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The Shakespearean Editor as Shrew-Tamer

We all know how Shakespeare's uncomfortable play *The Taming of the Shrew* ends. Kate makes a long and eloquent speech of submission to Petruchio in which she argues for the subordination of wives on legal, biological, and ethical grounds, finally offering to place her hand beneath her husband's foot if that will "do him ease." Petruchio responds with gusto, "Why, there's a wench!"¹ and after a bit more repartee, the company scatters, commenting on the miracle of Kate's taming, even though, at least as we like to read and teach the play nowadays, it is by no means clear that Kate is thoroughly converted to the system of patriarchal hegemony she advocates. Whether she is or not, there is a strong illusion of reality surrounding her speech at the end of the play: we are invited to forget that the taming of Kate by Petruchio started out as a mere play within a play performed for the delectation of one Christopher Sly, drunken tinker turned temporary aristocrat.

In actual productions of the play within the last fifteen years in London or New York, Stratford or New Haven, however, Christopher Sly is harder to forget. As often as not in recent stagings, he remains on stage and alert until almost the end of the taming plot, calling for the clown figure to come back on stage, commenting on the action, and even intervening to stop it when some of the characters appear about to be hauled off to prison.² When he finally does

1. *The Taming of the Shrew* 5.2.179–80, cited from the New Cambridge *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Ann Thompson (Cambridge, Eng., 1984). Subsequent references to the play will be to this edition and indicated by act, scene, and line number in the text.

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2. For discussion of recent performances, I am indebted to Tori Haring-Smith, *From Farce to Metadrama: A Stage History of The Taming of the Shrew, 1594–1983* (Westport, 1985), and to

drift into sleep around the beginning of Act 5, the Lord orders him carried back to his original place and he becomes once more a drunken tinker lying in a stupor before an alehouse. Sly awakens, somewhat dazed, and concludes that the taming play he has watched has been a vivid dream, the bravest and best he has ever had. The reality of the taming plot in this version is severely undercut: it has remained "only" a play—or even a dream—throughout. Moreover, Sly's final lines compromise Kate's message even further. He lurches off, vowing to tame his own termagant wife at home now that his dream has taught him how to do it. He is unlikely to succeed, we can confidently predict, given his staggering condition and his obvious characterological distance from the charismatic stage figure Petruchio. Instead of convincing us that the inner play's wife-taming scenario is a possible one in reality, Sly's vow turns it into the wish-fulfillment fantasy of a habitual drunkard who is as likely to be punished by his wife for this night out as he has been for past transgressions. Shrew-taming becomes the compensatory fantasy of a socially underprivileged male.

It is not difficult to imagine why the Christopher Sly ending is gaining increasing popularity in theatrical productions of *The Taming of the Shrew*: it softens some of the brutality of the taming scenes, which can then be viewed as tailored to the uncultivated tastes of Sly; it distances late twentieth-century audiences from some of the most unacceptable implications of Kate's pronouncements on male sovereignty. But on what authority do directors tack the Sly episodes onto the written text as we all know it from our standard editions? To attempt to answer that question is to enter a labyrinth in which any stable sense we may have of the identity of Shakespeare and his work very quickly begins to dissolve. By examining the textual and performance history of *The Taming of the Shrew* we will gain a fresh sense of the provisionality, even the fragility, of our standard text.

II

The easy and traditional answer to the question "On what authority?" is "On no authority whatsoever." The scenes of Sly's intervention in

Graham Holderness, *Shakespeare in Performance: The Taming of the Shrew* (Manchester, Eng., 1989).

the action and eventual return to the alehouse are, as most recent editors of the play agree, "not Shakespeare," and therefore inadmissible into the canonical text of the play and usually relegated to an appendix. These episodes featuring Sly come from *The Taming of a Shrew*, a play generally regarded by editors as artistically inferior to *The Taming of the Shrew* but viewed in its own time, for copyright purposes at least, as the same play as *The Shrew*. *The Taming of a Shrew* (or *A Shrew*, as it is termed to differentiate it from *The Shrew*) was published in a 1594 quarto and again in 1596 and 1607. *The Shrew* appeared in print for the first time in the 1623 First Folio of Shakespeare's works without having been entered separately in the Stationers' Register; it was reprinted in quarto form in 1631 by the printer who owned the copyright to *A Shrew*.³ So far as we know, the earlier printed version of *A Shrew* was not republished after 1607. It was, however, closely associated with other early quarto versions of Shakespeare plays: it was, according to its 1594 title page, "sundry times acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Pembroke his servants," a company with which Shakespeare may have been briefly associated; it was sent to the printer around the same time as the quarto versions of *Henry VI Parts 2 and 3* and *Titus Andronicus*, very likely because by 1594 the Earl of Pembroke's Men had become indigent and dissolved. A play called by Henslowe "the tamynge of A shrowe" was performed at Newington Butts in 1594 by the Lord Chamberlain's Men, a company with which Shakespeare was probably already associated by the end of that year if not earlier; other plays performed alongside it included *Titus Andronicus* and some version of *Hamlet*.⁴ At the very least, *The Taming of a Shrew* was closely connected with other early plays now accepted by textual revisionists as Shakespearean.

Nevertheless, beginning with Edmond Malone in the late eigh-

3. Thompson, pp. 1-3; the New Arden edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Brian Morris (London, 1981), p. 3.

4. Scholarly opinion differs as to whether Shakespeare himself was a member of Pembroke's Men and whether *A Shrew* was actually performed by that company or by the Lord Chamberlain's Men at Newington Butts. There are also marked differences of opinion over which of these early *Shrews* was *A Shrew* and which may have been *The Shrew*. For representative views, see E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1930), 1:324-28; *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson (Cambridge, Eng., 1928), pp. vii-xxv, 99-126; *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. H. J. Oliver (Oxford, 1984), pp. 29-34; and David George, "Shakespeare and Pembroke's Men," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 32 (1981), 305-23.

teenth century, an enormous amount of editorial energy has gone into proving—over and over again and by various ingenious strategies—that no part of *The Taming of a Shrew* can be Shakespeare. Whether consciously or not, recent editors have suppressed the degree of visibility *A Shrew* has had in the textual history of *The Shrew*. Modern editors, when they consider *A Shrew* at all, tend to state that of all Shakespeare's previous editors, only Alexander Pope admitted the Christopher Sly episodes and conclusion to his text of *The Taming of the Shrew*. That significantly understates the matter: not only Pope, but, following him, Thomas Hanmer, Lewis Theobald, Samuel Johnson, William Warburton, and Edward Capell all included some or all of the Sly materials in their editions as "Shakespeare." The eighteenth-century pattern was broken by Malone, who argued that *A Shrew* was not Shakespeare, but Shakespeare's source play for *The Shrew*.⁵ Since Malone's edition of Shakespeare in the late eighteenth century, *The Taming of the Shrew* in printed versions has looked much as we know it in our standard editions today—with Sly dropping out early on and the taming plot opening out into "reality" at the end. In every generation there have been a few hardy souls who have argued that *A Shrew* is indeed Shakespeare—an early apprentice version of the play that later became *The Shrew*. From time to time there have also been hardy souls who have argued that their preferred text, *The Shrew*, or at least most of it, was also not written by Shakespeare. During the twentieth century, however, opinion has rigidified significantly. *The Shrew* has been generally accepted as canonical and *A Shrew* moved further and further from Shakespeare. Instead of being regarded as the source play for *The Shrew*, as it was by most editors until the 1920s, it now has lost even that status, and is generally considered instead a "vamped up" copy—a "bad quarto" of the "original" play, *The Taming of the Shrew*. Yet, curiously, *A Shrew* is not

5. Early editions I have consulted include *The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare; In Six Volumes*, ed. Nicholas Rowe (1709); *The Works of Shakespear . . . in Six Volumes*, ed. Alexander Pope (1720–1725); *The Works of Shakespeare in Seven Volumes*, ed. Lewis Theobald (1733); *The Works of Shakespeare in Six Volumes*, ed. Thomas Hanmer (1744); *The Works of Shakespear in Eight Volumes*, ed. William Warburton (1747); *The Plays of William Shakespeare, in Eight Volumes*, ed. Samuel Johnson (1765); *Mr. William Shakespeare his COMEDIES, HISTORIES, AND TRAGEDIES*, ed. Edward Capell (1768); and *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare in 10 Volumes*, ed. Edmond Malone (1790). Capell represents a transitional case in that the Sly materials are included in the text of his London 1768 edition but branded as non-Shakespearean in the introduction and notes of his Dublin 1771 edition, *The Plays of Shakespeare*.

included among the other "bad quartos" in Michael J. B. Allen and Kenneth Muir's handsome facsimile edition of *Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto*, on the grounds that its text is anomalous, "longer and more coherent than the texts of the other bad quartos."⁶ What gets called "Shakespeare" in the case of *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* is protean and malleable, shifting over the years along with literary fashions, along with social mores, and especially—this is the part that interests me the most—along with shifting views of male violence and female subordination. "Shakespeare" is a historical construction, grounded in historical data, to be sure, but data so scanty that they can be reconfigured rather easily to support one or another hypothesis about what constitutes a genuine text.

III

In *The Taming of the Shrew* we are dealing with a particularly tricky form of marginality: what might Shakespeare have written or helped to write when he was not yet sounding like "Shakespeare"? Even though the early history of *A Shrew* so closely parallels that of *Titus Andronicus*, which now has a secure place in the canon, and that of the quarto versions of *Henry VI, Parts 2 and 3*, which are now accepted as Shakespeare by revisionist critics, *A Shrew* remains in a curious limbo. It is too regular and original to be a "bad quarto," yet somehow too derivative and uncouth to be acceptable Shakespeare. There are, I would suggest, good reasons why twentieth-century editors and critics have been particularly reluctant to associate *The Taming of a Shrew* with Shakespeare, either as source play or as Shakespeare's early version of the standard text. For traditional editors, *A Shrew* has been less acceptable than *The Shrew* at least in part because of an

6. *Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto: A Facsimile Edition of Copies Primarily from the Henry E. Huntington Library*, ed. Michael Allen and Kenneth Muir (Berkeley, 1981), p. xv; see also W. Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio: Its Bibliographical and Textual History* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 210–16. For representative twentieth-century arguments about the derivative nature of *A Shrew*, see n. 23 below. For examples of dissenting opinion, to the effect that *A Shrew* is either early Shakespeare or Shakespeare's main source, see *The Taming of a Shrew*, ed. F. S. Boas (London, 1908); *The Works of Shakespeare: The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. R. Warwick Bond (Indianapolis, n. d.); *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough, (London, 1966), I, 58; *Shakespeare's Comedy of "The Taming of the Shrew,"* ed. William J. Rolfe (New York, 1881 [new edition, 1898]); W. J. Courthope, *A History of English Poetry* (London, 1895–1910), IV, 467–74. To their credit, in *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford 1987), Gary Taylor and Stanley Wells leave open the question of the relationship between *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*.

affinity between shrew-taming as valorized in *The Taming of the Shrew* and what editors have traditionally liked to do with texts. As an essay by Gary Taylor has recently pointed out, the editing of Shakespeare has traditionally been a gendered activity, with the editor almost always male and the text implicitly female.⁷ Good texts are not supposed to be wild and unruly; to the extent that they appear so, it is the editor's job to tame them into meaning, ironing out uncouthness and grotesqueries as a way of showing the essential elevation and refinement of "gentle Shakespeare's" creation once the disfigurements introduced by ignorant actors, copyists, and printers have been carefully cleared away. In *The Shrew*, shrew taming is explicitly associated with humanist pedagogy: Petruchio's subduing and refinement of Kate operates parallel to the purported efforts of Bianca's tutors to teach the two sisters Vergil and the art of the lute. By learning to speak the pedagogue's language of social and familial order, Kate shows herself to be a better student of standard humanist doctrine than her sister.⁸ In *A Shrew*, as we shall see, the taming process is considerably less efficacious. To accept *A Shrew* as Shakespeare would be, from the standpoint of traditional editorial practice, to leave the shrew (and the text) in disorder. It would also be to lose a convenient mechanism by which the forcible suppression of female insurgency is naturalized as reality and truth.

But even for reader-critics whose views are markedly less traditional, *A Shrew* has usually been kept safely on the margins, at considerable distance from the "genuine" play, perhaps because if allowed to come into close proximity with the "correct" text, it would undermine yet another version of "gentle Shakespeare"—his time-honored reputation for unusual benignity, at least by the standards of his day, in his understanding of and sympathy for women. To the extent that they have considered *A Shrew* at all, modern editors and critics have regularly fragmented it, citing it piecemeal in order to demonstrate the superior artistry and the superior humanity of the "authentic" version. They regularly excerpt parts of Kate's speech of submission

7. Gary Taylor, "Textual and Sexual Criticism: A Crux in *The Comedy of Errors*," *Renaissance Drama*, n. s. 19 (1988), 195-225.

8. For this point I am indebted to Margaret Downes-Gamble's paper, "The Taming-school: *The Taming of the Shrew* as Lesson in Renaissance Humanism and the Modern Humanities," forthcoming in a special issue of *Sixteenth Century Studies*, ed. Jean R. Brink. See also Thompson, pp. 13-14.

from *A Shrew*, which argues for wifely obedience on the basis of Eve's responsibility for the Fall, in order to demonstrate the vastly decreased mysogyny of Kate's arguments in Shakespeare's "authentic" version. Just as regularly, they identify as defects features of *A Shrew* which, if analyzed instead as alternate versions of the text, might make the canonical *Shrew* sound less than humane by comparison.⁹ In all modern editions of the authorized text, *A Shrew* is treated not as an artistic structure with its own patterns of meaning and its own dramatic logic, but as a heap of shards thrown together by ignorant actors with no capacity for coherence. As we shall see, there has long been a radical disjunction between what passes as genuine Shakespeare in the printed text of the play and what is accepted as Shakespeare in performance, with performance traditions sometimes run-

9. See, e.g., John C. Bean, "Comic Structure and the Humanizing of Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*," in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely (Urbana, Ill., 1980, rpt. 1983) pp. 65-78; and Peter Berek, "Text, Gender, and Genre in *The Taming of the Shrew*," in "*Bad*" *Shakespeare: Revaluations of the Shakespearean Canon*, ed. Maurice Charney (London, 1988), pp. 91-104. Both essays consistently misread *A Shrew* out of a desire to demonstrate Shakespeare's greater tolerance and humanity. For use of Kate's submission speech from *A Shrew*, see Ann Thompson's fine edition (n. 1 above), pp. 28-29.

Other interpretive articles with which I may not agree but to which my own thinking is indebted include Lynda E. Boose, "Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly Member," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42 (1991), 179-213; and her forthcoming essay "*The Taming of the Shrew*, Good Husbandry, and Enclosure"; Richard A. Burt, "Charisma, Coercion, and Comic Form in *The Taming of the Shrew*," *Criticism*, 26 (1984), 295-311; Joel Fineman, "The Turn of the Shrew," in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (London, 1985), pp. 138-59; Thelma Nelson Greenfield, "The Transformation of Christopher Sly," *Philological Quarterly*, 33 (1954), 34-42; Robert B. Heilman, "The *Taming* Untamed, or, The Return of the Shrew," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 27 (1966), 146-61; Barbara Hodgdon's forthcoming essay "Katherina Bound, or Notes on Pla(k)ating the Structures of Everyday Life"; Richard Hosley, "Was There a 'Dramatic Epilogue' to *The Taming of the Shrew*?" *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 1 (1961), 17-34; Sears Jayne, "The Dreaming of *The Shrew*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 17 (1966), 41-56; Ernest P. Kuhl, "Shakespeare's Purpose in Dropping Sly," *Modern Language Notes*, 36 (1921), 321-29; Karen Newman, "Renaissance Family Politics and Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*," *English Literary Renaissance*, 16 (1986), 86-100; Marianne L. Novy, "Patriarchy and Play in *The Taming of the Shrew*," *English Literary Renaissance*, 9 (1979), 264-80; Marion D. Perrit, "Petruccio: The Model Wife," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 23 (1983), 223-35; Michael W. Shurgot, "From Fiction to Reality: Character and Stagecraft in *The Taming of the Shrew*," *Theatre Journal*, 33 (1981), 327-40; Edward Tomarken's forthcoming essay "The Discipline of Criticism: Samuel Johnson on Shakespeare"; Valerie Wayne, "Refashioning the Shrew," *Shakespeare Studies*, 17 (1985), 159-87; and Karl P. Wentersdorf, "The Original Ending of *The Taming of the Shrew*: A Reconsideration," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 18 (1978), 201-15. My thanks to Lynda Boose, Edward Tomarken, and Barbara Hodgdon, who graciously shared their work in manuscript.

ning a good half-century ahead of editorial practice. If that pattern holds, then *A Shrew*, with its heavy undercutting, through the return of Christopher Sly, of Kate's long sermon at the end about proper female subordination, may be on the verge of becoming "Shakespeare," just as it was during most of the eighteenth century and just as, since then, other suspect plays like *Titus Andronicus*, *King John*, and the *Henry VI* plays and their quartos have gradually been brought into the canon.

Recent poststructuralist theory positing the fundamental indeterminacy of all literary texts has shaken up most of the interpretive categories by which editors have been able to assert confidently in the matter of *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* that the latter is "Shakespeare" while the former is not. In the case of *King Lear*, many editors and bibliographers are now willing to accept the argument of Steven Urkowitz, Michael Warren, and Gary Taylor that there are not one but two authoritative versions of that play—the 1608 quarto version and the 1623 folio. Both are printed in the New Oxford Shakespeare and in Warren's *The Complete King Lear, 1608–1623* (Berkeley, 1989). Little by little, the status of the "bad quartos" of Shakespeare is rising.¹⁰ Instead of damning them in the language of the First Folio itself as "stolne and surreptitious copies,"¹¹ we are beginning to regard them as valuable records of performance with their own logic and artistic merits, their own "local" identities, their own distinctive claim to critical attention. It is time to extend that attention to *A Shrew* and its undercutting of patriarchal authority.

IV

What happens if, instead of regarding *A Shrew* as *ipse facto* a foul corruption of the "true" play, we regard it as a text in its own right, a

10. See Steven Urkowitz, *Shakespeare's Revision of King Lear* (Princeton, 1980); *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare's Two Versions of King Lear*, ed. Gary Taylor and Michael Warren (Oxford, 1983); Urkowitz, "Reconsidering the Relationship of Quarto and Folio Texts of *Richard III*," *English Literary Renaissance*, 16 (1986), 442–66; Urkowitz, "Good News about 'Bad' Quartos," in "Bad" Shakespeare: *Revaluations of the Shakespeare Canon*, ed. Maurice Charney (London, 1988), pp. 189–206; Annabel Patterson, "Back by Popular Demand: The Two Versions of *Henry V*," *Renaissance Drama*, n. s. 19 (1988), 29–62; and Leah Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents* (Berkeley, 1988). The present essay will be included in revised form in a book in progress under the tentative title of "Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton."

11. *The First Folio of Shakespeare*, ed. Charlton Hinman (London, 1968), p. 7.

text in which difference does not have to be read as debasement? The differences are many and striking. *A Shrew* is shorter and often simpler; the verse has many borrowings from Marlowe and is often metrically irregular, although that is occasionally true of *The Shrew* as well. More strikingly, *A Shrew* has a different setting (Athens) and different names for all the main characters except Kate. Petruchio is named Ferando. In *A Shrew*, the subplot to the taming play is quite different: Kate has two sisters instead of one and each has her own suitor, so that the rivalry of *The Shrew* for the hand of Bianca is absent. The taming plot itself is much like that of the play as we know it, except that the incidents are arranged somewhat differently, the characters are less vividly and fully drawn, Kate's motivation in accepting Petruchio is clearer, and Petruchio's in taming Kate is less clear. Editors have traditionally disparaged *A Shrew* on the grounds that its portrayal of motivation is murky, failing to notice that their generalization applies only to the male characters, not to Kate herself.¹² In *A Shrew* Kate tells the audience in an aside that she will play along with her tamer: "But yet I will consent and marry him, / For I methinks have lived too long a maid, / And match him too, or else his manhood's good."¹³ That aside does not exist in *The Shrew*.

Some of the most profoundly patriarchal language of *The Shrew* is not present in *A Shrew*. Petruchio/Ferando never states that his only motive in wiving is financial, nor does he refer to Kate as one of his possessions—goods, chattels, household stuff, "My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything" (3.2.221). Indeed, *A Shrew* is remarkable for the absence of such language—none of Petruchio's most demeaning speeches in regard to female weakness and impotence exists in *A Shrew*. In *A Shrew*, as he carries Kate off after the wedding, Petruchio/Ferando even suggests that if she humors him for the present, he will do her recompense later on: "Come, Kate, stand not on terms, we will away; / This is my day; to-morrow thou shalt rule, / And I will do whatever thou commands" (p. 32, ll. 87–89). In *A Shrew*, Petruchio/Ferando's method of taming by opposites is less elaborate and cleverly psychological than in *The Shrew*, or at least less clearly articulated as such by him; on the other hand, in *A Shrew*, Kate has less

12. See, for example, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Oliver, pp. 17–18.

13. "The Taming of a Shrew" being the Original of Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew," ed. F. S. Boas (London, 1908), p. 14, lines 169–71. Subsequent quotations from this edition will be indicated by page and line number in the text.

far down to go in order to appear properly tame—a proper “household Kate”—and Petruchio/Ferando clearly considers some of her most flamboyant gestures of subservience to be excessive. Kate’s speech of submission in *A Shrew* is very different from the parallel passage in *The Shrew*. Although the very few editors who have discussed it have, following the traditional pattern of debasing *A Shrew* in order to exalt *The Shrew*, found it *more* unredeemingly sexist than the authorized Shakespearean version, I would characterize it as offering a different kind of patriarchal argument, one that was less up-to-date in sixteenth-century terms. Whether we regard it as more or less misogynist will depend on our evaluation of different modes of patriarchy.

Kate’s speech in *A Shrew* can be described as a restatement of traditional misogyny on religious grounds. Much of it is taken up with platitudes about the creation: God made the world out of chaos, a “gulf of gulfs, a body bodiless” before it was shaped by his framing hand (p. 62, l. 124). After the six days’ work, he fashioned Adam, and out of his rib created woman:

Then to His image did He make a man,
 Old Adam, and from his side asleep
 A rib was taken, of which the Lord did make
 The woe of man, so termed by Adam then
 “Wo-man,” for that by her came sin to us;
 And for her sin was Adam doomed to die. (p. 62, ll. 130–35)

This interestingly inaccurate view of the fall blames woman, as usual, for the plight of humankind—she is named a “woe” by Adam before she has even had a chance to act—but it is not echoed by other elements of the play, nor does it limit the woman’s sphere of action as the alternative speech in *The Shrew* does. By contrast, Kate’s rationale for obedience in *The Shrew* is given a political rather than a religious base: she advocates wifely obedience in terms of a theory of sovereignty by which the household is modelled on the kingdom and wifely disobedience becomes a form of “petty treason” against her “king” and husband. “Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, / Thy head, thy sovereign,” (5.2.146–47) “thy lord, thy king, thy governor” (5.2.138)—an authority against whom disobedience or even peevishness is (according to the doctrine of petty treason) the same crime as that of a rebellious subject against a monarch:

Such duty as the subject owes the prince,
 Even such a woman oweth to her husband.
 And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour,
 And not obedient to his honest will,
 What is she but a foul contending rebel
 And graceless traitor to her loving lord? (5.2.155-60)

The machinery of state lying behind this appeal for submission is rather more awesome and immediate than the diffuse and generalized appeal for order in *A Shrew*. We will note, too, that in the two speeches, the meaning of obedience is startlingly different. In *A Shrew*, Kate appeals to wives to obey because their husbands need their assistance: "Obey them, love them, keep, and nourish them, / If they by any means do want our helps" (p. 62 ll. 137-38). In *The Shrew*, the rationale is precisely reversed: women are presented as helpless, passive, creatures of the household, who lie "warm at home, secure and safe" while their hardy lords and masters venture out into the maelstrom for their benefit (5.2.151). Kate's vision of a housewife lying safe and protected at home sounds so familiar to us that we may fail to recognize its relative newness in the Renaissance. *The Shrew's* image of the wife as a private possession of the husband to be tucked away at home was, in England at least, only beginning to emerge as the most desirable family model for haut bourgeois households.¹⁴

To be sure, Kate's final gesture of submission is more extreme in *A Shrew* than in the version we are accustomed to. In *The Shrew*, she commands the wives,

Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,
 And place your hands below your husband's foot.
 In token of which duty, if he please,
 My hand is ready, may it do him ease. (5.2.176-79)

14. See Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfeld, 1977); Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" (1977), reprinted in *Women, History, and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly* (Chicago, 1984), pp. 19-50; and David Underdown's critique of Alice Clark's *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*, rev. ed. by M. Chaytor and J. Lewis (London, 1982), in Underdown's "The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England," in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge, Eng., 1985), pp. 116-36. Underdown accepts the theory of a general decline in the independence of women during the period, but argues that increased attention to the scold may signal increased opportunities for women in some segments of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century culture.

Petruchio's response "Why, there's a wench!" registers his approval of her extravagant gesture of submission and also, perhaps, an element of condescension. In *A Shrew*, Kate makes the same gesture, but its symbolic rationale is not articulated (and this is one of the things editors have traditionally pointed to as an indication that *A Shrew* is a borrowed and derivative text). In *A Shrew*, Kate's act becomes a piece of deliberate excess, which her husband stops instead of approving:

Laying our hands under their feet to tread,
 If that by that we might procure their ease;
 And for a precedent I'll first begin
 And lay my hand under my husband's feet. (p. 63, ll. 139-42)

The stage direction calls for her actually to lay her hand beneath his foot. Petruchio/Ferando responds, "Enough, sweet, the wager thou hast won; / And they, I am sure, cannot deny the same" (p. 63, ll. 143-44), which makes her masochistic gesture something acknowledged as excessive—performed to help her husband win the bet. It is possible, of course, to make the same interpretation of her meaning in *The Shrew*, but we have to create it ourselves by reading between the lines. In *A Shrew* it is unequivocally articulated in the text.

The reaction of the other characters is also strongly contrasted in the two versions of the play. In *The Shrew*, Kate's speech silences the other women; only the men speak thereafter. In *A Shrew*, Emelia (Bianca) makes it clear that she finds Kate's speech ridiculous. After Kate and Petruchio/Ferando exit at the end, Bianca/Emelia asks Polidor (Lucentio), "How now, Polidor, in a dump? What say'st thou, man?" He retorts, "I say thou art a shrew," to which she replies, "That's better than a sheep." He responds, as though with a shrug, "Well, since 'tis done, let it go! Come, let's in" and they exit (p. 63, ll. 157-61). In this version Kate's sister is not only not silenced, it looks very much as though she has won. When she and her new spouse exit, Sly returns, and Kate's message of submission is compromised even further—contained within a series of dramatic events, rather like a nest of boxes, that narrows down its applicability and ideological impact to almost nothing.

Perhaps the most fascinating differences between *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* are metadramatic: a play is a much more limited entity in *A Shrew*, much more exalted and powerful in *The Shrew*. To imagine Shakespeare in connection with *A Shrew* is to associate The Bard with

a very lowly profession. The actors in *A Shrew* are humble, ill-educated itinerants. They enter bearing packs on their backs and one of them is so ignorant that he has not mastered the classical generic terms of his trade. When the Lord asks them what they can perform for him, Sander, the actor-clown, answers, "Marry, my lord, you may have a tragical, or a comodity, or what you will," and the other actor fiercely corrects him, "A comedy, thou should'st say; souns, thou'lt shame us all" (p. 3, ll. 59-61). In *A Shrew*, the actors and Sly inhabit the same world of hardship, and they are able to give him the entertainment he wants: he remains awake enjoying it almost to the end. In *The Shrew*, by contrast, the actors are allied with the Lord and his household against Sly. They are urbane and well-educated, at home in the world of humanist discourse rather than alien from it. In this version, unlike the other one, Sly has never seen a play. The butt of the "comodity" joke is not an actor, but Christopher Sly himself, who queries, when offered a "pleasant comedy," "Is not a comonty a Christmas gambold or a tumbling trick?" (Induction 2.132-33). And of course the play itself is far above him: he wearies of it by the end of the first scene, "'Tis a very excellent piece of work, madam lady. Would 'twere done!" and is never heard from again (1.1.243).

In *The Shrew* and in that version only, dramatic and pictorial art are valued for their verisimilitude: Sly is presented with sexually explicit pictures of Adonis, Cytherea, and Io "beguilèd" and ravished by Jove, "As lively painted as the deed was done" (Induction 2.52). The Lord praises one of the actors for a similar verisimilitude in a previous role: "that part / Was aptly fitted and naturally performed" (Induction 1.82-83). The same claim is made at least implicitly by the taming play itself: instead of being bounded by the reappearance of Sly, it has become independent of his narrow vision and attained, at the end, the status of "nature" rather than performance. In *The Shrew*, the Induction is also more clearly localized than its counterpart in *A Shrew*, with numerous evocations of Shakespeare's own early neighborhood in Warwickshire. In the nineteenth century, Bardolators liked to search out Slys in the Stratford area as a way of pointing to the wonderful realism of Shakespeare's art—drawn to the very life.¹⁵

15. F. J. Furnivall, *The New Shakespeare Society's Transactions*, Series 1, no. 1 (London, 1874), 104. See also the New Arden edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Brian Morris (London, 1981), pp. 62-63. John Russell Brown uses the appeal to realism in *The Shrew* to build a broad

The Shrew's more compelling aura of reality is one of the salient characteristics for which that version has been preferred over the cruder and more farcical *A Shrew*. We will note, however, that in *The Shrew* the rising status of the actors in terms of their ability to claim a kind of truth for their art is bought at the price of woman's power and autonomy, since there is nothing to qualify the "truth" of female subordination they offer up at the end. If we imagine the play as a relatively bounded economy, then the actors triumph by putting women down, "realizing" womanly weakness in both senses of the term through their staging of Kate's submission. In *A Shrew*, the actors are lower and stay low; the women are brought less low. John Harington's *The Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596) referred to *A Shrew* in a way that suggested he (and other readers of the quarto) found the play's message of shrew-taming in that version to be fatally and ruefully compromised by Sly's fantasy at the end: "For the shrewd wife, reade the booke of taming a shrew, which hath made a number of us so perfect, that now every one can rule a shrew in our countrey, save he that hath her."¹⁶

V

Given the significant ideological difference between the two versions of the play, it is relatively easy to see why modern editors and critics have been at such pains to distance the two texts from each other, or at least to go along with earlier editorial decisions to keep them apart. With the passage of the centuries, the gulf between the two has widened. In the Renaissance, as we have noted, the two *Shrews* were regarded as one in terms of copyright; in the early eighteenth century they were considered an earlier and later draft by Shakespeare. Beginning with Malone, *A Shrew* was less frequently considered early Shakespeare, more frequently identified as Shakespeare's source for *The Shrew*. In all of these hypotheses *A Shrew* comes out as the earlier play, and I have made a case for that view as well. The shifts from *A Shrew* to *The Shrew* can be seen as the articulation of "modern" ideas

argument about increasing naturalism in acting styles during the age of Shakespeare, "On the Acting of Shakespeare's Plays," (1953), rpt. in *The Seventeenth-Century Stage: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. G. E. Bentley (Chicago, 1968), pp. 41-54.

16. John Harington, *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*, ed. Elizabeth Donno (London, 1962), pp. 153-54; cited in Oliver, p. 34.

(for the Renaissance at least) about women's place within the household and within the absolutist state; the name of Shakespeare thus becomes identified with the rise of individualism and the development of the haut-bourgeois family model. Similarly, the status of the actors rises considerably from *A Shrew* to *The Shrew*, running parallel to the rising status and prosperity that theatrical historians associate with the profession during Shakespeare's time and with Shakespeare's own career in particular.¹⁷

During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the cultural need to naturalize the story of the play was so intense that in Garrick's highly popular afterpiece *Catherine and Petruchio*, *The Taming of the Shrew* was whittled down to the taming story *tout seul*, a sentimentalized version of *The Shrew* with no Sly, no subplots, and a softened conclusion in which Petruchio and Kate share in the delivery of the final speech. John Lacy's *Sauny the Scot, or The Taming of the Shrew* (1667), similarly omitted the frame entirely. The Sly material was not discarded, however; it formed the basis of two farces both called *The Cobler of Preston* by Charles Johnson and Christopher Bullock respectively and both published in 1716. On the eighteenth-century stage, it would seem, the Sly plot and the taming plot were kept strictly separate so that neither could compromise the "reality" of the other. As Samuel Johnson noted scoffingly in his edition of Shakespeare, the story of the shrew and her tamer was printed as fact in *The Tatler*, passed off as a notable "transaction in Lincolnshire."¹⁸ During the same century Kate's speech was split off from the play and published separately (with a few added lines) as a wholesome sermon on wifely duty. Eighteenth-century readers and playgoers seemingly wanted the taming story to be true, although some women readers even then found Kate's submission excessive. However, they didn't much care whether or not the story was really Shakespeare.¹⁹

Garrick's *Catherine and Petruchio* continued popular on the stage

17. See G. E. Bentley, *The Professions of Dramatist and Player in Shakespeare's Time, 1590-1642*, one-volume paperback edition (1971 and 1984 rpt. Princeton, 1986); and Muriel C. Bradbrook, "The Status Seekers: Society and the Common Player in the Reign of Elizabeth I," 1961, rpt. in Bentley, pp. 55-69.

18. *The Plays of William Shakespeare, in Eight Volumes*, ed. Samuel Johnson (1765), III, 99. For discussion of eighteenth-century adaptations, see Haring-Smith, pp. 7-22; and *Taming*, ed. Oliver, pp. 65-69.

19. See, for an example of women's response, Marianne Novy's introduction to her *Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare* (Urbana, 1990), p. 7.

until almost the end of the nineteenth century. But during the same period there was a growing thirst for "authentic" Shakespeare on the part of both editors and theater-goers. The name of the exalted Bard had to be reattached to the taming story. *The Shrew* in its Folio version had been absent from the stage for two hundred years. It was revived, with the Induction but without the Sly interruptions and conclusion, in England in the 1840s, in America in the 1880s. Thereafter the "authentic" text of *The Shrew* gradually won the stage over from *Catherine and Petruchio*. In Victorian productions most directors took great care to keep Christopher Sly and the Induction from undercutting the taming story. Critics and audiences of the Victorian productions of *The Shrew* seem generally to have liked Kate's speech of submission, applauding it wildly and calling it the "choicest gem of the play." H. N. Hudson asserted that *The Shrew* was worth "All the volumes on household virtue that I know of." Even the most successful and fiery of Victorian actresses to play the part of the Shrew, Ada Rehan, saw the taming of Kate as bringing her "to the saving grace of woman." In the first British production of the "authentic" *Shrew*, one of the actors in the Induction was made up to resemble Shakespeare, then proceeded to take the role of Petruchio, brandishing the traditional whip, so that wife-taming became a Shakespearean virtue indeed.²⁰ "Authentic" Shakespeare for the Victorians showed the beauties of wifely acquiescence. We probably do not need to remind ourselves that the same century, through the theories of Sigmund Freud, gave us the concept of normal female masochism.

VI

Amidst all of this thirst for authenticity, there was a conceptual problem that editors had to wrestle with. If *The Shrew* was "true" Shakespeare, then what was to be done with *A Shrew*? If *A Shrew* was also Shakespeare, then the wife-taming message was harder to associate unequivocally with his name. If *A Shrew* was not Shakespeare, then his originality went out the window: *The Shrew* was massively borrowed from its earlier and cruder prototype and therefore less than authentic. The problem did not come to a head until the early twentieth

20. For all of these and other examples, see Haring-Smith, pp. 43-64. See also Susan J. Wolfson, "Explaining to Her Sisters: Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespear*," in Novy, pp. 16-40, especially pp. 23-27.

century, but already toward the end of the nineteenth, we find editors entertaining the idea that *A Shrew* did not precede *The Shrew*, but instead derived from it. Victorian editors of Shakespeare were generally uncomfortable with the strong, outspoken women in Shakespeare's early plays. Furnivall, for example, expressed the strong hope that Shakespeare was not responsible for "all the women's rant" in *Titus Andronicus*, the *Henry VI* trilogy, and *Richard III*.²¹ To regard *A Shrew* not as a source but as a debased copy allowed them to associate the realism and patriarchy of *The Shrew* with "authentic Shakespeare." *The Shrew* and its message of wifely submission were the "original." *A Shrew*, with its freer relationship between Petruchio/Ferando and Kate, its many undercuttings of the shrew-taming moral, was, in a subtly sexualized language of transgression, a debased and brazen travesty of the "manly" Shakespearean original, put together in all likelihood by itinerant actors as ignorant of dramatic art and as mean and destitute as the poor players within *A Shrew* itself.

The next stage of this editorial development is rather deliciously predictable. Widespread editorial agreement with the new textual theory by which *The Shrew* was original Shakespeare, or close to it, and *A Shrew* a "vamped up" copy came in the 1920s, along with the triumph of women's suffrage. The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century struggle for women's rights made "authentic Shakespeare" on stage in *The Taming of the Shrew* more and more uncomfortable. Increasingly, directors tried either to engage the play's topical potential directly—at least one production cast Kate as the "new woman"—or to mitigate the tensions by staging the play as farce. Reviewers commented regularly on Kate's submission as unlikely to commend itself, as one of them put it, "to the out-and-out feminists of the Women's Federation League or the generality of the shingled and Eton-cropped sisterhood."²² In 1926, two years before women's suffrage in Britain, Peter Alexander wrote an influential series of articles in the *Times Literary Supplement* contending yet once more that *A Shrew* was a "later and degraded version" of Shakespeare's play and relying heavily on arguments first broached a half century before. Other editors during the 1920s and later put Shakespeare at an even greater distance, arguing that his original play was

21. *New Shakspeare Society's Transactions* (1874), 95–103. See also William Benzie, *Dr. F. J. Furnivall: Victorian Scholar Adventurer* (Norman, 1983), pp. 194–96.

22. Thompson, p. 21.

lost, and that both *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* were derivative, although the latter was more strongly Shakespearean than the former.²³ At the same time that "new women" were agitating for the vote in England, editors were burying the "vamped up" version of *A Shrew* deeper and deeper—like a shameful skeleton in the Shakespearean closet that had to be kept out of sight. Even editors who remained skeptical about Alexander's view of the relationship between the two plays displayed a nostalgia for past simplicities, as in Quiller-Couch's comment in the Cambridge edition (1928), "avoiding the present times and recalling Dickens, most fertile of inventors since Shakespeare, with Dickens's long gallery of middle-aged wives who make household life intolerable by various and odious methods, one cannot help thinking a little wistfully that the Petruchian discipline had something to say for itself."²⁴

The textual arguments by which editors have convinced themselves (and others) that *A Shrew* is a contaminated version of *The Shrew*, or of an earlier play that was genuine Shakespeare, rest on an implicit prior ranking by which *The Shrew* is assumed to be "what Shakespeare meant," so that deviations from it are invariably read as corruptions. In the two versions we have already noted of Kate's placing her hand beneath her husband's foot, for example, the standard argument is that "the imitator, as usual, has caught something of the words of the original, which he has laboured to reproduce at a most unusual sacrifice of grammar and sense . . . he has by omitting the words 'in token of which duty' omitted the whole point of the passage."²⁵ I have argued earlier that the "imitator" is instead making

23. See Peter Alexander, "The Taming of a Shrew," *Times Literary Supplement* Thursday, Sept. 16, 1926, p. 614. See also his "'II. Henry VI.' and the Copy for 'The Contention' (1594)," *Times Literary Supplement*, Oct. 9, 1924, pp. 629–30; and "'3 Henry VI' and 'Richard, Duke of York,'" *Times Literary Supplement*, Nov. 13, 1924, p. 730. For more recent refinements of the argument by which *A Shrew* is derived from *The Shrew* or from a common ancestor of both, see, e.g., Raymond A. Houk, "The Evolution of *The Taming of the Shrew*," *PMLA*, 57 (1942), 1009–38; Henry David Gray, "The Taming of a Shrew," *Philological Quarterly*, 20 (1941), 325–33; and G. I. Duthie, "The Taming of a Shrew and *The Taming of the Shrew*," *Review of English Studies*, 19 (1943), 337–56. Similar arguments are made in almost every modern single-volume edition of the play; for dissenting views, see the sources in n. 6 above.

24. *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson (Cambridge, Eng., 1928), p. xxvi. For another similar view, see A. L. Rowse, ed., *The Annotated Shakespeare, Vol. I: The Comedies* (New York, 1978), pp. 119–21.

25. Wilson, ed., citing, as nearly all discussions of the problem do, Samuel Hickson, "Marlowe and the Old 'Taming of a Shrew,'" *Notes and Queries*, 1 (1850), 194, 226–27, in the Cambridge ed., p. 179.

a different point. Two other telltale passages for the derivative nature of *A Shrew* are drawn from the scene between Kate and the tailor. In the "authorized" version Grumio protests to the tailor, "Master, if ever I said 'loose-bodied gown,' sew me in the skirts of it and beat me to death with a bottom of brown thread" (4.3.131-32). The equivalent speech in *A Shrew* is, "Master, if ever I said loose body's gown, sew me in a seam and beat me to death with [a] bottom of brown thread!" (p. 44, ll. 29-31). The criticism of *A Shrew* here is that "the reporter is very close but the difference is enough to show his hand. 'Sew me in the skirts of it' has meaning whereas the variation has none."²⁶ The talk during the scene has been of facings, and facings quite commonly require the type of seam (although admittedly not quite the amplitude) in which a person could be sewn. Why does the idea of being sewn in a seam have no meaning? It requires no great powers of observation to recognize that facings in portraits of Elizabethan women's dresses are commonly sewn double, like what we would now call "French seams." The speech in *A Shrew* is more ludicrous than its counterpart in *The Shrew*, and also more deviously ribald if one takes the idea of being sewn in a lady's seam as relating to her person, not her clothes. But in what way is the passage clearly derivative? Only if one has already decided what constitutes "good sense" in the text of the play, with variations representing nothing more than "rant" or "nonsense." In the second passage, which follows hard upon the first, *A Shrew* has the following exchange:

San. Dost thou hear, tailor? Thou hast braved many men: brave not me. Thou'st faced many men—

Tailor. Well, sir.

San. Face not me: I'll neither be faced nor braved at thy hands, I can tell thee! (p. 44, ll. 37-41)

The equivalent passage in *The Shrew* reads:

GRUMIO. Thou hast faced many things.

TAILOR. I have.

GRUMIO. Face not me. Thou hast braved many men; brave not me. I will neither be faced nor braved. (4.3.121-24)

In this case, editors argue, *A Shrew* misses the puns on "faced" and "braved" and therefore declares itself as the derivative version. But all

26. Wilson, ed., citing Hickson, Cambridge ed., p. 168.

that would be required for *A Shrew* to make as much "sense" as *The Shrew* would be for the actor to indicate through gesture that the braving and facing he has in mind are punningly linked to the tailor's trade. *A Shrew's* version of the passage is less explicit, but would hardly be regarded as corrupt if it were allowed to stand on its own: it is editorially suspect only because it does not replicate every nuance of *The Shrew*.

Perhaps the most damning flaw of *A Shrew* in the minds of those who have argued for its derivative status is its frequent Marlovian echoes. The argument here is that the ignorant actors who patched together the pirated version of the play threw in snatches of Marlowe whenever their memories failed them, creating a pastiche with no claim to independent literary integrity. Peter Alexander characterizes the putative compiler(s) as having "a mentality very like that of ancient Pistol, and a head no more proof against the intoxication of tragic diction."²⁷ That *A Shrew* contains numerous passages echoing *Tamburlaine the Great* and *Doctor Faustus* is undeniable, although some of the alleged parallels are too faint to be convincing. If we grant that text the same privilege of putative intentionality that is routinely granted to *The Shrew*, however, we can regard the Marlovian passages not as mere unassimilated bombast, but as deliberate stage quotations of tragedies well known to audiences in the early 1590s—quotations designed to create a ludicrous effect of mock heroic in their new and incongruous setting. In the Induction to *A Shrew*, for example, when the nobleman and his men first enter, his grand language echoes the famous speech with which Faustus first conjures up his devils:

*Now that the gloomy shadow of the night,
Longing to view Orion's drizzling looks,
Leaps from th' Antarctic world unto the sky,
And dims the welkin with her pitchy breath,
And darksome night o'ershads the crystal heavens* (pp. 1–2, ll.9–13)

What the Lord conjures up, however, is not demons but the drunken, sleeping Sly. The humor can scarcely be said to be subtle, but it might

27. Alexander, p. 614. All editorial argument about Marlovian borrowings rests ultimately on Hickson, n. 25 above. On Marlovian borrowings, see also Boas, pp. xxx–xxxii and 91–98, and nearly every modern edition of the play. My own argument that the Marlovian passages work as successful burlesque has been anticipated in part by a few editors, most prominently Quiller-Couch, pp. xxi–xxii.

have been quite funny on stage. In the corresponding scene at the end of the play, when Sly is once again lying before the alehouse, the Tapster utters a parallel passage just before stumbling upon him:

Now that the darksome night is overpassed,
And dawning day appears in crystal sky,
Now must I haste abroad. But soft, who's this?
What, Sly? (p. 64, ll. 1-4)

The device is doubly ludicrous the second time, and helps to underline the return of Christopher Sly: his discovery, once again, takes center stage. Marlovian echoes serve a similar comic, deflating function throughout the play, sometimes even taking the form of stage business. In the scene at Petruchio's house, *A Shrew*, unlike *The Shrew*, specifies that Petruchio / Ferando enters "with a piece of meat upon his dagger's point," echoing the hideously powerful moment in *Tamburlaine the Great Part I*, 4.4 in which Tamburlaine offers food at his sword's end to the conquered Bajazeth. The many Marlovian echoes of *A Shrew* help to keep the play firmly within the realm of farce, overturning any faint whisper of the heroic about Petruchio/ Ferando's campaign against the shrew, undercutting any incipient claim to realism (of the kind so prominently made in *The Shrew*) before it has a chance to develop.

VII

Barring the discovery of new historical artifacts—such as a working manuscript of one or both texts in the same hand as the passages from *Sir Thomas More* believed to be in Shakespeare's—we are unlikely ever to settle the question of which play came first, or how much of either is genuine Shakespeare. We may settle such matters to our own satisfactions, but if past editorial opinion is any guide, what pleases us as explanation may not equally please those who come after us. To the author of the present essay, *A Shrew* sounds distinctly earlier, sounds as though it could perhaps contain bits of early Shakespeare and be designed to capitalize on the public passion for Marlowe during the early 1590s. Whether or not we label *A Shrew* as Shakespeare, we need to recognize that it is a more interesting, intriguing play than its long history of suppression would suggest. But what would be the point just now of insisting on the priority of one or another version? To do so would be to revert to the old editorial mode of creating hierarchies

of texts which are invariably value-laden. I would suggest instead that we start thinking of the different versions of *The Taming of the Shrew* intertextually—as a cluster of related texts which can be fruitfully read together and against each other as “Shakespeare.” To do that, of course, is to give up the idea that either Shakespeare or the canon of his works is a single determinate thing. It is to carry Shakespearean textual studies out of the filiative search for a single “authentic” point of origin and into the purview of poststructuralist criticism, where the authority of the author loses its élan and the text becomes a multiple, shifting process rather than an artifact set permanently in print. In the case of *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*, it is also to interrogate the canonical version of a play we may no longer want to live with.

In twentieth-century productions of *The Shrew*, the patriarchal message of the piece has been evaded by many ingenious methods: Kate may wink at the audience even as she hoodwinks Petruchio, as in Mary Pickford’s film version. Kate may be portrayed as a loveless neurotic who is cured by Petruchio through a kind of psychodrama that shows her her own excess. Quite often she abases herself out of love. Or the whole thing can be reduced to farce. At present, however, all of these methods seem to have played themselves out on stage (and film), and there are signs that the equivalent critical readings are playing themselves out as well—not only among modern feminists, who find the text too alienating to be “set right” by such strategies, but also among our students, who are increasingly unhappy with our usual readings emphasizing the mutuality of the taming and other such palliatives designed to smooth over the reality of Petruchio’s domination. We can choose, of course, to remove the play quietly from the list of those we teach and discuss, as Shirley Garner and other perceptive readers have suggested we do.²⁸ Or we can bring back *The Shrew*’s long suppressed intertext *A Shrew*, the tactic resorted to on the modern stage.

In the eighteenth century, readers of Shakespeare got the Sly ending to the play, while theater-goers saw the play cleansed of Sly and rechristened *Catherine and Petruchio*. Now the opposite pattern prevails: theatrical productions depend on the Sly framework to cast the whole patriarchal system constructed by the taming plot into doubt and

28. “*The Taming of the Shrew: Inside or Outside of the Joke?*” in “*Bad Shakespeare*,” pp. 105–19.

unreality, while our texts banish Sly at the end and conclude with the “reality” of Kate’s capitulation. If *A Shrew* comes to be accepted by editors and readers as an acceptable intertext of *The Shrew* (whether as a first draft, source, or early derivative), then several things could happen. In editions of Shakespeare that offer composite texts of other plays, *The Shrew* could also become composite. In the same way that editors have regularly inserted the mock trial scene and other brief segments from the 1608 quarto of *King Lear* into the Folio text, so editors could insert the Sly episodes from the 1594 quarto *A Shrew*—and perhaps other material as well—into *The Taming of the Shrew*. A more satisfying alternative would follow the pattern of the newest editions of *King Lear* and print both texts in their entirety, one after the other. Such a format would preserve the integrity of each early version while offering readers a dazzling, unsettling empowerment: with only a slight stretching of the traditional rationale of copytext by which the best possible text is arrived at through the combination of variant early versions, readers would be freed, if the task appealed to them, to become their own editors, to create new combinations of the two texts that are as much “Shakespeare” as the composite texts to which we are already accustomed in our standard editions of the plays.

But, it may be objected, such a procedure would be irresponsibly chaotic and ahistorical—it would take us much too far afield from the Renaissance itself, in which, whether we like it or not, patriarchy was as dominant and univocal as it is in *The Taming of the Shrew*. That is by no means clear. I have pointed to a process of naturalization by which the patriarchal ideology of *The Shrew* gradually became “reality” in terms of public expectations in the theater and readers’ expectations of Shakespeare. But that process was not without its glitches, temporary reversals, and ambivalences in any period—certainly not in the Renaissance itself. The same culture that preferred *The Shrew* to *A Shrew* also made space for an antidote. In the early seventeenth century, John Fletcher continued the story of Petruchio in *The Woman’s Prize, or The Tamer Tamed*, in which Kate has died and Petruchio marries a second wife, Maria, who tames him as effectively as he had earlier tamed Kate, except that Maria’s methods are draconian to the point of paramilitarism. When Shakespeare’s *The Shrew* and Fletcher’s *The Woman’s Prize* were performed within a few days of each other at the court of Charles I in 1633, Shakespeare’s *The Shrew* was “liked” but

Fletcher's play was "very well liked."²⁹ It is probably fair to say that patriarchy as a system has regularly been more consistent and orderly in the minds of historically-inclined editors and readers than it has been in society at large. If we are to interrogate the canonical Shakespeare, then we need to interrogate the editorial assumptions underlying the texts by which we have come to "know" him.

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29. Oliver, p. 64.

