

# Prospero's Girls

Deanne Williams, York University

---

## Abstract

This essay examines the afterlives of Miranda and Ariel, Prospero's "girls," on stage and in film. A longstanding editorial and theatrical tradition that assigns Miranda's "abhorred slave" speech to Caliban informs the ongoing representation of Miranda as a passive and submissive character, even after the speech is restored in the twentieth century. The two-hundred-year-long history of reassigning Miranda's speech to Prospero coincides with the tradition of casting a girl actress as Ariel. Dismissed in recent years as an outmoded and *déclassé* theatrical convention, Ariel's history as a girl left a strong impression on the play's theatrical and artistic legacy. Restoration adaptations of *The Tempest* added more and more girl characters to Prospero's island, reflecting an intensified interest in girls and girlhood as the play charted the paths to Miranda's marriage and Ariel's freedom. With Miranda representing domestic expectations and Ariel embodying the dream of liberation, Prospero's girls and their history reflect the conflicting and competing expectations placed upon girls and the dream of a patriarchal power that, rather than stifling girls, sets them free.

---

Ever since *The Tempest* was performed for the fifteen-year-old Princess Elizabeth Stuart's 1613 wedding to Frederick, Elector Palatine, girlhood has been important to its stage history.<sup>1</sup> The part of Ariel was played by young female actresses for over two hundred years after the Restoration, and Miranda was celebrated as the quintessence of young feminine virtue by generations of editors and visual and dramatic artists. As Prospero's docile daughter, however, Miranda has proven frustrating to feminist scholars, who find more of interest in the disenfranchised Sycorax. Current theater historians tend to regard the tradition of the girl Ariel as an embarrassing lapse of taste, "an old theatre tradition long out of fashion" (Holland 1997, 229), and welcome the return of the male Ariel in the twentieth century with an almost audible sigh of relief. As I demonstrate here, the respective girlhoods of Miranda and Ariel in *The Tempest* signal the play's genuine interest in girlhood. The elaboration of their girlhood in various aspects of the play's theatrical, cinematic, artistic, and editorial history confirms the significance and centrality of girls and girlhood to *The Tempest* and its history, as well as to the larger history of Shakespeare appropriation and adaptation.

The characters of Miranda and Ariel may be understood as two sides of the same coin, both subordinate to Prospero: the one a biological daughter and the other an adopted, "tricksy" spirit. They both serve Prospero and are in different kinds of bondage to him, and the play concludes with the achievement of their liberation, which takes different forms. In their secondary status and in their roles as dependent and sidekick, they reflect the protected and patronized experience of girlhood as it was lived in early modern England and constructed on the early modern stage, but their struggles reveal, as well, the potential that girlhood offered for freedom and creativity. As daughter and fairy, the girlhoods of Miranda and Ariel together articulate a combined image of ideal girlhood, while their respective destinies as married mainlander and free-spirited islander highlight the opposing models and contradictory expectations that early modern girls inherited and sought to resolve.

### Abhorrèd Slave

I begin with Miranda's speech to Caliban:

Abhorrèd slave,  
 Which any print of goodness wilt not take,  
 Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,  
 Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour  
 One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,  
 Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like  
 A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes  
 With words that made them known. But thy vile race —  
 Though thou didst learn — had that in't which good natures  
 Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou  
 Deservedly confined into this rock,  
 Who hadst deserved more than a prison. (Shakespeare 1987, ed. Orgel; 1.2.350-61)<sup>2</sup>

This speech poses the key critical problem regarding Miranda in *The Tempest*. It complicates Miranda's reputation for being obedient, demure, and a willing pawn in Prospero's marriage scheme and conveys, instead, the discourse and outlook of a hard-hearted colonizer: equating her own language and culture with civilized "goodness" and condemning Caliban as a "brutish" barbarian. It was found to be so charmless and unladylike that generations of editors assigned the speech to Prospero: as Stephen Orgel puts it, "from Dryden and Theobald to the Cambridge editors and Kittredge" (Shakespeare 1987, ed. Orgel, 17). As Orgel points out, there is no textual reason to

suggest that the speech is not Miranda's: it is clearly assigned to her in the Folio. As Northrop Frye advises, "If your edition of *The Tempest* gives this speech to Prospero, throw it away" (1988, 177), conveying the extent to which Miranda's possession of this speech is essential to understanding the play.

To the extent that it reveals Miranda as Prospero's star pupil, perfectly parroting her father's colonialist ideology of racial difference, the speech certainly takes a leaf out of Prospero's book. Prospero's description of himself as Miranda's "schoolmaster" (1.2.172) recalls the title of Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster* (1570), invoking the academic achievements of the young Princess Elizabeth. Prospero takes liberal credit for his student's success: "Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit / Than other princes can that have more time / For vainer hours, and tutors not so careful" (72-74). In this respect, then, the passage illustrates Miranda's "princely" upbringing as Prospero's daughter. But it also gives her the opportunity to express her rage at Caliban, her would-be rapist or importunate seducer. Miranda is no victim here, no unfortunate castaway, and far from the tender-hearted witness of the shipwreck that her father orchestrates at the play's opening.

However, in *Shakespeare Restored* (1733), Lewis Theobald justifies the reassignment of the speech to Prospero:

I am persuaded the author never intended this speech for Miranda. In the first place 'tis probably Prospero taught Caliban to speak, rather than left that office to his daughter. In the next place, as Prospero was here rating Caliban, it would be a great impropriety for her to take the discipline out of his hands; and, indeed, in some sort an indecency in her to reply to what Caliban was last speaking of. (cited by Furness 1892, 73)

Theobald's words convey certain assumptions about Miranda's girlhood: he cannot take her seriously as a teacher (even though the play refers elsewhere to what Miranda taught Caliban), nor can he tolerate her chiming in with her father's chastisement of Caliban, which violates his notions of decorum, and he certainly cannot countenance the impropriety of her speaking out on the subject of Caliban's attempted rape, which he cannot even bring himself to name.

The centuries-long editorial and theatrical tradition of assigning this speech to Prospero contributes to the general impression of Miranda's character as passive and innocent. It first found onstage expression in Davenant and Dryden's *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island* (1670), a wildly popular and influential adaptation of *The Tempest* that sidelines the play's political themes in its celebration of virginal virtue and pursuit of a double marriage plot, or, as Michael Dobson puts it, "to justify the ways of marriage to men" (1991, 49). Other productions of *The Tempest* that perpetuated this tradition include those of Garrick, Kemble, Macready, Kean, Tree, Brook,

and Neville (Dymkowski 2000, 164). The history of critical discussions of Miranda is largely based, therefore, on a character who does not deliver the speech, allowing for an uncomplicated emphasis on Miranda's innocence and purity. Thus, William Richardson highlights her "gentleness of disposition, flowing out in compassionate tenderness, and unrestrained by suspicion" (1788, 344), and describes her as "guileless . . . compassionate and tender" (346). Anna Jameson praises Miranda's "nymph-like beauty," dubbing her "so perfectly unsophisticated, so delicately refined, that she is all but ethereal" (1832, 172).<sup>3</sup> For Helena Faucit Martin, Miranda is a kind of saint: "Full of plain and holy innocence . . . a being created of every creature's best" (1885, vii). And for Frank Harris, she is "all pity, love, and humble courtesy; she has milk in her veins, not blood" (1912, 248). This idealizing yet constraining characterization of Miranda is maintained in the earliest feminist discussions of the character. As Lorrie Leininger writes, alluding to Prospero's line, "My foot my tutor?": "Miranda, admired and sheltered, has no way out of the cycle of being a dependent foot in need of protection, placed in a threatening situation which in turn calls for more protection, and thus increased dependence and increased subservience" (1980, 289).

This editorial and theatrical tradition is reproduced in illustrations of the scene, in which Prospero chastises Caliban while Miranda hangs back. Thomas Rowlandson's engraving (after John Hamilton Mortimer) in his *Imitations of Modern Drawings* (1801), illustrates Theobald's ideal of Miranda as a model of propriety and social decorum. Miranda looks demurely at her feet ("My foot my tutor?") as she cowers behind her grandly turbaned father, who gesticulates at a Caliban who is either quivering timorously or insulting Prospero with his preposterous gyrations. In H. C. Selous's illustration of this scene, from the 1832 edition of Shakespeare co-edited by Mary Cowden Clarke (Shakespeare 1830), author of *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines* (1851-1853), Miranda is turned entirely away from Caliban and Prospero, as if she cannot bear to look at them, while Caliban, in turn, shrinks away from her and Prospero. Selous's Miranda is attempting to distance herself and Prospero from Caliban, as she gently pulls her father away from the cave and back into to the trees. Selous makes Miranda a figure of Nature, complete with garlands in the hair, reflecting Anna Jameson's Romantic view of her as "the mere child of nature," with "her soft simplicity, her virgin innocence, her total ignorance of the conventional forms and language of society," placing her in opposition to social codes and power structures. This illustration may explain why Cowden Clarke did not fictionalize Miranda's girlhood in her *Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*: perhaps so much idealization and abstraction provided less scope for the imagination.

The first of nine paintings that Henry Fuseli contributed to the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery, *The Enchanted Island: Before the Cell of Prospero* (1797), presents a rather sensuous Miranda,

with a Jove-like Prospero, whose gesture toward Caliban recalls Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*, reframing this scene of moral dressing-down as one of flawed creation ("this thing of darkness I acknowledge mine" [5.1.275-76]). Fuseli's illustration, which graced the Chalmers edition of Shakespeare, connects Prospero's mannerist gesture with Miranda's appraising gaze, here less fearful and more steady, as she looks thoughtfully back at Caliban. Implying a closer connection and even understanding of Caliban (mediated, here, by a cherubic Ariel), and allowing Miranda, through her gaze, to confront Caliban, these figures nevertheless retain the prevailing dramatic and textual tradition.

It is Miranda, of course, who makes the famous pronouncement, "O brave new world," aligning her encounter with Ferdinand with the discourses of exploration and expansion and casting herself as conqueror and explorer. But the re-assignment of Miranda's "abhorred slave" speech frames Miranda's participation in Prospero's colonial ideologies as silently complicit, rather than active. As a result, postcolonial responses to *The Tempest* overlook or underestimate Miranda. For example, George Lamming's reading of *The Tempest*, entitled "A Monster, a Child, a Slave" (1960), describes Miranda as a mere pawn, brainwashed by her father's "propaganda" (105). Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête* (1969) casts Miranda as Jameson's idealized flower child, a repository of natural island lore, like a wood nymph. Césaire's Miranda is completely absent when Prospero confronts Caliban about the attempted rape (a subject that Lamming refers to as "the Lie"). Sylvia Wynter's "Beyond Miranda's Meanings" characterizes Miranda according to her "mode of physiognomic being, defined by the phylogenically 'idealized' features . . . as the 'rational' object of desire" (1996, 478), viewing her as an emblem for a European system of gender difference. This may explain why an influential scholar such as Kwame Anthony Appiah persists in ascribing Miranda's speech to Prospero: "It is no surprise that Prospero's 'abhorred slave' speech has been a figure of colonial resistance for literary nationalists all around the world" (2006, 79).

Miranda is thus associated with a passive and subordinate model of girlhood. For Diana Brydon, the obedient Miranda is a metaphor for the colonial relationship to Empire (Brydon 1984), and Chantal Zabus anatomizes the glumly inferior Mirandas who slump through Canadian appropriations of *The Tempest*, embodying "white Canada's guilt in its dealings with a Calibanesque Other" (2002, 126). Zabus also shows how feminist novels such as Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* reject outright the role of passive subordinate Miranda to a Prospero-like father/lovers. Elaine Showalter anatomizes a similar process in American writers and intellectuals who use Miranda to critique their own daughterly relationship to a male-dominated literary tradition. Miranda thus lends her name to various treatments of the subjection of girls and women within patriarchal cultures. Marjorie Pickthall's 1917 poem "Miranda's Tomb" imagines

Miranda's death and connects it to the predicament of all women. Laura E. Donaldson's "The Miranda Complex," an account of rape in the context of colonial relations, refers to the character's "textual selflessness" as a reflection of women's oppression under patriarchy (Showalter 1991). And Ania Loomba draws upon her recollections of "Miranda House," a University of Delhi women's residence, to illustrate her discussion of Miranda as an enabler of Prospero's "ideological legitimation" (1989, 153).

What, then, are the implications of Miranda performing the ugly "abhorred slave" speech? To begin with, the restoration of the speech gives Miranda a voice and a place in a confrontation about power and language in which she is at the center: her body, her knowledge, her actions, her future. It transforms Prospero's angry chastisement of Caliban into an opportunity for Miranda to confront her own would-be rapist or seducer, allowing her a voice and response to an event that is as political as it is personal: one that acknowledges, as well, Miranda's transitional passage into sexual knowledge. Moreover, Miranda's speech is most emphatically not "nice": girls who claim their right to a voice in a political environment are seldom considered nice, nor should they be expected to limit their comments to what is pleasing or reassuring to their auditors. As Martin Orkin explains, Miranda's speech participates in a kind of rhetoric of domination, not only reinforcing "existing power relations" but also suggesting "an urge toward self-justification," illustrating "the brutality and callousness of which these travelers and settlers are sometimes capable" (1997, 146). Her speech illustrates how shocking racist indoctrination and ideology can look when it trickles down to children and confirms the extent to which the idealized innocence and purity of girlhood that patriarchy and colonialism ostensibly protect is a total fiction. We may also understand it in terms of current discussions of girls' anger by psychologists who have anatomized the cultural processes that discourage girls from giving voice to such a powerful and galvanizing emotion:

The pressure for girls to split off their anger is enormous and the rewards are clear. The girls who do so, however, risk losing the capacity to locate and clarify the source of their pain and thus to do something about it; they risk the capacity for a once ordinary, healthy resistance to turn political . . . If we take away girls' anger, then, we take away the foundation for women's political resistance. (Brown 1998, 12-13)

The speech, then, makes Miranda a more complicated and even nastier character. It locates her as a political agent, aligned with Prospero's domination of the island but also challenging Caliban's assumption of entitlement to her body.

Orgel observes that the editorial interventions by Theobald and others reflect anxieties about a "perceived inconsistency" in the character and a perception that the speech "does not suit a Miranda

who is all innocence and passivity" (Orgel 1994, 50). For Orgel, it reflects a "larger conviction about what kind of model Shakespeare ought to be providing for young women" (1984, 51). Indeed, Miranda performs in vastly different ways throughout the play. This comes out in her first words, about the "wild waters" (1.2.2): she orders her father to "Allay them." Miranda then immediately shifts to expressions of empathy: "O, I have suffered / With those that I saw suffer" (5-6); curiosity: "You have . . . often left me to a bootless inquisition" (33-35); and, later on, scorn: "abhorred slave." In her encounter with Ferdinand, Miranda is similarly changeable, moving from self-effacing modesty ("No wonder, sir, but certainly a maid" [438-39]) to passionate pleas ("beseech you, father" [474]) to quick-witted repartee ("My affections are then most humble" [482-83]). Elsewhere Miranda proves herself as bravely energetic ("I'll bear your logs the while" [3.1.24]), forthright ("do you love me?" [68]), and self-dramatizing, perhaps even a bit of a drama queen: "hence, bashful cunning, / And prompt me, plain and holy innocence!" (81-82). Finally, when she and Ferdinand are playing at chess, Miranda is worldly-wise — "Sweet lord, you play me false" (5.1.171) — offering us a glimpse of her as a mature, if disenchanting, adult.

Miranda's "abhorred slave" speech finds a place, then, within the play's representation of her overarching development from unworldly island lass to future mainland Queen. Moreover, to worry that this speech clashes with an otherwise simple and innocent character is to overlook the wildly inconsistent variety that actually defines her. Even Prospero refers to his daughter in different ways at different moments in the play. When reminiscing about the early days of their exile, he refers to her as "my girl" (1.2.62), casting Miranda as his helpmate and solace. Once she meets Ferdinand, however, Prospero pegs her as a sexually independent and uncontrollable "wench" (1.2.413). Prospero's use of these different terms for a girl child or young woman illustrates the competing definitions of girlhood in Jacobean culture (Higginbotham 2013). These competing definitions reinforce Miranda's status as girl, not as a fixed identity, but instead as offering a range of performative and identificatory possibilities. Thus, although it may not be pleasing to see Miranda as the stern mouthpiece of colonialism, it is at this moment in the play, when she is anything but sweetness and light, that she illustrates the idea that the girl can be a figure for whom contradiction and contrariness are essential aspects of the self.

Arguments in favor of re-assigning the speech to Miranda emerged in the late Victorian period. Horace Howard Furness flouted prevailing editorial tradition when he assigned the speech to Miranda in his Variorum edition of *The Tempest* (1892). Contra Theobald, Furness cites the Rev. Dr. Charles Porterfield Krauth, a Lutheran pastor who was also his colleague at the University of Pennsylvania, who finds it easy to accommodate Miranda's speech to his own notions of girlhood: he calls it "a most charming picture of Miranda's youth" and explains, "the strong language would

naturally spring from the inborn purity of a woman" (Furness 1892, 73). Framing her as a source of poetic inspiration, Furness's account of Miranda constitutes an extension of Jameson's Romantic idealization of the character:

It was by Miranda's pure loveliness and rare refinement that the soul of poetry was distilled out of that evil thing. Without this poetic feeling in Caliban, and its expression, whence would come our knowledge of the pervading life of enchantment which, by Prospero's wand, has converted that 'uninhabited Island' into the one magic tale of our imagination, forever floating in unknown summer seas? (Furness 1892, vii)

Furness acknowledges Miranda's roles as schoolmaster, muse, and object of fantasy, suggesting that by awakening "poetic feeling" in Caliban, she is key to the island's — as well as the audience's — enchantment. Caliban's desire for Miranda is, for Furness, neither a violation of codes nor a reaction to colonial violence, but instead a perfectly natural, even understandable, response to an overwhelming experience, like Bottom's with Titania. The different responses of Furness and Theobald may reflect diverging British and American historical attitudes towards women, as well as confirm changes in attitudes to girls between the eighteenth and the twentieth centuries. For Furness, girlhood is enabled through untrammelled self-expression, rather than protected by its suppression. He clearly felt it was time for Miranda to use her words.

Christine Dymkowski writes: "Of all the pbs [promptbooks] I have examined, [Lena] Ashwell's [in 1925] is the first to restore the speech to Miranda" (2000, 164). This production cut half the speech, however, from "but thy vile race" onward, retaining the material about Miranda as educator, but skipping her engagement with the thorny subject of rape. According to Grace Tiffany, the restoration of this speech in the twentieth century produced a different kind of Miranda: grumpy, recalcitrant, gum-chewing, occasionally naked, and usually full of frank sexual desire for Ferdinand (Shakespeare 2011, ed. Tiffany). Peter Holland describes how, for example, "Sarah Woodward's gutsy Miranda flew at [Caliban] at 'abhorred slave'" in Sam Mendes's 1993 production (1997, 174).

In the 1980 BBC Shakespeare version of *The Tempest*, Pippa Guard as Miranda thoughtfully and rationally takes her place before, not behind, her father. And in the 1983 Giorgio Strehler *La Tempesta*, Miranda may use Prospero's shoulder to seek protection from Caliban, but her shrill delivery conveys anger and indignation. These new theatrical interpretations are consistent with recent feminist discussions that seek to move beyond the cliché of Miranda as an icon of purity. Ann Thompson sets out the problem of Miranda's reputation as an "extremely feeble heroine" (1991, 47) and asks, "what kind of pleasure can a woman and a feminist take in this text?" (54). Jessica



Slights answers that Miranda offers "alternative models of selfhood, moral agency, and community life" (2001, 359) and that she "proves to be strong-willed and independent minded in her dealing with Prospero and Ferdinand" (365), while Melissa Sanchez contends that, paradoxically, it is Miranda's "erotic subjection" and "freely offered servitude" (2008, 74) that endow her with greater autonomy.

Nevertheless, many film versions of *The Tempest* hold fast to the old stage traditions, failing to take up the opportunity to redefine Miranda. In Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* (1991), Sir John Gielgud's Prospero delivers the "abhorred slave" speech, which is consistent with the film's concept of Prospero's world as internal and the other characters as objects in his own psychological theater. The film conveys its loyalty to the stage tradition of the silent Miranda by placing her in the usual position behind Prospero's shoulder after he has literally dragged her, traumatized, back to Caliban's cell. Derek Jarman's 1979 *The Tempest* has achieved cult-classic status for its campy theatricality (most notably, its concluding "Stormy Weather" scene) and frank homoeroticism, but Jarman's version of the scene also replicates conventional staging. Miranda sticking out her tongue at Caliban, however, may constitute her own version of the "abhorred slave" speech. Performed by the pop star Toyah Wilcox, Miranda's schoolyard gesture is consistent with the film's wittily satirical approach to the play, with its snooty Prospero and infantilized Ferdinand and Miranda (whose courtship takes place on a rocking horse).

Paul Mazursky's 1982 *Tempest*, however, resists this longstanding tradition. Casting the teenaged Molly Ringwald as a rebellious Miranda, he shows her in constant conflict with her father, Philip (John Cassavetes) and, most importantly, rebuffing the lustful Greek islander, Calibanos (Raul Julia), who lures her into his cave with the promise of television. Miranda is far more interested in the television than in Calibanos, and she coolly deflects his romantic overtures ("My goddess . . ."), pushing him away with the cry, "You pervert, you asked for it." She then proceeds to regale her father's girlfriend, Aretha (played by Susan Sarandon, and the film's answer to Ariel), with the story: "I decked him." Mazursky's *Tempest* thus recasts the play's issues of master and slave, settler and native, to depict, instead, a young New Yorker fully capable of defending herself and a Calibanos who respects that "no means no."<sup>4</sup> Miranda is off swimming with her more age-appropriate Ferdinand when Philip delivers the film's version of the "abhorred slave" speech, confronting Calibanos in a rowboat and ultimately knocking him into the water with an oar. But Mazursky transforms the nature of the confrontation: Calibanos acknowledges not only Miranda's womanhood but also her right to reject him; diving into the water to help Calibanos back into the boat, Philip makes the most un-Prospero-like admission: "I'm no god, I'm a monkey just like you."

Whereas Mazursky's feminist adaptation of *The Tempest* extends its vision of gender equality to include ethnicity and social class, Julie Taymor's recent experiment with a female Prospera in *The Tempest* (2010) falls short of its radical potential. Following the pattern set by the Ashwell production almost a century ago, Miranda is given only the first few lines of the "abhorred slave" speech. Moreover, the film remains faithful to the conventional staging of the scene, as she delivers the speech in the usual fashion, positioned diffidently behind Prospera. This more traditional representation of Miranda's girlhood is consistent with Mirren's dominant female Prospera, who wields her power and treats her humanized Caliban as roughly as any male Prospero.

Curiously, some of the most artistically and politically revisionist adaptations of *The Tempest*, such as *Prospero's Books* and Jarman's *Tempest*, are the ones that preserve the most traditional views of Miranda. By contrast, a production such as the BBC Shakespeare, with its pedagogical commitment to the unmediated "completeness" of the text, is comfortable working with the unedited version of Miranda. The more conservative decision from a textual point of view, which is to retain the Folio's original ascription of the speech to Miranda, actually opens up the potential for a radical rethinking of the character. While Mazursky's adaptation creates new possibilities for Miranda, and the play as a whole, by translating *The Tempest* into a contemporary context, others, such as Greenaway's and Taymor's, fall back into old traditions despite their experimentation with other aspects of the play. The overtly political adaptations by Jarman and Taymor seem blind to the potential and necessity of revisiting Miranda, even as they critique the excesses of the class system or experiment with the play's power structures.

### Like a Nymph o' the Sea

To find a film adaptation that is genuinely interested in Miranda's girlhood, we must look back to Percy Stow's 1908 film adaptation of *The Tempest*. One of the founders of British Cinema, Stow directed an astonishing 293 short films (McKernan 2005) with the producer Cecil Hepworth. One of the earliest Shakespeare films ever made, after the 1899 *King John* starring Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Stow's *The Tempest* is remarkably alive to the play's interest in girlhood and manifests an intense, idealizing interest in the character of Miranda. Revealing the influence of Mary Cowden Clarke's fictional prequels, and in the marital spirit of Dryden and Davenant's *The Enchanted Island* (1670), the film is less concerned with documenting Prospero's political struggles than it is with dramatizing Miranda's childhood and happy courtship with Ferdinand: only a minute after setting eyes on him, she kisses him rapturously. Stow expands upon plot details related to Miranda's childhood by including scenes in which Prospero and his toddler Miranda get into a boat and settle in on their island home, and a scene in which Caliban's tentative overtures

to Miranda are thwarted by Ariel's puckish intervention. Altogether, this prehistory takes up about a third of the film.<sup>5</sup>

Dominated by its girls' energy and initiative, this film version of *The Tempest* not only develops the idea of Miranda as romantic heroine (complete with pre-Raphaelite tresses), but it also casts a young girl actress in the role of Ariel.<sup>6</sup> Maybe nine or ten years old, this girl actress skips through the film's twelve minutes and entirely steals the show. Stow's casting of an unknown child actress as Ariel illustrates the fascination with girls and girlhood that is a defining feature of Victorian and Edwardian culture, as evinced by some of the other titles in Stow's oeuvre: "The Puritan Maid and the Royal Refugee," "What a Pretty Girl Can Do," "Three Sailormen and a Girl," and "The Love of a Nautch Girl." It participates, as well, in the long stage tradition, beginning in the seventeenth century, of casting a young female actress to play Ariel. As Orgel explains:

By the early eighteenth century . . . Ariel . . . had become exclusively a woman's role, usually taken by a singer who was also a dancer, and so it remained until the 1930s. In this form, Prospero's servant was the central figure in an increasingly elaborate series of operatic and balletic spectacles. (Shakespeare 1987, ed. Orgel 1987, 70)

This tradition of casting Ariel as a girl parallels perfectly the long history of assigning Miranda's "abhorred slave" speech to Prospero: both have their origins in the 1670 Davenant-Dryden adaptation, and both were just beginning to fall out of fashion at the time Stow's film was made: what is suppressed by the longstanding practice of silencing Miranda is expressed in the freedom embodied by a girl Ariel.

In Stow's *Tempest*, Ariel celebrates her liberation from the tree by Prospero with a little bow and a dance. She protects Miranda from Caliban's advances (Caliban is closer in this film to the medieval idea of the wild man than to a threatening monster) and escapes Caliban's angry clutches by making herself disappear and by turning herself, Rosalind-like, into a monkey. And she presides over the blossoming love between Ferdinand and a very forthright Miranda, teasing Ferdinand like a spunky little sister by brandishing her wand when he tries to get too close to Miranda. Ariel's freedom at the end of the film coincides with, and parallels, Miranda's wedding vows. Her performance is enhanced by Stow's effective use of film-splicing techniques to make her disappear and reappear, such as when she playfully eludes Ferdinand and when she makes the picnic disappear in the banquet scene. For his part, Stow's enjoyment of the possibilities offered by his new technology stops little short of childish glee. Complete with simple frock and unruly locks, Stow's girl Ariel is at one with the Edwardian English landscape in which this *Tempest* was filmed, and at her release she prances away from the field into the forest, ever the "child of nature."

Like Caliban, Ariel presents a broad range of casting options that can fundamentally alter the interpretation of the play. Choices that are made in casting and performing Caliban — be it in the European tradition of the wild man, as an African, Native American, or West Indian — establish the context for a production or adaptation of *The Tempest*. So, too, with Ariel: as male (as in the manly Mao-suited Simon Russell Beale of Sam Mendes's 1993 production of *The Tempest*, restlessly eyeing freedom), he can be a threat or collaborator; as a girl, Ariel becomes a second daughter (or, in the case of Mazursky's film, a faithful girlfriend) to Prospero, which frames their relationship less in terms of the politics of race or class than gender. As Thompson points out, the opening question of the Davenant-Dryden version of *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island* (1667) — "Miranda, where's your sister?" — highlights Miranda's untenable solitariness on Shakespeare's original island. For centuries of stage tradition, Ariel was the answer to this question.

Shakespeare's Ariel defines himself with a male pronoun at the beginning of the play — "to thy strong bidding task / Ariel and all his quality" (1.2.192-93) — and Prospero praises him as "brave" (206). But Prospero also considers Ariel too "delicate" to perform the commands of Sycorax and charges him to make himself "like a nymph o' th' sea" (301), a disguise that is "subject to no sight but thine and mine" (302), like a kind of private performance of a court masque. As Thompson notes, "Apart from Miranda herself, the only females mentioned in the First Folio's list of the 'Names of the Actors' are Iris, Ceres, Juno, and the Nymphs, all of whom are 'spirits' explicitly impersonated by Ariel and his 'fellows'" (1991, 45). Ariel's disguise as a sea-nymph may allude to the performance of Prince Henry's teenaged sister, Elizabeth, as a sea nymph in Samuel Daniel's *Tethys' Festival*, performed for her brother's investiture in 1610.<sup>7</sup> The lyrics of "Come Unto These Yellow Sands" provide a thumbnail sketch of girls' performances as dancers in the Jacobean court masque:

Come unto these yellow sands  
 And then take hands:  
 Courtsied when you have and kissed  
 The wild waves whist  
 Foot it featly here and there. (1.2.374-78)

When the boy actor playing Ariel put on the sea-nymph costume, he was disguising himself, for Prospero, in the kind of part that would have been played by a girl, performing in a courtly entertainment on a private stage.

Prospero's praise for Ariel throughout the play highlights stereotypically feminine and specifically girlish qualities, such as "dainty" and "delicate." When Prospero commends Ariel for

his song, "Where the Bee Sucks," he praises him as "my dainty Ariel" (5.1.95). In his *A World of Words* (1598), John Florio includes "dainty" in a string of equivalent terms that evoke girlhood in different ways: "delicious, dainty, delicate, wanton, effeminate." "Delicate Ariel" (1.2.272, 442) also uses a term associated with femininity: Cotgrave's *A Dictionary of the French and English Tonges* (1611) defines "delicat" as "daintie; pleasing, prettie, delicious; tender, nice." Prospero's other affectionate names for Ariel, such as "my bird" (4.1.184), and, finally, "my Ariel, chick" (5.1.316), use terms associated, in the *OED*, with children, and, in the case of "bird," specifically girl children, implying that for Prospero, Ariel is another beloved, obedient daughter. When Ariel returns from fixing the boat and reuniting the sailors and passengers, Prospero calls him "My tricky spirit" (5.1.226). For Cotgrave, "tricky" is "Prettie and neat; minion, briske." At a time when Prospero's affectionate language towards Ariel conveys his feelings about their imminent separation, the shared connotations of "tricky" and "minion," terms used for both girls and boy favorites, highlight the common ground that Ariel occupies between adorable girlhood and adorable boyhood.

Ariel's life as a girl does not exactly begin, then, with the Davenant-Dryden version of the play, *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island*. But the part of Ariel, in what Virginia Mason and Alden T. Vaughan appropriately describe as a "radical *revamping*" (Shakespeare 1999, ed. Vaughan and Vaughan, 76, emphasis added) of *The Tempest* is long thought to have been played by a young actress. However, as Orgel points out, Ariel in this adaptation was "far more explicitly male than Shakespeare's." In this version, Ariel makes no appearances as a sea nymph, Ceres, or a Harpy, although many of the girlish adjectives such as "dainty" and "delicate" are retained. To underscore Ariel's masculine identity, Davenant and Dryden invented his female counterpart and dance partner, Milcha, whose sole line, "Here!" bespeaks her subordinate position. Ariel and Milcha constitute the play's second female couple, joining Hippolito, a breeches role, and his love Dorinda, who is Miranda's sister. The first Restoration Ariel may have been Moll Davis, a well-established child performer whom Pepys called "the pretty girl" (although his wife dubbed her "the most impertinent slut" [Pepys 1976]). Pepys had admired Davis's singing and dancing for years, ever since she had appeared in boys' clothes in *The Slighted Maid* (1663). Richard Flecknoe's "To Mis: Davies, on her excellent dancing" (1669) even describes her as a kind of Ariel: "Who wou'd not think to see thee dance so light, / Tho wer't all air? Or else all soul and spirit" (cited in Shakespeare 1999, ed. Vaughan and Vaughan, 78). In 1667, at about eighteen or nineteen, Davis also played Celania, the Restoration counterpart of the Jailer's Daughter in Davenant's *The Rivals*, and it was around this time that she became the mistress of Charles II. The success of Davis's performance as

Ariel can be judged by Pepys's description of her successor in the role as "ill done, by [Winifred] Gosnell in lieu of Mall Davis" (Howe 1992, 74 and Highfill 1984, 222-24).

Far from the solitary Miranda of the Jacobean stage, then, the Restoration *Tempest* presents a veritable bevy of beauties. Ariel, Milcha, Hippolito, and Dorinda, along with the innumerable nymphs and "ariel spirits" that appeared in subsequent iterations of *The Enchanted Island*, add to *The Tempest* a sizeable population of parts for girls, as well as male parts played by girls. The very words Pepys used to describe the play, such as "innocent" and "mighty pretty," suggest the extent to which *The Tempest* itself becomes identified with girlhood on the Restoration stage (Pepys 1976, 189). With the addition of these new characters and a sizeable expansion of the parts of Ariel and Miranda, the Restoration *Tempest* reflects and promotes the keen Restoration appetite for girl characters and performers. This works two ways. On the one hand, as I have suggested, girl characters highlight the acceptance of women on the Restoration stage and promote, as well, a reading of the play that prioritizes girlhood. On the other, by providing an opportunity for plenty of attractive young women to display themselves on stage and dance around in sparkly costumes, the promotion of girlhood in the Restoration *Tempest* also provides plenty of eye-candy for the delectation of the Restoration male gaze.

Miranda's additions primarily take the form of boy-crazy dialogue with her sister Dorinda and some expanded flirtation with Ferdinand. For Ariel, the playwrights added a subplot in which Ariel angers Prospero by failing to protect Hippolito from Ferdinand, allowing for the *frisson* of Prospero's anger at Ariel — "I'll chain thee in the North for thy neglect" (Davenant and Dryden 1670, 66) — as well as for Ariel's long, meditative, soliloquy on "Harsh Discord" (68). Davenant and Dryden also added a number of new songs for Ariel, including the "seductive" Echo song, "Dry Those Eyes" (37), and the duet "Go thy Way" (200, 43), which was sung with Ferdinand (Winkler 2000). This foregrounding of the performance of girlhood works both in tandem and in tension with the play's strongly monarchical and traditionally patriarchal values, as Michael Dobson (1991) and Katherine Maus (1982) have noted. It confirms and solicits the Restoration audience's interest in girls' experiences and subjectivity, overcoming Puritan taboos associated with female performance. And it updates the Jacobean transvestite stage by turning Ariel, a part originally written for a boy actor who takes on various female disguises, into a part for a girl actor who adopts a predominantly masculine identity. Although the play's spectacles of courtship and service overtly reinforce Prospero's authority and the institution of marriage, they also celebrate the return of a monarchy that enables and approves of a wider range of girl parts and employs more girls on stage.

Thomas Shadwell's 1674 operatic version of the Dryden-Davenant adaptation further expands the performance of Ariel's girlhood. Many of Ariel's new numbers, such as the opening, "O bid thy faithful Ariel fly," "While you here do snoring lie," and "Before you can say come and go," are drawn from the play's dialogue. It expands the other girl parts, too: Milcha gets her own song, "Full Fathom Five," and performs "Dry Those Eyes" as a duet with Ariel. Even Dorinda gets some songs, "Adieu to the Pleasures" by James Hart and "Dear Pretty Youth." The opera's concluding sea-themed masque, involving sea gods such as Neptune and Amphitrite, multiplies the number of fairies, or "Aerial spirits," who sing "Where the Bee Sucks" in response to Prospero's final, show-business order to Ariel: "be visible . . . and entertain 'em with a Song" (*Tempest* 1674, 80). Ariel's concluding speech vows eternal fidelity to Prospero, implying the promise of further performances, and the play closes with the sight of Ariel "hovering in the Air" (81). The Restoration fascination with ever-more-elaborate theatrical spectacle, from scenery to machinery and songs and dances, informs the Shadwell opera's increasing focus on Ariel and on Ariel's world; put another way, Ariel's growing attraction and centrality as a character motivate the development of theatrical effects engineered to display her.

As the Restoration *Tempest* became more and more Ariel's play, the character became increasingly a vehicle for the girl actress: Sarah Siddons, for example, performed the role of Ariel at the age of eleven in a revised version of *The Tempest* produced by her parents in 1766. The publication of volumes such as *Songs and Masques in The Tempest* (Anonymous circa 1690), *The Ariels Songs in the Play call'd the Tempest* (Banister 1675), and *Songs and Chorusses in The Tempest* (Anonymous 1777) reflected readers' and audiences' tastes and priorities. Ariel was the young Anne Field's first theatrical role in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's 1777 production of *The Tempest* at Drury Lane, with music by Thomas Linley (Stone 1956). To showcase the talents of his protégée, Linley composed new arrangements of Ariel's original songs, such as "Come unto these yellow Sands," and of Shadwellian additions such as "O bid your faithful Ariel fly," "While you here do snoring lie," and "Before you can say come and go," which ends, fetchingly, "Do you love me, Master? — no?" (Cholij 1998, 91).

Anne Field's performance was decidedly childlike. As one review explains: "The child who performed the part of Ariel acquitted herself very creditably; her manner of acting was extremely pleasing, and her singing delicate and pretty, but as may naturally be expected from a child, rather too weak" (Cholij 1998, 92). Another dismissal of the production as "an enchantment suited to the childish taste of the present times" nevertheless confirms the play's ongoing investment in an Ariel increasingly characterized as young and girlish (Shakespeare 1987, ed. Orgel, 67). A 1780 puppet version of the play, called *The Shipwreck*, illustrates Ariel's ongoing identification as a female part

in a stage direction that refers to her with a feminine pronoun: "Ariel descends, a wand in her hand, and winged" (Anonymous 1780, 9).

After some attempts at returning to Shakespeare's original text by Garrick and others, with mixed results, Kemble's 1789 *Tempest* (Shakespeare 1789) restored some of the Davenant-Dryden material, showcasing Miranda and Ariel as "two young ladies." In this version, however, Milcha does not make an appearance: in the absence of a paramour, Ariel becomes, instead, a daughter to Prospero, and one review describes how Prospero's "behests to Ariel were chastened by a tender regard for so graceful and exquisite a being" (Dymkowski 2000, 14).<sup>8</sup> As a compendium of all the earlier versions, Kemble's *Tempest* included all of the songs composed for Ariel, from Shakespeare to Shadwell to Garrick. Ariel, listed as a women's part in the *Dramatis Personae* of the 1789 edition, was first played by the child star, Miss Romanzini (later Maria Theresa Bland), who was about eighteen or nineteen, then by Miss de Camp (later Mrs. Charles Kemble), and in 1807, by Margaret Meadows, whose performance prompted this meditation on girlish modesty by Leigh Hunt:<sup>9</sup>

A young lady of the name of Meadows appeared on the first night in the part of Ariel, and has since kept her situation with the most flattering applause. Her face though not handsome is sensible, and exhibits a sort of earnestness very natural to that active and enterprising spirit; her figure possesses elegance and delicacy; if we thought it wanted something of sprightly ease, perhaps we did not make sufficient allowance for that look of corporeality which an actress, however light her motions may be, cannot positively avoid in the representation of a being, who is air itself . . . We very much admired the air of modesty which this young lady preserved in a dress necessarily light and thin. Modesty is the charm that is soonest discovered and admired in a female, though it is the least anxious to look forth or obtrude upon the beholder. The modesty of an actress is not only delightful from its novelty, but it makes the spectator contented with himself, as well as with the performers, because he no longer blushes to patronize them. (Hunt 1807, 32)

Although these lines convey the extent to which Ariel is a part for a singer (in this case, the prize pupil of the composer John Davy, who wrote the new overture), they also suggest that Ariel is venturing, in this production, into Miranda's territory. With new songs such as "To see thee, so gentle a creature, distress" (30) and a duet with Ferdinand, "What new delights invade my bosom" (31; Muller 1994, 199), however, Miranda is also entering Ariel's territory through song. In Kemble's production, then, Ariel is a figure more for demure innocence than for operatic performance: Hunt explains how inappropriate it would be for Ariel's figure to be *too* enchanting. Here, the fairy and the daughter draw from each other to project an image of ideal girlhood. This



emphasis on girlhood is reinforced by an Epilogue performed by Dorinda, Miss Elizabeth Farren, who begs, "Stay! — and let the magic scene remain awhile."

Macready's 1838 return to the "genuine text of the poet" (Shakespeare 1987, ed. Orgel, 68), which restores, as John Forster put it, "the Enchanted Island of Shakespeare to the innocence and golden purity of its first creation" (Forster 1896, 66) reflects a shift in representations of Ariel from a figure of song to one of spectacle. Macready's journals attest to a near-obsession with the technology of Ariel's flights, and the part demanded the nimble athleticism of Priscilla Horton, who was described as "perfectly charming," "pretty, winning," and a "clever little actress." In her letter to Macready, written in haste after returning home from the show, Anna Jameson is effusive: "I never thought to see Shakespeare's most poetical Drama produced with such exquisite and felicitous effect — you have done what I deemed impossible" (Jameson 1832). Flying across the stage, hoisted up, as a Harpy, in a basket of fruit, rising up from the sea on the back of a dolphin (Nilan 1975, 199): the nineteenth-century Ariel is now prized not for her musical but for her acrobatic abilities. Retaining her prominence at the center of the action, she becomes a figure of costumes, special effects, and gymnastic prowess, with visual cues, rather than vocal, taking over the job of conveying the quality of the airy spirit.

Described by the London *Times* reviewer as "a fairy tale" in which "Ariel is the ever-prominent personage throughout the action" (Nilan 1975, 204), Charles Kean's 1857 production at the Princess's Theatre featured the thirteen-year-old Kate Terry as Ariel. Based on the Shakespearean text, the production downplayed Ariel's singing, which was assigned to an invisible choir led by a Miss Poole (Shakespeare 1857). Perhaps Kean recalled the problems posed by little girl Ariels such as Miss Meadows, who couldn't really pull off the songs. No longer an operatic tour de force, then, the part of Ariel played by Kate Terry was, instead, a plausible fairy: "Kean has given us, for the first time the dainty spirit, the ethereal essence that could be compressed within a rifted pine" (Jackson 1997, 43). As *The Saturday Review* explained:

The task which Mr. Kean appears to have set himself is to show Ariel in the greatest possible variety of situations, keeping up the notion of a spiritual being by the dazzling light with which he is surrounded, the suddenness of his appearance, and the swiftness with which he passes from spot to spot . . . The part was taken by Miss Kate Terry, who brought youth, grace, and intelligence. (Pascoe 1880, 340)

Displaying his familiarity with the Shakespearean original, as well as with Kate Terry's history of playing boy parts such as Prince Arthur (her sister, Ellen, played Mamillius), the reviewer uses the masculine pronoun to refer to Ariel. But the photograph of Kate Terry as Ariel is undoubtedly

feminine, illustrating how girlhood has become essential to the character. Lewis Carroll (for obvious reasons) admired her performance enormously: "The exquisitely graceful and beautiful Ariel . . . her appearance as a sea-nymph was one of the most beautiful living pictures I ever saw" (Collingwood 1909, 166).

Kean retained Shadwell's memorable concluding tableau of Ariel hovering on stage. As Geoffrey Ashton observes, "measured by frequency of exhibition at the Royal Academy between 1769 and 1900, the single most popular Shakespearean character was . . . Ariel" (Ashton 1980, 48). As girl performers of Ariel continue through the nineteenth century, including Maria Foote (1821), Maria Tree (1822), Elizabeth Rainforth (1842), Julia St. George (1847), and Alice Dodd (1865) (Marshall 2012, 361-62, 367; Kemp 2010, 121), the girl Ariel expands into the Victorian fairy paintings and the work of Arthur Rackham. Kean's production specifically informs the influential image of Ariel on a bat's back: "Enter divers spirits, in various shapes, and hunt them about; Ariel, flying on a bat's back, setting them on" (Shakespeare 1857, 57).

The performance of Ariel's girlhood, however, is not limited to young girls. Although girls predominate in the casting of Ariel from Dryden and Davenant to the twentieth century, Ariel was also played by the forty-something Kitty Clive in Garrick's unsuccessful operatic version of *The Tempest* (1756), which was described as "castrating" Shakespeare's original. What survives is an incredible story about Thomas Arne spanking Mrs. Clive on the bottom for her rude treatment of the orchestra: "Such a manual flagellation as she had not received since she had quitted the nursery" (Cholij 1998, 84). F. C. Burnand's burlesque fairy drama, *Ariel* (1883) preserved the evolving stage tradition of the fairy Ariel by casting former child actress Nelly Farren, who had earned a reputation as the "principal boy" in *Gaiety* burlesques. Sadly, reviewers found "nothing distinctly Shakespearean" in the thirty-five-year-old's performance of Ariel (Schoch 2002, 71). Paul Mazursky's *Tempest* nods to these mature diva Ariels and to the Restoration *Tempest* as a vehicle for girl singers generally, when Molly Ringwald and Susan Sarandon as Miranda and Ariel sing a duet of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love," on their isolated Greek island.

Berbohm Tree cast his daughter, Viola, in his revisionist production of *The Tempest*, which substituted his Caliban for Ariel in the play's final tableau. Describing it as "this fairy-play," Tree writes in his "A Personal Explanation": "My contention is that unless *The Tempest* be produced in such a way as to bring home to audiences the fantasy and the beauties of the play it were better not to attempt it at all" (Shakespeare 1904). Tree makes Ariel an essential part of his own Caliban's psyche, with stage directions that weave Ariel into Caliban's dream:

Beautiful music is heard. At its sound Caliban becomes transformed and is moved to dance, making inarticulate sounds as if attempting to sing. Ariel enters with the Nymphs; Caliban

disappears over the rock in search of wood; the Nymphs disport themselves on the sands, offering Ariel the treasures of the shore, and decking his person with their aid. (15)

In this painting based on the production, Ariel leads Caliban, Stefano, and Trinculo about "like a will-o'-the-wisp" (47). The wedding masque takes place in "a fairy glen and a lake, in which the Naiads of the winding brooks are playing among the water-lilies" (48). In the final tableau, the nymphs sing, "Come Unto these Yellow Sands," Ariel sings "Where the Bee Sucks" and gradually takes flight, and Caliban is "king once more."

Just before the beginning of the twentieth century, the male Ariel returns with William Poel's Jacobean *Tempest* at the National Theatre in 1897. Poel cast a male Ariel, Mr. H. Herbert, but he used a female actress, Miss Deane, as a sea-nymph (Shakespeare 1987, ed. Orgel 70). This was just a few years before Lena Ashwell's 1904 *Tempest* reinstated Miranda's "abhorred slave" speech. Poel and Ashwell thus revised the longstanding stage traditions of girlhood associated with Ariel and Miranda by returning to Shakespeare's text. Although film versions of *The Tempest*, from the little boy Cupids of *Prospero's Books* to the haggard middle-aged men of Jarman's *Tempest* and the BBC *Tempest*, illustrate the dominance of the twentieth-century re-conception of Ariel's character as male, the tradition of girl Ariels never really died out. Leslie French's well-known Ariel at the Old Vic in 1930, wearing nothing but a loincloth, showcased the character's abilities as a singer and dancer, looking back to the two centuries of girl Ariels. At seventeen, Judi Dench played Ariel in a school production. And actresses continue to evoke and explore the longstanding tradition of the girl Ariel. Examples include Elsa Lanchester's silver-winged fairy costume at the Old Vic in 1934, with her husband Charles Laughton as Prospero; Giulia Lazzarini as an exuberant Pierette doll in Strehler's *La Tempesta*; Aunjanue Ellis's emphatically un-girly Ariel in the New York Shakespeare Festival 1995, with Patrick Stewart; Bonnie Engstrom's "birdlike" Ariel, "clearly envious of Miranda," in David Thacker's 1995 RSC Production (Holland 1997, 229); and Rachel Sanderson's "recalcitrant and otherworldly teenager" in the Shared Experience Company production directed by Nancy Meckler (1996-97; Shakespeare 2002, ed. Lindley, 68). Perhaps Ben Wishaw's androgynous Ariel in Taymor's *Tempest* comes closest to reflecting to Shakespeare's original concept of the character, starting off as a young, slender male, but transforming himself into a female sea nymph for the songs "Come Unto these Yellow Sands" and "Full Fathom Five" and into a terrifying Harpy in the banquet scene. However, replacing the masque scene with a few moments of psychedelic astrology is a tragically missed opportunity.

## Pearls and Coral

The tradition of the girl Ariel reaches its final apotheosis in Sylvia Plath's *Ariel* (1965). The title of her posthumous poetry collection, which Robert Lowell insisted was only a reference to her favorite horse, reflects the ongoing dialogue that Plath had with *The Tempest* throughout her girlhood and career.<sup>10</sup> As Ted Hughes explains: "It was as if all her poetry were made up of the feats and shows performed by the poetic spirit Ariel. Whereas her poetry is the biology of Ariel, the ontology of Ariel — the story of Ariel's imprisonment in the pine, before Prospero opened it" (Hughes 1982, 17). Plath's first experience of *The Tempest* can be dated to her girlhood. In January 1945, Plath's mother Aurelia gave her a copy of the complete works of Shakespeare, with the assignment to read *The Tempest* and tell her the story: the reward was a trip to Boston to see Margaret Webster's production of the play, with Vera Zorina as Ariel. Biographer Andrew Wilson writes, "On the original playbill, Aurelia scribbled that the children were 'completely transported to the magical island of Prospero' . . . In her diary, Sylvia described the event as the biggest day of her life" (Wilson 2013, 44-45). From that time on, *The Tempest* was the foundational myth in Plath's life: casting her father, Otto, who died in 1940, as a kind of sea god Prospero and herself in alternate roles as dutiful (or resentful) daughter and gifted fairy protégée — and even, in her poem "Full Fathom Five," as grieving Ferdinand, "weeping again the king my father's wreck" (1.2.391). These competing roles shaped Plath's psyche and her poetry: the mid-century ideals of domesticity and femininity in which she reveled but against which she rebelled, the "airy" world of rarified intellectual and artistic achievement to which she aspired and for which she worked very hard, and her ever-present mourning for and fury at her lost father." She intended *Full Fathom Five* as the title for her first poetry collection, which eventually was published as *Colossus*. As she wrote in her journal:

It relates more richly to my life and imagery than anything else I've dreamed up: has the background of *The Tempest*, the association of the sea, which is a central metaphor for my childhood, my poems and the artist's subconscious, to the father image — relating to my own father, the buried male muse and god-creator risen to be my mate in Ted, to the sea-father Neptune — and the pearls and coral highly-wrought to art: pearls sea-changed from the ubiquitous grit of sorrow and dull routine. (Plath 2000, 381)

Illustrating the extent to which *The Tempest* pervaded Plath's imagination, this passage reveals how the play gave her an escape from "dull routine." She describes the poem "Full Fathom Five" as something she "dreamed up," but as Ariel's song, it also gestures towards the dream-landscape of *The Tempest*, which provided a filter for Plath's real-life relationships. This division between dream and art, on the one hand, and sorrow and dull routine, on the other — or between "pearls" and

"grit," in other words — not only speaks to the particularities of Plath's upbringing and struggles, but also provides an indication of how she read *The Tempest*, and Ariel in particular, as providing access to a fantasy dream-world of "pearls and coral highly-wrought."

This myth is at work in the composition of *Ariel* (originally entitled *Daddy*), produced in a spontaneous burst of creativity in December 1962, following her breakup with Hughes. As Wilson observes, Plath's childhood fixations on Otto and his memory became transferred onto Hughes: "As Ariel she had the power to conjure a whole world of 'airy spirits,' but she realized that she was a mere servant to the controlling father-muse figure of Prospero" (2013, 255). Nevertheless, "during the process of crafting [these poems], she finally becomes . . . herself" (5). Hughes would refer to Plath as Ariel in his work for the rest of his life, as in the poem, "Night-Ride on Ariel," part of his *Birthday Letters*. In Plath's poem "Ariel," lines that evoke the seafaring context of *The Tempest* and, specifically, Ariel's disguises as sea nymph and Ceres, take on personal resonance with the poet's childhood in coastal Massachusetts and her family life in Devon:

And now I  
Foam to wheat, a glitter of seas.  
The child's cry

Plath aligns Ariel's freedom and capacity with an Anglo-Saxon tale of forceful, untouchable girlhood, a mythical nude equestrian flouting postwar proprieties and transcending the limitations placed upon her sex:

White  
Godiva, I unpeel —  
Dead hands, dead stringencies.

Yet Plath ultimately reframes the androgynous Ariel's bid for freedom as a drive towards suicide, casting herself as a masculine arrow, hell-bent on the destruction of its irreconcilable opposite, a feminine self:

And I  
Am the arrow,  
The dew that flies  
Suicidal, at one with the drive  
Into the red  
Eye, the cauldron of morning (Plath 1965)

Removing Ariel from the world of girlhood fancy and returning Ariel to the more masculine, Jacobean form, Plath allegorizes the death of her dreams.

I have charted here two parallel traditions associated with *The Tempest's* interest in these female presences: the editing of Miranda's "abhorred slave" speech and the longstanding theatrical tradition of casting Ariel as a girl fairy. Both dismissed as outmoded and *déclassée*, these traditions nevertheless shape the ongoing reception of Miranda and Ariel, from the Restoration stage to the twentieth and twenty-first century stages and beyond, and in theater, film, and other arts, reflecting evolving models for and conceptualizations of girls and girlhood. As Prospero's girls represent a significant aspect of the history of *The Tempest*, revealing as well the key role played by girls and girlhood in the history of Shakespeare adaptation, they highlight the play's ongoing interest in girls and enshrine longstanding cultural traditions tied to the representation and dramatization of girlhood.

### Notes

1. I thank Ariane Balizet, Jenny Flaherty, Terry Goldie, David Goldstein, Erica Hateley, Marcela Kostihova, Seth Lerer, Bernice Neal, and Elizabeth Pentland for their helpful comments and encouragement. My recent book, *Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood* (Palgrave, 2014), contains my earlier thoughts on Miranda's "abhorred slave" speech, Ariel's girl disguises, and the Stow film. My title pays homage to Stephen Orgel's classic essay "Prospero's Wife," in appreciation of his influential and inspiring work on Shakespeare and gender.
2. All subsequent references to *The Tempest* will be to this edition (Shakespeare 1987).
3. Jameson continues: "Had he never created a Miranda, we should never have been made to feel how completely the purely natural and the purely ideal can blend into each other" (1832, 172).
4. In contrast to the emphatic teenaged normalcy of Ringwald's Miranda, the 1956 adaptation of *The Tempest*, *Forbidden Planet*, casts Alta as a kind of post-apocalyptic St. Francis, consorting with deer and tigers in an extension of the Romantic tradition of Miranda-as-Nature.
5. Stow's successors are often drawn to this aspect of the narrative: Taymor's *Tempest* shows Miranda's babyhood in a brief flashback; *Prospero's Books* represents her, cherubically, in a crib; and the Jarman *Tempest* consistently infantilizes its Miranda.
6. Ariel is also played by a young girl in Thanhouser's 1911 film version, now lost. A 9 December 1911 review from *The Moving Picture World* reads: "But Ariel is, perhaps, the only truly well-acted part in the picture. It is taken by a young lady who has put something of sprightliness and mystery into it, with the help of some well-chosen backgrounds. As a whole, the film will

please, not only because of its subject, but for the sake of the prettiness of parts of it" (<http://www.thanhouser.org>).

7. Saenger (1995) and Gurr (1989) propose that Ariel's original sea-nymph costume came from a sea-pageant celebrating the investiture of Prince Henry as Prince of Wales in June 1610. According to a pamphlet by Antony Munday, Corinea, the "very fayre and beautifull Nimphe," salutes the prince wearing "a Coronet of Pearls and Cockle shelles," which Saenger suggests is literalized in the song, "Full Fathom Five."
8. The word "exquisite" is frequently applied to both Miranda and Ariel: on "exquisite" as a term for girlhood, see Lerer 2012.
9. Hunt was the author of one of the great poems of girl-idolatry, "Jenny Kissed Me."
10. Lowell's Foreword to *Ariel* reads: "The title Ariel summons up Shakespeare's lovely, though slightly chilling and androgynous spirit, but the truth is that this Ariel is the author's horse" (Plath 1965, vii).

### Permissions

Joshua Reynolds, The Honorable Mrs Tollemache as Miranda (1773). English Heritage, Kenwood. English Heritage Archive. By permission.

After John Hamilton Mortimer. Scene from *The Tempest*, Caliban, Prospero, and Miranda. From Thomas Rowlandson, *Imitations of Modern Drawings* (London, 1801). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1953.

H. C. Selous, Illustration from *The Works of Shakespeare*, co-edited by Mary Cowden Clarke (London, 1830). From [internetshakespeare.uvic.ca](http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca).

From *A Collection of Prints, from Pictures Painted for the Purpose of Illustrating the Dramatic Works of Shakspeare*, by John Boydell (1803). Newberry Library Digital Collections for the Classroom.

Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, "Miranda Teaching Young Caliban to Read" (1809). Victoria and Albert Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Priscilla Horton as Ariel in *The Tempest* (1838).

Kate Terry as Ariel, 1857. Mander and Mitchenson / University of Bristol Theatre Collection / ArenaPAL. By permission.

Kate Terry as Ariel in Charles Kean's *The Tempest*, 1857. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Louis Rhead, *Ariel on a Bat's Back* (before 1918). Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image Collection. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Chorus of Fairies in F. C. Burnand's *Burlesque, Ariel*, Gaiety Theatre, London, 8 October 1883.

Frederick Henry Townsend, *The Tempest*, II.i. Mr. Lionel Brough as Trinculo, Mr. Louis Calvert as Stephano, Viola Tree as Ariel, Mr. Tree as Caliban. 1904. Folger Shakespeare Library. Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image Collection. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Viola Tree as Ariel, 1904. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Margaret Webster Production of *The Tempest*, 1945, with Vera Zorina as Ariel. Michael Schwartz Library, Cleveland State University.

Carl van Vechten, Vera Zorina as Ariel, photographed April 2, 1945. Carl van Vechten Trust. By permission of the Carl Van Vechten Trust.



## References

- Anonymous. ca. 1690. *Songs and Masques in The Tempest*. London.
- Anonymous. 1777. *Songs and Chorusses in The Tempest. As it is Performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane London*. London.
- Anonymous. 1780. *The Shipwreck*. London.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2006. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York: Norton.
- Ashton, Geoffrey. 1980. *Shakespeare's Heroines in the Nineteenth Century*. Derbyshire: Buxton Museum and Art Gallery.
- Banister, John. 1675. *The Ariels Songs in the Play call'd The Tempest*. London.
- Brown, Lyn Mikel. 1998. *Raising Their Voices: The Politics of Girls' Anger*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Brydon, Diana. 1984. "Re-writing *The Tempest*." *World Literatures Written in English* 23: 75-88.
- Césaire, Aimé. 1969. *Une Tempête*. Paris: Seuil.
- Cholij, Irena. 1998. "'A Thousand Twangling Instruments': Music and *The Tempest* on the Eighteenth-Century London Stage." *Shakespeare Survey* 51: 79-94.
- Collingwood, Stuart Dodgson. 1909. *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll*. New York: The Century Co.
- Cotgrave, John. 1611. *A Dictionary of the French and English Tonges*. London.
- Cowden Clarke, Mary. 1853. *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*. 3 vols. London.
- Davenant, Sir William, and John Dryden. 1670. *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island*. London.
- Dobson, Michael. 1991. *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Donaldson, Laura E. 1992. *Decolonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender, and Empire-Building*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Dymkowski, Christine. 2000. *Shakespeare in Production: The Tempest*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Florio, John. 1598. *A World of Words*. London.
- Forbidden Planet*. 1956. Dir. Fred M. Wilcox. Perf. Walter Pidgeon, Anne Francis, Leslie Nielsen. US. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- Forster, John. 1896. *George Henry Lewes: Dramatic Essays*. London.
- Frye, Northrop. 1988. *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Furness, Horace Howard, ed. 1892. *The Tempest. A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare*. Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- Goldberg, Jonathan. 2004. *Tempest in the Caribbean*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gurr, Andrew. 1989. "The Tempest's Tempest at Blackfriars." *Shakespeare Survey* 41: 91-102.
- Harris, Frank. 1912. *The Women of Shakespeare*. London.
- Higginbotham, Jennifer. 2013. *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Sisters: Gender, Transgression, Adolescence*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press.
- Highfill, Philip H., et al. 1984. *Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Holland, Peter. 1997. *English Shakespeares: Shakespeare on the English Stage in the 1990s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Howe, Elizabeth. 1992. *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660-1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hughes, Ted. 1982. "Sylvia Plath and Her Journals." *Grand Street* 1: 86-99.
- Hunt, Leigh. 1807. *Critical Essays on the Performers of the London Theatres*. London.
- Jackson, Russell. 1997. "Shakespeare's Fairies in Victorian Criticism and Performance." In *Victorian Fairy Painting*. Edited by Jeremy Maas and Jane Martineau. London: Royal Academy of Arts. 38-45.
- Jameson, Anna. 1832. *Shakespeare's Heroines: Characteristics of Women Moral, Poetical, and Historical*. London.
- Jameson, Anna. 1838. Autograph Letter Signed from Anna Jameson, London to W. C. Macready. Manuscript. Folger Shakespeare Library.
- Kemp, Theresa D. 2010. *Women in the Age of Shakespeare*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press.
- Lamming, George. 1960. *The Pleasures of Exile*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Leininger, Lorrie Jerrell. 1980. "The Miranda Trap: Sexism and Racism in Shakespeare's *Tempest*." In *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*. Edited by Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 285-94.
- Lerer, Seth. 2012. "'I've Got a Feeling for Ophelia': Childhood and Performance." In *The Afterlife of Ophelia*. Edited by Kaara L. Peterson and Deanne Williams. New York: Palgrave. 11-28.
- Loomba, Ania. 1989. *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Marshall, Gail, ed. 2012. *Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Martin, Helena Faucit. 1885. *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters*. London.
- Maus, Katharine Eisaman. 1982. "Arcadia Lost: Politics and Revision in the Restoration *Tempest*." *Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 13: 189-209.
- McKernan, Luke. 2005. "Percy Stow." In *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*. Edited by Richard Abel. New York: Routledge. 613.
- Muller, Julia. 1994. "Music and Meaning in *The Tempest*." In *Reclamations of Shakespeare*. Edited by A. J. Hoenselaars. J. Amsterdam: Rodopi Press. 187-200.
- Nilan, Mary M. 1975. "Shakespeare Illustrated: Charles Kean's 1857 Production of *The Tempest*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 26: 196-204.
- Orgel, Stephen. 1994. "The Comedian as the Character C." In *English Comedy*. Edited by Michael Cordner, Peter Holland, and John Kerrigan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 36-54.
- Orgel, Stephen. 1984. "Prospero's Wife." *Representations* 8: 1-13.
- Orkin, Martin. 1997. "Whose Things of Darkness? Reading/Representing *The Tempest* in South Africa after 1984." In *Shakespeare and National Culture*. Edited by John Joughin. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 142-70.
- Pascoe, Charles Eyre. 1880. *Our Actors and Actresses. The Dramatic List*. London: David Bogue.
- Pepys, Samuel. 1976. Vol. 9 of *Diary of Samuel Pepys: A New and Complete Transcription*. Edited by Robert Latham. 11 vols. London: Harper Collins.
- Plath, Sylvia. 2000. *The Journals of Sylvia Plath*. Edited by Karen V. Kukil. London: Faber and Faber.
- Plath, Sylvia. 1965. *Ariel*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Prospero's Books*. 1991. Dir. Peter Greenaway, Perf. John Gielgud, Michael Clark, Michel Blanc. UK. Allarts.
- Richardson, William. 1788. *Essays on Some of Shakespeare's Dramatic Characters*. London.
- Saenger, Michael Baird. 1995. "The Costumes of Caliban and Ariel qua Sea-Nymph." *Notes and Queries*, n.s. 42: 334-36.
- Sanchez, Melissa. 2008. "Seduction and Service in *The Tempest*." *Studies in Philology* 105: 50-83.
- Schoch, Richard. 2002. *Not Shakespeare: Bardolatry and Burlesque in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shakespeare, William. 2011. *The Tempest*. Edited by Grace Tiffany. Evans Shakespeare Editions. London: Cengage.
- Shakespeare, William. 2002. *The Tempest*. Edited by David Lindley. The New Cambridge Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Shakespeare, William. 1999; rev. ed. 2011. *The Tempest*. Edited by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. The Arden Shakespeare. London. Bloomsbury.
- Shakespeare, William. 1987. *The Tempest*. Edited by Stephen Orgel. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shakespeare, William. 1904. *Shakespeare's Comedy The Tempest Arranged for the Stage by Herbert Beerbohm Tree*. London.
- Shakespeare, William. 1857. *Shakespeare's Play of The Tempest. Arranged for Representation at the Princess's Theatre, with historical and explanatory notes by Charles Kean*. London.
- Shakespeare, William. 1830. *The Plays of William Shakespeare: The Comedies*. Edited by Charles and Mary Cowden-Clarke. London: Cassell and Company.
- Shakespeare, William. 1806. *Tempest, or, The Enchanted Island. A play, Adapted to the stage, with additions from Davenant and Dryden by J. P. Kemble*. London.
- Shakespeare, William. 1789. *The Tempest, or, The Enchanted Island. With Additions from Dryden*. As Compiled by J. P. Kemble. London.
- Showalter, Elaine. 1991. "Miranda's Story." In *Sister's Choice: Tradition and Change in American Women's Writing*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 22-42.
- Slights, Jessica. 2001. "Rape and the Romanticization of Miranda." *SEL* 41.2: 357-79.
- Squire, William Barclay. 1921. "The Music of Shadwell's *Tempest*." *Musical Quarterly* 7: 565-78.
- Stone, George Winchester. 1956. "Shakespeare's *Tempest* at Drury Lane during Garrick's Management." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 7: 1-7.
- Tempest*. 2010. Dir. Julie Taymor, Perf. Helen Mirren, Felicity Jones, Djimon Hounsou. US. Miramax Films.
- Tempest*. 1982. Dir. Paul Mazursky. Perf. John Cassavetes, Gena Rowlands, Susan Sarandon. US. Columbia Pictures.
- Tempest*. 1980. Dir. John Gorrie. Perf. Michael Hordern, Derek Godfrey, David Waller. UK. BBC.
- Tempest*. 1979. Dir. Derek Jarman. Perf. Peter Bull, David Meyer, Neil Cunningham. UK. Boyd's Company.
- Tempest*. 1908. Dir. Percy Stow. UK. Clarendon.
- The tempest, or, The enchanted island a comedy, as it is now acted at His Highness the Duke of York's Theatre*. 1674. London.
- Tempesta*. 1983. Dir. Giorgio Strehler. Piccolo Teatro di Milano.
- Thompson, Ann. 1991. "'Miranda, Where's Your Sister?': Reading Shakespeare's *The Tempest*." In *Feminist Criticism: Theory and Practice*. Edited by Susan Sillars. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 45-56.

- Williams, Deanne. 2014. *Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood*. London: Palgrave.
- Wilson, Andrew. 2013. *Mad Girl's Love Song: Sylvia Plath and Life before Ted*. New York: Scribner.
- Winkler, Amanda Eubanks. 2000. "Gender and Genre: Musical Conventions on the English Stage, 1660-1705." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan.
- Wynter, Sylvia. 1996. "Beyond Miranda's Meanings: Un/Silencing the 'Demonic Ground' of Caliban's Women." In *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. Edited by Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh. London: Routledge. 476-82.
- Zabus, Chantal. 2002. *Tempests after Shakespeare*. New York: Palgrave.