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A Voyage to the New World: Viola's Journey to View Man's Estate in *Shōjo Manga Twelfth Night*

In Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, Viola expediently travels in men's clothes. She is intelligent and courageous enough to disguise herself as a boy in order to enter the men's world. Her cross-dressing not only creates gender ambiguity, but also invites infinite imagination of homoerotics. In Act II Scene 2, Viola feels trapped in homosexual relationships. The theme of gender bending in Twelfth Night is attractive to Japanese shōjo manga, the comics dedicated to young female readers. Morikawa Kumi's shōjo manga version of Twelfth Night (1978) portrays Viola/Cesario as an adolescent girl in boy's clothes where Orsino is depicted as a bishōnen (beautiful boy). The pseudo shōnen-ai (boy love) marginalises the discussion of female sexuality. By doing so, the young female readers are shielded from recognising their sexuality. In response to the global dissemination of Japanese manga in the twenty-first century, Nana Li's Manga Shakespeare Twelfth Night (2009), published by the British publisher SelfMadeHero, mimics the manga's visual grammar, style, and techniques. This article examines the ways in which Viola and her sexuality are explored in these two manga adaptations of Twelfth Night to illustrate social attitudes toward gender and sexuality in different cultures. Yilin Chen is an Associate Professor at the Department of English Language, Literature and Linguistics, Providence University in Taiwan. Her current research interests are the global dissemination of Japanese manga Shakespeare and the representation of gender and sexuality in manga adaptations of Shakespeare. Her recent teaching research projects include online academic writing and the MOOC Global/Local Shakespeare. Both projects are funded by the Taiwan Ministry of Education.

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Today Shakespeare travels across boundaries as a global phenomenon. The dissemination of Shakespeare has resulted in the rise of border-crossing productions, adaptations, cultural products and peripheral commodities. These artistic and commercial renderings now appear worldwide and indeed reinforce Shakespeare as a global heritage. In Japan, Shakespeare has been adapted into the Japanese comics, *manga* since the 1970s. The modern Japanese *manga* was influenced by Western comics after modernisation began during the Meiji period (1868-1912). Deeply influenced by American comics and popular culture before the Second World War, Japanese *manga* soon localised these influences and developed a distinctive drawing style.¹The global flow of Japanese *manga* began when pirated versions of Japanese *manga* were widely circulated during the 1970s in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea.²Using the Japanese *manga* style and technique, talented local artists in East Asia began to translate Shakespeare's text into *manga* adaptations. In the early twenty-first century, the art form of Japanese *manga* won popularity in the UK and inspired the British publisher, SelfMadeHero, to conceive the *Manga Shakespeare* series.³The emergence of this *Manga Shakespeare* series was not only the consequence of cultural exchanges between the East and the West, but also clear testimony that Shakespearian globalisation today is not necessarily the same as global Westernisation.⁴

If globalisation is the eventual outcome of Western imperialism, the Age of Discovery was the impetus for European colonial exploration and exploitation. In the late sixteenth century, Queen Elizabeth I supported a number of exploratory ventures to the New World and attempted to establish a colony in Virginia. Although her attempt did not succeed, she laid the foundation for British colonisation that occurred in the early seventeenth century. Thus Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1601-1602) was written during a period when seagoing expeditions were in vogue. In this play, the heroine, Viola is not rewarded with monetary treasure, but a chance to explore her gender identity.

In *Twelfth Night*, a twin brother and sister are shipwrecked in the Mediterranean. It is not clear whether they are sailing to or away from their home, Messaline. However, due to a violent storm, Viola is separated from her twin brother Sebastian and ends up floating to the shore of Illyria, a fictional island which today is seen as being imagined somewhere on the coast of Croatia. Her past is a mystery, but her adventure to and in the "New World" raises a degree of controversy regarding her gender identity and sexuality occasioned by the disguise she assumes as a page boy in Illyria.

Being alone in a strange territory, Viola decides to disguise herself as a page boy, Cesario, to serve Duke Orsino, and in this disguise she shows her intelligence and also her courage to survive in an unfamiliar land. The Duke takes an immediate liking to Cesario/Viola, as he believes the youth will help him to win the heart and hand of the Countess Olivia. However, when Viola/Cesario goes to woo Olivia on behalf of the Duke, Olivia falls in love with the youth instead. Viola's male disguise elevates her social status and at the same time creates a gender ambiguity.

Following the accepted Elizabethan convention,⁵ several contemporary British theatre companies have staged an all-male cast of *Twelfth Night*, for example, at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre (2002), Propeller (2006), and Cheek by Jowl (2006). Viola's cross-dressing is further complicated of course when a young man portrays Viola in male disguise. Her presence generates erotic tensions that compound the anxiety about the fluidity of one's gender identity. This cross-dressing theme has been commonly explored in Japanese popular culture. For instance, the renowned all-female theatre, Takarazuka Revue Company, which is believed to have greatly influenced *shōjo manga*,⁶ has produced at least two versions of *Twelfth Night* (1999).⁷ Given that *Shōjo manga* is a postwar genre dedicated to teenage Japanese girls,⁸ *Twelfth Night* further feeds the *shōjo manga's* exploration of gender and sexuality in topics revolving love and friendship.

When Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* came to Japan, it was adapted for performance and then for a comic format. Morikawa Kumi's *shōjo manga Twelfth Night* (1978)⁹ was the first attempt by the Japanese comic industry to translate Shakespeare's text into a graphic language with an accompanying verbal text. Morikawa's *shōjo manga* version portrays Viola/Cesario as an adolescent girl in boy's clothes, while Orsino is depicted as a *bishōnen* (beautiful boy). Her drawing style and techniques echo the characteristics of *shōjo manga* in the 1970s. *Manga* offers a complex visual vocabulary to depict a character's emotions in detail; indeed, its sequences of images closely resembles a filmic storyboard. To that extent it can be equated with a performative visualisation, a connection that might be further investigated in the future.

As *manga* has become more popular in Europe in the late twentieth century, the British publisher recruited graphic artists based on the U.K. to depict Shakespeare's plays in the *manga* style, and established the series *Manga Shakespeare*.¹⁰ The emergence of the *Manga Shakespeare* series, in this context, proclaims that Japanese popular culture has a global reach and Nana Li's *Manga Shakespeare Twelfth Night* (2009) is a good example of contemporary global collaboration in the *manga* market. Her work incorporates the *shōjo manga* style based on text of *Twelfth Night* by its Canadian editor, Richard Appignanesi.

Shakespeare has been adapted into graphic novels in Europe since the 1940s.¹¹ However, Western comics are very different from the Japanese *manga* in terms of their narrative style, aesthetics and layouts. This article examines Morikawa's *Twelfth Night* and Li's *Manga Shakespeare Twelfth Night* to analyse the ways in which Viola's cross-dressing and female sexuality are represented and explored in these two versions of *manga*. Although both versions are drawn using *shōjo manga* techniques, they are significantly different in their depictions of gender fluidity and same-sex attraction. The British version tends to shy away from dealing with the possible queer implications in *Twelfth Night*. In contrast, Viola is portrayed as a gender-ambiguous *bishōnen* (beautiful boy) character in the Japanese *manga* version so as to confront the homoerotic affections. Consequently, the attraction between Orsino and Viola/Cesario appears like *shōnen-ai*, boy love, which features a platonic relationship between boys. This article argues that the cultural differences in attitudes toward gender images and sexual diversity determine the renderings of gender and desire in the two

versions. The discussion thus also examines the *shōjo manga* style and its modern appeal to Japanese adolescent girls.

The Characteristics of Shōjo Manga

The theme of gender bending has been explored in Japanese *manga* since the 1950s. Osamu Tezuka's¹² *Ribbon no kishi* (Princess Knight) invented an androgynous character, Sapphire, who is a princess, but acts like a boy when she needs to fight for her kingdom.¹³ Gender ambiguity, such as having female characters wearing male clothing, becomes an important theme in *shōjo manga*. However, it is Takahashi Makoto whose drawing style created the recognisable aesthetics of *shōjo manga*. In his visual style, girls are often depicted as innocent, cute creatures with sparkling doe-like eyes accentuated by long lashes. Deborah Shamoan, the scholar of Japanese popular culture, claims that "the liberal use of flowers, clouds, stars, and other symbolic motifs as backgrounds without regard to mimetic realism"¹⁴ in Takahashi's *shōjo manga* was inspired by the illustrations in pre-war girls' magazines. However, it is in the late 1960s and early 1970s that *shōjo manga* artists gradually improved the drawing style with sophisticated techniques to accomplish the mimetic realism.

Shōjo manga often sets stories in an exotic place and in an ill-defined time in order to allow teenage girls or young women to fantasise and picture themselves in the stories. The protagonist is almost always a young girl, and boys are usually beautifully androgynous. These boys are called *bishōnen* (beautiful boy), and their "hair is typically long and flowing, their waists narrow, their legs long, and their eyes big."¹⁵ Gender fluidity is thus one of the important characteristics in *shōjo manga*. The stories are often set in an exotic place, and the boys' social identities are somehow "romantic" and unbelievable and not easily found in real life since, for example, they are portrayed as aristocrats, vampires, angels or aliens.¹⁶ It is also interesting to note that the plot and setting of *Twelfth Night* are both compatible with the requirements for *shōjo manga*, namely, the representation of gender ambiguity in a fictional locale. When Viola disguises herself as a boy, her relationship with Orsino is portrayed as a pseudo "boy love," and yet, both their appearances, following the *shōjo manga* codes, look feminine and they appear to be two girls who feel attracted to each other.¹⁷ The boy love scenario offers an imaginary playground for the Japanese girls to escape from reality.¹⁸ In some cases, the androgynous youth [in *shōjo manga*] offers "one way in which the female reader can picture herself as separate from the reproductive role assigned to her by the family system which ties female sexuality to child bearing."¹⁹ If effeminate boys are "the girls' displaced selves,"²⁰ then boy love is a disguise for the repressed discourse of female sexuality. Interestingly, Viola's cross-dressing makes her appear like a beautiful boy, and her relationship with Orsino, like "boy love", belies the heterosexual attraction between a girl and an effeminate boy. Consequently, the image of Viola's cross-dressing in a *shōjo manga* adaptation of *Twelfth Night* should crucially be studied in the context of gender and sexuality, re-constructed or imagined in the fictional world of Illyria.

When Viola first arrives on the foreign sea shore, she asks, "What country, friends, is this?" (I.2.1). In this "New World" called Illyria, gender can be

performed and manipulated to explore adolescent sexuality. Viola's disguise as a boy allows her to see and realise those gender differences. Her journey to Illyria is also her coming-of-age experience. Malvolio describes Viola's disguised identity as:

Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for
a boy; as a squash is before 'tis a peascod, or a
cooling when 'tis almost an apple: 'tis with him
in standing water, between boy and man. He is very
well-favoured and he speaks very shrewishly; one
would think his mother's milk were scarce out of him.

(I.5.156-162)

In Morikawa's *Twelfth Night*, Viola becomes the *bishōnen* or beautiful boy character type. She has long hair and a pair of exaggerated eyes. Her interior monologues are placed outside the speech bubble, to emphasise her inner voices. Besides, symbolic motifs, like flowers, stars, etc., are illustrated to provide emotive backgrounds²¹ to show her interiority. Jennifer Prough claims that this *bishōnen* type seldom appears in the mainstream *manga* today.²² However, the big round eyes still remain the signature style of the *shōjo manga*.²³ In Li's *manga* adaptation of *Twelfth Night*, Viola is not portrayed as the typical *bishōnen*, but her appearance still looks feminine. A significant difference between Morikawa's and Li's adaptations then is that the target readership of the former work is Japanese girls, while the later adaptation seeks a more global appeal.²⁴

Morikawa's *Twelfth Night* was published in Japanese only and the publisher did not intend to export it to a market outside Japan. Her adaptation reflects the social attitudes toward gender bending,²⁵ and the diverse sexualities generated because of gender ambiguity. However, the British publisher SelfMade Hero aimed to use *manga* as the medium to introduce Shakespeare to teenagers or first-time readers of the playwright.²⁶ Thus Li's *Manga Shakespeare Twelfth Night* adopts *shōjo manga* techniques, yet, the aesthetics of her content is influenced by Western popular culture as well. As *manga* becomes more of "a global style,"²⁷ her *Manga Twelfth Night* thus represents a new breed of global *manga* outside Japan. By studying Morikawa's and Li's adaptations of *Twelfth Night*, this article explains how the visual grammar of *shōjo manga* can be applied to examine how both gender and sexuality are seen in both Japanese and non-Japanese cultures.

Morikawa Kumi's Shōjo Manga Twelfth Night

Morikawa Kumi's *manga* adaptation of *Twelfth Night* is set in late medieval or early Renaissance Europe. Viola appears as a vulnerable girl on the sea shore of Illyria. She has a pair of large elaborately drawn eyes with long eye lashes. Her voluminous hair is illustrated in the details of her close-up portrait (see Figure. 1).



Figure 1. Viola arrives in Illyria in Morikawa Kumi's *Twelfth Night* (1978)

When Viola disguises herself as the boy Cesario, her hair is not cut or bound. Both Cesario/Viola and Orsino are depicted as having big eyes and curly long hair. They are the *bishōnen* character type (Figure 2). Therefore, when Cesario/Viola and Orsino are first introduced in Orsino's chamber, the depictions of their hair styles become the highlight to distinguish one from another. In contrast to Orsino, Cesario/Viola wears a cap that is similar to an Italianate bonnet. All objects and furniture in this chamber look oriental and are elaborately drawn to produce a sense of magnificence.



Figure 2. Viola/Cesario and Orsino as the bishōnen in shōjo manga

Morikawa emphasises the effeminacy in Cesario/Viola's appearance while the Countess Olivia's beauty is presented with elegance. The contrast between the effeminate page boy and the feminine countess appears when Cesario/Viola is on a mission to woo Olivia. Olivia's hair is appropriately braided, and her eyelashes are skillfully detailed to underline her femininity. The arrangement carefully places Olivia and Cesario/Viola together in two panels side by side. The close-up portrait of Olivia highlights her exquisite eyes and dense eyelashes. In contrast, Cesario/Viola is sketched in a relatively small panel. Her three-quarter length portrait offers fewer details of her facial features (Figure. 3). Consequently, Olivia looks more feminine than Cesario/Viola does on this particular page. Cesario/Viola is layered on a river screentone, and the white lines on the screentone signify ripples on the surface of the river. Furthermore, three wavy lines are frontally arranged across two panels, suggesting that a breeze is blowing. These abstract lines become symbolic motifs that are used effectively to reflect Cesario/Viola's conflicting emotions.

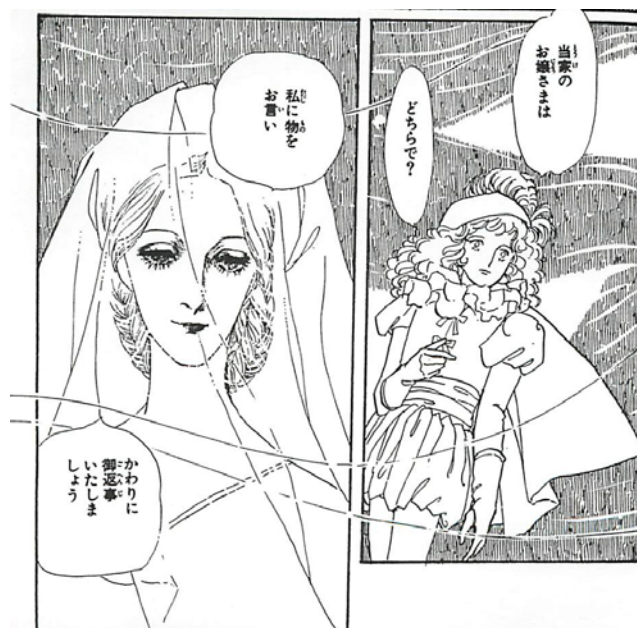


Figure 3. The effeminate Cesario/Viola meets Olivia

When Cesario/Viola realises he/she is the “man” that Olivia has fallen in love with, she suddenly feels confronted by a homosexual relationship. Cesario/Viola’s soliloquy clearly narrates her dilemma:

And I, poor monster, fond as much on him;
 And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.
 What will become of this? As I am man,
 My state is desperate for my master’s love;
 As I am woman,—now alas the day!—
 What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!
 (II.2.36-39)

Morikawa’s illustration juxtaposes two panels to characterise Cesario/Viola’s soliloquy as his/her inner voices. Morikawa draws the outline of Cesario/Viola, making her appear like a phantom standing still on a black background (Figure 4). Opposite to the panel with Cesario/Viola’s portrait, another panel portrays three faces queuing in a diagonal line. Above Cesario/Viola’s head, Olivia’s face is seen in profile resting closely next to Orsino’s face. This panel reads as Cesario/Viola’s imagination, foreseeing Orsino and Olivia as a couple, whereas the text, in fact, declares that there is an entangled love triangle happening between all three parties.



Figure 4. Viola/Cesario's soliloquy in Act II Scene 2 Morikawa Kumi's *Twelfth Night* (1978)

In *Twelfth Night*, Olivia's longing for Cesario/Viola becomes the highlight of Act III Scene 1. Morikawa places this scene in a flower garden. The background of Figure 5 is embellished with complex hatching techniques, including starbursts, leaves, and flowers to echo and thus enhance Olivia's romantic feelings. Olivia says to Cesario/Viola, "Stay. I prithee tell me what thou think'st of me" (III.1.139-140). Morikawa pictures Olivia's head about halfway between front and profile views. Her big curved eyelashes are sentimental, as if a teardrop will slip out from beneath these lashes at any time. Cesario/Viola's face is in profile and in contrast, shows surprise with big eyes. His/her curly hair blends into the background of the leaves, reflecting Cesario/Viola's entanglement with Olivia. Moreover, the hatches built around Olivia are carefully composed to create a symbolic motif of starbursts. This emotive background indeed makes the relationship between Olivia and Cesario/Viola even more emotionally intense.



Figure 5. Olivia says to Viola/Cesario, "Stay. Tell me what thou think'st of me" in Act III Sc 1

This demonstration of gender bending and sexual ambiguity in *shōjo manga* offers a "pleasurable and exciting contrast to the rigid roles that tend to proliferate in both the mass media and real social interactions."²⁸ Given that Orsino and Cesario/Viola are portrayed as the *bishōnen* character, their mutual attraction is heterosexual, carefully hidden in the guise of popular boy love. Despite the confusion caused by Viola's gender-bending, Morikawa's adaptation

persistently reaffirms heterosexual norms. For instance, when Orsino is troubled by his attraction to Cesario/Viola, he shouts “I am definitely not a sodomite!”²⁹ The strong undertone of homophobia does not contradict the prevailing atmosphere of homoeroticism in *shōjo manga* because the trope of *bishōnen* characters is not considered sexually dangerous to girls and young female readers.

Mark McLelland argues that *shōjo manga* is an outlet for erotic fantasy for Japanese women, and the *bishōnen* character embodies “the most attractive features of female gender.”³⁰ Neither Orsino nor Cesario/Viola represent real men in Morikawa’s *Twelfth Night*. The depictions of love or attraction between Orsino and Cesario provide a safe place, where female readers can picture themselves as these beautiful boys in order to explore their own sexuality.³¹ Consequently, Olivia’s attachment to the beautiful boy Cesario, which is visually represented as a homoerotic desire, is not necessary to support same-sex love (see Figure. 5). In this nominally heterosexual love, gender and gender roles are negotiable and the target readers of *shōjo manga* are offered the space to fulfill their imaginative constructs of love and sexuality.

Due to their androgynous appearance, the gender identities of Orsino and Cesario/Viola are unspecific. The “boy love” between Orsino and Cesario/Viola visually appears as an attraction between two feminine roles, and similarly, Olivia is trapped in a plausible same-sex relationship with an effeminate Cesario/Viola. Since these characters do not conform to the traditional heteronormative mode of gender identity and gender behaviour, they are able to break down the traditional gender binary. Accordingly, their romantic attractions escape from being depicted as the affection between persons of an opposite gender in the gender binary; namely, men depicting masculinity and women depicting femininity. More precisely, Morikawa’s *shōjo manga Twelfth Night* embraces diverse sexualities and liberates the characters from culturally prescribed gender and sexual roles. However, when *manga* enters the global market, that audience is not limited to Japanese girls. The representation of gender and sexual ambiguity then has to be adapted to comply with the social attitudes towards gender and sexuality in the local society.³² In the following section, this article emphasises the descriptions of cross-dressing and sexual desires in the British publisher’s version of *Manga Shakespeare Twelfth Night*.

Nana Li’s Manga Shakespeare Twelfth Night

In response to the global dissemination of Japanese *manga*, Nana Li’s *Manga Shakespeare Twelfth Night* (2009) imitates the *manga*’s visual grammar, style, and techniques. However, her rendering does attempt to avoid the gender bending tradition seen in *shōjo manga*. Li’s drawing of Cesario is not a *bishōnen* character; when Viola decides to disguise herself as the boy, Cesario, she gets a haircut. Although Cesario has big round eyes and an oval-shaped face, his short hairstyle enables “him” to look like a boy.

In *Twelfth Night*, there are at least three scenes that reveal an intimate relationship between Orsino and his page boy, Cesario/Viola: Orsino’s praise of Cesario/Viola’s beauty in Act I Scene 4, Orsino’s inquiry about the person Cesario/Viola has fallen in love with in Act II Scene 4, and Orsino’s statement to

sacrifice the lamb (Cesario/Viola) that he loves in Act V Scene 1. However, Orsino's attachment to Cesario/Viola is veiled in Li's adaptation. In her depiction, Orsino is not a *bishōnen* character; although he is handsome, his appearance is not effeminate. He has a short, asymmetric haircut. Whenever he appears, he looks like a narcissist, consciously posing to show off his fit body. He wears a fur collar overcoat with bare chest and tailor-made trousers.

When Orsino commands Cesario/Viola to deliver his love message to Olivia in Act I Scene 4, he observes that Cesario/Viola's lip is more smooth and red than the goddess Diana's and his voice is soft and feminine (I.4.31-34). However, in Li's adaptation, Orsino looks careless when he denies Cesario/Viola's manhood, and his expression is hidden while his compliments for Cesario/Viola are drawn in thought bubbles. It is unclear how Orsino conveys these thoughts to Cesario/Viola, and on the other hand, Cesario/Viola's face, in close-up, looks embarrassed sweating profusely down his/her head and neck. The intimacy between these two characters is not established and therefore this adaptation avoids dealing with the potential (homo)erotic attraction between Orsino and Cesario/Viola.

Furthermore, in Act II Scene 4, when Orsino asks Cesario/Viola with whom he/she is in love, Cesario/Viola confesses that he/she is in love with someone who looks like Orsino (II.4.20-34). This conversation has the potential to trigger the ambiguous desire, and yet, in Li's adaptation, Orsino slaps Cesario/Viola's back, as though they were in a relationship of mateship. Cesario/Viola's eyes turn white because of this surprise attack. Later, Cesario/Viola look embarrassed again when Orsino sneers at him/her that the "woman" he/she is in love with is too old. The scene also fails to show Orsino's interest in his page boy.

Because the previous scenes have not developed the ambiguous sexual desire between Orsino and Cesario/Viola in Li's adaptation, Orsino's declaration to sacrifice his beloved Cesario/Viola seems to be a pretentious gesture in front of Olivia. When Olivia calls Cesario/Viola "husband, stay," Orsino is shocked. However, the scene appears more like a power struggle than a love triangle and Cesario/Viola is the object to win over, in this case. Then, Orsino wins Cesario/Viola and kisses him/her on the lip. The close-up, however, looks as if the narcissistic Orsino kisses his own reflection in a mirror. In the very end, a page depicts Cesario/Viola in her women's clothing with Orsino, and the couple looks happily ever after (see Figure 6). By drawing Cesario/Viola in a dress again, Li resolves all the sexual ambiguities caused by him/her.



Figure 6. Cesario returns back to his women's clothes in Li's *Twelfth Night* (2009)

When Cesario/Viola goes to woo Olivia on behalf of Orsino, his appearance is evidently more boyish than that of the feminine Olivia. Figure 7 presents the scene of Cesario/Viola's first visit to Olivia's house in an ironic manner. In this scene, a large borderless panel at the bottom features a three-quarter length portrait of Cesario and his true identity, which is Viola, standing in the shadows. This largest panel becomes the focus of the page, indeed relaying Cesario/Viola's mood clearly to readers. Viola is dressed in a feminine gown with her long hair hanging over her chest. Her presence is in an obvious contrast to the boyish Cesario. By reminding her readers of the lady still underneath the doublet and breeches, Li's intent is to reduce the gender ambiguity generated by Viola's cross-dressing.

Furthermore, Olivia's attraction to Cesario/Viola is shown in three small framed panels vertically parallel to the borderless panel of Cesario/Viola's portrait. The three framed panels display a sequence of events; the first two panels characterise the close-up of Olivia's face and the last irregular panel suggests Maria's departure. In the top panel, Li adds a few extra strokes to Olivia's face, signifying her embarrassment or flushing of the face. Her eyes look in Cesario/Viola's direction. Beside Olivia's face, Li draws a few strokes and two small bubbles that float to Cesario/Viola, symbolising Olivia's inclination to this young messenger. In the second framed panel, Olivia's eyes look to the opposite of Cesario/Viola's direction, commanding Maria to leave them alone. She seems

afraid of being found out for liking Cesario/Viola. Then, an irregular shape of the last framed panel indicates a door being shut, but leaving a slit remaining to see Maria's back. In *manga* language, irregular shapes and arrangements of panels represent a character's unstable emotion or symbolise something unexpected.³³Li's last panel emphasises the closure of the door because Maria's leaving enables Cesario/Viola to speak to Olivia alone. Meanwhile, the irregular shaped panel is drawn from Olivia's perspective so as to imply her anxiety about being left alone with Cesario/Viola.



Figure 7. Cesario/Viola goes to woo Olivia on behalf of Orsino in Li's Twelfth Night (2009)

When Olivia is alone with Cesario/Viola, she asks him/her what Cesario/Viola would do if he/she were in love with her. Olivia is deeply moved by his/her speech of building a willow cabin at her gate. By the end of Act I Scene 5, when Cesario/Viola is about to say farewell to Olivia, he/she urges Olivia to keep her purse:

Oli. Get you to your lord:
I cannot love him. Let him send no more,
Unless, perchance, you come to me again,
To tell me how he takes it. Fare you well:
I thank you for your pains: spend this for me.
Vio. I am no fee'd post,
lady; keep your *purse* [Italics added]:
My master, not myself, lacks recompense.
Love make his heart of flint that you shall love,
And let your fervour, like my master's, be
Plac'd in contempt! Farewell, fair cruelty. [Exit.
(I.5.280-289)

In Li's depiction, Olivia offers Cesario/Viola money in return for her efforts and according to Cesario's/Viola's line, Olivia opens her "purse" to find money (see

Figure 8). The action of Olivia opening her purse also implies her sexual desire for Cesario/Viola. In Li's *manga* adaptation, she presents the conversation in thought bubbles, not in the convention of speech bubbles. One of the thought bubbles is accompanied with a close-up image of Olivia's face, indicating that Olivia is recalling the moment she opens her purse, as a blush appears on her face. Then, Cesario's/Viola's hand stops Olivia from opening her "purse," which should be kept closed till the time comes to recompense Duke Orsino. By offering a close-up sequence of the purse, Li's images dramatise the sexual implications in Shakespeare's text well.



Figure 8. Olivia offers money to Cesario/Viola.

Olivia's desire for Cesario/Viola is portrayed as misrecognition of the meaning of falling in love. Figure 9 illustrates the sequence of Olivia's confession in Act III Scene 1. It is divided into two vertical strips that are juxtaposed with each other; a strip of five framed panels are in irregular shapes to contrast with a large borderless panel. The five irregular panels imply Olivia's unstable emotions, i.e. the flutter of her desire. The sequence of these panels begins with a depiction of Olivia's state of mind. A high heel is shown at the top panel. The floor is filled with speed lines and a sparkle, suggesting a hasty pace. The second panel depicts Olivia's attempt to stop Cesario/Viola from leaving. The third panel shows a close-up of Olivia's face with blush lines. Her confession is made evident with the assistance of an abridged piece of Shakespearian text. In the last panel, Olivia throws herself toward Cesario/Viola, exclaiming that "but given unsought is better" (III.1.158). Opposite these five panels, the biggest borderless panel highlights Cesario/Viola's frightened face and Olivia's wavy hair.



Figure 9. Olivia's confession to Olivia about her ardent love for Cesario/Viola in Li's *Twelfth Night* (2009)

In Figure 9, Olivia's body occupies a large portion of the panel, leaving little room for positioning a word balloon in white space. Consequently, the balloon, "By innocence I swear, and by my youth, I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth" (III.1159-160), appears on Olivia's back. The tail of this speech balloon is placed between Cesario/Viola and Olivia. Both Cesario/Viola and Olivia could have spoken these lines; however, in the original play, these lines are Cesario/Viola's response to Olivia's confession. In this panel, Cesario/Viola's eyes are shaped like jelly beans, wide open with tiny pupils and white space to indicate shock. In contrast to Morikawa's illustration (see Figure 5), Olivia's face is unseen. In addition, Li's illustration of this emotionally charged scene emphasises Cesario's/Viola's surprise rather than setting a romantic atmosphere. Li does not use any emotive backgrounds to elaborate on Cesario/Viola or Olivia's mood. As a result, the graphic expression of their psychological struggles or conflicts in Li's drawing is not as rich as it is in Morikawa's.

Furthermore, by contrast to Morikawa's version, Olivia's attraction to Cesario/Viola is not portrayed romantically in Li's adaptation. When Olivia confesses her love for Cesario/Viola in Act III Scene 1, the scene is set in a simplification of a virtual garden. Li does not offer a realistic rendition of the garden, but she does use simple lines and abstract backgrounds to indicate those surroundings. However, although Li portrays Olivia's soliloquy in a relatively realistic tone, its conceptualised realism changes it into an abstract caricature of Cesario/Viola's rejection of Olivia's courtship.

Figure 10 shows Li's interpretation of Act III Scene 1, in which Olivia's infatuation with Cesario/Viola is portrayed as slapstick comedy to mock Olivia's ridiculous behaviour. In *manga* vocabulary, super-deformed (SD) is a technique used to create a *chibi* character and generate a comical effect. The word *chibi*, which literally means small and cute, refers to an "exaggerated and simplified form [that] characters take on in a heightened emotional state".³⁴ The use of *chibi*

also destabilises any conceptualisation of realism. Conceptualised realism defines images that *manga* or comics artists create as an artistic representation of natural objects, but which are, in fact, constructed only to highlight details relevant to what the artists wish to deliberately communicate.

The contrast between conceptualised realism and caricature is evident in Figure 10. At the top of Figure 10, Li depicts Cesario's response to Olivia's confession in three panels. They are clustered together above two larger panels showing Cesario's farewell to Olivia. Both Olivia and Cesario/Viola are "deformed" into small cute figures, while the farewell scene assumes a normal size. It is interesting to scrutinise the ways in which Li's drawing reduces the serious discussion of Olivia's courtship for Cesario/Viola. A vertical panel is juxtaposed to two horizontal ones, thereby presenting Cesario's justification, "And that no woman has; nor never none/ Shall mistress be of it, save I alone" (III.1.161-162).

The sequence begins with Olivia's clinging to Cesario/Viola. The vertical panel features numerous hearts surrounded by Olivia's face to indicate her desire for Cesario/Viola. However, Cesario/Viola's eyes are represented by two Vs; one is rotated 90 degrees clockwise, and the other counter-clockwise, with them facing each other in opposite directions. The representation of the two rotated V shapes is a visual metaphor intended to indicate Cesario/Viola's nervous or even terrified state of mind. A couple of jagged and speed lines parallel to Cesario/Viola's left arm show Cesario/Viola is in pain. Both Cesario/Viola and Olivia appear asexual, or androgynous in the *chibi* style. Olivia's overwhelming desire becomes funny because the *chibi* style draws attention to the cuteness of these two characters and their behaviour thus becomes surreal and absurd.

In the first horizontal panel, Li puts two hearts in place of Olivia's eyes. Several hearts float above her head, demonstrating her devotion to Cesario/Viola. Two wavy lines appear with the big words "DRAG DRAG" to suggest that Cesario/Viola is struggling to get rid of Olivia, but in vain. Olivia is attached to Cesario/Viola's back closely while Viola heads towards the door. The next panel shows Cesario/Viola grabbing the doorknob, and lifting his/her right leg, which is swaying in the air. The speed lines surrounding Cesario/Viola's leg implies hectic movement. Yet, Olivia's hand is attached to Cesario/Viola's leg. Her body is then flying in the air and her heart-shaped eyes become a symbolic expression of her devotion. The onomatopoeic words, "SHIKA SHAKA," appear close to the speed lines, telling of Cesario/Viola's attempt to rid herself of Olivia's hand. After the sequence presenting Cesario/Viola's struggle, two larger panels depict a conceptualised realism to present Cesario/Olivia's farewell to Olivia. There is no clue of the means Cesario/Viola uses to escape Olivia's hands. However, the *chibi* characters exaggerate the ridiculousness of Olivia's falling in love with Cesario/Viola and suggest her passion cannot be taken seriously. Olivia's desire for Cesario/Viola, therefore, becomes a laughable matter.



Figure 10. Cesario/Viola's objection to Olivia's love in *Li's Twelfth Night* (2009)

Li's Manga Shakespeare Twelfth Night follows the basics of the Japanese *manga* conventions and techniques, but it also conforms to the reading direction in the English language. Traditionally, Japanese *manga* tells a story from right to left; yet, the British *manga* series is illustrated with left to right pagination and incorporates the Western panel layout.³⁵ The number of irregular panels and layouts in Li's graphic novel are fewer than in Morikawa's. Also, Li seldom uses thought bubbles to express the interior feelings of a character, while Morikawa has a good command of thought balloons and narrative descriptions placed outside the speech balloons. In terms of Li's approaches to Viola's cross-dressing, she tends to distinguish Viola as a girl from her disguise as Cesario with different hairstyles. When Viola appears as Cesario, Li also reminds her readers of Cesario's female gender identity. Considering that the cross-dressing theme and the cult of effeminate young men in *shōjo manga* are not universal, Li's fashioning of these characters is based on the traditional perspective of gender binary. Her choice, consequently, undermines the ambiguous genders and sexualities present in Shakespeare's play.

Conclusion

Viola's cross-dressing is exceptional compared to other comic heroines because she is the only one who never changes back to her "woman's weeds" (V.1.2518). Julia, Portia, and Rosalind terminate their male disguises in the final scenes. Their male disguise, however, helps them assert their femininity. In contrast, Viola's perpetual cross-dressing blurs the distinction between the sexes, especially whenever her twin brother, Sebastian, stands next to her.

This article has compared the ways in which Viola is portrayed as well as the sexual attraction that is rendered in Morikawa's and Li's *manga* adaptations.

These two adaptations, to a certain degree, reflect the varying social attitudes toward gender and sexuality in the Japanese and non-Japanese cultures. Minami Ryuta observes that Morikawa's *Twelfth Night* is an example that utilises male and female twins to "project the motif of the divided self."³⁶ However, her *bishōnen* characters invoke an infinite imagination of sexual fantasy, including homoerotic attraction.

It is also worth noting that Cesario/Viola looks effeminate in Morikawa's adaptation, and following the original text, Cesario remains in his male attire at the end of this adaptation. Cesario/Viola's effeminate appearance, doublet, and breeches bring this character's gender identity and sexuality into question, and accordingly, Orsino's sexuality is in doubt as well. In contrast, Li's adaptation does not highlight Cesario/Viola's effeminacy, and thus, because of Cesario/Viola's boyish appearance, Olivia's attraction to Cesario/Viola is indeed plausible. Therefore, the ambiguous sexual attraction does not appear as strongly in Li's depiction and is not communicated as precisely in it. Furthermore, Viola returns back to her female attire by the end of Li's adaptation. The ending for Orsino and seeing his fancy Queen appear as a happily married couple reinforces gender binarism as well as the normative more acceptable heterosexual culture in society.

While Morikawa's adaptation of *Twelfth Night* features the *bishōnen* character type, Li's adaptation avoids *adopting* traditional androgynous and sexually ambivalent characters. Li inherits the *manga* form and style, and, yet, because the *Manga Shakespeare Series* seeks to achieve a global appeal,³⁷ the issues regarding gender bending and ambiguous sexuality are toned down for readers in the non-Japanese world who are not familiar with the boy love theme. Consequently, Li's adaptation sets a heteronormative tone to interpret Viola's cross-dressing. The combination of the Japanese *manga's* visual expression and the heteronormative storytelling mode thus produces a new cultural hybridity. This hybrid commodity clearly demonstrates the interplay of the global dissemination of Shakespeare and the Japanese *manga*.

¹ Wendy Siuyi Wong, "Globalizing Manga: From Japan to Hong Kong and Beyond" *Manga: Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspectives*, ed. T. Johnson-Woods (New York: Continuum, 2010), 336-342.

² Ibid.

³ See Emma Hayley, "Manga Shakespeare," in *Manga: Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspective*, in ed. T. Johnson-Woods, 267. The *Manga Shakespeare* series consists of 14 Shakespeare's plays, including *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Richard III*, *Henry VIII*, *The Tempest*, and *Julius Caesar*.

⁴ Globalisation is often regarded as a synonym to Westernisation because Western cultures are introduced to non-Western countries via media, leading to a cycle of Westernisation. However, since the 1990s, the Japanese *manga* has slowly gained popularity among Western world. In view

of the Japanese *manga* as the widely popular global export, the meaning of globalization has to be re-defined.

⁵ As we know, in Elizabethan theatre, it was a convention for boy actors to play female roles. Shakespeare, therefore, used this convention to play with gender identity. Shakespeare's heroines, like Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Viola in *Twelfth Night*, and so on, are disguised as boys. Viola is the only one who does not change back to her women's clothing. The double sex reversal, i.e. a boy actor playing a female role who is in disguise as a boy, creates gender ambiguity. On the other hand, Rosalind in her wedding garment announces on stage that "If I were a woman, I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleas'd me" (V.4.21). This line is read as a Shakespeare's boy actor defying his female garments. Gender identity is like costumes, which can be put on and take off as the heroines or boy actors wish. See Juliet Dusinberre, "Boys Becoming Women in Shakespeare's Plays," *Shakespeare Studies*, 6 (1998): 1-28, and Nancy K. Hales, "Sexual Disguise in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*," *Shakespeare Survey*, 32 (1979): 63-72. Because the all-male cast has the potential to trigger the multifaceted nature of sexual desires, performing Shakespeare according to original practice has remained popular.

⁶ Ryuta Minami, "Shakespeare for Japanese Popular Culture: Shojo Manga, Takarazuka and *Twelfth Night*" in *Shakespeare in Asia*, eds. D. Kennedy and Y. L. Lan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 124-127.

⁷ In 1999, the Takarazuka Revue staged two productions of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*: the Tsuki troupe's *Twelfth Night* and the Hoshi troupe's *Epiphany*.

⁸ Deborah Michelle Shamoon, *Passionate Friendship: The Aesthetics of Girls' Culture in Japan*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012), 82.

⁹ Morikawa Kumi, *Short Stories - Twelfth Night* (Kodansha Manga Bunko, 2003).

¹⁰ The *Manga Shakespeare* series features UK-based international *manga* artists' works for instance, Nana Li, who was hired to draw *Twelfth Night*, is a Swedish-born Chinese, Chie Kutsuwada, the author of *Manga Shakespeare As You Like It*, is Japanese, and Faye Yong, the author of *Manga Shakespeare The Merchant of Venice*, is Malaysian. All of these artists came to the UK for a career as illustrators and they succeeded. Their intercultural backgrounds enriched the *Manga Shakespeare* series.

¹¹ *Classic Illustrated Shakespeare* was first published in the 1950s.

¹² The name order for all Japanese names in this paper follows the Japanese social convention, which is to present the surname first, followed by the given name.

¹³ Shamoon, *Passionate Friendship*, 89.

¹⁴ Shamoon, *Passionate Friendship*, 95

¹⁵ Jennifer Prough, "Shōjo Manga in Japan and Abroad," in *Manga: Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspective*, ed. T. Johnson-Woods, 95.

¹⁶ Mark McLelland, "The 'Beautiful Boy' in Japanese Girls' Manga" in *Manga: Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspective*, ed. T. Johnson-Woods, in T. Johnson-Woods, 82.

¹⁷ See McLelland. "The 'Beautiful Boy'", 78. Because it is forbidden to discuss women's sexuality in contemporary Japan, *shōjo manga* develops the love between two beautiful boys so that girls can keep their sexuality in check.

¹⁸ Shamoon, *Passionate Friendship*, 111. In the late 1970s, *shōnen ai* (boy love) was sexualised in *shōnenmanga* (boys' comics) as *yaoi*, which feature romantic or sexual relationships between male characters. Later, *shōjo manga* followed suit and then a new genre called Boys' Love, a.k.a. BL, was invented in the 1990s.

¹⁹ McLelland, "The 'Beautiful Boy'", 87.

²⁰ Shamoon, *Passionate Friendship*, 104.

²¹ William Shakespeare: *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 414.

²² Shamoon, *Passionate Friendship*, 115-116.

²³ Prough, *Manga: Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspective*, 95.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

²⁵ See the British publisher's marketing strategies on page 3 and footnote 10.

²⁶ *Shōjo Manga* explores the issue of gender bending through the use of a girl in disguise as a boy or vice versa, and the depiction of effeminate *bishōnen* (beautiful boy).

²⁷ Hayley, *Manga: Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspective*, 268.

²⁸ Prough, *Manga: Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspective*, 104

²⁹ Tania Darlington and Sara Cooper, "The Power of Truth: Gender and Sexuality in Manga," in

Manga: Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspective, ed. T. Johnson-Woods, 159.

³⁰ See Minami in *Shakespeare in Asia*, 112-113.

³¹ McLelland, *Manga: Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspective*, 90.

³² *Ibid.*, 83 and 87.

³³ Prough, *Manga: Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspective*, 102.

³⁴ Minami in *Shakespeare in Asia*, 114

³⁵ Robin E. Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime* (London: Libraries Unlimited, 2007), 294.

2013. http://ourspace.uregina.ca/bitstream/handle/10294/3091/QueenCityComics-3-Troni_Grande.pdf?sequence=1.

³⁶ Minami in *Shakespeare in Asia*, 112.

³⁷ Hayley, *Manga: Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspective*, 278.