayoi, her long-lost daughter and an actual *yūjo*, because of the style of *obi* they both share. This, combined with the doll transformation, paints Osan as an object of desire both as a living woman and as a pretty ornament. Even though she is innocent of these accusations, Osan cannot shake the association she has with adultery and unfaithfulness. Osan has been missing for sixteen years, and has suffered greatly because of her husband, yet even as she returns, she is still wrongly labelled, albeit visually this time.

Figure 16. – Osan dressed as a doll with an elaborate *kimono* and front-tied *obi* © Takarazuka Company

Tomigorō's devotion to the doll version of Osan is understandable within the context of her great beauty and resemblance to his wife, yet it obviously seems strangely out of sync from a Western perspective. Why would Tomigorō worship the false object in the shape of his wife, and not the real woman herself? The answer lies in Tomigorō's growth at the end of the play, following his discovery of Izayoi and his reconnection with his old friend Izaemon. Tomigorō expresses feelings

of regret and shame for the way he acted, but he believes that it is too late to beg for Osan's forgiveness, hence why he becomes attached to this pristine image of her instead. However, Tomigorō acknowledges that "even though [the doll] looks like Osan, it still only has the heart of a doll" (01:54:20-24). Tomigorō notices that she is a mechanical doll rather than stationary. When Osan begins to move, she imitates Tomigorō in a series of masculine Kabuki poses (*mie*) as traditional shamisen music accompanies their movements.

Figure 17. – Osan (right) imitating Tomigorō (left) as he strikes a box-form *mie* © Takarazuka Company

The purpose of *mie* during Kabuki performances is "to show rising emotions and other expressions … [and] is mainly performed by the *tachiyaku* (actors playing virtuous men)" (Japan Arts Council). Furthermore, "[t]he *mie* stresses the physical presence of the actor by its strength and beauty, and also by relating him dynamically to other physical objects, to actors, and to the stage platform. … In most plays they carry some meaning, but the *mie*, like other forms of Kabuki movement, range from the representational to the abstract and non-literal" (Pronko 140). In *Fuyu*

Monogatari, we see both husband and wife strike *mie* poses side by side, which is highly unusual for Kabuki as this type of movement on stage is reserved for the male hero of the play.[88] Pronko explains that "the movements which strike us now as highly stylized had their origin in some real emotion and a real reaction to that emotion. Stylized, beautified, enlarged, to satisfy the needs of the theatre and the tastes of the public, these movements are firmly seated in reality" (146). In the play, Tomigorō's *mie* reveals his emotions to the audience. He has ostracized everyone in his life and killed his son, and so when he is faced with the doll lookalike of his wife, he has the opportunity to express his feelings in what he thinks is a private performance for an inanimate object. The poses are strong and enhance the hero aspect of the character, yet Tomigorō is anything but a virtuous hero. Osan's mirroring of his *mie* is a reminder that the only thing he still has is his talent as a Kabuki actor, but even that can be replicated, and by a doll, none the less. Without Osan's forgiveness, Tomigorō has nothing but his art. He has no heir, as Izayoi cannot inherit his Kabuki techniques, so even his artistic legacy is at risk.

Roland Barthes discusses in *Empire of Signs* how *Bunraku* dolls represent "three sites of the spectacle," that of the puppet, the manipulator, and the vociferant, which he further divides into "the effected gesture, the effective gesture, and the vocal gesture" (49). Since the dolls' 'voices' belong to human speakers, he writes that "… *Bunraku* [doll bodies give] the voice a counterpoise, or better still, a countermove: that of gesture. This gesture is double: emotive gesture on the level of the doll …, transitive action of the manipulators" (49; 54). Osan's appearance as a doll rather than a statue is related to the theatre art of *Bunraku* since it utilises puppets as its main 'actors,' while humans play the part of stagehands to guide the puppets. Osan is not physically moved by manipulators since she is an automaton, but, like the *Bunraku* puppets, her evocative Kabuki *mie* resonates more clearly than any voiced sentiment. Her silence here is not one of subjugation but rather a deliberate choice to let her body speak through gestures instead. Barthes continues to say that "the puppet does not live as a total body, totally alive, but as a rigid portion of the actor from whom it has emanated … *Bunraku* does not aim at 'animating' an inanimate object so as to make a piece of the body, a scrap of a man 'alive', while retaining its vocation as a 'part'; it is not

[88] By comparison, the *onnagata*'s standstill poses in Kabuki are called *kimari*.

the simulation of the body that it seeks but, so to speak, its sensuous abstraction " (59-60). Osan is, of course, not an actual puppet nor a doll, but she nevertheless imitates one to achieve her goal of having her husband earn his redemption. The human Osan therefore mimics not only her husband, but also the inanimate doll which is usually perceived as the opposite since dolls are miniature humans. Osan's human body becomes united with the doll's body, thus eliminating the distinction between the two since "the puppet no longer apes the creature, man is no longer a puppet in the divinity's hands, [and] the *inside* no longer commands the *outside*" (60). The *Bunraku* puppets become masters of themselves with no god-like figure or master to control them and, in the same vein, Osan is a master of herself as she no longer follows what her husband asks of her, but rather imitates or even mocks him through the *mie* scene. Barthes explains this human-puppet relationship through his observation of *Bunraku*:

> … in short the very qualities which to dreams of ancient theology granted to the redeemed body, i.e., impassivity, clarity, agility, subtlety, this is what the *Bunraku* achieves, this is how it converts the body-as-fetish into the lovable body, this is how it rejects the antimony of animate / inanimate and dismisses the concept which is hidden behind all animation of matter and which is, quite simply, "the soul." (60)

The idea of the soul is quite relevant in this play as Osan's legitimacy in Tomigorō's eyes is directly related to her 'essence' (or lack thereof). Even though impactful, the short display of *mie* is immediately followed by a scene in which Tomigorō gives a mirror to the doll Osan as it supposedly "carries the soul" (01:55:55) of its owner. According to Shintō belief, "[t]he great legendary idea underlying Japanese mirrors is that the mirror, through constant reflection of its owner's face, draws to itself the very soul of its possessor. Long before the Japanese mirror was a familiar object in the house it had a very deep religious significance…" because of its link to Amaterasu,[89] the sun goddess (Jackson 330). This subsequent scene reveals the intent behind the

[89] According to the myth, Amaterasu was scared into retreat by her brother, plunging the world in darkness because of her disappearance. The goddess of revelry and art, Ame no Uzume, put on a performance for the gods and danced beneath the sacred tree near Amaterasu's hiding place. Amaterasu peeked out of curiosity and was faced with a mirror that reflected her radiance, thereby restoring light to the world (Jackson 2022).

mie: Osan's act of mirroring her husband's poses is a symbol of devotion and lack of individuality on her behalf. Yet, when she is given the mirror "so that it may become her heart" (01:55:60), Osan sheds her doll mannerisms and becomes human once more. She reveals that she has been alive all these years, and that she has spent "sixteen summers, sixteen autumns, and sixteen winters" (01:57:34-52) in hiding. Tomigorō is too shocked to respond, and so Izaemon is the first to express joy at her return. Izaemon grabs hold of Tomigorō and emotionally tells him: "Isn't it great? Our long winter has finally come to an end" (01:58:00-16). The reference to winter is obviously a nod to the title of the play, but it also symbolizes the end of a 'cold period' or feud between Tomigorō, Izaemon, and Osan.

This departs significantly from Hermione's transformation and the final lines in *The Winter's Tale*. Paulina remarks how "it appears she lives, / Though yet she speaks not" (V.iii.142-143), yet when Hermione does speak for the last time in the play, she does not address her husband. Instead, she focuses her attention on her daughter and speaks directly to her:

> HERMIONE. You gods, look down
> And from your sacred vials pour your graces
> Upon my daughter's head!— Tell me, mine own.
> Where hast thou been preserved? Where lived? How found
> Thy father's court? For thou shalt hear that I,
> Knowing by Paulina that the oracle
> Gave hope thou wast in being, have preserved
> Myself to see the issue. (V.iii.147-154)

In these lines, Hermione clearly states that she was kept alive for the purpose of one day meeting her daughter again, disregarding a possible reunion with her husband. Hermione questions her daughter out of curiosity and concern: How has Perdita lived all these years? Was she well taken care of? Hermione's primary concern is her child's well-being, and the prospect of their future reunion as foretold by the oracle singlehandedly encouraged the mother to live and to come back to Leontes' court. *The Winter's Tale* focuses on the mother-daughter reunion as Hermione's reason for staying alive all those years was for the benefit of her child. Comparatively, the

husband-wife reunion is short and only described by other characters; Hermione "embraces him" and "hangs about his neck" (V.iii.135; 136), but she has no words for him, nor does he for her. It is clear here that Shakespeare's emphasis on the mother-daughter reunion reveals an intent to subvert the expectation of a happy male-centric conclusion, as he "consistently found patriarchal domination of women unhealthy and condemned it by the logic of his plays" (Dreher 11). As Greenblatt writes that, "it is a woman who most strongly opposes the tyrant's will" (*Tyrant* 127), and though Paulina can be credited with being the "principal challenger" (127), and her act of defiance is what ultimately changes the fate of the characters, there is a case to be made that Hermione and Perdita equally defy and oppose the tyrannical Leontes through both silence and absence. Though Leontes is redeemed at the end, Hemione, Perdita, and Paulina hold the power in this final scene as all the focus is placed on the women: the revived mother, the restored daughter, and the heroine who made it all possible.

Although the conclusion to the play is different in *Fuyu Monogatari*, Osan's agency is also restored by the end of the play through the fact that she takes back control of the situation through her disguise. However, the choice of disguise can arguably be labelled as counterproductive since she must pretend to be an emotionless object who reacts to Tomigorō like a puppet rather than a living being. Osan cannot truly be herself but only ever a version of what her husband expects, which is why the doll motif works well as a substitute for the statue. That being said, Shakespeare's statue is also limiting in terms of the exploration of female agency where Hermione is concerned. Valerie Traub explains that "what is commonly accepted as the play's essential reparative act—Hermione's transformation, first into a statue, and then into a woman—is inspired nonetheless by the threat Hermione's sexuality poses to Leontes" (228). The shift between the masculine and the feminine is felt in the narrative itself; the beginning is a "static, barren, masculine world that appears determinedly self-sufficient" (Neely 170), but the ending of the play is wholly feminine with its strong sisterhood composed of Hermione, Perdita, and Paulina.

Though each woman can be defined by her status as married, future bride, and widow, respectively, this patriarchal examination does not ultimately define them nor their ability to surmount the difficulties of their world. Indeed, one does not forget that the entirety of the plot

in *The Winter's Tale* hinges on Leontes' insecurities and belief that his wife is an adulteress since "out of his own anxieties, Leontes creates the myth of Hermione's adultery, and the projection of those anxieties leads to her metaphorical death" (Traub 230). The transformation into a stone statue therefore symbolically blocks Hermione's ability to further injure his pride and limits her chances of truly being unfaithful to him. Similarly, *Fuyu Monogatari*'s use of the doll at the end contributes to this idea, but it is done in a much more melodramatic way since the doll is animate rather than frozen like the statue. Osan's decision to imitate her husband's *mie* subverts the idea that women cannot perform Kabuki nor that they can defy their husband's wishes. The flavour of the adaptation is that of a traditional Kabuki play, so Osan's transformation is in line with what is expected of these stylized plays. Furthermore, puppetry is also used in traditional Kabuki, which is yet another link to the cultural legacy and influence of this theatre. Like Hermione, Osan is equally silent during her transformative moment. However, where Hermione is both silent and still, Osan dances and thus dispels *The Winter's Tale*'s ambiguity regarding Hermione's restored life.

Finally, spring arrives for the characters in *Fuyu Monogatari* as delicate cherry blossom petals fall over the stage to "welcome Izayoi home" (01:59:55). Cherry blossoms are yet another significant cultural element in Japan as they are associated with new beginnings. The flowers are also prized for their beauty and ephemerality. Cherry trees have a short blooming period, which links to Buddhist and Shintō ideals and the impermanence of life. With this in mind, the falling petals that end the final scene bring a sense of fleetingness to the character's feelings. Even though it ends on a hopeful note because of the reconciliation and reunion of all the major characters, it is hard to forget all the hardships the characters have lived through due to Tomigorō's impulsive decisions. Tomigorō and Osan's reconciliation conclude Tomigorō's redemption arc, and Izayoi's wedding with Hidenosuke marks the start of a new beginning for the rebuilt family. Leontes' final, hasty speech to his family and friends also acknowledges his wrong doings: "both your pardons, / That e'er I put between your holy looks / My ill suspicion" (V.iii.175-177). However, his final lines do not truly address the suffering he has caused. He asks of Paulina to "lead us from hence, where we may leisurely / Each one demand, and answer to his part / Performed in this wide gap of time since first / We were dissevered" (180-183), but to what "parts" does he refer to? Out of everyone

gathered, he is the only culpable one, yet he requires for each to take a part of the blame for the events that unfolded. This puts into question whether Leontes is truly repentant or not as he cannot take full responsibility for the damages he caused, and even though Leontes has reconciliated with everyone, “nothing can fully erase the memory of tyranny, nothing can bring back the sixteen years spent in isolation and misery, nothing can restore the sweet innocence of friendship, trust, and love” (Greenblatt *Tyrant* 135). The same effect is naturally true for *Fuyu Monogatari* where the same anxieties continue to resonate in the final scenes of the performance, and well after the play has ended as well.

At the close of *Fuyu Monogatari*, the actresses remind us that we have been watching a play all along, and that we have been complicit in the ‘dream’ created on stage. This direct appeal to the audience recalls the mechanism of the play-within-the-play used earlier in the performance, and creates a third space for play acting, one that involves the spectators, too. As with many of these Shakespeare adaptations, the end of the show is bittersweet, but the numerous cultural references firmly set *Fuyu Monogatari* in a separate world than *The Winter’s Tale*: A world in which samurai, Kabuki actors, and *yūjo* mingle and struggle through the same difficulties as the other familiar characters, reminding us once again of the timelessness of these very human themes.

Part II: Westernized Japanese Shakespeare

1. PUCK (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

PUCK shifts away from Early Modern and Meiji Japan to focus on the social commentary of Japan's position regarding the West. This change is explained by the need to look at postwar Japan and how it reinterprets Shakespeare through a different lens than the traditional cultural elements previously discussed. Shakespeare was appropriated and successfully japanified over the course of some 150 years; however, contemporary examinations of Shakespeare in Japan reveal a re-westernization following the country's own political and social changes in the postwar era. Shunsuke Tsurumi writes in his book *A Cultural History of Postwar Japan: 1945-1980* that:

> Major reforms, intended to break down the remnants of feudalism in Japan, were undertaken in the earliest phase of the [American] Occupation: the trial of the war criminals, the purge of war leaders, the abolition of the thought police and its public maintenance law, the release of political prisoners, the dissolution of financial groups, land reform, the Emperor's declaration that he was human, the draft of the constitution in which Japan gave up the right to wage war, women's suffrage, and the remodelling of the school system. (5)

The dissolution of Japan's long-prized cultural beliefs is a marker of the postwar period that has continued to spill over into contemporary attitudes where feudalism is seen as a long-gone glorious past that can no longer be replicated. With the advent of the American-backed reform of Japanese society, women's roles also changed considerably as more and more entered the workforce and gained more control as members of society.

The first play I analyse from this new point of view is Takarazuka's adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* named *PUCK* (パック *Pakku*). The play was first performed in 1992, but I chose to examine the more contemporary version because of the material more readily available

concerning this performance. The 1992 and 2014 versions are identical apart for the cast members. The version I examine here is the latter of the two, performed by the Moon troupe (月組 *tsuki gumi*) at the Tokyo Grand Theater from 21 November to 27 December 2014. Like *MND*, *PUCK* is a play that is sensitive to time and location: The play takes place in a school in twentieth-century England in a context that encourages the eponymous character to question the passage of time through his relationship to the humans in the story. In this adaptation, Puck is a newly awakened fairy who finds himself in a changed society from when he first fell asleep in the early modern period. In this sense, Puck becomes a representation of Japan's postwar 'reawakening' under American occupation and under which the traditions of the past are all but eliminated. Tsurumi explains that General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), restructured parts of Japanese society after his arrival in 1945 and, most interestingly,

> … MacArthur took a paternalistic attitude which entailed the encouragement of reform. His opinion is well expressed in a statement he made after he had left Japan to the U.S. Congress in 1951, that the Japanese were mentally 12 years old. The publication of this statement in Japanese newspapers angered the Japanese, who had by that time come to place full trust in General MacArthur's goodwill toward the Japanese people. There can be no doubt of his goodwill, but it was the goodwill of a full-grown man towards a 12-year-old. (2)

McArthur's infantilization of Japan and its people reflects Western attitudes towards an old, defeated war enemy that had been closed off to the rest of the world for most of its existence. These ideas are reflected in *PUCK* through the similar infantilization of the fairy and his 'conversion' to Western (and modern) ways of thinking throughout the play. Puck, as a creature from the early modern period who was once carefree and attached to his traditions, is forced to adapt to this new world and to transform into something that is twentieth-century appropriate. As such, Puck becomes an extended metaphor for Japan's transformation from its earlier tradition-bound systems to a specifically Americanized way of rule. Puck is a remnant of an old society that has been taken over by modernity, and his relationships to humans and the world

around him are punctuated by the uncomfortable realities of time. Furthermore, Puck's human friends embody these changes as they each pursue their dreams just as how "the postwar generation grew up in an environment in which every traditional value was questioned, liberal values were encouraged, and democratic principles were inspired" (Sugimoto 75). The humans in *PUCK* aspire to do great things and attempt to live in an idealised world where the youth can inspire and affect change in a new society. However, much like the broken American dream, the humans face the harshness of the world and see how their utopian dreams are impossibilities. Similarly, Puck's desire to protect his environment is met with resistance that recalls the acts of deforestations in Japan in the early 1950s (Driscoll 2010). All of these social events—of women's suffrage, the postwar boom, the dream of a utopia, and the clash between old traditions and new norms—converge in *PUCK* to create a dialogue about Japan's difficulties in the postwar age. Shakespeare is, once again, used to discuss these issues through a comedy that takes on dark overtones on the Takarazuka stage. This chapter will serve as a segue into the final discussion of this dissertation, which will be a combination of the themes examined thus far and how they culminate in a modernized version of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

In this chapter, I propose a perspective rooted in Russian formalism and literary theory, specifically Mikhail Bakhtin's theories on the carnivalesque and the grotesque, to examine these elements. This performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* departs from the Edo and Meiji-style adaptations examined in part I and instead relies on the elements of Carnival and ritual to explore its relationship to time and space. Puck's evolution—or transformation—is directly related to the flow of time and how carnivalesque that evolution can be. Though the idea of reading *MND* through a Bakhtinian lens is not novel in itself, its combination with Japanese concepts of rituals and postwar concerns adds a depth to a play that is meant to be a lighthearted comedy. Furthermore, *PUCK* plays on the idea of rituals and ceremonies as its characters are limited in their interactions to meeting only once a year to celebrate their school's history. My decision to analyse this performance from the point of view of modern theory reflects Takarazuka's wish to transpose the narrative to a different time frame and a completely foreign land, one that has no connection to Japan's theatre history, in order to examine its twentieth-century anxieties regarding its forced westernization. Ronald Knowles writes that "in the great awareness of

political and cultural discourses in late twentieth-century scholarly writing, the ideas of Bakhtin can still elicit major re-evaluative lines of enquiry in the study of Shakespeare" (2), which centres this analysis of *PUCK* around political issues through the use of the carnivalesque and grotesque. Puck, a newly awakened fairy, is sent to the human world to investigate their way of life, but because of Puck's frequent disobedience of Oberon's commands, he is repeatedly forced to forget about his experiences in the human world. According to the script of the play, the location of *PUCK* is described as being "Cornwall, in the south of England, the place of Stonehenge and the legends of King Arthur" (*Le CINQ* "PUCK"). This specific choice of setting immediately situates *PUCK* in a place rich with local lore and with a connection to the medieval and folk traditions.

This play is the first in this dissertation to be removed from the pre-war context of Japan to focus instead on a non-Japanese locality, a westernization of Japanese Shakespeare that mirrors the country's own transformation. Though there has been a Kabuki-influenced version of *MND*,[90] Jennifer Robertson explains that "the settings, costumes and atmosphere are described as 'entirely Nippon'; 'Nippon names' were given to the various characters; 'Nippon fairies' replaced the spirits of flowers…" (Matsumoto qtd. in Robertson 94) as opposed to the 2014 version of *PUCK* that maintains the play's English names and, therefore, establishes the fairies as part of English folkloric traditions. Furthermore, the assimilation of *MND*'s narrative is explained through "Japaneseness [as being] synthesized from an appropriation and adaptation of the foreign, while the foreign is Japanized" (Robertson 94). As I argue, the opposite effect is also true when considering *PUCK* as a re-westernization of the initial appropriation.

There is a need for disambiguation of the term 'carnival' as it is used by Bakhtin that needs to be addressed. In the proper sense, the calendar event of the Carnival refers to "the fun time preceding the Christian period of Lent [which] became popular in Europe in the Middle Ages. The name comes from the Latin words *carne* and *vale*, meaning 'farewell to the flesh'. … It usually ends with a big party and feast on its last day" (Cudny 644). For Bakhtin, 'carnival' holds a larger meaning more akin to festival or celebration and encompasses all the associated rituals and

[90] Directed by Katō Tadamatsu and performed at the Takarazuka Grand Theatre from 26 May to 24 June 1940.

traditions as performed by the people. On the nature of the Carnival in medieval culture, Bakhtin writes in *Rabelais and His World*:

> … the scope and the importance of [folk humor] culture were immense in the Renaissance and the Middle Ages. A boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture. In spite of their variety, folk festivities of the carnival type, the comic rites and cults, the clowns and fools, giants, dwarfs, and jugglers, the vast and manifold literature of parody—all these forms have one style in common: they belong to one culture of folk carnival humor. (4)

MND's themes reflect the medieval literary legacy and the courtly traditions of the period, as Farah Karim-Cooper notes: "… there are two traditions of fairy lore present in this play: one deriving from the medieval folk or popular narratives and the other from the courtly narrative being fashioned by 16th-century writers, including Shakespeare, which draws upon classical mythology and chivalric literature" ("Fairies re-fashioned in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*"). Other Shakespearean plays also have this carnivalesque approach, such as *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*, but *MND* is the clearest and more commonly used example of the phenomenon. Beatrice K. Otto writes how "[i]n Europe the court jester and the stage jester existed more or less side by side. … Although medieval England also had amateur fools … the connection between the court jester and the stage flourished most vibrantly from the Renaissance, reaching its apogee in the jesters of Shakespeare" (230). What is more, the idea of carnivals and festivals is further exemplified through *MND*'s connection to ancient Greek culture. Based on Bakhtin's description of the importance of comedy and "folk carnival humor," I wish to connect the use of comedy and the modernization of the setting and narrative to the Japanese culture of *manzai*. In brief, *manzai* (漫才) is composed of a duo of comedians, one known as the *boke* (ボケ), the fool, and the other as the *tsukkomi* (ツッコミ), the straight-faced partner.[91] The jester in Japanese culture is particularly resonant with ideas expounded in *Jūniya* and *Epiphany* about the religious influence over the popular arts. In fact, "[i]n China and Japan, the 'holy fools'

[91] Here, even though the *boke* comedian is labelled as the fool, he is typically an artificial fool who blunders on purpose so that the *tsukkomi* can step in and 'correct' the situation.

of Buddhism and Daoism were far closer to being jesters than martyrs. Daoist and Zen monks could display a joyously cavalier approach to the sanctity of their teachings …," becoming jesters to better spread Buddhist and Daoist messages (170). The Japanese *manzai*, also known as the "dialogue between the Master and the Servant" (Tsurumi 34) is an old practice that dates back to the Edo era and speaks to the mingling of social classes. Furthermore, *manzai* and other forms of oral entertainment "have their origin in banquet amusements. The stunts performed at banquets are preserved in modern festival dances at local shrines" (34). When combined with the dream quality and magic in *MND*, these two techniques become powerful tools on the stage to enact Bakhtin's carnivalesque and grotesque in *PUCK* and to magnify the aforementioned postwar concerns through the use of comedy.

Takarazuka's 2014 version of *PUCK* tackles the themes in *MND* with a different perspective, one that is much more punishing for the lead character than in Shakespeare's story. Taylor writes that Shakespeare's Puck "seems to be spiritually closer to the Witches in *Macbeth* than to the good fairies of fairy-story" (291) due to his impishness and trickster personality. Takarazuka's Puck, however, is shown to be innocent and childish, comically choleric at times, and hopelessly romantic in the literary sense. As with any other play produced by this company, "romanticism is the heartbeat of Takarazuka: the heroics are considerable; the obstacles seem insurmountable. Love is sought after, struggled for, and seldom serenely achieved. The women are exquisitely beautiful; the men are dashingly handsome and tough. But the toughness is always tempered by tenderness" (Zeke 46). As expected, *PUCK* is no exception to this rule; Puck, as both a fairy and a human, is the perfect *shōjo* hero once more. In this way, Puck's cheekiness is curbed by Oberon's punishment following the fairy's disobedience. In Shakespeare, this does not take place, but for Takarazuka, Puck becomes a slighted hero who garners pity from the audience instead of its rightful ire. *PUCK* becomes a modernized version of *MND* that represents a postwar Japanese society through the characters' interactions and its departure from Shakespeare's comedy to create an opportunity to discuss issues of gender expectations, social progress, and environmental concerns.

1.1 The Grotesque and the Carnivalesque

The play begins on the eve of the midsummer festival and introduces the main players who, at this point, are young children. Hermia (Manaki Reika) and her cousin Helen (Saou Kurama), along with their friends Daniel (Miya Rurika) and Lionel (Nagina Rūmi), attend the yearly school play held at the all-boys' boarding school owned by Hermia's grandfather, Sir Greyville (Asuka Yū). After Bobby's (Tamaki Ryō) interruption of the play, we are introduced to the fairies and Puck (Ryū Masaki), who awakens in the forest. Titania and Oberon explain to Puck that fairies are special beings somewhere in between "heaven and earth," while humans "typically go to hell, although some make it into heaven" (*PUCK* 00:08:48-00:08:58). In keeping with Bakhtin's theory that "'downward' is earth, 'upward' is heaven. Earth is an element that devours, swallows up … and at the same time an element of birth, of renascence …" (21), the fairies are therefore, by nature, not grotesque or unnatural as they belong to neither realm. The humans, however, who are lowly in their eyes, can easily be sullied and rendered grotesque (as with Bobby's transformation later in the play), yet they are also representative of this earthly cycle of birth and death. Still, there is a lingering curiosity for the mortals and the way they live their lives, so Titania and Oberon declare that Puck will infiltrate the school and observe the humans to learn about them. As Puck prepares for his visit, the court fairies (Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed) warn him that young children can sometimes see them, but that they lose this ability once they grow up. Puck's birthplace in the forest, a rock, as well as the place where the fairies live, further sets the fairies apart from the humans at the school, since the location remains unseen by most humans. Hermia is the exception to this rule, and her ability to see Puck and interact with the forest's magic enables to keep Puck as a childhood "secret" (00:16:44) thereby protecting both the fairy and his home.

The fact that Puck's rock hides a secret world of fairies and other creatures ties in with the early principles behind the grotesque. The Renaissance grotesque was initially born out of the discovery of grotto-like rooms covered in paintings from the Roman period. The architectural feature of the grotto led 'grotesque' to eventually become 'gothic,' thereby associating it with darker themes of deformity and ugliness. Tinsley explains how the original room was

> … vast, labyrinthine, and filled with lavish manmade land- and waterscapes. "Grotesque" denoted, in the Renaissance, the style of Fabullus's decorative wall and ceiling frescoes that were discovered there, a major feature of which was the fantastical, playful, and ornate fusion of human body parts with those of plants, birds, animals, fish, cameos, and architectural motifs, or hybrid entities such as hippogriffs and winged Victories. (28)

These paintings, no doubt owing to Graeco-Roman mythological concepts of the world, create the sense of a magical, unseen world that is secretive and closed to outsiders. This is not unlike the fairies' bower in *MND* and how it is a non-place where humans cannot go unless they are transformed, like Bottom. In *PUCK*, the bower is replaced by a rock that acts like a platform—or a stage—for the fairies and the humans to use. The stage in *PUCK* is highly decorated, but the forest scenes in particular are rich with foliage and décor that are similar to how "Victorian and twentieth-century directors amplified the spectacle, giving Titania a throng of fairies swathed in tulle … and dressing the stage as realistically as possible with moonlight, thickets of greenery, and live bunnies" (McDonald xxx). This attention to the fairy's bower in particular places the focus of the play on the magic and fantasy related to this secretive place. The rock feature in *PUCK* is closer to the initial description of the grotto from which the grotesque emerges, but the fairies' invisibility to all but Bobby and Hermia is in line with the secretive aspect of the Otherworld.

According to Christopher Kendrick in *Utopia, Carnival, and Commonwealth in Renaissance England*, "[i]t is generally allowed that Carnivalesque representational practice typically mixed some positive notion of an alternative state of affairs into its travesty and satire, indeed that it was a crucial part of its work to project some vision of a better world that once was or might be" (76). This is observable in *MND*, but more specifically in *PUCK* as the eponymous fairy's integration into the human world has a double purpose: for one, he is expected to spy on the humans and report to Oberon, but he also brings an element of magic to the human realm, thereby dismantling the barrier between the two worlds. The carnivalesque elements in the play bring about the vision of a better world, one where the old traditions (the fairies) and the new society (the humans) coexist in a utopian reality.

Broken Utopias

On the occasion of Japan's surrender to the Allied Forces, General MacArthur "praised Commodore Matthew C. Perry as a messenger of enlightenment to a closed Japanese archipelago," saying that "[Perry's] purpose was to bring to Japan an era of enlightenment and progress by uplifting the veil of isolation to the friendship, trade, and commerce of the world" (qtd. in Caprio, Sugita 3). While the sentiment of establishing ties with Japan seems genuine, the context of the forced friendship reveals a form of puppeteering over a nation that had previously stood aloof from all. Though not a direct commentary on these events, *PUCK* showcases the idea of forced progress onto a people (in this case, the fairies) who must adapt to the new world or else perish, and Puck's friendship with the humans further exemplifies this idea of eliminating the isolation of the fairy realm.

Puck's first visit to the human world is punctuated by chaos as he causes a fight to break out amongst the children of the school. Puck is mischievous and enjoys playing tricks on the humans who cannot see him. When he meets Hermia, who has a 'second sight' which allows her to see the fairy, she explains that "'Puck' is a famous name. A long time ago, there was a person named Shakespeare who wrote a play [about Puck]" (00:14:25-30). Hermia continues by singing about how she "thought [he] only existed in stories" (00:15:36-46) and Puck's bewilderment at having been written in a story that predates his birth quickly fades away; however, the mention of Shakespeare and his story about Puck creates unease since it implies that Puck lived another life before the events of the play, but he does not remember it. Puck and Hermia rapidly form a friendship, and Puck happily declares that "when danger comes your way, I will definitely come and help you" (00:16:37)—a foreshadowing of the troubles Hermia will face in her adult life. Unlike the Puck in *MND* who disliked and mocked the humans, this Puck is innocent and unaware of the differences between mortals and immortals like himself. This again sets the fairies in opposition to their human counterparts and places them in the realm of god-like beings who are forbidden from interacting with the inferior humans.

Figure 18. – Hermia (left) and Puck (right) promising each other to be one another's protector © Takarazuka Company

Seeing as how the Carnival and the idea of utopia are closely linked, we can use this to look at *MND*—and, by proxy, *PUCK*—as a snapshot of how utopias can disintegrate due to the abundance and excesses associated with festivals. Utopias, that are meant to be perfect paradises, exist in an unstable time and location, much like the events in *MND*. During the festival of a midsummer's night, the fairies come out of their utopia to play with humans, only to leave at the end when the festival is over, signifying the end of a cycle. In *PUCK*, the cycle is dictated by the humans who control the narrative rather than the fairies, and the utopia of the Otherworld, to borrow a

medieval term, is overshadowed by the need for social progress in the real world. These contrary ideas of stagnant paradise and social progress combine at the festival—or carnival in *PUCK*—in which Puck and Bobby (Bottom) become liminal characters between these two states of being. The shift between utopia and reality is represented by Puck's slow acceptance of the new world—a reflection of Japan's relinquishing of feudal ideals in favour of a Westernized social model.

A discussion on Bakthin's carnivalesque and Shakespeare would not be complete without looking at Michael Bristol's discussion on these topics in his seminal work *Carnival and Theater* (1989). In the introduction he notes that "… the theatre is festive and political as well as literary" (3), from which he derives his argument that Renaissance theatre's purpose is socially and politically motivated through the use of collective traditions and Carnival. Bristol writes how politics and culture come together during Carnival:

> In Elizabethan times, the ideology of the monarchy and its clientele, as well as the ideology of its opponents among the elite and privileged community, combines imagery of a chivalric past, to create a language in which particular questions of continuity, change, political legitimacy and the allocation of power may be argued.
> (…)
> Elements of social structure, social change and the processes of material production are linked in the pageantry of Carnival…. (62-63)

The court fairies in *PUCK* act as messengers for Oberon, the monarch of the story, and instantly chastise Puck for his friendship with Hermia, telling him that "there is a strict punishment reserved for fairies who love humans" (00:18:03-05), which is to "lose one's most precious thing" (00:18:10), but the fairies believe that all will be well for Puck and that he "will soon tire of the humans" (00:18:12). In terms of court politics, if Puck is a member of this social sphere, then of course he will lose interest in the plebians as soon as the magic of the festival is broken, signifying a return to the natural order. Furthermore, Oberon is in a position of power not only over the humans, but also over his fairy servant Puck. If we see Oberon as a figure much like the Japanese emperor, one who is god-like and the ultimate symbol of power, then the fairy king's permission

to celebrate and participate in the rituals is a direct comment on his status in this society. Furthermore, the political changes are directly associated to his power as the ruler of his court. In a context where that order is broken and the common people gain power, like in the democratized postwar Japan, the power of the monarch becomes obsolete. Kendrick writes that "… Carnival Utopia reminds the natural rulers of their own superfluity with respect to the forces of production, or of the extent to which these latter, unshaped and as it were only managed by them at a great remove, remain a part of Nature" (81). The "rude mechanicals" of *MND* are the ones who put on a play for the wedding, but the fairies get to enjoy it, too, and be reminded that they are technically not needed for the humans to live and progress. To extrapolate on a larger scale, the fairies are to the bourgeois class what the humans are to the merchants and peasants; *PUCK* plays on these hierarchies by having the fairies be (or think themselves) superior to the humans, and by having Puck demoted into the lower realm because of his repeated disobedience. Puck's defiance of Oberon reinforces the loss of respect for the monarch and reflects MacArthur's imposed sanctions on the emperor, limiting his power greatly in the postwar age.

The other fairies in *PUCK*, aside from Puck himself, are spectators of the carnival that unfolds. Unable, or perhaps undesiring of intervening in human affairs, the fairies can only look on as the humans struggle through life. Plato describes the early form of the carnival when he writes: "The gods took pity on the human race, born to suffer as it was, and gave it relief in the form of religious festivals to serve as periods of rest from its labours" (qtd. in Wiles 61). The yearly festival in *PUCK* contributes to this break in time during which the characters can reconverge onto a common area and enjoy a respite from the realities of their everyday lives. Plato's theory explains that "festive dancing creates bodily order, and thus bodily and spiritual well-being" (61); however, this is shown to be the opposite for Bakhtin for whom the festival is a reversal of hierarchal roles and, as Bristol reminds us, "Carnival is a travesty; costumes, insignia of rank and identity, and all other symbolic manifestations are mimicked or misappropriated for purposes of aggressive mockery and laughter" (*Carnival and Theater* 63). This is exemplified in *MND* when Bottom is half-transformed into an animal for the pleasure of the fairies and as a device to trick the queen into falling in love with him. In this situation, the festivities take on a grotesque approach "because travesty subverts the possibility of orderly setting forth through the monstrous proliferation of

differences and identities" (63-64), and Plato's "bodily order" is replaced with bodily chaos instead. Bottom's physical transformation creates the comedic effect sought after in the carnival; yet, as Bakhtin explains, these types of distortions of the body "[do] not fit the framework of the 'aesthetics of the beauty' as conceived by the Renaissance" (Wiles 29). Elizabeth Tinsley theorises that "[i]n common with the grotesque, the classical body itself with its perfect human bodily proportions, which had exerted a strong influence on Renaissance artists, depended upon objects that had been disinterred from various [archeological] sites. It was in many ways known through the buried and the ruined. When these ideal bodies came up out of the ground they were often missing arms or a head; they might have been nothing but torsos" (28). The grotesque, then, comes to represent these broken bodies that are contrary to nature like Bottom's transformed self. The fact that Bottom's transformation is horrifying seems contrary to Plato's ideas about the Carnival. Indeed, instead of enjoying Bottom's performance in the inset play, his acting companions run from him in fear: "O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted. / Pray, masters! Fly, masters! Help!" (*MND* III.i.105-106). The chaos of the scene is directly incurred by Bottom's 'bodily chaos,' and even though the atmosphere is a joyous one of celebration, Bottom's companions find themselves in a nightmare-esque situation.

In *PUCK*, Oberon tasks the fairy with finding a magical flower that makes ugly things seem beautiful. As with the plot in *MND*, this flower is used against Titania who has angered the king with her indifference. When Puck comes back with the flower, he and Oberon exchange a bit of *manzai*-style banter before moving on to the task at hand.[92] Puck swings above the stage on a white trapeze that is reminiscent of Peter Brook's stripped 1970 stage and uses his magical flower to create more chaos among the humans. Bobby's transformation is also a byproduct of Puck's mischief, but his friend's reaction offers a different grotesque interpretation:

[92] In the recorded performance, Puck and Oberon adlib a silly joke that is not included in the official script of the play. Oberon asks Puck to hold onto a vine and tells him he will "fly," to which Puck replies "fly, fly, *ebi furai* (fried shrimp)" (a pun on the words "fly" and "fry" that are both spelled and pronounced the same way in the katakana syllabary [フライ]). Oberon then pointedly tells him that those are two different kinds of "*furai*" in a dead-panned way. This short exchange follows the typical exchange of quips present in *manzai* comedy.

PUCK. Which one should I transform? Ok, let's go with Bobby. *Puck uses a magical spell*: What is clean becomes dirty; what is dirty becomes clean!

Puck uses the tricoloured violet on Bobby and hides him. Puck plays a prank on the Woodpeckers by making them dance. Bobby reappears with donkey's ears.
…
SNOUT. Everyone, look!
PICOLO. It appeared!
STARVELING. It's an evil spirit!
…
SNAG. This is because as a kid, he urinated on a gravestone! (*Le CINQ* "PUCK")

Starveling specifically refers to Bobby as an *akuryō* (悪霊), an evil spirit that is linked to the idea of demonic possession. This possession is further explained when Snag associated the transformation to a past offence, that of desecrating a grave. In Snag's mind, Bobby's transformation is a consequence of his bad actions, and perhaps the resentful spirit of the grave went as far as to possess or curse Bobby for his transgression. This explanation for the transformation roots the narrative in Japanese folklore, and though Bobby's donkey-headed metamorphosis is not a direct reference to a specific mythological creature, Starveling's *akuryō* recalls many evil spirits in Japanese folklore. The *kubikajiri* (首かじり), for example, comes to mind in this discussion of graveyards and lost heads, or even the *haka no hi* (墓の火) who haunts graves could be the culprit behind Bobby's punishment. These associations liken Puck to a malevolent spirit rather than a mischievous one, an idea that is repeated later in the show. Picolo's exclamation of "it appeared!" further links Bobby to the world of the dead since the expression 出た (*deta*) in this context infers a ghostly apparition. In this scene, Bobby's previous 'cleanliness' is made dirty or, in Bakhtinian terms, grotesque, through the magic of the flower.

Figure 19. – Bobby (center left) and Titania (center right) post-enchantment © Takarazuka Company

According to Bakhtin, Bottom's (and Bobby's) transformation of the head, being the "heaven" and "upward" topographical location of the body, is degraded and rendered grotesque for a comedic effect, reversing the order of life and death prescribed by these distinctions. Bakhtin explains that "to degrade is to bury, to sow, and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something more and better" (21). This ties in with the transgressive nature of Carnival where expected norms are overturned. As much as Bottom's friends are horrified, the audience is entertained since "laughter is stimulated by objects that are ugly, deformed and indecorous, provided that the pain or sorrow ordinarily occasioned by such objects is in some way modified" (Bristol *Carnival and Theater* 134). Bottom's betterment of his situation is found in his subsequent treatment by the fairy queen who lavishes him with attention, gifts, food, song, and dance—at least until the enchantment breaks and Titania casts him out. Puck's mischief and desire to "be an auditor; / An actor too, perhaps, if [he] see[s] cause" (III.i.74-75) is what creates this unease

vis-à-vis the sudden grotesque appearance of Bottom, the queen's lover by chance,[93] as the fairy is an active participant in this transformation.

For Bakhtin, "the grotesque image reflects a phenomenon in transformation, an as yet unfinished metamorphosis, of death and birth, growth and becoming. … in this image we find both poles of transformation, the old and the new, the dying and the procreating, the beginning and the end of the metamorphosis" (24). The grotesque is the "epitome of incompleteness" (26), and this is recognizable in Bottom's unfortunate half-transformation. This idea of metamorphosis and transformation, however, is rooted in classical literature and is commonplace in world mythology. In this context, Roman and Greek mythology are especially relevant when discussing the topic of metamorphosis. Puck, being a trickster figure, plays the role of the all-powerful being who can manipulate the lives of mortals at whim in the same way that the gods of old toyed with humans out of boredom.[94] Bakhtin concludes his discussion on the grotesque by explaining that,

> … the grotesque concept of the body forms the basis of abuses, oaths, and curses. The importance of abusive language is essential to the understanding of the literature of the grotesque. Abuse exercises a direct influence on the language and the images of this literature and is closely related to all other forms of "degradation" and "down to earth" in grotesque and Renaissance literature. (27-8)

This idea of degradation through language is apparent in *MND* in how Bottom is (mis)treated by both his friends and the fairies. When Bottom is confused about his friends' behaviour post-transformation, he declares that he "see[s] their knavery. This is to make an ass of [him], / to fright [him], if they could" (III.i.115-16), thinking that they mock him to make him feel stupid. Meanwhile, Puck's own description of why and how he transformed Bottom further showcases the abuse:

[93] Seeing as how Titania's enchantment dictates that she must fall in love with the first creature she sees, Bottom's relationship with the queen is due to Puck's mischief as well as chance.

[94] Of course, there are many reasons as to why the gods in ancient mythologies punished, chased, and transformed humans. For the sake of brevity, I choose here to focus on the need for entertainment as it fits well with the reasons behind Puck's behavior in *MND*.

My mistress with a **monster** is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour
A crew of patches, **rude mechanicals**,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play,
Intended for the great Theseus' nuptial day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented in their sport,
Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake,
When I did him at his advantage take;
An ass's nowl I fixed on his head
…
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly
….
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated here;
When in that moment (so it came to pass)
Titania wak'd and straightway lov'd an **ass**. (III.ii.6-34, emphasis added)

Puck's disdain for the humans is clear: the mortals who "work for bread" are beneath his fairy brethren, especially his beloved queen, and Bottom in particular, the "shallowest thick-skin" of the lot, is only worth Puck's time because of how he can be "translated" and used for Oberon's pleasure in punishing Titania. Puck labels Bottom as a "monster" due to his dual nature as man and animal, yet it is because of the fairy that Bottom is made into something monstrous and grotesque. The last line of the soliloquy plays on the double meaning of the word 'ass,' as both the animal and the idiot, furthering the idea that Bottom is a natural fool and therefore easy to manipulate. This type of verbal disparaging is, for Bakhtin, part of the carnival atmosphere. In fact, "when two persons establish friendly relations, the form of their verbal intercourse also changes abruptly; they address each other informally, abusive words are used affectionately, and mutual mockery is permitted" (Bakhtin 16), as seen when Bottom, Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling take jabs at each other during their rehearsal in act III scene I.

In *PUCK* this element is comparatively toned down, as the worst insult Puck uses for Bobby is to call him "donkey-man," which is effectively only a descriptor. On the contrary, when Titania sees

Bobby, she sings comically about his apparent good looks: “Cute donkey / your ears jump up and down / your long mane is so cool / I want to wear it as a scarf” (*Le CINQ* “PUCK”). Titania’s doting on the half-transformed Bobby plays into the topsy-turvy quality of Carnival. This reversal of expectations—that the fairy queen should fawn over a grotesque half-human—relates directly to the Carnival that thrives on subversion of lords pretending to be peasants and vice versa, for example.

Japanese Festivals and the Grotesque

Grotesque, known as *guro* (グロ) in Japanese popular culture, is a subgenre in fashion, literature, and *manga*, to name a few. *Guro* is a catch-all term for anything strange, monstrous, horrific, bizarre, and grotesque, and even has an association with eroticism and pornography (エログロ *ero guro*). This tradition can be traced back to work done by woodblock artists in the 1800s, such as Katsushika Hokusai. In his collection of sketches, known as the *Hokusai Manga*, Hokusai introduced elements of the grotesque into everyday life scenes. For example, many of the drawings depict the interactions between monsters and humans in ordinary situations such as cooking, playing games, and even sleeping/dreaming.

Figure 20. – Long necked and monstrous characters in *Hokusai Manga* (Wiki Creative Commons)

Bottom's grotesque transformation seems mild in comparison to what Japanese *guro* aestheticism accomplishes, but the sentiment of uncanniness pervades both iterations of the same theme. The English medieval festivals described by Bakhtin and passed down to Shakespeare through literary and social culture have a religious association to Lent, and the Japanese *matsuri* are also directly related to religious festivities. In fact, "the term *matsuri-goto*, which literally means 'affairs of religious festivals,' in common usage also means 'government.' This is in accordance with the tradition that the ceremonies of Shintō were the proper business of the state, and that all important aspects of public just as of private life were the occasions for prayers and reports to the *kami*" (Britannica "matsuri"). *Matsuri* are popular, yearly events peppered around Japan. Each city has its own methods of celebrating as well as its own specific traditions and rituals associated to the festival. For example, in Kyoto, during the culminating

event of the *obon matsuri* (the largest festival of the year meant to commemorate the spirits of the dead) known as the *daimonji okuribi* (大文字送り火), a giant bonfire in the shape of the ideogram for the word "large" (大) is set alight on the city's Mount Daimonji and can be seen for miles throughout the region ("*Kyoto Gozan Okuribi*"). The close association between religious ceremonies, rituals, and festivals is represented in *MND* and in *PUCK* as the characters participate and/or ensure the repetition of the rituals.

The grotesque and, by extension, the Japanese *guro*, are discordant with Shintoism in as much as "[p]urity is one of Shinto's most important concepts. Purity can be defined as the natural state of the living world, when not dirtied by death, or things associated with death. Blood, including from menstruation and childbirth, as well as urine, faeces, vomit, rotted food, stagnant water, and any portion of a corpse, are all ritually polluted, and therefore cannot be brought into the presence of a *kami*. … 'Purity' is not the same as 'good' any more than 'impurity' is equivalent to 'evil'; however, according to Shinto doctrine, *kami* love purity and abhor impurity" (Frydman). In *PUCK*, there is a strong emphasis on purity and cleanliness as Puck uses the magical flower to 'clean' the unclean like Bobby. All of this is compounded by the ritualistic chanting when using the flower, "what is dirty is clean; what is clean is dirty" (00:44:40-43), and the fact that it takes place in the context of a festival. Shintō doctrine aims to "regulate human activities within the natural world in a harmonious manner … [and] various methods of ritual cleaning [are] prescribed" (Isomae, Araki 48) to purify the polluted. Bobby's transformation is related to this Shintō belief of pollution, and Puck's 'purification' of his past transgressions translates into the grotesque appearance he gains.

The grotesque in *PUCK* is like in other spaces where it is present; it is a deformation of the expected that creates unease. According to Sasaki Miyoko and Morioka Heinz,

> … grotesque in art and literature consists in dramatization of an alienated world. The artist who confronts this world and expresses it can do so with two different attitudes: The alienation either produces in him positive feelings of superiority, or he harbors negative, disparaging feelings about it. Objectively looked upon with detachment, grotesque is an unrealistic description of the real world. But from the subjective point of view of the expressing artist and what

> he is trying to express, grotesque can be a pointedly realistic denunciation of a sham reality, of a world that has become absurd and fake. (435)

Within *PUCK*, the unsettlement and 'sham reality' is brought on by the repeated abuse of Puck at the hands of Oberon. Puck, who is continuously forced to forget about the humans he befriends, as well as his transformation into a human as a form of punishment, point to the grotesqueness of the world he lives in. The fairy world that Puck initially loves is truly malicious and an illusion of a utopia, yet the human world is not much better as it seeks to destroy traditions such as the annual midsummer festival, all in the name of social progress.

Of Mythology, Dreams, and Rituals

Despite this reversal of social order, the animalistic transformation of a human clearly places the race of fairies and sprites further up the social ladder as their bodies are intact and unchanged. By comparison, Bottom's new appearance is reminiscent of other mythological beings such as satyrs and centaurs who are neither man nor animal, but rather something in between. In Greek mythology, these creatures are deemed to be lesser in status compared to the Olympian gods because of their half-breed nature.[95] However, their animalistic half makes them closer to the natural world than the lofty gods who oversee everything. Furthermore, the human/non-human division of these beings is always either an upper or lower transformation of the body, but rarely a full-bodied transformation. Bottom's transformation particularly recalls the Minotaur because of its bull head and human body. By comparison, those who retain a human head but an animal's body (Sphinx, centaurs, Pan, etc.) are usually clever creatures who interact with humans.[96] David Wiles (1998) links Bakthin's theory of the Carnival to mythology through three major classical

[95] Edith Hamilton writes: "The Satyrs, like Pan, were goat-men, and like him, they had their home in the wild places of the earth. In contrast to these unhuman, ugly gods, the goddesses of the woodland were all lovely maiden forms …. The Centaurs: They were half man, half horse, and for the most part they were savage creatures, more like beasts than men" (40).

[96] There are of course many types of monsters in Greek mythology, many of which do not fit into the two categories I established here. However, for argument's sake, I used a few common examples to illustrate my point about half-human creatures.

festivals: the Greek Dionysia (spring solstice),[97] the Roman Saturnalia (winter solstice),[98] and Christmas. Unlike Bakhtin's sweeping approach to these festivals and their associated rituals, Wiles describes the Carnival as being "specifically concerned with the body, which has to be mortified during Lent, and its most potent symbol is the fat man who bloats his body to the point of expiry" (64). Furthermore, the "Carnival embodies the coarse and even bestial excesses of an archaic pagan past" (Bristol *Carnival and Theatre* 73). Contrary to Lent, when fasting is encouraged, the Carnival promotes excess that inevitably leads to the dissolution of the utopia, or the dream. In *MND*, Bottom is fed relentlessly by the queen's fairy underlings, thereby embodying the exact image described by Wiles. However, it is because of the festival in the play that Bottom is allowed to be anywhere near the fairies and their queen. Bakhtin says that the festivals of old were an occasion for the people to meet and rejoice together, despite their social status (1984), and this is clearly exemplified by Bottom's participation in the fairies' customs and rituals.

The very title of this play indicates its relationship to the Carnival and rituals. In fact, the play takes place during midsummer, a pagan festival held across Britain and Northern Europe to celebrate the summer solstice, and in *PUCK*, this association is reinforced by having the school and forest located near Stonehenge, a place closely associated to ancient paganism and rituals. The revels during midsummer include banquets, bonfires, and maypole dancing, all of which contribute to the carnival atmosphere of the holiday (Troiano). It is in this context that Shakespeare deliberately sets his tale, combining English pagan traditions and elements of mythology with an ancient Greek locality, set in the outskirts of Athens. Furthermore, the 'dream' that is alluded to in the title of the play can be interpreted in two ways: the literal dream of queen Titania while she is enchanted,

[97] Even though Dionysia is no longer celebrated, "what was done at [Dionysus'] great festival was open to all the world and is a living influence today. No other festival in Greece could compare with it. It took place in the spring when the vine begins to put forth its branches, and it lasted for five days. … But the place where people gathered to do honor to the god was not the wild wilderness made horrible by savage deeds and a bloody feast; it was not even a temple precinct …. It was a theater; and the ceremony was the performance of a play. The greatest poetry in Greece … was written for Dionysus. The performances were sacred" (Hamilton 59).

[98] Saturnalia for the Romans, as a precursor of Christmas, is described as a "great feast … held every year during the winter. The idea of it was that the Golden Age returned to the earth during the days it lasted. No war could be declared; slaves and masters ate at the same table; executions were postponed; it was a season for giving presents; it kept alive in men's minds the idea of equality, of a time when all were on the same level" (Hamilton 42).

and the events of the play as a midsummer illusion experienced by the befuddled characters. When extrapolated outside of the narrative, the 'dream' takes on a third nature, one that implicates the audience.[99] In all instances, "[t]he central action of the play inhabits a liminal, dream-like space characterized by the inversion of real conditions, being set out-of-doors, in the country, in summer and under a full moon" (Wiles 68). The inner world of the play allows for a carnivalesque parade of characters, all strange and ethereal, while the outer world evokes feelings of festival-related storytelling and rituals that exist within a limited timeframe. Puck himself concludes the play with a soliloquy that touches upon the construction of the events that unfolded and the audience's involvement in the dream:

> If we shadows have offended,
> Think but this, and all is mended—
> That you have but slumbered here
> While these visions did appear.
> And this weak and idle theme,
> No more yielding but a dream,
> Gentles, do not reprehend. (V.i.415-21)

Puck's avowal that the fairy world he inhabits and all that it contains is nothing but a vision or a dream reinforces the themes of utopia and the Carnival. Dreams are more often than not senseless and built up of a mishmash of images projected onto the conscious mind while the body is in a state of paralysis (Purves et al. 2001). Termed simply, the mind hallucinates scenes of fantasy (dreams) and of horror (nightmares). The fact that *MND* is a representation of this exact process adds to the overall grotesqueness and unnaturalness of the events that take place. The close relationship between the body and the mind during REM sleep, and the parade of disjointed images that cross the mind as we dream is reminiscent of what happens during the marketplace carnival where everything is flipped, and the expected order is instead in complete chaos. As Dent points out, however, "we may well remember that not all dreams are the products of disordered,

[99] Robert W. Dent writes: "… we have ourselves been admitted to a more complete vision, though we may well be asses if we seek to infer from it more than the suggestion of a mysterious 'grace' that sometimes blesses true love. Unlike the lovers and Bottom, we have been witnessing a play, a creation of Shakespeare's imagination. Only a part of the time have we watched imagination-dominated 'dreams' …" (121-122).

passion-stimulated, never-sleeping imagination. Some dreams are divine revelations of truth, however difficult to expound, and we have already seen plays of Shakespeare where dreams contained at least a prophetic, specific truth, if not a universal one" (122). Puck's apology at the end is a gentle reminder that not only are the contents of the play dream-like, so is the theatre experience in general.

Puck's well-known mischievousness in *MND* takes over his brief interest in the humans and highlights him as a non-human creature first and foremost. The festival atmosphere takes a turn for the strange in *PUCK* when the enchantment that falls over Titania and Bobby causes a strange dream-like world to unfold before their eyes. The parade of fairies and unicorns in the background of the scene add to the strangeness of Titania's 'dream.' To add to the confusion, Puck uses the magical flower on both Daniel and Lionel with the same spell of "what is dirty is clean." This causes them to change their opinion about Helen whom they initially thought unattractive (dirty), to making her beautiful (clean) in their eyes in the same way that Bobby is now beautiful to Titania despite his apparent ugliness as half-man, half-animal. As the orchestrator of these events, Puck relishes in the chaos he has created. When Titania falls in love with the donkey-headed Bobby, Puck observes it all unfold with glee.

Even though the transformation is limited to Bobby, the fairy queen and king also appear strangely deformed on stage compared to the other characters. Oberon in particular wears an overly large costume with a hoop beneath his skirt around his midriff to create the illusion of largeness and make him seem more imposing on stage as opposed to the delicate court fairies around him. This unnaturalness combines itself with the hallucinatory parade of otherworldly creatures at the back of the stage and helps to clearly differentiate the ordinary humans from the supernatural fairies. Oberon's overly large costume is a visual sign for his superior status, and, like the emperor, his power is supreme in this scene. By comparison, Puck has abandoned his human disguise and now dons an all-white outfit dotted with leaves and vines, signifying his return to the fairy world. This shift is explained by the fact that Puck has been forgotten by the humans and is no longer needed in their world. Moreover, this return to nature makes him once again 'pure' and 'clean' since he no longer has ties to the humans.

Figure 21. – Puck (center left) and Oberon (center right) surrounded by the court fairies © Takarazuka Company

Cycles and Repetition

During Shakespeare's lifetime in particular, Wiles describes that "at court [his] plays were performed according to the rhythm of the festive calendar, whilst in the city his plays were performed according to the Sabbatarian rhythm of the Reformation. When we look at the plays in their performance context, the festive or carnivalesque dimension relates to the experience of the aristocratic audience much more closely than it does to the experience of the 'popular' audience" (65). Despite this, however, the Carnival remains a typically 'popular' experience, as

Bakhtin argues.[100] Wiles reminds us that "although we encounter *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a text, it was historically part of an aristocratic carnival. It was written for a wedding, and part of the festive structure of the wedding night. The audience who saw the play in the public theatre in the months that followed became vicarious participants in an aristocratic festival from which they were physically excluded" (67). In a way, the play performed for an early modern audience during a festival mimics the events inside the play itself in how Bottom and his friends perform *Pyramus and Thisbe*[101] for the sake of Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding. Bottom makes a mention of performing the play at the right moment: "A calendar, a calendar! Look in the almanac. / Find out moonshine, find out moonshine" (III.i.49-50). The 'moonshine' is essential for the performance of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, adding to the importance of accurate timing during festivals and carnivals. In *PUCK*, the repeated occurrence of the midsummer's eve festival contributes to the perpetual carnival atmosphere in the play. Unlike *MND* that takes place within one night, *PUCK* repeats the ritual over the course of several years. Each time, midsummer's eve becomes the setting for chaos to ensue: Whether caused by Puck, Oberon, or the humans, midsummer's eve holds a form of mysticism that attracts the disorder of the carnival and the constant reversal of expectations.

The court fairies' dire warning to Puck about befriending humans is followed by a series of fast forwards in the play in which the children grow into teenagers and finally into adults. As teenagers, the friends express their childish dreams for their futures: Lionel wants to become a violinist, Helen wants to become Miss Universe, Daniel a hotel owner, Bobby a rock star, and

[100] In *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin creates a distinction between what he terms the "official feasts of the Middle Ages" and the "purer feasts" of old, as the former stood in opposition to the intended purpose of the carnival for the general population, a "utopian realm of community, freedom, equality, and abundance" (9). On this, he writes: "the official feasts … [w]hether ecclesiastic, feudal, or sponsored by the state, did not lead the people out of the existing world order and created no second life. … Unlike the earlier and purer feasts, the official feast asserted all that was stable, unchanging, perennial: the existing hierarchy. The existing religious, political, and moral values, norms, and prohibitions. … But this true festive character was indestructible; it had to be tolerated and even legalized outside the official sphere and had to be turned over to the popular sphere of the marketplace" (9).

[101] The story of *Pyramus and Thisbe* is found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (book 4) and is credited as being the precursor to the story of *Romeo and Juliet*. In terms of the link between *Pyramus and Thisbe* and *MND*, it is interesting that the former tells of a metamorphosis/transformation of its own. Instead of a human transformation, however, it is a "tree which was tall and heavily laden with snow-white berries" (Ovid 89) that is changed into fruit stained by Pyramus' blood and made "as a token of mourning, a monument making the blood of two lovers" (160) made possible by the grace of the gods.

Hermia hopes to become an author of *shōnen* and *shōjo* love stories, but when they become young adults, their dreams have matured and are more realistic. Meanwhile, Puck remains unchanged throughout these scenes, still sporting the childish overalls and roller skates that the court fairies dressed him in when he awoke in the forest. Puck whizzes around the stage on his roller skates, often bumping into characters who cannot see him and causing confusion. The contrast between the playful Puck and the more serious young adults is punctuated by this difference in costuming.

These scenes showcase the passage of time for humans in comparison to the fairies who are not bound by the same rules. The final jump in this section of the play features the friends all grown up: Lionel has become a choir conductor, Daniel is a rich hotel owner, Bobby has succeeded in becoming a singer, Helen is unaccomplished, and Hermia works at her grandfather's school. What is especially interesting in terms of these speed ups in the narrative is that each time the group of friends is reunited, it is always on the eve of the midsummer festival, and the main characters are shown participating in or preparing for the event. Whatever happens in their lives in between the cyclical event of the school's festival is overlooked in favour of the time spent together one night in the whole year. Again, Puck is untouched by these changes, and fails to see how the world is evolving around him. Puck is clearly a relic of the past for whom time has no meaning and represents a stagnant tradition that does not move forward.

The midsummer celebrations are central to the plot of the play and are an important anchor for the characters. For example, in the last jump forward in the timeline, the students at the school declare that "those who meet on midsummer's eve are bound to be tied[102] [to one another]" (*Le CINQ* "PUCK"), and the grown-up friends greet each other with "long time no see" (00:20:15) after a year's time spent apart, illustrating the importance of the festival in their lives as it allows them to meet again though adulthood may have caused them to drift apart, and obligations have kept them from seeing each other regularly. The yearly midsummer festival brings them back together, if only briefly. In this sense, the midsummer festival can be seen as the glue that keeps the

[102] Alternatively, 結ばれる *musubareru* can also mean to be joined in matrimony, which ties in with the themes of the play. However, the idea of being tied by fate to one another also resonates with the cyclical nature of their encounters.

community together and that allows for friends of various social classes to mingle and celebrate together. As an outsider, Puck is an observer of the passage of time while he remains untouched by it.

Festivals, both in early modern England and in contemporary Japan, are repetitive and ritualised. Albert Piette writes that "festivals create within their particular settings a mobile and ambivalent world of shifting realities which present contrary and conflicting aspects" (37). This is similar to how theatre functions as a series of repetitions with each performance of a play. Piette also separates festivals into two distinct categories: ceremonial (religious, sacred) and transgressive (carnival) (1992). Furthermore, Piette writes that the "festival is merely a transfer to a separate space-time of an everyday activity more or less transformed" (42). With this in mind, the repetitive and cyclical nature of festivals, both ceremonial and transgressive, engrains the rituals into each participant and onlooker's mind. In Japan in particular, where the national identity is closely linked to its historical inheritance and traditions, *matsuri* are an integral part of the common, popular culture. In *PUCK*, the idea of *matsuri* is conflated with the English equivalent of the midsummer celebration, but the repetition of the event in the play marks its importance as a yearly calendar event (as in *MND*) and as an ordinary and expected occurrence.

The fact that the events in the play take place mostly on or around midsummer's eve creates a sense of non-time to the point where it seems that the whole play takes place in a single night, such as in *MND*, even though there is actually a steady flow of time in the play. The true reason behind the repetitive nature of the festival is that it encourages a "[shift] away from the everyday hub of life. It detaches one of its expressions from the everyday and reframes the meaning in another context. Thus, the Carnival appears as a regulated challenge to established limits, a special play authorizes an intermingling of ordinarily incompatible themes and types of behavior" (51). This is all the more apparent in Shakespeare's play and its Japanese adaptation as humans are made to act in atypical ways because of the fairies' mischief and magic.

Conversely, Bakhtin's notion of "upwards" and "downwards" in terms of the grotesque plays its part in how the repetition in the story takes place. Knowles notes that "at the heart of Bakhtin's idea of carnival are the antinomies of life and death, or rather the resolution of any such antinomy

in the cyclic renewal of life which subsumes death into the larger constant of regenerative becoming made manifest in the seasons and human gestation" (4). In *MND*, this cyclical renewal is shown through the enactment of the festivals in the narrative, and the passing of time for the immortal fairies compared to the mortal humans. This extends itself into *PUCK* where the eponymous main character is born into a progressive, non-Shakespearean world. However, the cycle of the yearly midsummer festival is present here, too, and the changes experienced by the characters are affected by the Carnival. As such, "the fairy-world parallels the human [one] and, if anything, intensifies that suggestion of a harsher and more unfestive reality which is present in the play" (Taylor 265). The birth of the fairy is thereby linked to the death of the human characters' childhoods, dreams, and love.

Forgetting and Remembering

Now that Hermia has become an adult, she no longer has the 'second sight' that allowed her to see and interact with Puck. Hermia has forgotten about him and as a result, the fairies encourage Puck to "return to the forest to report to Oberon about the humans" (00:28:43-55), but Puck is too heartbroken to obey. This scene is followed by the main source of conflict in the play, that is, who will get Hermia's hand in marriage. While Daniel's parents want him to marry Helen, he has his heart set on Hermia, as does Lionel who proposes to her off stage. When she refuses both suitors, Daniel's mother asks if there is someone she loves, to which she replies "yes, in a diary. … No, probably in the forest" (00:37:09-13) in reference to Puck, thereby indicating that she has not completely forgotten about him despite growing up. The mention of the diary reveals a childish love for the fairy as he is part of Hermia's imaginary rather than her reality. Though she may not be able to see him anymore, Hermia remembers her encounter as a child and remains attached to the fairy tale she has created for herself. Furthermore, Hermia's attachment to the forest reveals not only her relationship to Puck, and thereby nature, but also hints at the second major conflict that pits the idea of social progress against the desire to maintain traditions and, more specifically, the ritual of the festival.

Puck curses Hermia for "forgetting about him" and accuses her heart of "having become dirty," which he threatens to "clean" with his magical flower (00:51:42-00:52:00). However, Puck is

unable to cause her harm because she is “beautiful inside and out” (00:52:02-14) and using the flower on her would have the opposite effect and transform her into something grotesque like Bobby. Hermia struggles to remember exactly who Puck is while the fairy makes himself known by calling out to her. After a dancing scene, Puck kisses Hermia, triggering her second sight and allowing her to see him for the first time in years. Puck’s love for Hermia breaks the curse, but it also enrages Oberon who suddenly appears in a flash of thunder to tell Puck that he broke his cardinal rule by falling in love with a human. As foretold by the fairies at the beginning of the play, Puck must give up his “most precious thing” which, to him, is his voice (00:00:56:16-22). The punishment extends to Hermia as well, who is stripped of her memories of Puck and, should Puck break his silence, he will also be made to forget everything and become mortal.

In this sequence of events, the expected conclusion of having the humans paired in romantic partnership is disrupted by Puck’s heavier involvement with the humans than in *MND*. Seeing as how “the wood … is the realm of magic, of sexuality, liberty, lovers, dreams, night” (McDonald xxxi), it is not surprising that the core of the action takes place in Puck’s domain. Furthermore, as a creature who straddles both worlds, Puck helps to make the barrier between the human realm of “reason, … civilization, property, parents, daylight” (xxxi) and his own more porous, which enables him to become a third suitor for Hermia.

After Oberon’s punishment of the lovers, all the affected humans wake up in the forest and are left with a vague sensation of having had a strange dream. Helen returns to being ordinary in Daniel and Lionel’s hearts, and Bobby is restored to his friends without his donkey’s ears. Bobby then goes on to find Puck unconscious, battered, and dishevelled following his encounter with Oberon. When Bobby asks Puck his name, Puck desperately tries to communicate without speaking, which allows for a short comedic moment to take place. Bobby misunderstands Puck, and names him ‘Pook’ instead. This new name recalls the Middle English spelling for Puck as ‘pouke,’ along with its definition as “devil” or “evil spirit.”[103] To Bobby, Puck is definitely devilish, especially following the chaos the fairy caused. Ironically, Bobby who had been accused of being

[103] “Puck,” Online Etymology Dictionary.

an evil spirit following his transformation, turns the narrative onto Puck now that the fairy has been punished and demoted to the human realm.

The flow of the narrative breaks to allow for a comedic interjection to take place. Bobby and Puck briefly perform the "*hen na oji-san*" dance side by side, replicating the Japanese comedian Shimura Ken's TV skit. Shimura's TV character is that of a strange/gross older man (*hen na oji-san* strange uncle) who infiltrates various social situations and creates confusion for the other characters, eventually resulting in him dancing at the end of the skit. The dance he performs is reminiscent of traditional *matsuri* dances, especially the Okinawan style. Because of the nature of the TV skit, and its recurring factor in popular culture, the inclusion of it in the play grounds it in contemporary Japanese culture while also maintaining the playfulness of *MND*. Furthermore, because this type of dance is typically performed at *matsuri*, it further connects the carnival nature of the play to that of Japanese festival culture. The grossness of the 'strange uncle' character reflects the uncanniness of this play and the blending of the carnival with the strange through Puck, the punished and silenced fairy, and Bobby, the transformable human.

In yet another fast forward, a mute Puck (now known as 'Pook' by the other characters as well) is shown working in Daniel's hotel as a valet. For a whole year, Puck lives his life as a human while obeying Oberon's punishment. At the hotel, he works with Hermia, who has forgotten about him once again. One year later, a day before midsummer's eve, tragedy strikes when Hermia's grandfather learns that the school will be sold to build a resort and that they cannot hold their yearly concert. It just so happens that this year's festival marks the 70th edition of the concert, marking the importance of this tradition for the school and the old friends. The disruption of the festival's ritual causes all the characters to panic until Daniel steps in and offers to buy the land to protect the school and the concert on one condition: to "give [him] Hermia" (1:10:02-04) because she is his "life's dream" (1:10:18-20), yet another reference to the utopian impossibilities of the play. Hermia asks him to "promise not to use the forest to build a [swimming] pool" (1:10:24-27), which had been a concern when selling the school, to which Daniel agrees, and the rapid wedding ceremony is set for the next day, on midsummer's eve.

The sudden combination of a wedding and the usual midsummer festivities reflect the events in *MND*; however, the main couple of Hermia/Daniel is different from the expected character union of Hermia/Lionel (Lysander). What is more, Daniel goes back on his word despite Hermia's request and announces that he has plans to destroy the forest to build a new hotel, set "to open on midsummer's eve" (01:18:37). Puck gets wind of this plan and alerts Bobby and his friends to Daniel's deviousness. As with many elements in this play that point to the idea of rituals and carnivals, this scene is the most significant in how the debate is not only about the right to celebrate, but also the status of the forest that houses the fairies.

This turn of events brings to mind the postwar consolidation of shrines and deforestations across Japan in favour of new infrastructures that would propel the country into a new era. In the immediate years after Japan's surrender, the country's economy expanded rapidly, with "[i]ndustrial pollution and the resulting public health problems … largely ignored in pursuit of rapid and sustained industrial development. The early postwar period was marked by the single-minded concentration of the national government on economic reconstruction and catching up with the West" (Karan 39). Daniel's betrayal is indicative of this desire for expansion at the detriment of his friends' well-being. As a rich industrial developer, Daniel represents a new generation with a Western capitalist mindset that had until that point not been a reality in Japanese society. By contrast, Hermia has always been attuned to nature because of her unique ability to see Puck. Her desire to protect the forest—and thereby the place of ritual—can be read as an act of resistance against the social changes that Daniel embodies.

The next day, everyone is at Hermia and Daniel's wedding. Just as Bobby gets ready to point out Daniel's deceit, he faints dramatically, and Puck's voice is restored in time for him to reveal the truth. Puck lets everyone know of Daniel's treachery by waving a DVD around that contains the plans for the hotel and pool complex and, despite Oberon's warning not to speak, Puck pleads with the assembled crowd to listen to "the song [he will] sing. Please listen to this song about the forest where [he] was raised" (*Le CINQ* "PUCK"). Puck reveals his identity to Hermia through his song: "I was born in this forest / I was raised in this forest /… / I played with you in this forest / We met in this forest" (01:27:41-28:22) that recalls his close relationship to nature. Through his

heartfelt song about the forest, Puck shows the importance of nature for mortals and fairies alike. However, as with Puck's first attempt to reveal the world of the fairies to the humans, Oberon is angered once more, and the festivities are cut short by a sudden thunderstorm. Oberon's mercurial temperament continuously sets him apart from the other characters as a divine being with the power to change the outcome of human (and fairy) life and, contrary to Puck, he is not inclined to help nor become involved in human affairs. Oberon's primary concern is to keep the fairy world hidden and thereby protected from human intervention, but Puck's continued disobedience puts his plans at risk.

Puck returns to the group in torn-up clothing, seemingly not recognizing anyone, not even his own name. As per Oberon's previous threat, Puck is made human because of his disregard for divine law and is forced to forget about his life as a fairy and everything that has happened since his birth. Throughout the play, Puck and Hermia go through a vicious cycle of losing then regaining their memories which is fueled by the ideas of the dream and the Carnival. Each time they meet, it is always on midsummer's eve and, each time, the fairies intervene in their story and wreak havoc in their relationship. However, this time, it is Hermia's turn to honour her promise from the beginning of the play and teach Puck anew:

> HERMIA. I'm Hermia.
> PUCK. Hermia? Do you know me?
> HERMIA. Yes, I've known you since you were born.
> PUCK. When was I born?
> HERMIA. On midsummer's eve.
> PUCK. Where?
> HERMIA. On that rock over there. (01:34:30-54)

Puck's rock, which also doubles as a stage for the midsummer's eve yearly concert, becomes a place of convergence for both humans and fairies alike. The play ends with Puck and Hermia sitting atop his birthplace, and it is understood that they will go on to be together as they wished since the beginning. In the end, Oberon's punishment can be seen as a blessing since it gives Puck the opportunity to be with the person he loves but, of course, the loss of his immortality and his memories make this ending bittersweet. Unlike in Shakespeare's version, *PUCK* does not have a

clear and definite happy ending. Lionel and Helen are together, and we can assume that Puck and Hermia will become a couple eventually, but Daniel is conveniently left out of the equation and without a partner. Furthermore, seeing as there is no Theseus/Hippolyta equivalent in this play, there lacks a wedding ceremony in the background of the story, although Hermia and Daniel are briefly shown in wedding clothes before Puck's revelation.

Puck's outcome in the play is one based on transformation, much like Bobby before him. However, unlike Bobby who is half-human, half-animal for the entertainment of the fairies, Puck is made wholly human. Puck is a creature who whole-heartedly disliked and disparaged humans, yet he is punished by becoming one. In terms of mythology, this type of transformation is rare as human into non-human metamorphoses are much more common. Not only is Puck transformed into the thing he once hated the most, but he is also stripped of his memories again, leaving him 'born anew' for the last time. With this final rebirth, Puck is no longer a relic of the ancient world and is instead a twentieth-century human with no connection to the past. Despite Oberon's best efforts, time moves forward, and the traditions of the past are stamped out in favour of progress.

The cyclical nature of Puck's metaphorical deaths and rebirths throughout the play is reminiscent of the karmic wheel prevalent in Buddhist ideals. Though Puck does not physically die, the erasure of his memories at each stage of his life is a form of death of the different versions of himself. Hermia serves as a reminder early in the play that Puck has had many lives that he has evidently forgotten about. When she mentions Shakespeare's story about him, it reveals that Puck's past, that is not discussed in the play, is also riddled with cycles of remembering and forgetting, of 'dying' and being reborn.

Figure 22. – Puck as a human (left) and Hermia (right) © Takarazuka Company

Puck's transformation is not only limited to his fairy-human dichotomy. In fact, his personality changes completely over the course of his bodily transformation. In the beginning, Puck was a selfish fairy who did not understand the world around him. By the end of the play, after many years have passed since his awakening, and he experienced an extra year's worth of labour among the humans, Puck has matured and grown into someone who cares about more than just himself. Ryū Masaki does well at showcasing this shift: as the young fairy, she raises her voice higher to imitate that of a youngster, and as a human, she pitches her tone much lower to indicate that Puck is no longer a youthful sprite, but he has instead become a man. In his first state of being, Puck is unable to take care of others but this changes when he sings his last song in favour of protecting the forest and its inhabitants. In the end, *PUCK* is the perfect embodiment of

Bakhtinian themes and does not shy away from important social issues through its representation of the Carnival and the grotesque.

The fact that the whole play is centered on a single event, that of the annual midsummer concert, is indicative of the festival's importance in the narrative for both the fairies and the humans. Instead of focusing on the fairies' superiority, the play looks at the themes of loving without social boundaries and the communion between humans and nature. Hermia and Puck defy expectations time and time again, proving that their love for one another is not limited by their mortal status. Similarly, nature is not bound by the humans' whims, and ultimately triumphs through Daniel's defeat at the hands of Puck, an agent of nature. All of this is accomplished through the reoccurrence of the midsummer festival and, when the event is threatened, the characters band together to maintain its integrity. The relationship between *PUCK* and Japanese folklore is evident in the numerous allusions to Shintoism notwithstanding the fact that "… Japanese mythologies … are still deeply intertwined with the political authority of the modern nation-state" (Isomae, Araki 28). The blend of old traditions and new social realities in *PUCK* is what makes Shakespeare's play resonate with a contemporary, localised audience.

PUCK is a play of celebrations and commemoration, and its restaging in 2014 coincides with the 100th anniversary of the Takarazuka Company. It is therefore fitting that Shakespeare's most festive and joyous play should be used as a metaphor for the company's own celebrations. Ultimately, *MND*'s themes find a new life in this modernized version, yet still retain the celebratory feeling of the original story. Despite the happy conclusion to the festivities, the play "… include[s] an ironic awareness that the joys attained are necessarily costly, anxiety about the evanescence of the theatrical fantasy, and recognition that the world to which we must return is not pretty" (McDonald xxix). In fact, the festival atmosphere leads to a bleak outcome for the characters despite the apparent happy conclusion of the play. The musical's contemporary interpretation of *MND* plays on the idea of the broken illusion post-festival (and post-performance) at the end with an amnesiac, human Puck who must once again learn how to live in a foreign world.

PUCK makes use of many of the elements observed in other plays thus far, such as *Jūniya'*s *shōjo* appeal, and the *henshin* qualities afforded to many of Shakespeare's japanified characters and plays. Puck, like many of the male heroes in these plays, is once again androgenous in appearance and also youthful from start to finish despite the passage of time, which recalls Orsino's *bishōnen* appearance in *Jūniya*. The strict adherence to rituals and traditions recalls Tomigorō's behaviour in *Fuyu Monogatari*; however, what *PUCK* does differently is to re-westernize Shakespeare's play through the setting and the themes it explores. The frequent allusions to Western fairy tales[104] as well as the looming threat of social progress mingle with the inherent Japanese-ness of the characters' behaviour and the references to popular culture and folklore. While Bobby's transformation is grotesque, so is Puck's as it is a perversion of his nature as a being who belongs to another time and place. Daniel's capitalist mentality is out of place in a world where the god-like Oberon can control the weather and play with people's memories. Helen's hopes for herself are broken and ignored in favour of a conventional marriage and her undertaking of a housewife role. In the end, Puck and Hermia's shared desire to protect the forest reveals a need to maintain and respect the old ways—a nod to the feudal past of Japan and its dismissal in favour of a postwar world filled with broken utopian dreams.

[104] For the sake of brevity, I did not go into detail as to what these allusions are, but astute readers will surely recognize the references to *Peter Pan and Wendy* in Puck's inability to grow up, *The Little Mermaid* when Puck loses his voice, *The Beauty and the Beast* in Titania and Bobby's relationship, and finally *Sleeping Beauty* in some of Titania's more conceited lines. These references clearly contribute to the Western perspective of the play.

2. Say It Again (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*)

In the wake of Japan's defeat at the end of WWII, the American military exerted its influence over the island nation in terms not unlike those of its British colonisers before it. General MacArthur wished to "transplant American democracy and 'enlighten' the subjects of this alien nation" by reforming "an alien race of spiritual growth stunted by long tenure under the physical, mental and cultural strictures of feudal precepts" (Koikari 23). Furthermore, the American Occupation's goal other than democratizing Japan was to "… [liberate] Japanese women from the 'inferior' cultural tradition of the East and [provide] them with Western 'superior' and more 'democratic' political and educational guidance" (24). These ideas shaped Japanese society during the seven-year postwar American Occupation. However, the undoubtedly problematic approach to this 'liberation' was coloured by the fact that "… the U.S. occupation of Japan was an instance of imperialism imbued with power and domination; … [and] while the U.S.['s] attempt to liberate Japanese women brought benefit to some women, it was fundamentally facilitated and driven by the imperial power dynamics that transpired between the United States and Japan" (25). This power struggle between the defeated and the victor is apparent in the forced reform of Japan's social and political ways in the postwar age. As a matter of course, major social upheavals such as this affect culture and the arts and, seeing as how theatre is political in nature, these events transpire on the stage through performances and adaptations.

This history informs my final chapter, which looks at Takarazuka's musical *Say It Again*[105] based on Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In the previous chapters, the emphasis was placed on the intersection between Shakespeare and traditional Japanese theatre, especially Kabuki. Comparatively, Takarazuka's *Shakespeare Series* adaptation of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* undergoes a transformation and displacement from both England and Japan and takes place instead in 1950s New Orleans. Through this choice of setting, the play embodies Americanized Japanese values about women in a postwar context. My decision to analyse this performance from the point of view of modern theory is a reflection of Takarazuka's wish to transpose the

[105] *Say It Again* is the seventh play in the Bow Hall *Shakespeare Series*, directed by Masatsuka Haruhiko. It was performed in Takarazuka city, Hyogo, between 18 September and 3 October 1999.

narrative of *Two Gentlemen* to a completely foreign land, one that has no connection to Japan's theatre history. Instead, the play combines the *laissez-faire* attitude of the American south with Shakespeare's comedy to comment on the question of female personhood in Japanese society. Director Masatsuka Haruhiko wanted to use "Shakespeare's least performed play" and transform it into "something interesting for the Takarazuka stage" ("Say It Again" Program) by changing the roles and the setting of the play. He staged the adaptation in New Orleans, the "city with a European flair" (*Stage Album* 51) as it is the only American city that has an effect comparable to Verona because of its yearly festival. New Orleans and Verona are both places where the characters can converge and hide their true selves behind a social—and sometimes literal—mask. For the better part of the play, the characters in *Say It Again* continuously lie and cheat one another, but it is specifically at Mardi Gras that they reveal themselves for who they truly are. The Carnival in this context becomes a place where their inhibitions can be released and where the women in particular are given freedom of choice by disregarding the patriarchal constraints of a non-Carnival society.

The play's setting in the context of postwar prosperity echoes the real-world anxieties in America and Japan through the suffrage of women as a tool for political gain. *Say It Again*'s male protagonists roll into town with false identities right around Mardi Gras with the intent to use the city's friendliness to swindle their way through the social echelons. The characters' relaxed attitudes reflect that of the city's carnival-loving dwellers. Similarly, the women in the play also adhere to this way of life in how the city allows them to break away from social expectations in the form of their emancipation. As with the events in *PUCK*, the carnival atmosphere of New Orleans increases the sense of falsehood and trickery in *Say It Again*, and it encourages the upsetting of social hierarchies. *Say It Again* allows for these discussions to unfold by transforming Shakespeare's play about courtship and nobility into a story about dishonesty and socioeconomic woes.

Although *Two Gentlemen* is meant to take place in Italy, Takarazuka's production is reminiscent of another contemporaneous American production that William C. Carroll highlights when he writes:

> One of the most successful twentieth-century productions was that of Thacker in 1991, set in the 1930s of Noel Coward. This production began with approximately fifteen minutes of songs (from a big-band orchestra and blonde chanteuse) by George and Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin and Cole Porter, among others, to which couples in period evening wear danced. Once the play began, intervals between scenes were created in which the singer and orchestra would perform another song; the songs were cleverly chosen for their relevance to the themes of the play…. (89)

This format of alternating between the play and musical interludes is very familiar to Takarazuka audiences. What is more, the opening scene described in Thacker's production is reproduced in *Say It Again* where the four principal characters meet at a dance party. Not only are the characters introduced to one another within a festive environment, the carnival atmosphere of New Orleans also lends itself to the characters' silliness and mishaps throughout the play. *Say It Again* re-iterates the previously discussed themes of cross-dressing (TN), transformation/metamorphosis (TN, WT, MND), the motif of the Prodigal Son (TN, MND), redemption (WT), the Carnival (MND), and the re-established bonds of friendship (WT). Takarazuka's adaptation of *Two Gentlemen* revitalises the play by bringing in contemporary themes to the conventional marriage plot, but it also ignores important parts of the story, especially towards the end of the play. *Say It Again* presents young adults in the pursuit of their dreams—monetarily driven, but dreams nonetheless—like the characters in *PUCK*. The youth expressed in *Say It Again* is one of pigheadedness (Vince and Pierre) and independence from parents (Julie and Cheryl). Moreover, while *Two Gentlemen* contains the element of cross-dressing as a plot device, which translates into the effect of masquerade, *Say It Again* forgoes this mechanism in favour of a social masquerade by having the main characters hide their identities and true motives, as well as acting as scoundrels towards one another. Shakespeare puts forward ideas of friendship, courtship, and love with a critical eye in his play, and in *Say It Again*, the same ideas are further dismantled through their association with postwar America and the significant modification of the characters' social position from noblemen to thieves. The characters' ease at deceiving and abusing their relationships in *Say It Again* is directly informed by their reduced socioeconomic status in a

prosperous society. Furthermore, the adaptation comments on women's condition in a society that allows for more freedoms yet simultaneously restrains its citizens through patriarchal norms. *Say It Again* combines all the aforementioned themes developed in *Jūniya, Epiphany, Fuyu Monogatari,* and *PUCK* and firmly sets Shakespeare in a re-westernized world that relies on sociopolitical constraints to inform women's new positions in society.

2.1 Internalized and Externalized Masquerades

Joan Rivière's seminal paper entitled "Womanliness as a Masquerade," a precursor to Judith Butler's ideas on gender performativity, offers an interesting angle from which to consider the play's reliance on social masquerades. This psychoanalytical theory proposes that women wear a social mask to conform to norms and expectations and hide their inherent masculine traits (Rivière 1929). Rivière argues that "an analysis has shown that what appears as homosexual or heterosexual character traits, or sexual manifestations, is the end result of the interplay of conflicts and [n]ot necessarily evidence of a radical or fundamental tendency" (303), revealing that both masculinity and femininity are intrinsic parts of human psychology regardless of the biological sex of the individual. In terms of Shakespeare, this is an idea commonly addressed in the plays, especially the comedies, in which we see male and female characters exploring their inner opposite gender traits by externalizing, through cross-dressing, or internalizing, through thought processes translated into concrete acts. The psychoanalytical masquerade is further related to theatre in how characters present a side of themselves to fellow characters that we, as audience members, see as false. To extrapolate these ideas further, the actors who play these characters also present a front that the audience is complicit in. Catherine Belsey explains that,

> we are what we are, psychoanalysis maintains, in response to the gaze of other people who have us in their sights, though what we are also exceeds their expectations. Awake, we play our assorted parts before the audience of the world, however much in dreams we resist our own capture by these roles. But romance introduces another dimension in the notion of identity as performance. … Jacques Lacan treats seduction as a kind of masked theatre, or a shadow-play against a screen which intervenes between us and the demanding gaze. (60)

In Shakespeare's plays, we encounter these figures who do not conform or who hide their true selves behind social masks, like Hamlet, and physical disguises, such as Viola and Rosalind. These forms of masks become ways through which a person (or character) can deceive others for either negative motivations or for self-preservation. As Anthony Tatlow explains, "society creates or permits certain roles, and individuality consists in performing within the constraints, exploring the space determined by these roles" (221). The Lacanian gaze lends itself to the discussion in how the perceptions of self are influenced by how others perceive you, and how social norms dictate specific behaviours. However, Shakespeare's characters tend to circumvent these restrictions by displaying androgynous and flexible genders. Julia's disguise as a page boy, for example, shows how she is able to gain Proteus' trust and friendship as a fellow man—something that she could not accomplish as a woman. Indeed, "Julia shows her independence and resourcefulness by traveling in masculine garb and has a female confidante …. She also wins Sylvia's sympathy. While the men in this play betray their friends, the women are constant and true" (Dreher 117). Androgyny, in the case of *Two Gentlemen*, allows Julia to perform as the other gender, thereby altering the perception of others. In fact, "androgyny reaches widely and deeply, and impulses toward a recognition and realization of its range run throughout Shakespeare's work. … [both men and women try] to break out of the frustrating confines of what society has labeled appropriate behavior for a woman or for a man" (Kimbrough 18), which ties in with the idea of using masquerade as a mechanism to achieve this breakthrough through social barriers.

While plays such as *Twelfth Night* exemplify this idea, as well as the Japanese adaptations of the same works, *Say It Again* proposes a different type of masquerade, one that is socioeconomically motivated. In fact, the main foursome, Vince, Pierre, Julie, and Cheryl, all masquerade as other versions of themselves to hide their true nature. The first three hide the fact that they are professional swindlers, and the latter hides her social status by pretending to be a servant. Together, they masquerade as people different from who they are and build their relationships to one another based on this constructed façade.

2.2 Same-Sex Friendship

Many scholars regard The *Two Gentlemen of Verona* as being one of Shakespeare's first plays. As such, it tends to be dismissed as an underdeveloped, flat play, especially when compared to the later iconic works such as *Hamlet*. However, *Two Gentlemen*'s status as an early play means that it is still entrenched in medieval courtly love traditions, which makes it unusual in its portrayal of friendship as a bond that rivals—and even surpasses—love. William Carroll writes to this effect that,

> … homosocial bonds prove stronger than male-female desire. … The nature of such male-male friendship is both platonic and to some extent erotic, and its power is sufficient to cause a man to renounce his own life to save his friend …, to renounce his wife or fiancée in preference to the bond with another man, or even, in perhaps its most extreme form, to offer his female beloved to his friend. (12)

This idea of the male-male bond is based on early modern concepts of friendship and are explored in Shakespeare's play. Carroll details how this tradition, carried over from the Middle Ages, originated with the Greek and Roman thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, who saw the male-male bond as the highest form of friendship (Carroll 2004). Therefore, with such strong statements about this type of relationship, "the idealization of the power and transcendent virtue of male-male friendship lies at the heart of the male friendship tradition as Shakespeare explores it in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*" (11). What is of particular interest here, however, is the apparent disdain for or inability to see female friendship as the same kind of elevated relationship as the male-male bond, as "for almost all (male) writers, friendship is a possibility among men only, not among women; 'the ordinary sufficiency of women', Montaigne asserts, 'cannot answer this conference and communication, the nurse of this sacred bond" (qtd. in Carroll 8). Thus, the focus of both Shakespeare's play and Takarazuka's adaptation is the male-male relationship and how it affects the women on the periphery of the "sacred bond." In both the source text and the adaptation, women are given different social roles that often challenge the male-male bond and

the credibility of this allegedly indissoluble bond; however, Shakespeare's women, especially Sylvia, are equally victims of the male-male bond. Comparatively, Takarazuka gives the female characters a new form of agency that is informed by the social realities of America in the 1950s.

Even though America boasted a more progressive approach to women's rights, it also reinforced the male-dominant rhetoric by framing these social gains within a patriarchal mindset. When this 'progressive' society was exported to Japan during the Occupation, America placed Japan in opposition to itself by painting the island nation as backwards in terms of social advancements. Koikari writes to this effect that:

> Since the outset of the occupation, Japanese women were constructed as victims of the "feudalistic" tradition and male domination in contrast to more liberated American women who enjoyed greater gender equality. In the *Civil Affairs Handbook, Japan*, the guidebook for the occupiers, as well as other official documentation and occupiers' memoirs, one can see that the predominant image of Japanese women was either that of *geisha*/prostitute or wife/mother who had been silently suffering under the centuries-old patriarchal social and cultural system. (28)

While these representations of women are indeed featured in some of Takarazuka's other Shakespearean adaptations as detailed in Part I of this dissertation, *Say It Again* takes American feminism of this period as inspiration to offer a different kind of female character. *Two Gentlemen*'s women are limited by the patriarchal constraints of their world, and while Shakespeare points to this inequality through his male characters, *Say It Again* pushes the discussion further by emancipating its female characters through new social realities. Takarazuka's Julie and Cheryl represent an American form of agency that differs from that of the women in *Jūniya*, *Epiphany*, and *Fuyu Monogatari* and that strays from the Meiji "Good Wives, Wise Mothers" motto. As a result, the male-male friendship is lessened and the focus shifts to the women and their changed roles in a postwar world.

In *Two Gentlemen*, Proteus and Valentine's version of the male-male friendship of the ancient Greeks and Romans is discussed in terms not unwholly dissimilar to romantic love. In act 1, scene

1, the pair converse and address one another as “my loving Proteus” and “Sweet Valentine” (1; 11). When Valentine announces that he is leaving for Milan, Proteus expresses his sadness at his friend’s departure when he asks him to “think on thy Proteus, when thou haply seest / Some rare noteworthy object in thy travel. /Wish me partaker in thy happiness” (I.i.12-14). From the beginning of the play, Shakespeare immediately highlights their close relationship, which is important for the finale of the play when Valentine is faced with the choice of forgiving his friend or not. That being said, “all these same-sex friendships are changed by romantic desire and ultimately marriage. Yet despite the use of similar language to describe both male and female same-sex friendship … none of … [Shakespeare’s] plays really derive from the Ciceronian friendship tradition of idealization, which took men as its exemplars” (Carroll 10). In this sense, the men in *Two Gentlemen* are anything but ideal in the way that Damon and Pythias or Achilles and Patroclus are perfect examples of what the ancient thinkers perceived as the true representations of the male-male bond (Carroll 2004). As a result, “… Shakespeare never unambiguously endorses the Ciceronian ideal. Instead, his writing constantly holds it up to critical examination in a way that might well be called skeptical but should perhaps more accurately be called suspicious” (Cox 2). Yet, Valentine displays his love and support for his friend on a number of occasions, such as when he boasts Proteus to the Duke of Milan:

> I know him as myself, for from our infancy,
> We have conversed and spent our hours together;
> And though myself have been an idle truant,
> Omitting the sweet benefit of time
> To clothe mine age with angel-like perfection,
> Yet hath Sir Proteus—for that’s his name—
> Made use and fair advantage of his days;
> His years but young, but his experience old;
> His head unmellowed, but his judgement ripe;
> And in a word—for far behind his worth
> Comes all the praises that I now bestow—
> He is complete in feature and in mind
> With all good grace to grace a gentleman. (II.iv.60-72)

Valentine elevates Proteus by diminishing himself, showing how his friend is far superior to him and to any other gentleman. It is clear that, at least on Valentine's behalf, male friendship supplants that of romantic love. Valentine "view[s] love for a woman as competing with love of a male friend" (Rose xxvii), and Proteus "makes clear that he shares his friend's negative view of heterosexual love as transient, frivolous, idle, and depleting" (xxvi). Valentine proves that he believes in these ideals when he chooses Proteus at the end of the play. In fact, "the controversial ending of *Two Gentlemen* presses the social demands of male friendship to their absurd limits, deliberately unsettling the audience by providing [a] form of closure but also leaving unresolved disturbing questions about desire, friendship and identity" (Carroll 3). This simultaneously reinforces and dismantles the importance and seriousness of the male-male bond as we are shown that Valentine's reaction to his friend's attempted rape of the woman he loves is emotionally unrealistic.

In *Say It Again*, the male friendship is not as prominent as in Shakespeare's play, and their love for one another is twisted by their monetary desires. Vince seems to be in competition with his friend, which is not a marker for a good relationship. In *Two Gentlemen*, the rivalry is of love for Sylvia, but in *Say It Again*, it is a professional rivalry that dominates the unfolding of the male-male relationship. This is further compounded by the fact that Vince is also jealous of Pierre and more concerned with the scheme at hand than his friend's feelings or well-being. We also see in this adaptation how the men and women form friendship bonds first before romantic ones. Cheryl's father, James, worries when he hears about his daughter being seen in town with Pierre, declaring, "who ever heard of men and women being friends?" (*Say It Again* 00:30:00-40). The Greeks and Romans would have approved of James' ideas, as "it would be slightly more accurate to note that writers from Cicero onward had considered whether true friendship could exist between male and female, and whether romantic love could develop into the idealized form of friendship; the answers were invariably negative" (Carroll 31). Yet, *Say It Again* explores this idea as Pierre and Cheryl are friends before anything else, which is also why Pierre refuses to take advantage of her, much to Vince's dismay.

Mistaken Identities

Takarazuka's *Say It Again* makes use of the mistaken identity trick to further confuse the characters in the story. Having just arrived in New Orleans, Vince Proteus (Asami Hikaru) and Pierre Valentine (Naruse Kōki) go to a party where they see Julie Valentine (Konno Mahiru), looking miserable with a bad dance partner. Pierre cuts in and saves her from further boredom, while Vince chastises him for getting involved. At this point, Vince steps in and introduces himself to Julie as Valentine, thereby stealing his friend's name and appropriating it for his own scheme. Pierre is not happy with the fact that Vince is passing himself off as him, but he nonetheless lets it happen and plays along. Not long after, Cheryl Reed (Kisaki Miri) bumps into Pierre, spilling wine on his coat, and forcing him to leave Julie with Vince.

Such events do not take place in *Two Gentlemen*. However, the characters of Proteus and Valentine in Shakespeare's play are likened on a split-soul level, which makes them seem as "in essence one man split into two parallel but distinct figures" (Carroll 24). Takarazuka's *Say It Again* utilises this concept with the name swap, indicating that the two men are as one. To further complicate things, Julie is also (legitimately) surnamed Valentine, which heightens the complex interrelationship between the three. By sharing a name, the three form a group that Cheryl cannot join; this group is both socioeconomically different than Cheryl and is also composed of three people of the same dubious profession. This exclusion in a way both isolates and protects Cheryl, the most vulnerable character out of the four. Cheryl is the only one who has no control over her life: Her father, a politician, wishes for her to marry someone of his choosing, and she is expected to be an obedient, well-bred lady. By comparison, Julie is free to do as she pleases, as are the men, too.

Julie is initially interested in Vince because she thinks his last name is like hers, which creates a point of commonality. Thus, their relationship starts based on a lie that will affect the narrative later on when other characters mistake Vince and Pierre for one another. Furthermore, Vince and Pierre are both marriage swindlers who make a living by conning rich single ladies into matrimony, and then leaving with their money before the paperwork can be finalised. Both men have their sights set on Julie as she seems to be an affluent young woman, and despite Pierre's protest that

it is his turn to play the romantic part, Vince steals Julie away from him. Despite this, Pierre does not resent his friend; on the contrary, he continues to support him, and their swindling plot moves forward regardless of who does the wooing, and who does the stealing. This dynamic changes when Cheryl inserts herself into Pierre's life.

2.3 Social Hierarchy

Through its choice of setting, *Say It Again* embodies the qualities proper to postwar America as a period "… announcing that good times had returned ... after wartime deprivations. It designates … an era of prosperity, family, and fun…" (Caputi 3). Furthermore, this period of American (and world) history speaks to how "America saw itself as the New Garden of Eden located outside of chronological time, a nation of pioneers on a spiritual journey unlike that traveled by Europe" (6). As per Koikari's argument (2002), Japanese society under American Occupation directly felt the effects of this saviour attitude. Despite the idealisation of this period, however, *Say It Again* dismantles the American Dream of "happy families and safe neighborhoods … [and] simple American virtues" (Caputi 6) by presenting socially deviant characters who challenged the aforementioned concepts.

Cheryl, who is the daughter of a politician, works as a waitress at the hotel where Vince and Pierre first arrive. Because of her job, she is often dismissed for being perceived as of a lower class than the guests. Even after she has been fired, and is seen with Pierre at a dance hall, Cheryl displays discomfort when faced with the upper-class Julie and tries to escape from the situation. Pierre reminds her that she "isn't a waitress anymore" but rather his "[dance] partner," as though her status is more elevated now that she is by his side. The implication is that her worth is directly related to whomever shows interest in her: If Pierre accepts her as his dance partner, then she is 'better than' the lowly servant she used to be. Naturally, this is all notwithstanding her true status as a middle to upper class lady, but the other characters' assumptions of her are entirely based on her perceived lower status.

The characters' socioeconomic status is not a concern in *Two Gentlemen*, yet it is important in *Say It Again* as the premise of the play is how Vince and Pierre are swindlers who are experts at

parting women from their money. With this in mind, Cheryl is not a good 'target' for their mission, which explains why Pierre is indifferent to her for the first half of the play. Cheryl offers to take him on a tour of the city as an apology for dirtying his suit at the hotel, but Pierre is not interested in wasting his time with, what he thinks is, a poor woman. On the topic of *Two Gentlemen*, Elizabeth Rivlin argues that the play "includes one of William Shakespeare's most intensive considerations of servant characters and their relationships with masters. Thirteen of the twenty scenes in the First Folio *Two Gentlemen* feature speaking parts for servant characters, not including the scenes in which Julia appears disguised as a male page" (105). The servant/master relationship is compounded by the nature of Julia's disguise, thereby blurring the lines between the different types of bonds explored in the play. In *Say It Again*, however, Julie's disguise is not that of a servant, but rather her identity as a rich woman. In fact, Julie is also a swindler, which changes the dynamics in the play between herself and Vince. Instead of having Vince swindle her, we have a reversal of expectations when she attempts to scam him out of half a million dollars.

Say It Again explores these relationships from a gendered and socioeconomic perspective that is entrenched in the postwar mentality. This substantive attention to the master/servant bond in this early play indicates how the themes of servitude, friendship, and romantic love are not only intertwined but also comparable in their strength and effect. This is also amplified by the uneasy US-Japan relationship in the background of *Say It Again*, as postwar women's condition is destabilized by the "… power hierarchy that [exist] between the victor/occupier and the defeated/occupied" of the two nations (Koikari 25). The fact that "extremely racist, sexist, and heterosexists prejudices were rampant in 1950s America, and the safety and innocence that many knew was paid for by the segregation and discrimination imposed on others" (Caputi 10) juxtaposes the Eden-like portrait of postwar America to the ugly realities beneath. Essentially, one can liken the use of the American Dream as a large-scale social mask used at home and abroad to reinforce the image of political supremacy.

To further illustrate this point, the Takarazuka production fully embraces these connections by presenting Pierre's love interest as first his servant. In *Two Gentlemen*, "Shakespeare maps servant/master relations onto bonds of romantic love and friendship, so that far from detracting

from the play's conceptual unity, service underwrites its governing interest in how interpersonal relationships shape the individual subject" (Rivlin 105). In the context of *Say It Again*, in which the figures of Speed and Launce are absent, this servant/master relationship is explored through Pierre and Cheryl's relationship instead. The servant/master relationship between the two eventually develops into a romantic relationship, [106] but it is still coloured by the allure of potential monetary gain that attracts Pierre (and Vince) to New Orleans. Cheryl faces discrimination in her society, but she finds herself 'saved' by the benevolent Pierre. However, Pierre is disingenuous, and his decision to help Cheryl is two sided, split between generosity and avarice.

Compared to Shakespeare's Renaissance Verona, *Say It Again*'s modern setting in the American south modifies the role of servant/master relationships in the narrative. Class disparity based on economic considerations has a different meaning in the 1950s than in the late 1500s; Cheryl chooses to work at the hotel out of her free will and not because she has to. She even encourages Julie to try because "[working] is fun" (00:58:05). Julie, who is a well-to-do lady, has never worked a day in her life, but that is an expected situation for a woman of her standing in both time periods. Cheryl's choice to work as opposed to Julie's situation further resonates with Japanese ideas from the late Meiji era and into the postwar age. In fact,

> Westernisation at this time came to mean almost the same as modernisation in Japan, and women became a powerful symbol of modernity and of the shake-up of conventions and taboos; they 'emerged' to liberate society from the pre-existing norms regarding human rights, family, love, marriage and maternal morality which were challenged by women obtaining a job and professional career. (Yamanashi 330)

[106] In *Shakespeare, Love and Service* (2008), David Schalkwyk discusses how master/servant relationships are linked to or converted into romantic bonds in Shakespeare's plays. He writes that "… the concepts complement each other in the weight that they give to what, with due care, we might call the public and the private, or the personal and the structural. Whereas love pulls us in the direction of individualized affect, service reminds us of the historical and social networks in which affect is shaped and has to find expression" (7).

However, contrary to MacArthur's rhetoric at the time that the US had brought democracy and liberation to Japan, women's social roles were already redefined in the pre-WWII context "when social democracy inspired Japanese women to break down conservative ideas about womanhood and become professional working women" (330). Cheryl therefore represents a modern woman willing (and encouraged) to work for her own benefit in a country that peddles the availability of the American Dream to all through hard work and dedication.

2.4 Women as Currency

The American-backed social changes in Japan were of a dual nature with regard to women; on the one hand, they were granted more rights and freedoms, but on the other, they were expected to uphold patriarchal norms. In fact, "… when the suggestion to grant suffrage to women was discussed in the Diet in 1945, to many members the idea of women in politics must have seemed irreconcilable with women's accepted roles as they had been defined since the Meiji era" (Klemperer-Markham, Goldstein-Gidoni 8). In this way, the granting of women's rights came at the price of strengthening the nation from within the home: "The new 'democratic' subjects the American occupiers were creating in Japanese women were given specific roles. MacArthur expressed his expectations that enfranchisement would allow Japanese women to exert 'the noble influence of womanhood and the home, which [had] done so much to further American stability and progress'" (Koikari 29). In this way, Japanese women were used to tout the benefits of postwar democratization while also mirroring American ideals of work/life balance. While *Say It Again* does not portray women politicians, its play on the social masquerade, and the duality of the characters creates a similar sense of unease vis-à-vis women's social roles as Julie and Cheryl take on these qualities of postwar women.

When Vince approaches Pierre with Julie's proposal, Pierre is rightfully worried that his friend is being deceived and conned by this woman. However, Vince believes he has the upper hand because "she's a rich girl, and she's in love with [him]" (II, 00:13:07-10), as if this somehow justifies her behaviour. Vince is blind to Julie's scheming and thinks that she is honest on the basis of their mutual affection, yet he asks Pierre the impossible in trying to find 500 000$ to fund the venture.

The two friends fight not over a woman, but rather over a sum of money, and Vince worsens the situation when he involves Cheryl:

> PIERRE. No matter what you say, it's pointless.
> VINCE. Why not? We're discussing!
> PIERRE. Discussing what? I don't have any money.
> VINCE. You just have to make some!
> PIERRE. How?
> VINCE. There's that girl, no? The one you've been going out with everyday.
> …
> PIERRE. Shut up, you're being so loud. I told you, that girl doesn't have that kind of money. (II, 00:13:19-46)

Vince has no qualms about using Cheryl for his own gain, but Pierre does not want to hurt someone who has been kind to him so, even though he knows at this point that she is in fact rich, he chooses to lie to his friend to protect his love interest. Their argument escalates to the point that Pierre decides to break off their business partnership and, in true Takarazuka style, the dramatic 'break up' is followed by a singing number in which Vince expresses his heartbreak. He sings: "crying, repeating words / tonight are lonely Blues. / If you immerse yourself in it, / your heart will rust over" (II, 00:17:40-18:07) in reference to the apparent loss of his friendship with Pierre. This section of the play recalls the opening scene of *Two Gentlemen* in how Proteus is desperate to keep Valentine by his side despite his love for Julia. This scene is the closest we get to portraying a strong male-male bond in *Say It Again*. Until this point, and hereafter, the focus is on the devious Julie and the innocent Cheryl. As with *Jūniya*'s naïve Viola and mature Olivia, the two women in *Say It Again* are also placed in opposition, but this time their male counterparts are used to further deepen the contrast.

Despite Vince's heartbreak, he goes to Cheryl's father, James, to not only try to swindle him out of the money he needs for Julie's proposition, but also to get back at his friend for choosing someone else over him and their partnership. Vince dramatically tells James that "there's no way [he] can stay silent and let Valentine trample all over [Cheryl]. [He] will not allow it" (II, 00:26:07-

26:18).[107] Vince devises a plan to have Pierre kidnapped, thus 'helping' James in separating his daughter from his friend and, at the same time, obtaining a large ransom from Cheryl to 'rescue' Pierre. Vince continues to use Cheryl as a means to obtain money to then give it to Julie, whom he thinks is an honest woman. Vince approaches Cheryl with the news of Pierre's kidnapping:

> VINCE. If we give them the money, they'll return Pierre safe and sound.
> CHERYL. Then that's what we should do!
> VINCE. Impossible! Who has 500 000$ to give? If I could save him, I would, but it's not possible. In any case, I thought I should tell you.
> (…)
> CHERYL. I have a favour to ask. Go meet with my father and get the money from him. (II, 00:32:09-50).

With this suggestion, Cheryl seals her own fate by accidentally falling for Vince's trick. Samuel Asa Small writes that "of the two gentlemen, Proteus is, throughout the play, false in both love and friendship" (768), and we see this replicated on stage with Vince's behaviour towards Cheryl and Pierre. Vince is disingenuous in all of his relationships, even with Julie, but she being also false makes them in fact the perfect couple in the play. This reminds us once again of the beginning of *Two Gentlemen* in which Proteus says of himself "I leave myself, my friends, and all for love" (I.i.65). Vince abandons not only his friend but also himself by resorting to despicable forms of trickery such as orchestrating Pierre's kidnapping.

Marriages and Transactions

During the American Occupation, "[t]he emphasis on helplessness and lack of agency in Japanese women fed into the occupiers' missionary zeal, resulting in a widespread conviction that the Americans had a mission to 'save' Japanese women" (Koikari 28-29). However, despite these ideas of salvation-disguised-as-emancipation, MacArthur held contradictory beliefs about

[107] There is an interesting play on words here with Vince's last sentence. In Japanese, he says: "*zettai ni yurusenai,*" which is a common expression to denote both disapproval and unforgiveness. In the context of the 'breakup' between him and Pierre, the latter meaning twists Vince's speech from being about Cheryl to referring to his failed friendship with Pierre.

women, and "communicated that women should make contributions to postwar Japan 'without sacrifice of the important position of women in the home,' and he strongly advised these women politicians against forming a 'women's block' vis-a-vis Japanese men in the Diet" (29). In this way, women were given new social rights while simultaneously reinforcing the patriarchal values that MacArthur—and the United States—allegedly disagreed with. In fact, both disagreed with the pre-war Japanese patriarchy, but the postwar American one was more than satisfactory by comparison.

Despite Cheryl's hard-won independence in *Say It Again*, she pleads for her father to pay the ransom in exchange for her obedience. Cheryl promises to marry Howard, her fiancé, so long as Pierre is rescued from the kidnappers. Her father agrees to the arrangement as Vince looks on, devoid of any feeling or reaction. To save Pierre, a man who does not even love her at this point, she chooses to sacrifice her future happiness by marrying her father's choice for a husband. As with Sylvia in *Two Gentlemen*, Cheryl is the only genuine and selfless character in *Say It Again*; she is the only one who does not attempt to manipulate, lie to, or swindle other people in her life. Cheryl represents a generation of women who were more often than not forced to follow expected norms despite their new emancipated status. Cheryl may be a modern working woman, but her father would see her married to someone who benefits his position as head of the household and politician despite the American and, by extension, Japanese women's suffrage.

After obtaining the money from James, Vince heads out to meet with Julie, who he bumps into coincidentally during a Mardi Gras celebration in the streets. All the important players turn up at this location: Howard and his girlfriend Anne, Cheryl, and most importantly, Pierre, who has escaped from his kidnappers and is ready to confront his old friend. Pierre wastes no time in telling everyone present just how much of a scoundrel Vince truly is: "It was all his plan! You were all fooled by his careless lies. He is a swindler who will happily betray anyone for the sake of money. That's the kind of man he is" (II, 00:55:45-56:05). Pierre further distinguishes himself from Vince by admitting "I'm also a swindler, but I do not betray my friends" (II, 00:56:21-28). This distinction is important because it sets Pierre as a better friend and as being morally superior to Vince. Even though Vince apologizes and is thereby redeemed, Pierre is ultimately the winner in

this situation since he can claim to have never betrayed those who are close to him. The play reaches a resolution of conflict with the pairings Vince/Julie and Pierre/Cheryl forming successfully without any resentment in between the different parties. However, despite these couplings, the true resolution lies in Vince and Pierre's forgiveness for one another and their re-established friendship. The four friends depart together after giving the money back to James, indicating that they choose friendship and love over their professional swindling.

Figure 23. – Left to right: Julie, Vince, Pierre, and Cheryl © Takarazuka Company

The act of forgiveness in *Say It Again* is comparably less impactful than in *Two Gentlemen.* Sylvia chastises Proteus for being "counterfeit to [his] true friend" (V.iv.53), and after Proteus' attempted rape of Sylvia, Valentine steps in to further admonish his disregard for friendship:

> Thou common friend, that's without faith or love,
> For such is a friend now. Treacherous man,
> Thou has beguiled my hopes. Nought but mine eye
> Could have persuaded me. Now I dare say

I have one friend alive; thou wouldst disprove me.
Who should be trusted, when one's right hand
Is perjured to the bosom? Proteus,
I am sorry I must never trust thee more,
But count the world a stranger for thy sake.
The private wound is deepest. O time most accurst,
'Mongst all foes that a friend should be the worst! (V.iv.62-72)

It is clear from Valentine's language that he is most distressed by his friend's betrayal of their friendship, and the lengthy speech does not mention his anguish at finding his beloved Sylvia in harm's way. Valentine's words are focused on the broken bond and the pain he feels at having lost his "right hand" who has wounded him the "deepest." However, despite his indignation in this speech, a few lines later he readily forgives Proteus and "receives [him as] honest" (V.iv.78) and even goes as far as to offer Silvia to him so "that [his] love may appear plain and free" (V.iv.82). Like Vince "who does not betray his friends," Valentine is painted as the more magnanimous of the two men. Yet, Proteus' hasty repentance is hard to believe as only a few lines earlier he exclaimed "In love who respects friend?" (V.iv.54). Conveniently, Shakespeare does not give us Silvia's reply to Valentine's ridiculous suggestion. Instead, the narrative shifts to Julia's revelation and Thurio, Valentine, and the duke's back-and-forth as to who owns Sylvia.

By comparison, *Say It Again*'s decision to forgo the attempted rape scene allows for a smoother process of revelation and forgiveness to take place. In other stagings of the play, the rape scene is used to show Proteus' villainy that contrasts so greatly with Valentine's unwavering friendship. In fact, "… the theatrical history of the attempted rape, by contrast, reveals a growing effort to maximize it, from its inclusion even in softened form in the earliest adaptations, to increasingly violent modern stagings and even the representation of an actual rape. Moreover, the attempted rape is, along with Lance and Crab in 4.4., the most frequently depicted scene in the play" (Carroll 99). However, Takarazuka's version of *Two Gentlemen* ignores this tradition and eliminates this scene that would mark Vince as an unredeemable character. For it to be a true 'happy ending,' Vince's dubious morals must be directed only at Pierre since a man-to-man affront is more easily

forgivable than an irreparable violence committed against Cheryl. Takarazuka circumvents this difficult topic in favour of an easy reconciliation between the two friends, which is a choice that arguably shies away from Shakespeare's representation of the ridiculousness of blind friendship.

Pierre is the first of the two friends to extend an apology even though Vince is the one who has continuously betrayed him. Regardless, Pierre is willing to forgive Vince for the kidnapping and for attempting to use Cheryl for his own benefit. *Say It Again* changes the ending of the play considerably, yet it still relates to the source text in how

> the structural plan of *Two Gentlemen*, therefore, brings out clearly, in a contrasting light, the two main ideas. The strong framework of friendship, supported by Valentine, encloses the fancy-bred love experiences of Proteus. This contrast displays Valentine's friendship on a spiritual plane far superior to Proteus' earthly love. But the more earthly the love story is, the more romantic and conventional it naturally becomes. (Small 774)

Pierre, like Valentine, shows his moral superiority by valorising his friendship with Vince even though the latter has demonstrated his inability to be faithful both in love and in friendship. In *Two Gentlemen*, "Proteus has, for the moment, cut a noble figure in his speech of repentance. But Valentine can rise above him again by an even greater display of nobility, a towering act of self-sacrifice, of renunciation in unforgettable words" (Stephenson 167). However, contrary to Valentine in *Two Gentlemen*, Pierre does not offer Cheryl to Vince in a strange reconciliatory act. Instead, he accepts Cheryl's love declaration for him and responds in kind. According to Carroll, "the offer of the woman from one male friend to another would therefore be the highest expression of friendship, from one point of view, a low point of psycho-sexual regression from another, or, from still another viewpoint, a fantastic instance of patriarchal culture's 'traffic in women' (Gayle Rubin's term)" (12). Pierre's actions instead are much more believable than what Shakespeare suggested in his play; Pierre does not offer Cheryl because he recognizes 1) his own feelings that precede over Vince's, and 2) that Cheryl is not his to give. She is of course her own person, and her final decision to defy her father and to ignore Pierre's less-than-gentlemanly past

shows her independence that, until now, had been camouflaged or restrained by other people's actions.

The disguise motif is also eliminated from *Say It Again*, which is an unusual staging choice since Takarazuka is more than used to employing cross-dressing characters on stage.[108] This would seem like a missed opportunity to discuss gender fluidity in *Say It Again* since *Two Gentlemen* clearly did with Julia's disguise as a pageboy. In fact, Shakespeare's

> … play does not shy away from gender complications. The audience is left visually at the end with a semiotic asymmetry: three men and one woman, identified as two couples, walk toward 'one mutual happiness'. In *Two Gentlemen* Shakespeare has begun to explore, with some considerable sophistication, the dramatic possibilities raised by the material reality of the boy actor: the boundaries of gender identity, a metadramatic self-consciousness about his own craft and the erotic frisson of transvestite wooing. (Carroll 54)

Say It Again is kept from this exploration by eliminating the cross-dressing aspect of the play and maintaining an easy heteronormative ending in line with the play's values about love and friendship. By sidestepping Shakespeare's "improbabilities" (Stephenson 168), *Say It Again* opts for a low-conflict environment, despite the kidnapping plot that, in essence, was used as a comedic device more so than a serious and traumatic event for Pierre.

Despite these cuts, *Say It Again's* primary concern is, as in *Two Gentlemen*, friendship. The love rivalry is replaced by a professional competitiveness between Vince and Pierre, and Julie's status as a conwoman modifies the relationships in the play and addresses the imbalance of power since she controls Vince through the allure of monetary gain. Cheryl's agency is re-established through her decision to defy the men in her life. Finally, by foregoing the attempted rape, Vince becomes a redeemable character who can be forgiven by both the people in his life and the audience who silently witnesses his downfall and subsequent redemption.

[108] Such as is the case for the *Twelfth Night* adaptations discussed in Part I, chapters 1 and 2.

The tension between Japan's past concepts of women's social position and the postwar American point of view is placed in contrast through Takarazuka's adaptations examined thus far. This final play in the dissertation breaks from the carefully crafted conventions and influences examined in Part I, and also goes further than *PUCK* by fully embracing a Western perspective on questions of womanhood. Like with Shakespeare's plays, all the adaptations examined here have a happy ending when taken face value, but they also reveal deep anxieties informed by historical, social, and cultural realities in Japan.

The American Occupation in postwar Japan affected many social spheres, but women were particularly touched by these changes. Moreover, "[t]he insistence on the United States' granting of constitutional rights to Japanese women obscures the occupation as a space of unfreedom, a place of nonrights, and thus masks the paradox of its simultaneous violence and benevolence" (Yoneyama 899). While women were enfranchised in this new society, they also continued to be restrained by the prevailing patriarchal ideas at the time as imposed by the American system. In this context, Shakespeare's play is appropriated and transformed to embody these social changes. Cheryl's treatment in *Say it Again* is not wholly unlike Sylvia's, but her double status as an emancipated woman yet still expected to answer to social expectations sets her firmly in the postwar mindset. Similarly, the economic situations of Pierre, Vince, and Julie reveal the underside of this new society and showcase how the American Dream is broken from the very start. In this way, Japanese Shakespeare is re-Westernized to accommodate postwar US-Japan discussions about politics, socioeconomic perspectives, and, most of all, women.

Conclusion

Shakespearean adaptations in Japan have changed significantly since Tsubouchi's first Kabuki-style reinterpretations. With the postwar political changes and the influences of popular culture in every medium, Japan's adaptations and performances of Shakespeare are imbued with a strong national identity through the use of the playwright's 'universal' plots. Takarazuka's adaptations are perfect examples of this japanized Shakespeare and the ways in which his stories can be appropriated into a different culture. Takarazuka's interpretations of Shakespeare encompass both Japanese cultural aesthetics and Shakespearean traditions, and the frequent references and allusions throughout this dissertation to other forms of Shakespeare in East Asia attest to the relevance of critically examining Shakespeare in contexts outside of the anglophone sphere. From Japan's first translations and performances of Shakespeare were born other East Asian Shakespeares and, as Alexa Alice Joubin writes in *Shakespeare and East Asia*, "Japanese translations of western classics were retranslated into Chinese and other languages in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as part of related but ultimately distinct pursuits of modernization in several East Asian countries" (27). Shakespeare influenced Japan in its arts, and, in turn, Japan influenced its neighboring countries during its colonization period, exporting their version of Shakespeare to other nations and creating a domino effect of adaptations and performances of Asian Shakespeare. Although I focused specifically on the phenomenon of Japanese Shakespeare, further work that places such a phenomenon in critical dialogue with the larger Asian Shakespeare diaspora is needed.

When considering Shakespeare's influence and popularity in Asia, Joubin asserts that "performing Shakespeare in Asian styles has constituted an act of defamiliarization for audiences at home and abroad. By the late twentieth century, Shakespeare had become one of the most frequently performed playwrights in East Asia" (2). While this phenomenon is perhaps not surprising seeing as how Shakespeare is the most performed playwright globally, his influence in East Asia is particularly notable due to this deep defamiliarization that Joubin refers to. Stanley Wells believes that Shakespeare's global renown is because of his profound understanding of humanity ("How did Shakespeare get so popular?"), which is something that is reflected in Japanese adaptations.

In the hands of Japanese filmmakers, like Kurosawa Akira, and of theatre directors, like Ninagawa Yukio and Deguchi Norio, Shakespeare's ideas about human frailty and strength are enhanced through the use of traditional forms of storytelling. What Kurosawa, Ninagawa, and many more accomplish with Shakespeare is the successful combination of "… select cultural elements drawn from disparate genres … as common denominators and bonding agents between different periods and cultural locations" (Joubin 5). While many theatre companies in Japan accomplish this, my focus on the Takarazuka Revue's adaptations and performances was to examine the implications of having an all-female cast represent Shakespeare's japanified characters while also considering sociohistorical realities regarding women's place on the stage. The resemblance between early modern England's theatre practices and those of early modern Japan is uncanny; both resorted to banning women for an extended period of time and replacing them with female impersonators, a phenomenon that is still culturally significant in Japan to this day. Takarazuka's post-Meiji creation coincides with a tide of changing attitudes regarding theatre, women, and popular culture. A little over a decade after their inception, Takarazuka produced its first Shakespearean play, *Hamlet*, which then sparked a 100-year long tradition of staging Shakespeare through a cultural lens that is sensitive to its historical past. Takarazuka accomplishes in today's modern society what the Kabuki actors did during the Edo period: To capture the imagination and question gender and sexuality through the use of Shakespeare's narratives.

Influences of Popular Culture

Takarazuka's status as a *shōjo* company resonates with the cultural expectations of the subgenre of the same name that focuses on women as both the primary readers and the focus of these types of narratives. Much like Shakespeare, the Revue's influence stretches beyond the stage as it inspires other forms of media, too. Takarazuka's popularity has, for example, transformed it into a popular manga and anime series called *Kageki Shōjo!!* (歌劇少女) that follows the journey of new students at the music academy, from ordinary young girls to famous stage actresses. In the manga, the protagonist attends a performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, which sparks her desire to become a Takarazuka actress, specifically an *otokoyaku*. The link between Shakespeare and Takarazuka is exemplified in the pages of the manga where the main character witnesses the

clash of these two worlds on stage. In this way, Shakespeare—in this case, through Takarazuka—continues to inspire new adaptations in different mediums.

Figure 24. – Romeo and Juliet in the manga *Kageki Shōjo!!* © Kumiko Saiki

Takarazuka's popularity in and out of Japan is also due to its wide variety of productions such as historical plays, musicals, and Western theatre. *Jūniya*'s particularity is that it combines the *shōjo* aesthetics with the politics of the theatre, all the while maintaining its Shakespearean essence in the plot and dialogue. *Jūniya* is not overtly Japanese in the same way that *Epiphany* and *Fuyu Monogatari* are, but its subtlety encompasses an entire subgenre of popular culture along with its long relationship to religious beliefs and influences in Japan. Even though the *shōjo* subgenre is relatively modern, it is rooted in religion and traditional forms of theatre while also handing back the power to women as they become the heroines of their own stories. *Jūniya'*s strength lies in carrying this history on stage while also respecting Shakespeare's material.

Popular culture in Japan bleeds into all forms of art, and even traditional forms become embedded in it. Such is the case for Japan's most easily recognizable cultural markers: geisha, samurai, sumo, and Kabuki all share a common root that makes them popular in today's contemporary media. Shakespeare, in his appropriated form, touches upon these cultural elements important to Japanese society, and often sees his plays adapted within the realm of these ancient traditions. The Edo period was rife with artistic expression in the pleasure and entertainment districts of the capital. The 'floating world' of *ukiyo* spread across theatre and art, with geisha and courtesans mixing with sumo wrestlers and samurai alike. This colourful world lost a lot of its gleam during the Meiji era, but "[it] remain[s] [a] colourful [part] of Japan's major cities to this day, and the cult of celebrity is more powerful than ever in contemporary Japan" (Goto-Jones 33). This idea of cult is especially relevant when observing the mechanics of theatre in Japan and, as I established in this dissertation, the fanbase for a company, actor, or particular show is essential in the discussion of its affect in the arts. For example, *Epiphany* shows the dangers of conflating love with celebrity admiration in the world of theatre. Takarazuka's *Fuyu Monogatari*, set during the height of the Edo 'floating world,' utilises this colourful world as a backdrop to discuss the tragedies that regularly took place during this period. From murder, to suicide, to forced prostitution, the ugliness of the world is placed in sharp relief against the seemingly beautiful and glamourous life of Kabuki actors and their families. *Fuyu Monogatari* is rich in cultural markers that make it firmly Japanese, but Shakespeare's late romance continues to linger in its lines and the unfolding of its story.

Modernity in Japan is a complex topic, and while the shift happened during the Meiji period, "the tension between traditional and new social values that is commonly associated with the process of modernization was already an important feature of Tokugawa society at the start of the 18th century" (36). A play such as *Epiphany* exploits these tensions through its titular character, Otaka, and her ability to straddle the traditional side of Japan by partaking in Kabuki and also the post-Westernization side by adapting herself to these changes. In this example, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is transformed to embody these tensions from a political, artistic, and gender-based point of view. *Epiphany* portrays this important period of change and includes numerous references to the politics at the time, most notably the debate concerning women's right to perform in public

performances. *Epiphany* captures a small pocket of time in which East and West clashed—and eventually blended—in Meiji Japan. Otaka may have initially wanted to protect her brother's reputation by taking on his role in the Kabuki troupe, but ultimately her love for the theatre enables her to contribute to these larger societal changes and to become an actress in her own right.

Postwar Japan is a very different world than the feudal past examined in *Jūniya*, *Epiphany*, and *Fuyu Monogatari*. During the seven-year American Occupation immediately following Japan's surrender to the Allied Forces, the traditions of the past were all but eliminated in favour of a progressive, Westernized society: "The United States initially envisioned a complete break from core provisions enshrined in the Meiji Constitution that altered the emperor's position, prohibited the Japanese from engaging in war, and eliminated peerage beyond that of the emperor" (Caprio, Sugita 4). Though *PUCK* is not specifically a postwar play, its themes speak to the nostalgia of a lost past and the dangers of a rapid economic expansion. Puck, an otherworldly being that belongs to a mythological place, is forced to adapt or perish, and despite Oberon's best efforts to keep the fairy in his world, Puck is transformed into a human—a metaphor for the transformation of Japan from a feudal, samurai-run world to a modern capitalist society. The Westernization and, in fact, Americanization of Japan is reflected in *PUCK* and the humans' easy dismissal of traditions for the sake of progress.

Say It Again, set in the United States, creates an interesting dialogue as to the US-Japan relationship in the boomer generation. The characters from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* are completely changed in this adaptation, from being aristocrats to swindlers. Arguably, this shift addresses a political and societal change in which the American Dream is questioned and dismantled. The characters' constant need to masquerade and hide themselves and their intentions speak to Japan's contemporary adherence to *honne* (本音) and *tatemae* (建前), resulting in a Westernized Japanese Shakespeare that has little in common with his original English self. The women in *Say It Again* take control of their lives, and Cheryl in particular surpasses the limits of Shakespeare's text by gaining agency over the men in her life.

Japanese Adaptations of Shakespeare

My focus in this dissertation has been solely on the Takarazuka Revue's adaptations and performances of Shakespeare, but there are, of course, countless more examples of theatre companies in Japan who regularly adapt and perform the Bard's plays. Takarazuka's adaptations and performances of Shakespeare are interesting to examine because of the particularity of the company having an all-female cast. However, the company has a very clear identity divided between the two central regions of Japan with one theatre in Hyogo prefecture, and another in central Tokyo. While Shakespeare can be expected to be found in major metropolitan cities, more intimate and localised Shakespeares have much to offer in this discussion, too. For example, The Sendai-based Shakespeare Company's adaptation of *Othello*, renamed as *Ainu Othello* after the indigenous Ainu people of Hokkaido, uses Shakespeare's narrative to tackle questions of race on indigenous soil. The head of the company, Shimodate Kazumi, was well aware of the racial discrimination and repeated mistreatment of Ainu people, and so *Ainu Othello* was staged in collaboration with Debo Akibe, an Ainu theatre director, to lend more sensitivity to the performance ("第十四回公演「Ainu Othello」" *Fourteenth performance of 'Ainu Othello'*). Little is said about this performance in scholarly work, but it goes without saying that it holds significant cultural value and is worth examining.

When Tsubouchi used Shakespeare's plays to create his own Kabuki plays, he allowed for two great forces in the theatre world to combine and influence one another. Similarly, Shakespeare's influence stretched past the Tokyo hub all the way down to the eastern island of Okinawa where "*Okinawa shibai* was formed under the influence of both *kabuki* and modern plays from the mainland Japan. It was this boom to imitate plays from mainland Japan that introduced Shakespeare to Okinawa" (Suzuki 156). While no traces of early Okinawan Shakespeare survive, "it is obvious that the plays were adaptations in Okinawan dialect, and it is likely that the costumes were quite different from those worn by actors in Tokyo, let alone from Elizabethan costumes" (157). Shakespeare's inclusion in native forms of theatres shows how widespread his works were following the modernization of Japan. The author Natsume Sōseki famously opposed Tsubouchi's choice of using Kabuki to perform Shakespeare, preferring instead to "see

Shakespeare on the *noh* stage and listen to the chanting of professional *noh* actors" (156). Whether this was due to the fact that Kabuki was seen as a lesser form of theatre than the classical Noh, or that simply the Noh chanting mimicked more closely Shakespeare's poetry, it is clear that Shakespeare was seen enacted in various forms of traditional theatre across the country, and his plays helped revive and even create new forms of theatre in Japan. Shakespeare was eventually staged in the Noh style as well, and today it continues to be a popular form of adaptation for his plays.

The Future of Japanese Shakespeare

As testified by the online database *Tokyo Area Shakespeare Performance Schedule* (東京近郊 シェイクスピア劇スケジュール), there are tens of new performances of Shakespeare in Japan every year. Some are direct adaptations of the source text, while others depart from the text and create new forms of Shakespeare. In a post-pandemic age, Shakespeare is not only performed on the traditional stage, but also virtually and brought to thousands of computers and TV sets across the country and internationally. Online scholarly databases such as *A*|*S*|*I*|*A* and *MIT Global Shakespeares* are dedicated to collecting this information about Japanese Shakespeare as well as other instances of Asian Shakespeare, showing the continued interest in these non-anglophone Shakespeares.

Japanese Shakespeare in this modern day continues to be a phenomenon of interests for scholars both in and out of Japan. With each new generation of directors, Shakespeare is re-explored, adapted, and performed to fit the current social climate. One thing that remains, however, is Shakespeare's enduring popularity in being the primary storyteller to explore questions of race, gender, and politics both on and off stage. Many new productions are experimental in nature and reinvigorate Shakespeare by combining different forms of media and storytelling. For example, CHAiroPLIN's 2023 *Dancing Shakespeare* (おどるシェイクスピア *Odoru Sheikusupia*) transforms *Romeo and Juliet* into a play about overconsumption interspersed with elements of contemporary ballet, and the same company's *Vegetable-love Shakespeare* (さいあい・シェイクスピア) discusses Shakespeare's understanding of humanity through a human's relationship

to agriculture and dancing vegetables on stage. These unusual forms of Shakespeare undoubtedly create interesting conversations about his influence and presence in contemporary Japanese society, as well as focus on the social commentary that emerges from these performances. From the serious to the strange, Shakespeare continues to be staged in a nation that values his literary legacy and its own long theatre culture and rich history.

I opened this long discussion about Japanese Shakespeare with a few personal stories, and it is only fitting that I should end it in a similar manner. My first visit to Japan was as a language student in Kanazawa, Ishikawa. One year later, I returned as a teacher in the small city of Hidaka, Saitama, on the outskirts of Tokyo. For three years, I travelled up and down the country as much as I could. I was fortunate enough to attend many theatre performances, both traditional and contemporary, in major cities in the Kanto and Kansai regions. The first and only live performance of Shakespeare I saw was Takarazuka's 2016 *Shakespeare: The Sky is Full of Endless Words* at the Tokyo Grand Theatre, and this sparked an academic interest that has informed my work thus far. As a result of my experiences in Japan, and in combination with my Western upbringing and my interest in Shakespeare, I was inspired to explore these crossroads in this dissertation.

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Glossary

Romanisation	Definition
Bishōnen (美少年)	A beautiful man in the feminine sense. The word connotes femininity as opposed to the more masculine "handsome" (*ikemen*) or "cool" (*kakkoi*). In manga/anime, the word *bishonen* is usually used to qualify the male hero.
Henshin (変身)	Buddhist concept of transformation.
Kami (神)	Gods in Shintō religion.
Minshū bunka (民衆文化)	Popular culture.
Musumeyaku (娘役)	Women actors who perform as female characters in Takarazuka.
Onna (女)	An adult woman.
Onnagata (女形)	Male actors who perform as female characters in Kabuki.
Otoko (男)	An adult man.
Otokoyaku (男役)	Women actors who perform as male characters in Takarazuka.
Seinen (青年)	Subgenre of manga/anime that targets young men.
Shōjo (少女)	Subgenre of manga/anime that targets young women.
Shōnen (少年)	Subgenre of manga/anime that targets boys.
Taishū bunka (大衆文化)	Mass culture, often translated as popular culture.
Yōkai (妖怪)	Supernatural creatures in Shintō religion. They are often malevolent or trickster figures.

Appendix

Characters & Cast in *Jūniya* (十二夜)

Role[109]	Actor
Duke Orsino	Yamato Yūga
Viola	Hanase Mizuka
Sir Toby	Ōzora Yūhi
Olivia	Natsukawa Yura
Malvolio	Ritsu Tomomi
Feste	Mayama Haru
Maria	Honoami Aria
Sebastian	Kaji Yūki
The Captain	Taiju Maki
Antonio	Narumi Jun
Sir Andrew	Shijō Rui
Valentine	Asama Moyu
Edmond	Takaki Amane
Roland	Taiju Maki
Rosalind	Koizumi Kirara
The Priest	Akira Jun

Other cast members:

Asabuki Yuika	Ayadori Kanna
Shiina Aoi	Memu Chisato
Houjou Rumi	Natsumi Rin

[109] Cast information sourced from TakaWiki: **"**Twelfth Night (Bow Shakespeare Series #4)."

Characters & Cast in *Epiphany* (エピファニー)

Role[110]	Shakespearean equivalent	Actress
Otaka/ Takagorō (kabuki actor)	Viola/Cesario	Ayaki Nao
Raikōya Takagorō (Kabuki actor)	Sebastian	Ayaki Nao
Mori Mari (noble woman)	Olivia	Ayame Hikaru
Iriya Shigeyoshi (theatre owner)	Orsino	Tsukasa Yūki
Ando Shintarō (rickshaw puller)	Antonio	Matobu Sei
Marui Yae (servant in the Mori household)	Maria	Miya Erika
Fukunaga Osuke (ministry of Foreign Affairs)	Toby/Andrew	Asazumi Kei

Other cast members:

Role		Actress
Mori Shintarō (army doctor and writer)		Natsume You
Mimasuya Kirizō (Kabuki actor)		Nishiki Ai
Kisaragi Jūshiro (Kabuki actor)		Ōhiro Ayumu
Aizawa Kenichi (Takagorō's long-time friend and police superintendent)		Asamiya Miyu

[110] Sourced and translated from "'エピファニー,' 公演データ *Epifanī kōen dēta*" (1999–2015).

Characters & Cast in *Fuyu Monogatari* (冬物語)

Role[111]	Shakespearean equivalent	Actor
Nakamura Tomigorō	Leontes	Haruno Sumire
Nakamura Izayoi	Perdita	Haruno Sumiro
Fujikawa Izaemon	Polixenes	Sena Jun
Osan	Hermione	Sawaki Kurumi
Hidenosuke	Florizel	Ayabuki Mao
Hikosaburo (Nakamura servant)		Isono Chihiro
Osode (Hikosaburo's daughter)		Takayagi Midori
Satsuki (mistress of Satsuki-ya)		Shō Tsukasa
Oden (Satsukiya-servant)		Sachimi Anna
Ibira (master of Satsuki-ya)		Kazato Yuma
Yoshitsugu (Tomigorō's assistant)		Asazono Miki
Jurota	Mamillius	Fuzuki Miyo

[111] Cast information sourced from TakaWiki: "The Winter's Tale (Bow Shakespeare Series #1)."

Characters & Cast in *PUCK*

Role[112]	Shakespearean equivalent	Actor
Puck (a newborn fairy)	Puck	Ryū Masaki
Hermia (granddaughter of Greyville, the school's owner)	Hermia	Manaki Reika
Helen (Hermia's cousin)	Helena	Saou Kuruma
Daniel (son of a hotel owner)	Demetrius	Miya Rurika
Lionel (son of a noble family)	Lysander	Nagina Rūmi
Bobby (protector of the forest)	Nick Bottom	Tamaki Ryō
Oberon (king of fairies)	Oberon	Seijō Kaito
Titania (queen of fairies)	Titania	Tōka Yurino
Snout (Bobby's band mate)	Tom Snout	Shimon Yuriya
Quince (Bobby's band mate)	Peter Quince	Uzuki Hayate
Starveling (Bobby's band mate)	Robin Starveling	Chinami Karan
Snagg (Bobby's band mate)	Snug	Akizuki Saya
Flute (Bobby's band mate)	Francis Flute	Hōzuki An

[112] Cast information sourced from **"**PUCK / CRYSTAL TAKARAZUKA."

Characters & Cast in *Say It Again*

Role[113]	Shakespearean equivalent	Actor
Pierre Valentine (marriage swindler)	Valentine	Naruse Kōki
Vince Proteus (marriage swindler)	Proteus	Asami Hikaru
Cheryl Reed (hotel maid)	Sylvia	Kisaki Miri
Julie Valentine (upper class lady)	Julia	Konno Mahiru
Emmett (a detective)		Misa Noeru
Charlotte (a detective)		Morio Kazumi
Nora Valentine (Julie's mother)		Akari Nami
James Reed (Cheryl's father)	Duke of Milan	Misato Maya
Howard Thurio (Cheryl's fiancé)	Thurio	Mirai Yūki
Anne (Howard's lover)		Ai Yōko
Launce (hotel clerk)		Sugata Kō

[113] Cast information sourced from TakaWiki: "Say It Again (Bow Shakespeare Series #7)."