Desdemona, Juliet and Constance Meet the Third Wave

Shelley Scott

Kelly Thornton is Artistic Director of Nightwood Theatre, Canada's longest-running feminist theatre company, which is based in Toronto. Under Thornton's leadership, Nightwood has developed a new theatre program called Busting Out for girls twelve to fifteen years old. The program is designed to encourage girls to express themselves and to introduce them to the idea that the images they see in the media are not the only images of women available to them. Thornton calls the grassroots initiative "a hardcore feminist action," and expresses the hope that the program will eventually find its way into the school system, with girls serving as leaders for other girls: "it can be like Brownies!" (Thornton interview, 2002).

I begin with this anecdote because it illustrates the kind of attention being paid to girls in contemporary feminism, and does so in the context of Canadian theatre. In this article, I will look at another product of Canadian theatre, the play *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* by Ann-Marie MacDonald. I want to demonstrate how its continuing popularity may be due to an engagement with sexual politics and post-modernism that I will define as fundamental to third-wave feminism, and how these issues are particularly evident in performance. The proliferation of books and articles published around the turn of the millennium that attempt to address the complexities of feminism for young women suggest that girls have a wider array of possible models and definitions than ever before.[i] I am not the first to point out, however, that some of those identifications may not necessarily look empowering from a second-wave feminist perspective. But I will go further and say that

challenging, contradictory representations of young women lie at the heart of what is now being called third-wave feminism.

This was my interest in attending a conference entitled Third Wave Feminism, held at the University of Exeter in July of 2002.[ii] Identity, representation, and cultural production are issues particularly pertinent to third-wave feminism, which was sometimes referred to at the conference as "choice-ism." This phrase was meant to imply that a supposedly unified feminist agenda of the second wave, of the 1960s through the early 1980s, has been fragmented to the point where it is left to the individual to define an individualized feminism.[iii] In the work of such recent third-wave writers as Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards (*Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future*), this translates into a playfulness with representation and identity. The most frequently cited example from popular culture is Madonna, an icon celebrated for her willingness to don and discard one image after another. Inherent in the feminist embrace of playfulness is both a dismissal of sexual stereotypes, through rendering visible their arbitrariness, and a campy celebration of femininity. While these projects might seem to be contradictory, they are central to the third-wave insistence on redefining, literally, what feminism looks like.

As the conference organizers explained it in their call for papers, the event was an attempt to "capture a definition of third-wave feminism(s) in order to redirect feminist enquiry without acceding to the defeatism implicit in [the term] postfeminism." At the same time, the conference organizers, Gillis and Mumford, advise caution in the unproblematized use of the wave paradigm, suggesting that the third-wave has tended to apprehend a part of the second wave as if it were the whole and vice versa (Gillis and Mumford, 2004,177). The difficulty in capturing definitions is apparent in the range of ways these terms are used. At

one extreme, Suzanna Danuta Walters, for example, disavows the word postfeminism as being too much associated with the work of certain conservative American writers and believes that the term "… encompasses the backlash sentiment… as well as a more complex phenomenon of a recent form of antifeminism" (Walters, 1995,117). [iv] Other writers, such as Sophia Phoca and Sarah Gamble, use the terms postfeminism and third-wave feminism almost interchangeably to denote a scholarly understanding of "an alignment with postmodernist theory in destabilizing notions of gender" (Gamble, 2001, p. 298). Others, such as Heywood and Drake, Baumgardner and Richards, and Gillis and Mumford, specifically adopt the term third-wave in order to signal a generational shift, but one that does not entail a rejection of what has come before, insisting that "third wave feminist politics allow for *both* equality and difference" (Gillis and Mumford, 2004, 168). Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake, the editors of *Third Wave Agenda*, maintain that the biggest difference between second and third-wave feminism is a third-wave comfort with contradiction and pluralism. They identify the third-wave as originating with critiques of the women's movement by theorists of colour such as bell hooks, ensuring that third-wave feminism is intrinsically plural and hybrid, and that it is linked with activism and not just theory (1997 p. 3). This activist element seems to be what differentiates the use of the term postfeminist from the label third-wave. Sarah Gamble, for example, defines postfeminism as "more theoretical than actual" (Gamble, 2001, p. 49) and argues that those calling themselves postfeminist "support an individualistic, liberal agenda rather than a collective and political one…" (p. 298). This is contrasted with her definition of the third-wave as "… a resurgence of interest in feminist activism on the part of young women who wish to differentiate themselves from the postfeminist label . . . characterized by a desire to redress economic and racial inequality

as well as 'women's issues'" (p. 327). So while Gamble defines postfeminism as an attitude that "attacked feminism in its present form as inadequate to address the concerns and experiences of women today…" (p. 298), Heywood and Drake insist that they are not distancing themselves from the second wave, which they characterize as being concerned with gaining opportunities for women. Rather, they embrace "second wave critique as a central definitional thread while emphasizing ways that desires and pleasures subject to critique can be used to rethink and enliven activist work" (p.7). Interestingly, the points of tension seem to accrue around issues of self-definition, the relative status of popular culture, and a third-wave insistence on pluralism. Rubin and Nemeroff argue that "[t]hough the form (personal narrative rather than group consciousness-raising) and content (examining, often celebrating difference rather than seeking commonality) of personal expression in the third-wave may differ from that of the second wave, we believe their functions are quite congruent"(Rubin and Nemeroff, 2001, p. 98). It has been suggested, rather poetically, that "the third wave can come to view itself as indivisible from the ocean of feminism" (Bruns and Trimble, 2001, p. 33). At the same time, feminists who may have considered themselves somehow outside of the second wave, by virtue of colour, age, sexual identity or experience, have a real interest in exploring how the shift to a third-wave consciousness can be of benefit to them; as Muslim Feminist Sherin Saadallah writes, for her "… the pluralities embraced under third wave feminism offer a more welcoming space than previous feminisms" (Saadallah, 2004, p. 216).

Any definition of third-wave feminism must foreground its relationship with popular culture, and its emphasis on "the contradictions and conflicts shaping young women's experiences" (Gillis and Mumford, 2004, p. 172). Most importantly, third-wave feminists

"often take cultural production and sexual politics as key sites of struggle, seeking to use desire and pleasure as well as anger to fuel struggles for justice" (Heywood and Drake, 1997, p. 4). Thus, many of the articles in *Third Wave Agenda*, for example, deal with topics such as celebrity role models, body image and appearance, magazines like *Bitch* and *Bust*, certain websites and music, and claim them as sites for third-wave feminist activity. Similarly, in the Fall 2002 issue of *Resources for Feminist Research*, Brandi Leigh-Ann Bell discusses the young women involved with zine culture (independent, non-commercial publications). Bell points out that zine editors "criticize mainstream culture aimed at girls and women while also celebrating it. These editors highlight [an] element of third-wave feminism: contradiction." Bell goes on to give an example of an editor who comments that a particular TV program is "soul-sucking, standardized trash" but still admits to watching and enjoying it (Bell, 2002, p.193). Central to this understanding of the third-wave is the refusal of guilt and the revolutionary acknowledgement that feminist meaning can be derived from the most unlikely of sources.

This brings me to the play *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* as an example of the way that third-wave feminist theory can be worked out in the practice of theatre. Choosing a piece of theatre to explore third-wave feminism seems appropriate since, as Natalie Fenton has argued, the movement within feminism from an emphasis on sameness to difference within the category "'woman' . . . can be charted through a critique of the politics of representation" (Fenton, 2001, p.104). Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* is one of the most successful plays in English-Canadian theatre history. First produced by the feminist Nightwood Theatre in 1988, it was remounted in 1990 and won the Governor General's Literary Award and a Chalmers Canadian Play

Award for Best Production, proving that it both reads and plays well. And it is played often, with at least fifty productions in Canada, the U.S., and England, many of them at colleges and universities. [v] As an Associate Professor in the Department of Theatre and Dramatic Arts at the University of Lethbridge, I had the opportunity in March of 2003 to direct a student production. I was intrigued by the fact that this play is done frequently at educational institutions, and also by the overwhelmingly positive response to the play I noted in my students, especially the young women. Kathleen Gallagher has also addressed *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* as a text to use when working with female students, and cites the play's treatment of sexual identity and gender construction as factors that make it useful in sociological terms. Considering the frequency with which this play is produced in school environments, it is significant that a good part of this play's popularity comes from its particular brand of feminism. Despite the fact that the play dates from the late 1980s, I will argue that it is a feminism that can be recognized as third-wave in its irreverence and its insistence on pleasure. [vi]

Ann-Marie MacDonald's play breaches all the boundaries, between texts, historical periods, nations, genders and sexualities, and certainly theatrical conventions such as language and spectacle. The critical assessment of the play has focused on its postcolonial content (Wilson 1992), its treatment of Shakespeare's female characters (Porter 1995), its sociological uses in teaching (Gallagher 2002), and its use of a recognizably feminist mode of comedy (Hengen 1995). The play has also been criticized (by, for example, Ric Knowles and Marianne Novy) as an affirmation of the privileged cultural position and High Culture theatrical tradition of Shakespeare (Dickinson, 2002, p.193). But, I will argue, it is this very affirmation that makes it third-wave.

The main character, Constance Ledbelly, is an exploited academic who is working on the thesis that Shakespeare used a source by some unknown author to create the plays *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, but suppressed the comic Fool character in order to turn them into tragedies. Shakespeare then gave his source book to his friend Gustav the Alchemist to preserve in an undecipherable code. Constance is trying to de-code the Gustav manuscript in order to determine the original author. After a first act in which we come to understand both Constance's quest and her dreary life circumstances, she is magically transported into the worlds of *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* and succeeds in turning them into comedies through her interventions in the fates of the characters. Although Constance is a university professor, her low status and poor self-esteem mean that she inhabits a "youthful" subject position that students may be able to can relate to more easily. As Laurin Porter points out, "For all practical purposes, as the play begins Constance is a child, an innocent" (Porter, 1995, p. 365). Her desk is covered with remnants from her childhood, and during the course of the play she recounts incidents from her experiences in grade five (when she was tormented by bully girls) and grade eight (an erotic encounter with class-mate Ginnie Radclyffe). The play can be seen to chart Constance's journey through her own unconscious mind, the process by which she explores the different sides of her personality and sexuality and finally emerges, a whole, adult woman. This is a journey especially relevant to young feminists and to students in general. As Shannon Hengen observes, it is of central importance to the play's comedy and its revolutionary potential that the audience empathizes with a marginalized protagonist (Hengen, 1995, p. 99).

The aspect that most clearly signals a third-wave attitude in the play is the treatment of gender and sexuality. In her study of contemporary young women's sexual behaviour,

Paula Kamen claims that, "[u]sing their own taste as their barometer, they have a broad menu of choices at their fingertips…" (Kamen, 2000, p.3) and that "[t]he greatest sexual revolution has taken place inside women's heads" (p. 45). In Act Three, when Constance arrives in the Verona of *Romeo and Juliet*, she has lost her tweed skirt and appears only in a jacket, long underwear and boots. Thus clad as male, she is understood to be male by all who meet her. Both Romeo and Juliet desire Constance as a boy. Romeo believes the boy, "Constantine," to be heterosexual, so dresses as a girl to win "him." Sexuality is cued entirely by clothing, something one can easily put on and take off. All Constance has to do to "be" male is to lose her skirt, and all Romeo has to do to "be" a female love interest is to gain a skirt. Juliet believes the boy, "Constantine," to be homosexual, and so dresses as another boy to win "him." When, in her bedchamber, Juliet discovers that Constance is, in fact, biologically a woman, and a much-older woman at that, her desire is again swiftly accommodated:

> **Constance**: … I'll have to trust you with the truth. /My name is Constance. I'm a woman.
>
> **Juliet**: Oh
>
> **Constance**: That's right. So that's that.
>
> **Juliet**: And art thou of Cyprus?
>
> **Constance**: Not originally.
>
> **Juliet**: Then art thou of Lesbos?!
>
> **Constance**: What?! I've never been there in my life.
>
> **Juliet**: O most forbidden love of all!
>
> **Constance:** Oh no.

Juliet: Unsanctified desire, more tragic far/than any star-crossed love ‘twixt boy and girl!

Constance: Now wait.

Juliet: Once more I am a virgin maid. /O take me to thine island’s curv’ed shore, and lay me on the bosom of the sand… (76-77).

The characters do acknowledge societal strictures and gender expectations: at least partly, Constance is thinking of personal safety when she goes along with the mistaken perception that she is male, and part of Juliet’s desire for Constance as a woman lies in the “forbidden” nature of that love. But as Porter observes, "While these scenes are played tongue-in-cheek, MacDonald uses Juliet in a more serious fashion to awaken Constance to her own sexuality" (Porter, 1995, p. 370). Romeo too desires indiscriminately, male and female, with sweet abandon: first he pursues Juliet and Constantine, then Desdemona when she also arrives in Verona, and at the end he is carried offstage by Tybalt. Fluidity of sexual practice is not matched by an insistence on essential identity. As Sophia Phoca explains: "Queer politics challenges the essentialist assumption that 'the queer' emerges from a uniquely gay sexuality. Queer sexuality expresses a desire for polymorphous sexual configurations and fantasies which do not stem from a need to regulate, control and organize the sexual subject according to compulsory identification" (Phoca, 1999, p.105). All the characters are free to sexually pursue each other, but no one is required to claim a label, and no one is punished for what they want. I would argue that the fluidity of sexual choice, the celebration of desire of many kinds, and most importantly, the lack of angst around the subject, all mark the play as third-wave. Theorists such as Laurin Porter point out that the cross-dressing "allows MacDonald to reveal the extent to which not only our social exchanges but our very identities are shaped by

gender constructs" (Porter, 1995, p. 368). But I would add that the real subversion lies in the flagrant and gleeful manner in which these constructs are flouted and disregarded. As Ann Wilson has argued, "The text is a sort of Arden . . . where, free from the demands of the actual world, we can live imaginatively" (Wilson, 1992, p. 11), placing us in the role-playing, polymorphous playroom of the third-wave. To quote Phoca again, (one of the theorists who uses the term postfeminism as interchangeable with third-wave), this movement is about "retaining a desire for empowerment without telling women how to experience their sexuality. By celebrating difference, postfeminism invites women to explore the complexities inscribed in the construction of the sexual subject" (Phoca, 1999, p.171).

As Brooks writes "the truly resistant female body is not the body that wages war against feminine sexualisation and objectification, but the body… that uses simulation strategically in ways that challenge the stable notion of gender as the edifice of sexual difference" (Brooks, 1997, p.157). The third-wave embrace of pluralism can be highlighted through challenging assumptions about race as well, especially through casting choices. In the 2001 production in Toronto, for example, Desdemona was played by a Black actor, Alison Sealy-Smith, challenging traditional Shakespearean production conventions, and opening up further layers of possibility for political identification, new resonances in the text, and even more boundary-crossing eroticism. Such casting choices further align the play with third-wave feminism through live production. It is possible that this liberating effect is truly evident only in performance. Martha Tuck Rozett, for example, misses the subversiveness of the action set in Verona when she writes that, after the wedding banquet scene early in Act Three, "The play degenerates into silliness and confusion . . . and though it would be tempting to see this as MacDonald's comment on the improbable complications and mistaken

identities of *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*, parody for its own sake threatens to overwhelm the play's feminist agenda" (Rozett, 1994, p. 165). Rozett claims that MacDonald only "regains control of the action at the very end," in a "long scolding oration to both Juliet and Desdemona " in which she teaches them to eschew violence and suicide. Later in her study, Rozett wonders how Juliet and Desdemona can possibly return to their respective husbands after what they have experienced, and notes that Romeo and Othello do not appear in this final interaction with Constance, which she takes to be the moment when the two female characters learn their lessons (Rozett, 1994, p. 166). But Rozett disregards the fact that the actor who plays Othello in Act Two also plays Juliet's Nurse in Act Three, and that Romeo has been wearing a dress since the wedding banquet. The visual effect of these two characters in drag is thoroughly redemptive, at least for the spectator to the live performance. If Juliet and Desdemona have changed, so have their mates. Furthermore, we do see the two men again: after the scene in which Constance "scolds" the two women, the play concludes with an Epilogue in which the entire company enters dancing, clearly suggesting unity and acceptance as in any traditional comic structure.

Of course, production choices can sway audience perception, and it would be possible for a director to downplay some of the subversive effect. Ric Knowles, for example, describes the play's "representation of polymorphous sexuality and lesbian eroticism" as "muted" (Knowles, 2002, p. 379). But I would argue that this depends on choices of casting, costuming and direction. And for many mainstream, heterosexual spectators, especially for those outside of urban centres who may not see much theatre, the very fact that they have found themselves empathizing with and enjoying characters who display homosexual behaviour is in itself a significant feat. Not all audience members will respond in the same

way, or necessarily in a positive way. As Natalie Fenton explains, audiences "use and interpret . . . according to their own social, cultural and individual circumstances - the audience is involved in making sense of the images they see - the message does not have the total monopoly on the meaning" (Fenton, 2001, p.112). Its popular success, however, does suggest that the play has widespread appeal. My interest is in what constitutes the particular appeal for my young female students. The oft-repeated criticism of third-wave feminism, that it is largely media-obsessed, discounts the critical importance of representation to self-definition and identity for young women and men. Heywood and Drake paint a picture of today's academics "[F]acing classrooms of young women and men who are trained by the media caricature of 'feminazis,' who see feminism as an enemy or say 'feminist' things prefaced by 'I'm not a feminist, but'…" (Heywood and Drake, 1997, p. 4). Kaschak also identifies the phenomenon of negative media portrayal as a significant obstacle to young women claiming a feminist identity: "Specifically they face the dilemma of reconciling two different cultural discourses, that of the classroom which tends to credit feminism for many cultural strides and that of the popular media, which portrays feminists negatively" (Kaschak, 2001, p. 3). As a result, Kaschak advises that educators may have to take into account initial negative responses to feminism in younger women (p.16). Much of the appeal of *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* as a teaching tool, then, is its ability to frame feminism in a way that students can appreciate.

The very silliness and confusion that Rozett condemns produces a carnivalesque fantasy of permission. The play demonstrates, rather than lectures about, an agency free from gender assignment for all its characters. Citing Kathleen Rowe and Mary Russo, Fiona Carson has argued that the ribald excess of the unruly woman in comedy can be used

affirmatively to destabilise and provoke social transformation (Carson, 2001). Perhaps critics like Rozett are overlooking this crucial aspect of theatre, which can make feminist meaning in performance as much as through written lines. Indeed, Rozett seems relieved when Constance finally has a speech with a concrete, recognizable message, although I would argue that the message, (to live by questions and confusion rather than answers and certainty), is redundant at this point. In fact, the third-wave feminist spectator might not be convinced that Desdemona's violence is such a negative quality, if by violence one reads physically strong and capable of action; consider the many female heroines in popular culture (Xena, Warrior Princess, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Lara Croft, Tomb Raider, or even Charlie's Angels) who exist in similar realms of fantasy and demonstrate just these attributes. And the audience has already had demonstrated for us the childishness of committing suicide over lost love, as Juliet readily recovers from heartbreak to find one new love after another. In comedy, perhaps in any theatrical performance, the audience does not necessarily have to be told a character's behaviour is folly, or liberating, because we can see it for ourselves. Again, the fact that *Goodnight Desdemona* models a forgiving world means that its "silliness and confusion" is part and parcel of its third-wave feminism.

The second aspect which makes the play third-wave is its post-modernism, specifically its simultaneous embrace and critique of both high and low culture.[vii] *Goodnight Desdemona* employs two texts in which traditional power relations result in death for the tragic heroines, Desdemona and Juliet, and shows how the internal contradictions of those texts produce an undermining protest in the viewer (we feel, for example, how preventable and unfair Desdemona's and Juliet's deaths are). As a reading of canonical literature, *Goodnight Desdemona* foregrounds the act of feminist resistant reading -- its plotline is

explicitly based on a female academic choosing to re-investigate the authority of its source texts-- and as Ric Knowles points out, the audience finds their interpretive role inscribed as a resisting one (Knowles, 1994, p. 285). As theatre, it uses theatrical tradition and conventions to produce its comic effect and make its feminist meaning, through the familiar devices of cross-dressing, mistaken identity, and even vaudevillian humour. And as Canadian theatre, it is conscious of its colonial relationship with its source material. MacDonald's play alternates between different time frames and different fictional worlds, and uses ambiguity and indeterminacy to develop not only the play's comedy, but also its clever subversion of audience expectation.

Goodnight Desdemona uses plays by Shakespeare as inspiration and source material for the plotline and language (primarily *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet,* but with references to others, most notably *Hamlet*). The play cleverly works with the concept of authority by having Constance, an exploited female Canadian academic with no personal "authority," searching for the source material of the most highly respected male literary authority (Shakespeare) and discovering that she herself is that Author. This draws attention, of course, to the play as a work created by an author, Ann-Marie MacDonald. Familiar characters and lines from Shakespeare are appropriated into a new text, which makes for a highly satisfying experience for the audience as they can recognize the source and take pleasure in its witty reinterpretation -- they are able to admire both authors simultaneously. While the plotlines of his plays and the fate of his female characters are critiqued, the audience is never actually required to give up their affection and respect for Shakespeare, a complicity with dramatic tradition that is very post-modern and an attitude towards problematic cultural artefacts which, as we saw with Brandi Bell's article, is very third-wave.

Goodnight Desdemona takes the traditional versions of Desdemona's and Juliet's stories and reverses them. This is done for comic effect, but it also serves to point out, and effectively dismiss, the ideology underlying their traditional creation as passive victims. When MacDonald reconstructs them as powerful women capable of efficacious action, she not only creates delightful characters, but also empowering ones. In response to the question: "Is parody almost an inevitable part of the portrayal of women on the stage today?" MacDonald has responded:

> It's like opening up a trunk that used to be full of instruments of torture and now everything has turned into toys. When you reclaim and transform ideas and methods that have been used against you as a woman, you become empowered. Subversion of this kind is healthy (Much, 1990, p.142).

As noted earlier, the audience member (especially the contemporary feminist) is not satisfied with Desdemona's and Juliet's preventable deaths and objects to their function as sacrifices within male narratives, a dissatisfaction which MacDonald consciously remedies. I think that by embracing a vision of female wholeness that encompasses an intriguing variety of desiring and desired characters, *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* is uniquely in tune with the kind of representation young feminists respond to. MacDonald's technique clearly moves in the direction of embracing her cultural sources, yet uses them to empower her female characters, particularly sexually and particularly in the realm of "the revolution within," to use the phrase coined by Gloria Steinem. MacDonald's choices make the play appealing to viewers more comfortable with third-wave feminism's contradictions. Critics Linda Burnett, Ellen McKay, and Marianne Novy have all suggested that it is not Shakespeare's work that is patriarchal and imperialist, but the subsequent critical

interpretations (whether literary criticism or productions) that have allowed only one possible reading. They argue that a parody like MacDonald's actually restores a sense of what is already there, or at least what might be possible.[viii]

Juliet's seduction of Constance is set up in a way that makes it "acceptable to spectators often uncomfortable with same-sex wooing" (Novy, 1999, p. 79) and the play as a whole makes a good text for teaching students because "many will enjoy it while few if any complain about its subversive laughter" (Novy, 1999, p.81). MacDonald herself has stated that it is her "crusade" to bring the spectator to identify with a character they had previously thought of as "alien or deviant" (Hengen, 1995, p.103). Thus I conclude that its particular brand of feminism, one that is particularly appealing to the third-wave generation, accounts, in large part, for the play's continuing popularity.

Works Cited

Baumgardner, Jennifer and Amy Richards. *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000.

Bell, Brandi Leigh-Ann. "Riding the Third Wave: Women-Produced Zines and Feminisms." *Resources for Feminist Research* Vol. 29 Nos. 3 & 4 (Fall 2002), 187-198.

Brooks, Ann. *Postfeminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory and Cultural Forms*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

Bruns, Cindy M. and Colleen Trimble "Rising Tide: Taking our Place as Young Feminist Pyschologists." *The Next Generation: Third Wave Feminism Psychotherapy*. Ellyn Kaschak, ed. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc., 2001, 19-36

Burnett, Linda. "'Redescribing a World': Towards a Theory of Shakespearean Adaptation in Canada." *Canadian Theatre Review* 111 (Summer 2002), 5-9.

Carson, Fiona. "Feminism and the Body." *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism.* Sarah Gamble, ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2001, 117-128.

Dickinson, Peter. " Duets, Duologues, and Black Diasporic Theatre: Djanet Sears, William Shakespeare, and Others." *Modern Drama* Vol. XLV No. 2 (Summer 2002), 188-208.

Fenton, Natalie. "Feminism and Popular Culture." *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism.* Sarah Gamble, ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2001, 104-116.

Fortier, Mark. "Shakespeare with a Difference: Genderbending and Genrebending in *Goodnight Desdemona*." *Canadian Theatre Review* 59 (Summer 1989), 47-51.

Gallagher, Kathleen. "Dramatic Arenas for Ethical Stories." *Resources for Feminist Research* Vol. 29 Nos. 3 & 4 (Fall 2002), 167 - 176.

Gamble, Sarah, Editor. *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.

Gillis, Stacy and Rebecca Munford. "Genealogies and Generations: The Politics and Praxis of Third Wave Feminism." *Women's History Review* Vol. 13 No. 2 (2004), 165-182.

Gillis, Stacy, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford, Editors. *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration.* Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004.

Hengen, Shannon. "Towards a Feminist Comedy." *Canadian Literature* 146 (Autumn 1995), 97-109.

Heywood, Leslie and Jennifer Drake. *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Horne, Sharon, Susan Mathews, Pam Detrie, Mary Burke, and Becky Cook "Look it up Under 'F': Dialogues of Emerging and Experienced Feminists." *The Next Generation: Third Wave Feminism Psychotherapy*. Ellyn Kaschak, ed. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc., 2001, 5-18

Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. London and New York: Routledge, 1989.

Kamen, Paula. *Her Way: Young Women Remake the Sexual Revolution*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

Kaschak, Ellyn, Ed. *The Next Generation: Third Wave Feminism Psychotherapy*. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc., 2001.

Knowles, Richard Paul. "Othello in Three Times." *Shakespeare in Canada: A World Elsewhere?* Eds. Diana Brydon and Irena R. Makaryk. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002, 371-394.

Knowles, Richard Paul. "Reading Material: Transfers, Remounts, and the Production of Meaning in Contemporary Toronto Drama and Theatre." *Essays on Canadian Writing* Numbers 52-52 (Winter 1993-Spring 1994), 258-295.

MacDonald, Ann-Marie. *Good Night Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet*). Toronto: Vintage Canada, 1997.

McKay, Ellen. "The Spectre of Straight Shakespeare." *Canadian Theatre Review* 111 (Summer 2002), 10-14.

Much, Rita and Judith Rudakoff, Editors. “Ann-Marie MacDonald.” *Fair Play: Twelve Women Speak: Conversations with Canadian Playwrights*. Toronto: Simon and Pierre, 1990, 127-143.

Novy, Marianne. "Saving Desdemona and/or Ourselves: Plays by Ann-Marie MacDonald and Paula Vogel." *Transforming Shakespeare: Contemporary Women's Re-visions in Literature and Performance*. Ed. Marianne Novy. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999, 67-85.

Phoca, Sophia and Rebecca Wright. *Introducing Postfeminism*. New York: Totem Books, 1999.

Porter, Laurin R. "Shakespeare's Sisters: Desdemona, Juliet and Constance Ledbelly in *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet*)." *Modern Drama* Vol. XXXVIII No. 3 (Fall 1995), 362-377.

Porter, Natalie, Dalia G. Ducker, Holley E. Ferrell, and Laura Helton. "Exploring the Rift: An Intergenerational Dialogue About Feminism." *The Next Generation: Third Wave Feminism Psychotherapy*. Ellyn Kaschak, ed. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc., 2001, 57-78

Rozett, Martha Tuck. *Talking Back to Shakespeare*. Newark, University of Delaware Press, 1994.

Rubin, Lisa and Carol Nemeroff "Feminisms Third Wave: Surfing to Oblivion?" *The Next Generation: Third Wave Feminism Psychotherapy*. Ellyn Kaschak, ed. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc., 2001, 91-104

Saadallah, Sherin. “Muslim Feminism in the Third Wave: A Reflective Inquiry.” *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration.* Gillis, Stacy, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford, eds. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004, 216-226.

Thornton, Kelly. Personal interview. 28 May 2002.

Walters, Suzanna Danuta. *Material Girls: Making Sense of Feminist Cultural Theory*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Wilson, Ann. "Critical Revisions: Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet*)." *Women on the Canadian Stage: The Legacy of Hrotsvit*. Ed. Rita Much. Winnipeg: Blizzard Publishing, 1992, 1-12.

---

[i] A few examples include *Body Outlaws: Young Women Write About Body Image and Identity (*2000*); Ophelia Speaks: Adolescent Girls Write About Their Search for Self* (1999); *The Bust Guide to the New Girl Order* (1999); and *Girls Speak Out: Finding Your True Self* (1997).

[ii] Third Wave Feminism was the third in a series of conferences organized through the Institute for Feminist Theory and Research (IFTR) at the University of Exeter. The IFTR was established in 1998 and, in addition to serving as a research resource, acts as an umbrella group for women in higher education. My own panel was entitled "Girl/Grrrl Power" and featured three Canadians and a scholar from Manchester. We were all discussing various aspects of young women's artistic and/or subcultural expression.

[iii] As Sarah Gamble points out, arguments against or critiques of the second wave must take into account the fact that feminism has never been a monololithic, inflexible movement. She suggests that it is helpful to distinguish between feminism and a media-influenced definition of feminism "in the popular imagination" (Gamble, 2001, p. 49).

[iv] The most commonly cited of these conservative American postfeminists are Katie Roiphe, Naomi Wolf and Camille Paglia.

[v] In Alberta, where I teach, it has been done professionally in Edmonton and Calgary, and had student productions at the University of Calgary, Keyano College and Mount Royal College.

[vi] Ric Knowles has said that *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* displays "a second-wave feminist focus on gender and genre that was very much of its 1980s context at Toronto's Nightwood Theatre" (Knowles, 2002, pp. 377-378). But I do not think this accounts for the fact that the play continues to be so popular, far after, and in locations far removed from, its original 1980s Toronto context.

iv. For the particular analysis of postmodernism I am working with, see See Linda Hutcheon*, The Politics of Postmodernism,* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989).

v. See Burnett, 2002, 7-8, McKay, 2002, 13, and Novy, 1999, 73.