

Shakespeare's Shrew: Orthodoxy and Carnival

by

Paulo Luís de Freitas

Drama Department  
Goldsmiths College

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## Abstract

Although the Shakespearean comedies have been analysed as festive plays, and more recently even his historical plays and tragedies have been viewed in the light of Bakhtin's theory of Carnival and the carnivalesque, *The Taming of the Shrew* has been systematically ignored. It would appear that this situation is a result of the misogynist issues the play raises. In seeing *The Taming of the Shrew* as a carnivalized drama in addition to the other Shakespearean plays already placed in this category, the aim of this thesis is to show that this early comedy is perhaps even more representative of what Bakhtin termed as carnivalized literature than any other play to be found in Shakespeare's canon. This, I would suggest, is related to the intertextual qualities of a text which has interwoven in its three-plot structure popular oral tradition, elements of the Italian *commedia*, and the domestic clowning conventions. All these three elements are saturated with a system of images appropriate to the culture of Carnival. As a result of this, the text goes deeply into the Carnival grotesque realism described by Bakhtin. Seeing the play form as dialogic in the same way as the Bakhtinian polyphonic novel is, I argue here that *The Taming of the Shrew* is a dialogue of voices, in which the patriarchal one is dominant. However, the patriarchal voice is not the only one to be heard. The opposing voices threaten the patriarchal authority, even when they seem to agree with it. The play's carnivalesque open-endedness allied to its 'metatheatrical' qualities reveals the contradictions of the dominant ideology. With respect to the controversial issue of the relationship between Shakespeare's *The Taming of The Shrew* and *The Taming of a Shrew*, the anonymous text is analysed here as a parody of its sources rather than as a 'plagiarism' or a 'compilation' of Shakespeare's and Marlowe's works. The similarities and differences between these two texts are seen positively rather than dismissively.

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## Introduction

*The Taming of the Shrew* has become one of the most problematic plays in Shakespeare's canon. And the reason for this seems to be the misogynist issues it raises. Despite being one of the most popular of Shakespeare's comedies, the play has been an embarrassment for critics, directors, and the actors performing in it. As a 'problematic' play, this particular text, which has no lack of festive motifs, has also been ignored by critics analysing Shakespeare's plays in terms of festivity and, more recently, in terms of Bakhtin's theory of Carnival. In seeing the play as carnivalesque, as well as other Shakespearean plays already placed in this category, my project here is to offer an alternative reading of *The Taming of the Shrew* as carnivalized drama. However, in order to apply Bakhtin's theory of carnivalized literature to the Shakespearean drama some points have to be clarified, especially in relation to his proposition that drama is by its nature 'monologic'. For if Carnival is, according to him, a 'dialogic' system, how then we can apply his theory to drama? Since I believe that drama is a dialogic form, just like the Bakhtinian polyphonic novel, I shall begin this thesis by examining Bakhtin's view and contextualizing it with existing critical material on the subject. Then, after establishing the grounds on which drama can be viewed as a polyphonic system, I discuss Bakhtin's idea of a 'progressive' Carnival as against the idea of Carnival as a 'safety valve'. The manifestations of Carnival, which can be subversive as well as progressive, are described and supported by historical testimony of this anarchic festivity of the early modern period. Thus, I will make an account of London's Shrovetide as a peculiar Renaissance example of Carnival's freedom and ritualized violence. Since I am viewing the Shakespearean *Shrew* as a carnivalesque battle between the sexes, I suggest that the 'violence' pictured in the play is an intertextual reassessment of Carnival's ritualized violence. These are the subjects of my first chapter.

In the second chapter I analyse the controversial issue of the relationship between Shakespeare's *The Taming of The Shrew* and the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew*. Instead of viewing the anonymous text as simply a 'plagiarism' or a 'compilation' of Shakespeare's and Marlowe's works, I suggest in this chapter that the former is a

parody of its sources. Support for this suggestion comes from a basic characteristic of parody: parodists do not conceal their sources; on the contrary, they openly acknowledge them. And this appears to be true in the case of the anonymous text. Thus, in this chapter I discuss this subject in the context of a modern theory of parody. According to this theory, parody does not have the negative meaning generally applied to it. Firstly, parodists can laugh with as well as laugh at the parodied texts; secondly, one of the parodists' aims is also to enlarge and give a new meaning to the parodied text. In the particular instance of *The Taming of the Shrew*, the anonymous text is perhaps the first representative of a series of secondary versions of the Shakespearean text of which Cole Porter's musical *Kiss me, Kate* (1948) screened by George Sidney (1953) and Zeffirelli's film (1966) are two widely-known modern examples. Whether these versions, as well as *The Taming of a Shrew*, are 'good' or 'bad' is a matter of critical debate; however as 'parodies' of their source they offer new ways of seeing the 'original' text. In this respect the 1594 anonymous text, by 'enlarging' the Sly framework, gives us more material with which to examine the 'meaning' of the 'original'. This is why in my analysis of the Shakespearean *Shrew*, rather than being dismissive of the anonymous text, I have treated it as an independent work providing invaluable material to help us gain an understanding of the 'original' staging of the play. Thus, the two texts are analysed here against each other, both as independent texts and as analogues.

In the third chapter I examine the Sly framework as a clown scene, which was perhaps played in the 1590s by Kemp. In terms of carnivalesque texts, Sly would function as a kind of 'lord of misrule' presiding over the countryside holiday entertainment represented in the *Shrew* plays. His role in the plays could have further implications in terms of the jig, an additional show still in vogue in Shakespeare's company of the 1590s. If so, it is possible that Sly's 'silence' in *The Taming of the Shrew* does not mean that the text transmitted to us is 'erroneous' as has sometimes been asserted. To elucidate my argument, I examine the clown's convention in the period, and contextualize it with the 'jig farces' commonly offered to the audience after a given play.

In the final chapter I apply the ideas discussed in previous chapters in order to clarify my point of view in terms of the idea of the Shakespearean *Shrew* as carnivalized drama. To do so I offer a range of elements to be found in the text which, according to Bakhtin's theory, are to be found in carnivalized literature. By analysing each of these elements in turn, I shall provide a sequence of exemplary cases rather than a developmental argument. From this sequence, I suggest, a particular mode of approach to the Shakespearean *Shrew* should then start to emerge.



## I – Carnival and Carnivalized Drama

Carnival is, in Bakhtin's terms, 'dialogic.' However, when it comes to drama, he proposed that it is 'monologic.'<sup>1</sup> So, how can one talk of drama as carnivalized? I maintain in this chapter that drama is—just like the Bakhtinian polyphonic novel—dialogic. Likewise I examine Bakhtin's contradictory vision of drama, contextualizing it with the existing critical material on the issue. I also examine Bakhtin's 'progressive' Carnival as against the idea of carnival as a 'safety valve.' Consequently, the carnival cycle is analysed here, especially London's Shrovetide, as a peculiar example of a Renaissance Carnival which offers further material for discussion of Carnival's freedom and ritualized violence. As such, Carnival can be used by the community taking part either to reinforce or challenge the establishment, for Carnival's disruptive behaviour is always potentially subversive as well as conservative depending on the context and the urges of the people taking part in it. Finally the text of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is used here as the main source to signpost some initial ideas concerning Shakespeare's appropriation of the carnivalesque misrule which is fully developed in my further analysis of *The Taming of the Shrew*; the subject matter of this thesis.

In relation to Bakhtin's concept of Carnival as heteroglot, we cannot talk about carnivalized drama without arguing that it is also dialogic. In fact Bakhtin has already acknowledged Shakespeare's drama as Carnivalized. As he states (1965), the 'analysis we have applied to Rabelais would also help us to discover the essential carnival element in the organization of Shakespeare's drama.'<sup>2</sup> But what if Bakhtin had also affirmed (1963 [1929]) that drama (including Shakespeare's), despite its dialogue structure, is monologic? Accordingly, the 'rejoinders in a dramatic dialogue do not rip apart the represented world, do not make it multi-leveled'. Indeed, he goes even

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<sup>1</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984 [1965]), p. 275. The original date of publication (in brackets) of Bakhtin's works can be found in Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 353-7.

further by affirming that drama is ‘monolithic,’ encompassing only the hero’s world vision.<sup>3</sup> However, Bakhtin’s idea of a ‘monolithic’ drama seems to refer to classical theatre rather than Shakespeare’s. He had already made clear, albeit in a footnote (1934-1935), that what he had earlier described as ‘a single world and a single unitary language’ can be found only in ‘pure classical drama.’ Immediately after the footnote he admits that ‘comedy [to a certain extent] is an exception to this’; whilst, in the same footnote, he affirms that ‘Contemporary realistic social drama may, of course, be heteroglot and multi-linguaged.’<sup>4</sup> Is one justified, then, in interpreting these disparate statements as stating—in Bakhtinian terms—that the dramatic genre is dialogic, just like the ‘polyphonic novel’? Although in various places throughout Bakhtin’s writings we find scattered references to dramatic text, unfortunately, as Tzvetan Todorov said, ‘we never find (unless it is in the unpublished material) the confrontation we await, between the novel and drama.’<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps Bakhtin’s most extensive view of drama can be found in his preface to Tolstoy’s plays.<sup>6</sup> However, in conformity with the Soviet party orthodoxy of the period, Bakhtin’s analysis of Tolstoy’s plays is more concerned with examining the author’s ideological output rather than viewing his plays from the perspective of his own theoretical ideas concerning polyphony and carnival.<sup>7</sup> In spite of this, Bakhtin’s

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<sup>3</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, op. cit., pp. 17, 34. For a disputed support of Bakhtin’s view on the issue of drama as necessarily monologic, see Gery Saul Morson and Ceryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); especially, pp.148-9. The authors also have dismissed Bakhtin’s work on *Rabelais* as being an aberration in the author’s canon. For a criticism of Morson and Emerson’s ideas concerning this subject, see Anthony Wall and Clive Thomson, ‘Cleaning up Bakhtin’s carnival act’ in *Diacritics*, vol. 23, no.2 (1993), pp. 47-68.

<sup>4</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 405.

<sup>5</sup>Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p.90.

<sup>6</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘Predislovie [‘Preface’] a L. N. Tolstoj’ in K. Xalabaev e B. Ejxenbaum (eds.), *Polnoe Sobranie Xudozestvennyx Proizvedenij*, vol. 13 (Moscou-Leningrado: Gosizdat, 1929), pp. III-X.

<sup>7</sup>See translation of Bakhtin’s preface to Tolstoy’s dramatic works in Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson (eds.), ‘Preface to Volume 11: The Dramas’. *Rethinking Bakhtin: Extensions and Challenges* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University

controversial vision of drama has been the subject of several recent analyses which firmly acknowledge the dramatic genre as being—as the Bakhtinian ‘polyphonic novel’ is—a dialogic system.<sup>8</sup> One of the most illuminating studies on the subject is Ilkka Joki’s thesis on Mamet’s demotic, in which the author makes an enormous contribution to developing Bakhtin’s theory and applying it to contemporary drama. Joki has examined Bakhtin’s occasional statements on drama in which Shakespeare’s name frequently appears, and he takes into consideration one of Bakhtin’s latest articles (1970): ‘Response to a Question from the *Novy Mir* Editorial Staff,’ already published in English (1986), in a translation by Vern W. McGee.<sup>9</sup> In this article, Bakhtin echoes his early statements in which ‘he is willing to admit that Shakespeare was Rabelais’ equal, if not his superior, in the transmission of the dialogized heteroglossia based on the demotic’.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Joki quotes Bakhtin’s observations that

[what] draws attention to the ‘semantic treasures’ ‘hidden in the language’ of Shakespeare, above all ‘in the strata of the popular language that before Shakespeare’s time had not entered literature, in the diverse genres and forms of speech communication, in [the forms

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Press, 1989), pp. 227-236. For a comprehensive view of the Soviet party line related to ‘socialist realism,’ and Bakhtin’s strategies to deal with that matter, see Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, op. cit., pp.155, 270-74.

<sup>8</sup>See, for instance, the seminal study of Michael Bristol, *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (New York and London: Methuen, 1985); see also Bristol’s ‘Charivari and the Comedy of Abjection in *Othello*’ in Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry (eds.), *True Rites and Maimed Rites: Ritual and Anti-Ritual in Shakespeare and His Age* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), pp.75-97; Robert Cullif, ‘Charmed Snakes and Little Oedipuses: The Architectonics of Carnival and Drama in Bakhtin, Artaud, and Brecht’; Ilkka Joki, ‘David Mamet’s Drama: the Dialogicity of Grotesque Realism’; both in David Shepherd (ed.), *Bakhtin: Carnival and Other Subjects*, Selected Papers from the Fifth International Bakhtin Conference, University of Manchester (July 1991), *Critical Studies*, vol. 3 no.2 — vol. 4 no.1/2 (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1993), pp. 48-69, and 80-98; Ronald Knowles (ed.), *Shakespeare and Carnival: After Bakhtin* (London: Macmillan Press; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998).

<sup>9</sup>See Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (eds.), *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays: M. M. Bakhtin* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), pp.1-9.

<sup>10</sup>Ilkka Joki, *Mamet, Bakhtin, and the Dramatic: The Demotic as a Variable of Addressivity* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 1993), p. 61.

of a mighty national culture (primarily carnival forms)] that were shaped through millennia ...'<sup>11</sup>

It is worth adding to Joki's quotation Bakhtin's acknowledgement of Shakespeare's appropriation of what he calls genres of literature and speech. According to his view, Shakespeare, awakening 'the semantic possibilities' of a vast cultural legacy, has voiced the 'accumulate[d] forms of seeing and interpreting particular aspect[s] of the world.' The 'immense treasures' that Shakespeare 'included in his work'<sup>12</sup> would certainly align him more closely with what Bakhtin calls the polyphonic than with what he has called monologic drama.

In his pioneering application of the theory of carnivalization to drama, Michael Bristol laments that Bakhtin 'perhaps anomalously, identifies the novel rather than drama as the exemplary genre in which heteroglossia and carnivalization are most powerfully represented.'<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, he saw Bakhtin's analyses of Carnival as suggesting 'the possibility of a more detailed and circumstantial account of the relationship between popular culture, theater and dramatic literature', especially with respect to the Elizabethan dramatic literature produced by Marlowe, Shakespeare and their contemporaries.<sup>14</sup> Despite his contradictory view of Shakespeare's drama, Bakhtin, in what is perhaps his latest comment on the subject (1970), states that 'after Shakespeare, everything in drama became trivial.'<sup>15</sup> He adds that Shakespeare's heroes (the ones he earlier saw as monolithic) can be viewed as being subjected to 'all reality that affects [them] into the semantic context of their actions, thoughts, and experiences: either they are actually words (the words of witches, of a father's ghost, and so forth) or they are events and circumstances translated into the language of the interpretative potential word.'<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ilkka Joki, Ibid. See his quotation of Bakhtin in *Speech Genres*, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>12</sup>*Speech Genres*, Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Michael Bristol, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>See *Speech Genres*, op. cit., p. 171 n. 11: 'an internal review for the future publishers of a book on Shakespeare by his good friend L. E. Pinsky (*Shakespeare* [Moscow, 1971])'.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 164.

Ronald Knowles' recent edition of a collection of articles (*Shakespeare and Carnival: After Bakhtin* [1998]) has considerably expanded the possibilities of Bakhtin's concept of Carnival as applied to Shakespeare's plays. Indeed, during the 1990s, the *Henry* plays, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and so on, were all reread and reconsidered in the light of Bakhtin's carnival theory. The application of the theory of carnivalization to Shakespeare's plays was in fact encouraged by Bakhtin himself, as can be seen in his book on Rabelais (1965), which was a revised and expanded version of his (1940) thesis 'F. Rable v storii realizma [F. Rabelais in the history of realism]'. In this the author, as we have already seen, firmly acknowledges the carnivalized elements of Shakespeare's drama. Moreover he makes clear that these 'essential' carnivalesque elements do not merely apply to 'the clownish motives of [Shakespeare's] plays.' As he states:

The logic of crownings and uncrownings, in direct or indirect form, organizes the serious elements also. And first of all this 'belief in the possibility of a complete exit from the present order of this life' determines Shakespeare's fearless, sober (yet not cynical) realism and absence of dogmatism. This pathos of radical changes and renewals is the essence of Shakespeare's world consciousness.... Shakespeare's drama has many outward carnivalesque aspects: images of the material bodily lower stratum, of ambivalent obscenities, and popular banquet scenes.<sup>17</sup>

In the absence of a fully developed Bakhtinian theory on drama, the above quotation has been (quite legitimately) employed time and time again as a guide to a reinterpretation of the Shakespearean world. However, the idea of carnival as applied to Shakespeare's early comedies, except perhaps *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, still awaits clarification. Certainly these plays are no different from the 'more elaborated' texts of his maturity in terms of, for instance, the Bakhtinian concept of *intertextuality*; these plays, like many other early-modern dramas, also voice other texts, and other cultures; they voice the past and present. Their multi-plots contain double-voiced utterances, dialects, billingsgate, and carnivalesque motif—either allusively, or directly borrowed from popular themes and festivities. As such they can be said to represent a form of broad carnivalized drama. And since *The Taming of*

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<sup>17</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, op. cit., p. 275.

*The Shrew* is no exception, why then have recent studies of Shakespeare's plays—which have benefited from Bakhtin's theory—not included *The Shrew*?<sup>18</sup> Of course one can argue that the scope of some analyses was never intended to include the whole gamut of Shakespearean drama, but it is also true that *The Shrew* appears to have disappeared from certain critical analyses where discussion of the play would be most relevant. Nancy Lenz Harvey, in her annotated bibliography of *The Shrew* (1994), noticed that the play had been excluded 'from discussions that purport to study Shakespeare's early plays or his comedies or both.'<sup>19</sup> It would appear that *The Shrew* has become one of the most embarrassing plays in the Shakespearean canon.<sup>20</sup> As Ann Thompson aptly puts it:

In comparison with its popularity on stage, *The Taming of the Shrew* has been somewhat neglected by critics. Why should this be so? The apparently incomplete nature of the text and uncertain status of *A Shrew* may have deterred a few potential critics but they can hardly account for the positive conspiracy of silence which runs from Anna Jameson's *Shakespeare's Heroines* in 1832 to C. L. Barber's *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* in 1959 and beyond. A more likely explanation is that literary critics have concurred in the opinion of theatrical critics from George Bernard Shaw to Michael Billington that the play is 'disgusting' and 'barbaric', and, having a greater freedom of choice in regard to their subject matter, have simply censored it by omission. Those who cannot choose to ignore the play, notably its editors, take an apologetic stance, admitting the problem but attempting to excuse the author.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>From now on the play's title will be shortened to *The Shrew*.

<sup>19</sup>See *The Taming of The Shrew: An Annotated Bibliography*, compiled by Nancy Lenz Harvey, *Garland Shakespeare Bibliographies*, vol. 21 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1994), p. ix.

<sup>20</sup>Some have gone to the extremes of asking for the play to be banished from the classroom. See Shirley Nelson Garner's 'The Taming of the Shrew: Inside or Outside the Joke?' in Maurice Charney (ed.), *'Bad' Shakespeare: Revaluations of the Shakespeare Canon* (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1988), p. 105.

<sup>21</sup>Ann Thompson (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 25. To add to Thompson's survey, again, *The Shrew*, a play not lacking in wedding feast celebration, is completely ignored by Bristol in his section on 'Wedding Feast and Charivari.' Rare exceptions to that are Leo Salinger, *Shakespeare and The Traditions of Comedy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974, and François Laroque,

Ann Thompson, in her 1997 essay “‘Errors’ and ‘Labors’: Feminist and Early Shakespearean Comedy’, further argued that feminist critics have ignored most of Shakespeare’s early comedies with the exception of *The Taming of the Shrew* which, ‘predictably enough,... has been rediscovered and reread with, as it were, a vengeance.’<sup>22</sup> Considering all the problems we have examined so far, can *The Shrew* still be considered worthy of a PhD thesis? This question has occupied my mind for at least seven years and I still believe that it is. However, to develop my analysis, some questions still remain to be answered. Does the concept of Carnival help us gain a better understanding of *The Shrew*? I think it does. Exploring the elements of mirth and struggle found in *The Shrew*, I will argue that the play is a carnivalization of the battle between the sexes and this was how the Shakespearean audience would have interpreted it. Still, what advantages can Bakhtin’s theory offer us in contrast to the ways in which *The Shrew* has been read until now? I think that the play, as a carnivalesque vision of society, exposes the failures of patriarchy, not so much perhaps in terms of the hierarchical structures of gender difference, as in the arrogant pretensions of patriarchy in attempting to obtain total control over women. The text’s ‘grotesque realism’ contains a combination of ‘many outward carnivalesque aspects’ which form—I would argue—a powerful parody of the patriarchal system it portrays. This is why a new reading of *The Shrew* as carnivalized drama is urgently needed, and this is my project here.

### **Festivity as Subversive Carnival**

C. L. Barber, although excluding *The Shrew* from his analysis of what he calls Shakespeare’s old comedies, begins his book with an epigraph quoted from the play (‘Induction 2’, 129-143). He explains his choice (on page 12 of the first chapter) by saying that

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*Shakespeare’s festive world: Elizabethan seasonal entertainment and the professional stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>22</sup>Ann Thompson, “‘Errors’ and ‘Labors’: Feminist and Early Shakespearean Comedy’ in Michael J Collins (ed.), *Shakespeare’s Sweet Thunder: Essays on the Early Comedies* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1997), p. 90.

When the bemused tinker Sly is asked with mock ceremony whether he will hear a comedy to ‘frame your mind to mirth and merriment,’ his response reflects his ignorant notion that comedy is some sort of holiday game—‘a Christmas gambold or a tumbling trick.’ He is corrected with: ‘it is more pleasing stuff... a kind of history.’ Shakespeare is neither primitive nor primitivist; he enjoys making game out of the inadequacy of Sly’s folk notions of entertainment. But folk attitudes and motifs are still present, as a matter of course, in the dramatist’s cultivated work, so that even Sly is not entirely off the mark about comedy. Though it is a kind of history, it is the kind that frames the mind to mirth. So it functions like a Christmas gambol.<sup>23</sup>

No doubt, as Barber noticed, the comedy Sly is about to see is perfectly fitted to his notions of folk entertainment. Moreover, despite being informed that the play is something more elaborate, Sly is quite correct: it is rather ‘household stuff’ (Induction 2.134). Indeed, Barber’s vision of festivity and dramatic structure is extremely important for the development of criticism which sees Shakespeare’s comedies as a stage appropriation of social customs. In this respect Barber’s 1959 criticism was progressive: ‘he connected Shakespeare with a large ... intellectual movement that includes the work of Durkheim, Van Gennep and Victor Turner.’<sup>24</sup> He was in line with a form of anthropological criticism going back to Chambers, which formed a corrective to the prevailing religious bias of much contemporary criticism.<sup>25</sup> Louis Montrose, using Barber and Frye as his theoretical model to analyse *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, criticised the religious bias of much of the earlier criticism by arguing that the emphasis (made by that criticism) on the didactic and rhetorical aspects of poetry was in fact a strategy. He points out that in its view,

literature presents exemplary encomiastic and reprehensive [*sic*] images of virtue and vice by which it intends to move the audience to shun vice and emulate virtue. This crude mechanistic and moralistic model is perhaps appropriate to popular homiletic literature, tracts, and

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<sup>23</sup>C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 12.

<sup>24</sup>Annabel Patterson, *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* (Cambridge, MA, and Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 59.

<sup>25</sup>See E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1967 [1903]); especially vol.1.



emblem books but simply inadequate for the complex structures of imagery which constitute the great literary art of the Elizabethan age.<sup>26</sup>

Barber's theory which 'can be summarized in the formula, through release to clarification,'<sup>27</sup> is nevertheless a conservative view of the socio-political aspects of popular festivities. Agreeing with F. M. Cornford (*The Origins of Attic Comedy* [1914]) 'that invocation and abuse were basic gestures of a nature worship behind Aristophanes' union of poetry and railing'<sup>28</sup>, Barber drew attention to the same type of gesture which were practised by the Elizabethan celebrants of the May-game, harvest-home, and winter revel. During those festivities, invocation was to be found, 'for example, in the manifold spring garlanding costumes, "gathering for Robin Hood"; abuse, in the customary license to flout and fleer at what on the other days commanded respect.'<sup>29</sup> Barber concludes:

The same double way of achieving release appears in Shakespeare's festive plays. There the poetry about the pleasures of nature and the naturalness of pleasure serves to evoke beneficent natural impulses; and much of the wit, mocking the good housewife Fortune from her wheel, acts to free the spirit as does the ritual abuse of hostile spirits. A Saturnalian attitude, assumed by a clear-cut gesture toward liberty, brings mirth, an accession of wanton vitality.<sup>30</sup>

Michael D. Bristol has acknowledged the importance of Barber's analysis as a minute examination of the social and cultural milieu of Elizabethan England. Nevertheless, he criticises the Saturnalian pattern described by Barber as 'a complicated version of the "safety valve," which explains festivity according to a theory of necessary and beneficial repression.'<sup>31</sup> Indeed, Barber's idea of festivities as a form of release suggests they were an escape from everyday labours and from the rigidity of social hierarchy. His idea of *clarification* brings the festival participants to

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<sup>26</sup>Louis Adrian Montrose, "*Curious-Knotted Garden*": *The Form, Themes and Contexts of Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1977), p. 6.

<sup>27</sup>C. L. Barber, op. cit., p. 4

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p.7

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

an idyllic communion with nature. Hence, from time to time (and according to official sanction) the common people are allowed a certain license. In this ‘perfect world,’ the participants have the awareness of their ‘excesses’ as a sanction, and they—after having achieved a temporary release—are ready to return to their (Spartan) social functions. Criticising Barber’s theory, Bristol argues:

Festive comedy ends happily in the return of a repressive order characterized by a wise and tolerant acceptance of individual waywardness. In this reduced but influential application of Durkheim, collective life is portrayed as an opposition between social ‘order’ and an isolated individual who desires and may even need ‘freedom’ from the restrictions of society. Saturnalian release and repression mediate this opposition by redirecting the energy of individual desire back towards the necessary imperatives of social discipline.<sup>32</sup>

In Emile Durkheim’s view, ritual and festive celebrations have a conservative and regenerative function. He insists on the social aspect of festivity where each individual shares the benefits of a communal solidarity.<sup>33</sup> As Bristol argues, Durkheim’s sociology offers a conservative view of society. However, his idea of festive life ‘has relatively little to do with covert manipulation or with social control by an extrinsic authority or political monopoly.’<sup>34</sup> In fact, Barber does not quote nor even mention Durkheim in his work. Nevertheless, the ‘reduced but influential application of Durkheim’s’ represented in Barber’s view of Shakespeare’s ‘festive comedies’ seems to be an example of what had become an orthodoxy: festivity’s freedom as a sanctioned ‘safety valve.’ Barber recalls Freud’s theory of jokes and their relationship to the unconscious to support his ‘Saturnalian pattern’ of Shakespeare’s ‘festive comedies’. As he puts it,

In terms of Freud’s analysis of wit, the energy normally occupied in maintaining inhibition is freed for celebration. The holidays in actual observance were built around the enjoyment of the vital pleasure of moments when nature and society are hospitable to life. In the summer

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<sup>31</sup>Michael D. Bristol, *Carnival and Theater*, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, second edition (London: Allen and Unwin, 1976), pp. 347-50.

<sup>34</sup>Michael D. Bristol, op. cit., p. 29.

there was love in out-of-door idleness; in the winter, within-door warmth and food and drink. But the celebrants also got something for nothing from festive liberty—the vitality normally locked up in awe and respect.<sup>35</sup>

This is something of a reduction of Freud's theory. As far as Freud's analysis is concerned, the release obtained by our laughter at a joke certainly does not imply a panacea for the problems and struggles of daily life. According to Freud, 'Caricature, parody and travesty (as well as their practical counterpart, unmasking) are directed against people and objects which lay claim to authority and respect, which are in some sense "sublime."' In Freud's analysis, these species of comic procedures are aimed at degrading someone's image.<sup>36</sup>

No one can deny Barber's importance to the advance of Shakespearean scholarship. Barber was writing in a context of image analysis and character analysis. This context was criticised as early as 1933 by L. C. Knights in his essay *How Many Children had Lady Macbeth?* However, Knights' proposal could still be seen as a way of reading the Shakespearean plays as dramatic poems.<sup>37</sup> Barber finds a new way of relating play to society, insisting on the dramatic qualities, and on the mood of the whole. Thus, we can build on his foundations. However, if Barber was progressive for the critical standards of the fifties, his formula ('through release to clarification') has the effect of limiting the social response to carnivalesque merriment and underestimates Shakespeare's appropriation of folk culture, making his 'festive plays' sound like escapism. In Barber's view, the element of festive misrule is—in

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<sup>35</sup>C. L. Barber, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup>Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* in James Strachey (ed. and trans.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. VIII (London: Hogarth Press, 1960), p. 200-1. Freud explains his use of the term *unmasking* as only applied 'where someone has seized dignity and authority by a deception and these have to be taken from him in reality.' Next, exploring the choice of the word *sublime* in this context, James Strachey explains that the accepted English translation for the 'German [word] "*erhaben*" ... in aesthetics is "sublime". As, however, it is difficult to apply this rendering in the case of people, we have, where necessary, used the word "exalted" instead.' *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>Cf. L. C. Knights, *How Many Children had Lady Macbeth: an Essay in the Theory and Practice of Shakespeare Criticism* (Cambridge: The Minority Press, 1933).

the final analysis—used to reinforce power rather than to create room for social change.

In turning from Barber's festive world to Bakhtin's carnival, one can see a radical change in the way people respond to seasonal festivals. According to Bakhtin, 'laughter is not a subjective, individual and biological consciousness of the uninterrupted flow of time. It is the social consciousness of all people.'<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, he sees the 'festive folk laughter' as presenting 'an element of victory not only over the supernatural awe, over the sacred, over death; it also means the defeat of power, of earthly kings, over the earthly upper class, of all that oppresses and restricts.'<sup>39</sup> Bakhtin's ideas of a 'progressive Carnival' are, however, not universally accepted, and dissension from his ideas always centres on whether Carnival is a challenger of authority or an instrument of social control. Umberto Eco, in his criticism of Bakhtin's liberating carnival as false theory, has argued that if it were true that carnival is transgressive,

It would be impossible to explain why power (any social political power throughout the centuries) has used *circenses* to keep the crowd quiet; why most repressive dictatorships have always censored parodies and satires but not clowneries; why humor is suspect but circus is innocent ...<sup>40</sup>

Eco's criticism is correct concerning the use of carnival by those in power, but completely wrong about the politics of carnival. Although carnival has historically been used by 'the powers that be' for their own purposes, this fact cannot always be taken at face value. History also tells us that carnival (contrary to the will of established power) has provided opportunities for social, political and/or religious struggle. Peter Burke, analysing the world of carnival in Europe between 1500 and 1800, found that 'rituals of revolt did coexist with serious questioning of the social, political and religious order, and the one sometimes turned into the other. Protest

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<sup>38</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Umberto Eco, 'The Frames of Comic "freedom"' in Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.), *Carnival!* (Berlin, New York, Amsterdam: Mouton Publishers, 1984), p. 3.

was expressed in ritualised forms, but the ritual was not always sufficient to contain the protest. The wine barrel sometimes blew its top.’<sup>41</sup> As Natalie Zemon Davis aptly pointed out, ‘rather than being a mere “safety-valve”, deflecting attention from social reality, festive life can on the one hand perpetuate certain values of the community, even guarantee its survival, and on the other hand, criticize political order. Misrule can have its own vigour and can also decipher king and state.’<sup>42</sup> Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (1979), in his analysis of the popular uprising at Romans in 1579-1580, observed that

Carnival [was] particularly apt as an instrument of *social change*, which was slow but undeniable in sixteenth-century towns successively shaken by the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation.’... [It] was not a merely satirical and *purely temporary* reversal of the dual social order, finally intended to justify the status quo... It was a way to action, perhaps modifying the society as whole in the direction of social change and *possible progress*.<sup>43</sup>

Unfortunately, Bakhtin never provided an account of a specific Renaissance carnival. Instead, when he talks of a particular carnival, he relies on Goethe’s description of the Roman Carnival of 1788.<sup>44</sup> And that carnival was, if Goethe is to be believed, a joyful occasion, with no riots at all. The carnivalesque components of praise and abuse, which usually have the potential for violence, were present but ritualized. Although as ‘subversive’ as any real carnival, any threat to the established order was achieved by grotesque representation rather than actual violence. Indeed, Goethe’s report is exemplary in supporting Bakhtin’s teleological view of carnival: as a feast offered by the people to themselves in which there are no spectators but only participants, where the temporary abandonment of all hierarchical differences is the

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<sup>41</sup>Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Temple Smith, 1978), p. 203.

<sup>42</sup> Natalie Zemon Davies, ‘The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France’ in *Past & Present*, no. 50 (February 1971), p. 41.

<sup>43</sup>Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Carnival in Romans: A People’s Uprising at Romans 1579-1580*, trans. by Mary Feeney (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981[orig. published in the USA by George Braziller, Inc., 1979]), p. 292. Cf. Ladurie, *Le Carnaval de Romans: De la Chandeleur au mercredi des Cendres 1579-1580* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1979), p. 349.

<sup>44</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, op. cit., pp. 245-56.

norm, where impudence excites more amusement than indignation, and where opposites such as crowning and uncrowning, and praise and abuse, are symbolic gestures of killing the old and giving birth to the new. As Stallybrass and White put it, the main importance of Bakhtin's study of Rabelais' world 'is its broad development of the "carnavalesque" into a potent, populist, critical inversion of *all* official words and hierarchies in a way that has implications far beyond the specific realm of Rabelais studies.'<sup>45</sup> Indeed, Bakhtin's carnival is an open and unfinished world where everything is still in a state of becoming, and that is why his ideas are worth applying to various other fields and ideologies: 'Bakhtin's radical analysis brings about the deeply ideological significance of such phenomena in a way that has been claimed by Marxist, anarchist and humanist.'<sup>46</sup> Or, as has been stated by Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry, 'since carnival's world-upside-down inverts hierarchies of class, gender, and age, and so does Shakespeare, the approach has been of great interest to Marxist, feminist, and social-history oriented readers.'<sup>47</sup> This is my task here: to analyse *The Shrew* whilst employing Bakhtin's grotesque as a means of revealing the social struggle which lies behind its carnivalesque slapstick.

To Bakhtin, Carnival is more than simply a holiday of officially-sanctioned freedom. It is a people's feast. According to him,

The feast (every feast) is an important primary form of human culture. It cannot be explained merely by the practical conditions of the community's work, and it would be even more superficial to attribute it to a physiological demand for periodic rest. The feast has always an essential, meaningful philosophical content. No rest period or breathing spell can be rendered festive per se; something must be added from the spiritual and ideological dimension. They must be sanctioned not by the world of practical conditions but by the highest aims of human existence, that is, by the world of ideals. Without this sanction there can be no festivity.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Methuen, 1986), p. 7.

<sup>46</sup>Ronald Knowles, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>47</sup>Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry (eds.), *True Rites and Maimed Rites; Ritual and Anti-Ritual in Shakespeare and His Age* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p. 13.

<sup>48</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, op. cit., pp.8-9.

It may be that Bakhtin's concept of carnivalized literature has failed to take into account carnival's dark side, and this is why, instead of describing his vision of carnival as populist, we should view it as teleological. As Natalie Zemon Davis pointed out, 'Bakhtin presents carnival as a **primary source** of liberation, destruction and renewal in *all* societies.'(my emphasis in bold).<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, Bakhtin's radical carnivalesque utopia stresses<sup>50</sup> the material bodily principle with its inexhaustible wealth and perpetual renewal. This is, I believe, his greatest subversive strength. It is perhaps the Bakhtinian grotesque body that makes his treatment of carnivalesque all the more radical and revolutionary. Using Bakhtin's analysis as a basis, Bristol declared that in the early modern period 'the grotesque physically oriented laughter' is a response of common people, which objectifies an 'implicit political doctrine.'<sup>51</sup> The author also notes that Freud's conclusion is very similar to Bakhtin's theory. In order to clarify his argument, he quotes Freud where he says:

What these jokes whisper, may be said aloud: that the wishes and desires of man have a right to make themselves acceptable alongside of our exacting and ruthless morality... it has been said in forceful and stirring sentences that this morality is only a selfish regulation laid down by the few rich and mighty who can satisfy their wishes at any time without postponement... so long as social arrangements do no more to make it more enjoyable, so long will it be impossible to stifle the voice within us that rebels against the demands of morality.<sup>52</sup>

To laugh at adversity is in itself contradictory, but this contradictoriness may be understood as a healthy metaphor. However, such contradictory laughter must not be confused with the utilitarian mechanism of reconciliation proposed by Keith Thomas: 'In Tudor and Stuart times laughter ranked with drink as one of the most obvious means by which the poor reconciled themselves to a harsh environment.'<sup>53</sup> The

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<sup>49</sup>Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Reasons of Misrule', op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>50</sup>For a stimulating view of Bakhtin's 'critical Utopia' in contrast to 'blueprint utopias,' see Michael Gardiner, 'Bakhtin's Carnival: Utopia as Critique' in David Shepherd (ed.), *Bakhtin: Carnival and Other Subjects*, op. cit., pp.20-47.

<sup>51</sup>Michael D. Bristol, op. cit., p. 138.

<sup>52</sup>See Sigmund Freud, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>53</sup>Keith Thomas, 'The place of laughter in Tudor and Stuart England' in *Times Literary Supplement* (January 21, 1977), p. 80.

Bakhtinian idea of Carnival renewal is not an abstract concept. It is not (as in Chambers' conservative view) a monotonous re-enactment motivated by the 'consciousness of the waning and waxing of the season.'<sup>54</sup> Instead, Bakhtin's view of people's festivities as the 'highest aims of human existence,' as a 'world of ideals,' and above all, as not a 'rest period'<sup>55</sup>, allows us to see his 'gay' carnival also as social struggle. If we accept the Bakhtinian carnivalesque struggle as a primary impulse towards society's renewal, this process of change can then be better understood if one evokes Fernand Braudel's concept of *long durée*, or 'structure of everyday life.' Informed by Braudel's view of a slow, but continual process of social change which advances despite the inertia of material culture,<sup>56</sup> one can see the festival's misrule, even if (as usual) under the surveillance of a dominant order, as providing the opportunity and occasion for social struggle.

The festival at the end of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*<sup>57</sup>, for example, provides the occasion for Falstaff's uncrowning and also the opportunity for the transgressive union of the young lovers (Anne Page and Fenton). Despite the comic reconciliation at the end of the play, the stolen marriage is irreparable, and the play's young society has found its way of challenging the old rules. Contrary to the 'safety valve' theory which suggests that despite the excesses committed during the festivities, 'nothing has ever changed', the hypocrisy of society in the play has been exposed, the patriarchal system has been challenged, and the parental strictures imposed on the young people have been transgressed. The 'chaste' Mrs. Page plots against her husband by giving her daughter in matrimony to one who (contrary to her husband's will) is more suitable to her aspirations: Doctor Caius, who 'is well moneyed, and his friends / Potent at court. He, none but he, shall have her' (4.4.86-7).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>E. K. Chambers, *The English Folk-Play* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 221.

<sup>55</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, op. cit., pp. 9 and 8ff, respectively.

<sup>56</sup>According to it, 'Social structures changed so slowly that the pattern devised by Georges Gurvitch to analyse the thirteenth century is still a valid guide.' See Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism (15th-18th Century): The Wheels of Commerce*, vol. II (London: Collins, 1982), p. 550.

<sup>57</sup>From now on I will refer to the play as *Merry Wives*.

<sup>58</sup>All my quotations of Shakespeare's texts, unless stated, are from Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor's 1988 Oxford edition.



Perhaps we can better understand the process of change at Windsor by evoking Victor Turner's concept of *liminality* and *communitas*.<sup>59</sup> The concept of liminality is an expansion made by the author of a term first used by Arnold van Gennep in his *Rites of Passage* (1960[1909]),<sup>60</sup> to describe the stage 'betwixt and between' in which the 'initiands' or novices are kept during the process of passage from one sociocultural state and status to another.<sup>61</sup> This 'suspended zone' is, according to Turner's holistic anthropology, also applied to other events experienced outside ordinary social life. Indeed, Anne Page's stolen marriage happens in the time

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<sup>59</sup>This word appears under different spellings throughout Turner's works, i.e. *comunitas* and *communitas*. From now on, for uniformity, I will adopt *communitas*.

<sup>60</sup>In his expansion of Van Gennep's concept of rite of passage, in which the author distinguishes between three distinct phases: *separation*, *transition*, and *incorporation*, Turner argues that the 'first phase of *separation* clearly demarcates sacred space and time from profane or secular space and time'. According to him, 'it is more than just a matter of entering a temple—there must be in addition a rite which changes the quality of *time* also, or constructs a cultural realm which is defined as "out of time," i.e., beyond or outside the time which measures secular process and routines ... It includes symbolic behaviour—especially symbols of reversal or inversion of things, relationships and processes secular—which represents the detachment of the ritual subjects (novices, candidates, neophytes or "initiands") from their previous social statuses. In the case of members of a society, it implies collectively moving from all that is socially and culturally involved in an agricultural season, or from a period of peace as against one of war, from plague to community health, from a previous socio-cultural state or condition, to a new state or condition, a new turn of the seasonal wheel. During the intervening phase of *transition*, called by van Gennep 'margin' or "limen" (meaning "threshold" in Latin), the ritual subjects pass through a period and area of ambiguity, a sort of social limbo which has few (though sometimes these are most crucial) of the attributes of either the preceding or subsequent profane social statuses or cultural states.... The third phase, called by van Gennep, "reaggregation" or "incorporation" includes symbolic phenomena and actions which represent the return of the subjects to their new, relatively stable, well-defined position in the total society. For those undergoing life-cycle ritual this usually represents an enhanced status, a stage further along life's culturally prefabricated road; for those taking part in a calendrical or seasonal ritual [whose residues are carnivals and festivals], no change in status may be involved, but they have been ritually prepared for a whole series of changes in the nature of the cultural and ecological activities to be undertaken and of the relationships they will then have with others—all these holding good for a specific quadrant of the annual productive-cycle.' See Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982), pp. 24-5. See also Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), especially Chapter I and IX.

‘betwixt and between’. While the play’s old society is involved in the practical joke on Falstaff, Anne is taken away by Fenton who previously arranged the mischievous plan: ‘you’ll procure the vicar / To stay for me at church ‘twixt twelve and one, / And, in the lawful name of marrying, / To give our hearts united ceremony.’ (4.6.47-50). The stolen marriage was made possible by the action of a young *communitas*: contrary to the expectations of father and mother, the fairy-like cross-dressed boys have changed position with Anne. Thus, we hear Slender who had mistaken a boy for Anne revealing the young *communitas*’ trick: ‘I went to her in white and cried “mum”, and she cried “budget”, as Anne and I had appointed; and yet was not Anne, but a postmaster’s boy.’ (5.5.193-5). Then we hear that the same kind of trick was played upon Doctor Caius: ‘By Gar, I am cozened! I ha’ married *un garçon*, a boy, *un paysan*, Gar. A boy! It is not Anne Page, by Gar.’ (5.5.200-2). The concept of *communitas* is perhaps better understood if contrasted with what Turner refers to as ‘structure’.<sup>62</sup> In his own words,

In human history, I see a continuous tension between structure and *communitas*, at all levels of scale and complexity. Structure, or all that holds people apart, defines their differences, and constrains their action, is one pole in a charged field, for which the opposite pole is *communitas*, or anti-structure, the egalitarian ‘sentiment for humanity’ of which David Hume speaks, representing the desire for a total, unmediated relationship between person and person, a relationship which nevertheless does not submerge one in the other but safeguards their uniqueness in the very act of realizing commonness. *Communitas* does not merge identities; it liberates them from conformity to general

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<sup>61</sup>See Victor Turner, *On The Edge of The Bush* (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1985), p. 159.

<sup>62</sup>Explaining his concept of structure Turner says: ‘By “structure” or “social structure” I do not mean what Lévi-Strauss or his followers mean by these terms, that is, a structure of “unconscious categories” located at a deeper level than the empirical, but rather what Robert Merton has termed “the patterned arrangements of role-sets and status-sequences” consciously recognized and regularly operative in a given society and closely bounded up with legal and political norms and sanctions.’ See Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 201.

norms, though this is necessarily a transient condition if society is to continue to operate in an orderly fashion.<sup>63</sup>

Anne Page's *rite of passage* from one sociocultural status (a maiden) to another (a married woman) occurs during a folk celebration in the wood in which the spirit of 'Herne the hunter' is evoked. It happens during in an intermediate period of 'crisis', during which, according to Turner, social values are questioned. Thus, Page, who has had his plans of having his daughter married to the slow-witted but rich Slender frustrated, has to come to terms with his own greed: 'Ford (*to Page and Mistress Page*) Stand not amazed. Here is no remedy. / ... / Money buys land, and wives are sold by fate.' (5.5.223,5) Indeed, Falstaff, the 'Lord of Misrule' of that festival, crowned 'with huge horns on his head' (as described by Mistress Page in 4.4.42), is a symbol of this liminal period at Windsor. This 'transient condition' is necessary to renew society, and this occurred early in the play: while the wives are playing their practical jokes on Falstaff, Ford's fears of becoming a cuckold are ridiculously exposed on these occasions (3.3.189-217 and 4.2.104-184). So, greediness, fear of cuckoldry, wifely and filial obedience are the 'moral' issues the play's society has to face in order to be renewed. Furthermore, the breaching of norms at Windsor was also made possible by the emergence of a *communitas*. This *communitas* is perhaps more precisely classified as what Turner calls the *existential* or *spontaneous* type, i.e. 'the direct, immediate, and total confrontation of human identities which tends to make those experiencing it think of mankind as a homogeneous, unstructured, and free community'.<sup>64</sup> Although there are various socially related groups 'spontaneously'

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<sup>63</sup>Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, op. cit., p. 274. I am italicising the term *communitas*, even in Turner's quotations, for uniformity. From now on I will do it silently.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 169. As the author puts forward in his (1982) *From Ritual to Theatre*, the spontaneous *communitas* 'has something "magical" about it. Subjectively there is in it a feeling of endless power. Is there any of us who has not known this moment when compatible people—friends, congeners—obtain a flash of lucid mutual understanding on the existential level, when they feel that all problems, not just their problems, could be resolved, whether emotional or cognitive, if only the group which is felt (in the first person) as "essentially us" could sustain its intersubjective illumination. This illumination may succumb to the dry light of the next day's disjunction, the application of singular and personal reason to the "glory" of communal understanding. But when the mood, style, or "fit" of spontaneous

formed in the play, such as those formed by the rascals, the justices, the foreigners, the wives, the husbands, and the young people, the only emergent *communitas* is that represented by the latter; the former are merely representatives of the old social structure.

As often happens in comedies, the young people, in order to achieve fulfilment, have to struggle against the older society which has legal power on its side. Nevertheless, the young characters who are responsible for the comical reversal tend to be the least interesting people in this kind of play. Notwithstanding that Fenton is (to use Northrop Frye's classification) technically the hero of *Merry Wives*,<sup>65</sup> his action has to be taken 'underground'. Despite his efforts to conquer his space in the social structure, he has been put aside and finds himself in a social limbo. In fact he is still in that stage 'betwixt and between'; he is still on the threshold of his *rite of passage*. The reason for his not receiving Page's consent to marry his daughter is also related to his activities during his 'novitiate' stage as an outsider in the social structure. At this stage, 'when the individuals or groups are in a liminal state of suspension, separated from their previous condition and not yet incorporated into their new one, they present a threat to themselves and to the entire group.'<sup>66</sup> This is the same as being in a social limbo. The threat they present is related to a state of 'non-existence,' where they are not yet responsible for themselves. Being on the threshold there is no law to obey, no limits to respect, and because of that they are seen as being a threat to the individual as well as the social body. This is (if one can transfer this anthropological model to an early modern society) exactly what happens with the threatening Katherine before she is transformed into a model wife; with the

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*communitas* is upon us, we place a high value on personal honesty, openness, and lack of pretensions or pretentiousness. We feel that it is important to relate directly to another person as he presents himself in the here-and-now, to understand him in a sympathetic (not an empathetic—which implies some withholding, some non-given of the self) way, free from the culturally defined encumbrances of his role, status, reputation, class, caste, sex or other structural niche. Individuals who interact with one another in the mode of spontaneous *communitas* become totally absorbed into a single synchronized, fluid event.' See *From Ritual to Theatre*, op. cit., pp. 47-8.

<sup>65</sup>Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, third edition (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 167.

<sup>66</sup>Victor Turner, *On The Edge of The Bush*, op. cit., p. 159.

roguish Prince Hal before he becomes Henry V, ‘when his headstrong riot hath not curb, / When rage and hot blood are his counsellors, / When means and lavish manners meet together,’ (4.3.62-4)<sup>67</sup>; and the same is suggested by Fenton about himself. As he admits, ‘My riots past, my wild societies’ are, among others, reasons not to have Mr Page consent to marry his daughter (3.4.8).

As Anne pleads, Fenton tries (in vain) to gain the favour of Mr Page, and (equally vainly) the favour of Mrs Page. Apart from a few lines in scene three of the third act, we do not hear of the young lovers’ drama again until Fenton talks with the Host of the Garter Inn about his lover’s disposition to deceive her father and mother, and (as we have already seen) asks him to find a vicar to marry them (4.6.1-55). Since Anne Page is supposed to be dressed as the Fairie Queen of the festival, and an arrangement has been secretly made between the young people to deceive the elders, it is clear that the young lovers (helped by their *communitas*) have struggled against the constraints imposed upon them by a crystallized custom. Thus, instead of Anne being dressed in white as her father has recommended, or in green as her mother has advised, we have the two boys dressed alike. Anne’s rite of passage occurs during a liminal state of suspension, during the time and space of folk representation. Equally we cannot forget the strong kinship between theatre, ritual and festive celebration. As Victor Turner expresses it, theatre ‘is almost ritual’s firstborn, and ... the oldest forms of theatre have much in common with ritual.’ Although it breaks the unity of the congregation which is ritual’s performative characteristic, ‘something of the anti-temporal character of ritual continues’ to adhere to the theatre.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, theatrical

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<sup>67</sup>For an extensive analysis of Hal’s behaviour, see Stephen Greenblatt’s ‘Invisible Bullets’ in his *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp.21-65. Although the author’s analysis has explained Hal’s carnivalesque misbehaviour as a calculated strategy towards power, he thinks that his political interests ‘may be bracketed, if only briefly, for the pleasure of imagining what Victor Turner calls “*communitas*”’. Ibid., p. 49. Whether ironical or not, it seems that Greenblatt acknowledges Hal’s carnivalesque misbehaviour as happening (as in Turner’s concept of Rite of Passage) in a suspended zone; in a time (betwixt and between) prior to his investiture as Henry V.

<sup>68</sup>Victor Turner, *On The Edge of the Bush*, op. cit., p. 237.

performances occur in that suspended zone which characterizes the liminal period set out by Turner. According to him,

liminality is not wholly concerned with the transmission of sacra. It is also, even in tribal ritual, a time outside time in which it is often permitted to *play* with the factors of sociocultural experiences, to disengage what is mundanely connected, what, outside liminality, people may even believe to be naturally and intrinsically connected, and to join the disarticulated parts in novel, even improbable ways. Even in solemn rites of passage and far more in calendrical festivals and carnivals it is considered licit to fool around with the factors of cultural constructions, liberating the signifiers from the signified, filling the liminal scene with dragons, monsters, caricatures, fantasies made up of elements of everyday experience torn out of context and improbably combined with other disrupted elements... Such devices are used for mocking, critiquing, detaching the group from sober, normal, indicative orderings, and subverting the grammars of their arrangements.<sup>69</sup>

This detachment from ‘sober, normal, indicative orderings’ could be applied to the boy actor who played Rosalind in *As You Like It*. Asking for applause at the end of the play, the boy encourages the audience to indulge themselves in the joys of love. ‘Revealing’ his identity, the boy actor is released from the supposed decorum imposed on his role. Indeed, his words (‘If I were a woman’) are more likely to be a licentious interplay with the female audience than the male.<sup>70</sup> Hence, if he were one of them, he

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 236.

<sup>70</sup>Rosalind’s Epilogue has been the subject of several analyses. For an acute analysis on the subject see, for instance, Jean E. Howard, ‘Power and Eros: Crossdressing in Dramatic Representation and Theatrical Practice’ in her *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 118-21. While critically examining Shakespearean stage crossdressing as convention (a convention which at any moment could be unmasked), she sees the Epilogue as an instance where ‘the character Rosalind enjoins the men and women of the audience to have the “play” between them be pleasurable.’ Ibid., p.120. Lisa Jardine analyses ‘Rosalind’s’ provocative words as follows: ‘She is the boy-actor mincing and lisping his way through his “woman’s part”. As Rosalind speaking the Epilogue, she is a little bit of both, saucily provoking the male members of the audience with her problematic sex.’ Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Brighton and New Jersey: Routledge, 1983), p. 20. In Marjorie Garber’s view: ‘by calling attention to her underlying male “identity” as an actor ... Rosalind opens up the possibility of a male/male homoeroticism between male audience member and male actor which is the

(taking advantage of that liminal period) would subvert the rules of decorum by taking the initiative of kissing 'as many' as pleased him. In *The Shrew* this detachment from the routine of everyday life which is implied in *As You Like It's* Epilogue, is suggested early in the play in the same way: Sly, the tinker, who, in his working class style, is enjoying his day out, and a lord who, with his entourage, is returning from a day's hunting. The Lord's stated intention of continuing his sport the next day ('Tomorrow I intend to hunt again' [Induction 1.25]), and the providential arrival of the players, seem to be an indication that they are on holiday. This holiday spirit, which creates room for 'inconsequent' mirth, also allows for order reversal. Just as in the inner play, where a master changes places with his servant ('Thou shalt be master, Tranio, in my stead' [1.1.193]), in the Sly plot a lord exchanges his position with a tinker and acts as his servant (Induction 2.24-42). In the role of an actor-servant, he also greets the actors' company (the ones who are there to serve his lordship) as equals: 'Now, fellows, you are welcome. (Induction 1.75). 'Now', i.e. in this liminal period, he and the actors are equalized as if belonging to the same social stratum.

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counterpart of male/"male" homoeroticism that animates Orlando's conversations with Ganymede, as well as the converse of the female/female homoeroticism figured in the play by Phebe's infatuation.' Marjorie Garber, 'The Travestite's Progress: Rosalind the Yshiva Boy' in Jean I. Marsden (ed.), *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Post-Renaissance Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo and Singapore: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 150. See also Phyllis Rackin, 'Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Stage' in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 102, n. 1 (January 1987), pp.36-7; and Catherine Belsey, 'Disrupting sexual difference: meaning and gender in the comedies' in John Drakakis, *Alternative Shakespeares* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), pp. 180-4. Stephen Orgel in his fresh approach to the convention of boys playing women on the English stage, suggests that the 'boy player was apparently as much an object of erotic attraction for women as for men'. See Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 71. On the issue of women as audience in the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre, see also Jean E. Howard, 'The Materiality of Ideology: Women as spectators, spectacles, and paying customers in the English public theater' in her book cited above, pp. 73-92; Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540-1620* (Urbana University of Illinois Press, 1984), pp. 250-2; and Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), pp.74-8.

## The Reversal of Order

Concerning liminality in *Merry Wives*, one could say that while the structured society of the play is busy organising its plot to humiliate Falstaff and, at the same time, a wife is planning to deceive her husband ('My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff as he will chafe at the doctor's marrying my daughter.' [5.3.7-9]), the young society is finding a way to challenge the old norms. Indeed carnival misrule at Windsor provided a 'liminal' period in which a 'communitas' emerged. While the old society is busy playing its trickery on Falstaff, culminating in the mock-evocation of the spirit of the 'woodman', the youngsters' rite of passage takes place. It occurs after the symbolic burning of death (represented by Falstaff as the spirit of a legendary hunter—'Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about, / Till candles and starlight and moonshine be out.' [5.5.100-1]) in suspended time: between midnight and one o'clock. The burning of death and/or carnival has a symbolic connotation, i.e. the renewing of nature<sup>71</sup> and society. The old order of Windsor has been changed, though not perhaps to a very great extent, and, once more, the festive period of misrule leaves its legacy. Hence, Carnival, in the persona of its uncrowned Lord of Misrule, can claim victory: 'I am glad, though you have ta'en a special stand to strike at me, that your arrow hath glanced.' (5.5.226-7).

Just as in *Merry Wives* our laughter at Mr and Mrs Page's frustrated plans has something deeper behind it, so in *The Shrew* our laughter is not simply a release. 'Petruccio's school', as we are going to see in the next chapter, will not be of as much help to the other men as Kate's apparent taming might suggest. This can be seen in Bianca and the Widow's response to Kate's demonstration of submission. Widow: 'Lord, let me never have a cause to sigh / Till I be brought to such a silly pass!'; and Bianca: 'Fie, what a foolish duty call you this?' (5.2.123-5). The taming of Katherine—as in the folktale—is indeed a 'lesson' which cannot be transmitted. And above all, her taming is clearly an enactment. It happens in a space 'betwixt and between', where a holiday 'communitas' is playing a practical joke on a drunkard.

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<sup>71</sup>See Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, Abridged Edition (London: Macmillan & Co., 1922), pp. 296-323.



The idea of a carnivalesque *Shrew* and how it would have worked on the audience is fully developed in the last chapter of my analysis. For now, however, it is worth stating that the ‘taming’ theme is strongly rooted in the cultural forms of Carnival type. The battle between the sexes in *The Shrew* resembles the grotesque battle of Carnival and Lent. And this is not just because of the obvious battle between Katherine and Petruchio. Abusive language and bodily degradation pervade the play and the symbolic elements of the cycle (Carnival-Lent-Easter) are clearly represented. First we have abusive language, transvestism, disguise, grotesque dressing, thrashing, food and drink; these are followed by fast, vigil and abstinence, then its back to festivity, laughter, and sexual intimacy. All these elements, of which I shall give a detailed account later, can be summarized in the inner play as follows: Carnival misrule, Lent quarantine, Easter renewal.

### **The World of Carnival**

It is important now to examine the world of carnival in order to understand the ideas of merriment and struggle that it encompasses. We need to ask, firstly, what Carnival means; secondly, whether it managed to survive in Renaissance England and—if so—what forms it took. Carnival is in fact part of a threefold calendrical festival which culminates with Easter: the holy resurrection of flesh. As very often religious calendrical festivities have their secular counterpart, the profane Carnival cannot be understood separately from its sacred antagonist, Lent. Nor can the symbolic antagonism attached to them. According to the OED, the Italian word *carnevale* comes from the Latin phrase *carnem levare*: put away meat. In addition, the expressions ‘farewell to flesh’ (from Latin *vale*), and ‘down with flesh!’ (from French *aval*), belong to the domain of popular etymology. In Anglo-Saxon speaking cultures the word Shrive, or Shrift (*Confession*), became Shrove-tide, or the time for confessing sins: which in fact occurred, as a pious religious observance, on the next day, Ash Wednesday. Thus, since Carnival is ambivalent (it crowns and uncrowns its king, it offers praise yet at the same time abuses the subject of such praise, and it kills in order to renew), before saying farewell to meat, or confessing sins, the eve of

Shrove Tuesday was a time to eat, drink, and have as much fun as possible. The excesses of food and drink marked the passage of a stage characterized by superabundance and joy to a stage of abstinence and sorrow. And this is symbolically represented by the battle of Carnival and Lent; a fight between the regenerative power of laughter and life and the gloomy principles of seriousness, constraint and death. Although Lent inevitably follows Carnival, the defeat of the latter does not have a negative connotation. Indeed the old customs of throwing stones at Carnival's effigy, and its final burning on the eve of Ash Wednesday, were symbolic gestures towards life and renewal. Like the mythical Phoenix, Carnival would be resurrected (year after year) from its own ashes. In some places, an enactment of Carnival's resurrection would even take place.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, the triumph of the joys of life over death is represented by the advent of Easter which comes after Lent's quarantine. During the Easter season, when laughter and jokes were permitted even in church, the priest, after the days of Lenten sadness, could incite the congregation's gay laughter as a joyous regeneration; it was *risus paschalis*: 'Easter Laughter.' It was a time when jokes and stories—especially about the body—were of a Carnival type; a time when Lenten prohibitions were suspended and laughter was granted simultaneously with the permission to eat meat and to resume sexual intercourse.<sup>73</sup>

Carnival (the archetypal Lord of Misrule) is represented by Pieter Breughel the Elder in his painting *The Tournament Between Lent and Carnival*. In this we see King Carnival sitting on a barrel of wine and engaging in an allegorical fight against Lent. Behind Carnival is his throng made up of masquerades and musicians, who are

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<sup>72</sup>See Sir James George Frazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-7.

<sup>73</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-9. Also see V. A. Kolve's 'Religious Laughter' in his *The Play Called Corpus Christi* (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), pp. 124-44. Although not discussing the specific subject of *risus paschalis*, and being very cautious concerning any eventual transgression contrary to the devotion which the 'religious laughter' perchance should favour, Kolve's work is a source of reference concerning the late medieval theological discussion of earthly mirth and joy as against the old ecclesiastical doctrine of enduring pious sorrow. Furthermore, as he puts it, religious laughter does not 'imply a polite and sophisticated amusement. It often sought the vulgar guffaw, the laugh from the belly rather than the smile. And on occasion it valued this kind of laughter as an indication of sanity, indeed almost of holiness.' *Ibid.*, p. 139.

depicted as joyful merry-makers, Lent is pictured as a grey and scrawny personage and his followers are represented as a gloomily serious group. While Lent's weapon is a long wooden spoon with two tiny fish in it, Carnival's is a long iron spit with a roast pig's head, sausages, chickens, and the like. And in literature there is a gallery of notorious grotesque characters of the Carnival type such as Gargantua, Panurgis, Don Quixote, and Falstaff.

### **The English Festival of Carnival and Easter**

Bakhtin's idea of carnivalesque is a broad concept: it embraces all public holidays with their attendant festivities. In Elizabethan and Jacobean England a vast list of calendrical and non-calendrical festivities occupied the year, and were largely appropriated by the literature of the period. There were twelve days of celebration at Christmas, starting on 25th December and finishing on Twelfth Night, and other major folk celebrations such as Shrove Tuesday, May Day, Hocktide, and so on.<sup>74</sup> Since my aim in this thesis is to analyse *The Shrew* as carnivalesque, a problem exists insofar as how such a seemingly violent play can be seen in the same way as festivities which took place at a time devoted to mirth and celebration. This problem cannot be solved unless we are prepared to confront the dark side of Carnival. Indeed, Renaissance London's Shrove Tuesday offers a good example of how violent Carnival's celebration could be. I intend to concentrate on the threefold aspects of these festivities (Carnival, Lent and Easter) in order to suggest that *The Shrew's* battle between the sexes exhibits the same grotesque characteristics as the battle between Carnival and Lent culminating with Easter.<sup>75</sup> I am not suggesting that the play is a

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<sup>74</sup>For a detailed study of the Elizabethan and Jacobean calendrical and non-calendrical festivals related to the Shakespearean drama, see François Laroque, *Shakespeare's festive world: Elizabethan seasonal entertainment and the professional stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). See also Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England*, op. cit.

<sup>75</sup>Laroque has already suggested that Shakespeare's 'minor comedies' such as *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of The Shrew*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, encode 'the clash of contraries (winter/summer, Shrove Tuesday/Lent).' According to him, 'Oppositions of this kind, which are the very substance of festive comedies such as Nashe's *Summer's*

straightforward account of such celebrations. However, I would suggest that the riotous Shrove Tuesday revelry in London (as well as other war-like mirth of that season) is echoed in *The Shrew*'s carnivalesque violence. As a result, therefore, an account of London's Carnival (specifically Shrove Tuesday) would perhaps be helpful in seeing *The Shrew*'s thrashing and abuse as a Shakespearean carnivalization of the battle for supremacy between the sexes. As we shall see later in this chapter, London's Shrovetide riots provide evidence which tends to demonstrate the motivations of both sides of such an uprising, which could be either conservative or subversive in its origin.

London's battle between Carnival and Lent is vividly reported by John Taylor, the Water Poet, in his *Jack-a-Lent* which, in his own words, he wrote 'before his comming this yeere 1617.' In his satirical accounts of the event, he states:

Alwayes before *Lent* there comes wadling a fat grosse bursten-gutted groome, called *Shroue-Tuesday*, one whose manners shews that he is better fed then taught: and indeed he is the onely monster for feeding amongst all the dayes of the yere, for he deuores more flesh in foureteene houres, then this whole Kingdome doth (or at least should doe) in sixe weekes after: such boyling and broyling, such roasting and toasting, such stewing and brewing, such baking, frying, mincing, cutting, caruing, deuouring, and gorbellyed gurmondizing, that a man would think people did take in two months prouision at once into their paunches, or that they did ballast their bellies with *meate* for a voyage to *Constantinople*, or to the *West indies*.<sup>76</sup>

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*Last Will and Testament*, are certainly particularly used by Shakespeare in his earliest comedies.' Cf. François Laroque, op. cit., p. 203.

<sup>76</sup>See *All The Works of John Taylor* (London, 1630 [A Scolar Press Facsimile: London, 1973]), p.114. As a satirist Taylor has drawn a picture of a commercial struggle between fishmongers and butchers behind the religious tenor of fasting observance. His definition of the term Lent is what makes him unmistakably bound to the serio-comic genre: 'First then you must conceiue, that the true Etimologie, or ancient name of this *Lent*, is *Lean-tide*, which being Anagramatiz'd (*Land-it*) for chiefe prouision that he is furnished withall being fish, and such sea-faring fare, that except he land it, there will bee but cold takings in the fish markets: for *Jack a Lent* hath no societie, affinitie or propinquitie with flesh and blood, and by reason of his leanness (as *Nymshag* an ancient *Vtopian* Philosopher declares in his Treatise of the Antiquitie of Ginger-bread, *Lib. 7. Pag. 30000*.) he should haue beene a foot man to a Prince of that Empire named *Lurguash Haddernot*; but *Lent* shewed him the tricke of a right footman, and ran away from him faster then an Irish Lackquey, and from

A similar account of the gluttony taking place during such a celebration is found in a later text (1623) entitled *Vox Graculi, or Iacke Dawes Prognostication*.<sup>77</sup> The English Shrove Tuesday celebration was a medieval custom which survived even the most austere periods of the post-Reformation. A brief account of the history of this custom can tell us how important the season was for the court and the populace. Before the Reformation the festival was a large celebration, which started on the seventh Sunday before Easter and lasted until the eve of Ash Wednesday. Just as on the Continent, the English Shrovetide was a time to eat meat, drink and be merry,

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that time to this was neuer seene in *Vtopia*. Besides, he hath the Art of Legerdemaine beyond all the Iuglers in *Egipt* or *Europe*, for with a tricke that he hath, he is in *England, Scotland, France, Ireland*, and the most part of Christian world at one and the self same time, yet for all this nimblenesse and quicke agility, he was never seene to sweate, which is no maruell, because he hath not any fat or pinguidity in his incorporeall corps. He hath a wife named *Fasting*, as leane as himself, yet sure I thinke she is as honest as barren: but it were very dangerous for an Epicure or a Puritan to haue a bastard by her, for there were no other hope, but that the father of the brat (if it should proue male) would tutor it in all disobedience against both *Lent* and *Fasting*: for although *Lent* and Abstinence be but forty dayes endurance, yet to these valiant men of their teeth it seemes forty yeeres, for they put the Letter (*e*) into the word *Fast*, and turn it into *Feast*. And though a man eate fish till his guts crack, yet if he eate no flesh he fasts, because he eates as fast as he can. For the word *Fast* is to be taken in many sences, as to fast from feeding, and to feed fast, to be bown to fast, and to be bound fast.' Ibid., pp-113-4. Thomas Nashe's *Nashes Lenten Stuffe* (1599), as he describes it in his title page, is 'a praise of Red Herring' rather than a description of the battle between the opposite forces (of Carnival and Lent) as in Taylor. Cf. *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, vol. III, Edited from the Original Texts by Ronald B. McKerrow, Reprinted from Original Edition with Corrections and Supplementary Notes by F. P. Wilson, 5 Vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), pp.145-226.

<sup>77</sup>“But now stand off (my friends) giue roome I say: for here must enter that wadling, stradling, bursten-gutted *Carnifex* of all Christendome; vulgarly enstiled *Shroue-Tuesday*, but more pertinently, sole-monarch of the Mouth, high Steward to the Stomack, chief Ganimede to the Guts, prime Peere of the Pullets, first fauorite to the Frying-pans, greatest Bashaw to the Batter-bowles, Protectour of the Pan-cakes, first Founder of the Fritters, Baron of Bacon-flich, Earle of Egge-baskets, and in the least and last place, lower Warden of the Stinke-ports. This corpulent Comander of cholericke things, called Cookes., will shew himself to be but of ignoble education; for his manners, you may finde him better fed then taught where euer hee comes: For he feedes fulsomly on nothing but flesh, of purpose to empty Plenties Pallace, to fill the dirty draught; and deuoures with delight, onely to impouerish Heauens Bounty, and quite eraze the race of Rost-meate.’ Cf. Jacke Dawe, *Vox Graculi, or Iacke Dawes Prognostication* (London: I. H. [John Haviland] for Nathaniel Butter, 1623), p. 55 (H3). Part of this text is quoted in Barber, op. cit., p. 72.

which was forbidden during the forty days that followed ‘Fasting’s Eve’, or Shrove Tuesday. Indeed the whole nation was involved in this busy season, which would include a range of sports. To the traditional cock fighting (a national passion) was added cock-thrashing and football. In John Stow’s accounts, cock fighting in the streets of the capital was a common Shrovetide pastime in the early Tudor period.<sup>78</sup> Even Henry VII was an enthusiast of cock fighting and thrashing (and he was imitated by the aristocracy in this respect).<sup>79</sup> The sport of cock-thrashing consisted of tethering the bird by its leg and attempting to hit it with a stick. And if animal thrashing may be considered a savage custom today, English Shrovetide football went one step further in that it provided an opportunity for young men to thrash each other. Football would involve as many players as possible and was without rules; a team would be victorious if it could obtain the ball—at whatever cost—from its opponents and bring it back to its own territory, perhaps a neighbouring village. It was a warlike game. This primitive and dangerous English football—played mostly on Shrove Tuesdays—is one more example of an anarchistic form of Carnival activity to have survived the Reformation. Railing against the brutality of the Shrovetide game the Puritan propagandist, Philip Stubbes, offers a detailed account of the sport.

maie rather bee called a freendly kinde of fight, then a plaie or recreation. A bloodie and Murtheryng practice, then a fellowlie sporte or pastyme. For, dooeth not euery one lye in waite for hys adversarie, seekyng to ouerthrowe hym, and picke hym on his nose, though it be vpon barde stones, in ditch or vale, in valley or hill, or what place so euer it be, be Careth not, so he he maie haue him doune.... So that by this meanes, sometymes their neckes are broken, sometymes their backs, sometymes their legges, sometymes their armes, sometyme one parte thrust out ioynte, sometyme an other, sometyme their noses gush out with blood, sometyme their eyes starte out: and sometymes hurt in one place, sometymes in an other. But who euer scapeth awaie the best goeth not scotfree, but is either sore wounded and brused, so as he dieth of it, or els scapeth very hardlie: And no meruaile, for thei haue sleightes to meete one betwixt twoo, to hath hym against the

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<sup>78</sup>See John Stow, *A Survey of London*, reprinted from the text of 1603 with Introduction and Notes by Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, Vol. II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1908), p. 92.

<sup>79</sup>See John Brand, *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, arranged, revised, and greatly enlarged, by Sir Henry Ellis (London: George Bell and Sons, 1890), p. 79.

harte with elbowes, to hitte him vnder the shorte Ribbes, with their griped Fistes, and with their knees, so catche him vpon the hip, and to picke him on his necke, with an hundred suche murderynge deuises: And hereof groweth enuie, malice, rancor, cholour, hatred, displeasure, enmitie, and what not els: And sometymes fightyng, braulyng, contention, quarrel pickynng, murther, homicide, and greate effusion of blood, as the experience daiely teacheth.<sup>80</sup>

Stubbes has left us a war-like description of the game, suggesting that neither side could rest until its opponent had been ‘tragically’ subdued. Although Stubbes appears to have exaggerated the warlike nature of the game and the extent of casualties it provoked (for he often tended to demonize activities to which he was opposed), the degradation of the body and its counterpart, the carnivalesque dismembered body, were nevertheless symbolic events representing death and eventual rebirth. The demonization of such early-modern merriment seems to have been recurrent. The violence of the Shrovetide tournament was condemned as early as 1531 by Sir Thomas Elyot. In his opinion, ‘football, wherein is nothing but beastly fury and violence, whereof procedeth hurt, and consequently rancour and malice do remain with them that be wounded; wherefore it is to be put in perpetual silence.’<sup>81</sup> Once the excesses of the period of Carnival’s misrule were over, the early-Tudor kingdom had to make itself ready for the penitential Lenten period. As Ronald Hutton describes it:

Upon the morning after Shrovetide the English, some of them bruised or badly hung over, were expected to make their way to church and kneel before a priest. He would bless ashes, sprinkle them with holy water, and place the mixture upon the heads of the people, with the Latin words for the phrase ‘Remember O Man that thou art dust and to dust thou shalt return.’ It was Ash Wednesday and Lent had begun. For six and a half weeks there was to be a restricted diet and no festivity, while individuals considered to be specially sinful by priest and community were excluded from the church.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1585), pp. 119-20.

<sup>81</sup>See S. E. Lehmborg (ed.), Sir Thomas Elyot’s *The Book Named The Governour* (London and New York: Everyman’s Library, 1962), p. 92.

<sup>82</sup>Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: the ritual year of 1400-1700* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 19.

If Henry VIII's Reformation (1529-1537) was to make the sanctity of Ash Wednesday obsolete, it did nothing to undermine the profane celebrations of Shrove Tuesday. Indeed, the pre-Lenten amusement was to continue even in the onset of the post-Reformation, which took place under Edward VI (or rather under the rule of Lord Protector Somerset). The festival was celebrated at court with 'expensive revels' which included masks, costumes and torches. It also provided an opportunity for the court to stage mocking theatrical activities in which the main targets were Catholic priests.<sup>83</sup> If the profane Shrove Tuesday celebration was preserved in the sharpest years of the post-Reformation reign of Edward VI, and even more in the counter-Reformation reign of Mary I, who had restored Catholic celebrations, it is not difficult to foresee that in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods this festival would provide an occasion for revels at all levels of society.<sup>84</sup> While in the court, and in every household, it was a time for merrymaking, in the streets the wild sports of the day marked a passage from the joys of life to the constraints of the forty days of Lent. In a Bacchic spirit, the anonymous author of *Pasquils Palinodia, and His progresse to the Tavern* described that day as being 'the day of all days in yeare'. His 'muse', under the influence of abundant drink sang about the festivities in all their ambivalent features, which we hardly find in other accounts of the period. Perhaps this was the reason why the author (as late as 1619) chose to conceal himself behind a pseudonym. He depicts the licentiousness of that festival in all its glory. To his mind, it was the day 'That unto Bacchus hath his dedication.' Although food and drink are the main subjects of his description, we can see how the frenzy of such a celebration could affect both the rich and the poor in the city and the countryside, who were all made equal by the same spirit.

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 89. For an analysis of some masques and plays related to the Shrovetide season, see R. Chris Hassel Jr., 'The Shrovetide Masques and Plays' in his *Renaissance Drama & the English Church Year* (Lincon and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), pp. 112-139.

<sup>84</sup>Despite being under constant scrutiny, the survival of residues of the old pagan festivities seems to be explained by the profound ambiguity found in the secular and religious laws of the regime 'concerning the number of seasonal feasts in the calendar and pastimes which were to be encouraged or discouraged upon them and on Sundays.' See Hutton, p. 123. In the sixth chapter of his book ('Reformation of Manners'), the author gives a minute analysis of the Elizabethan regime's ambiguous attitude concerning popular festivities. See pp. 123-52.



It was the day when *Pullen* goe to block,  
 And every Spit is fill'ed with belly tymber,  
 When *cocks* are cudgel'd down with many a knock,  
 And *Hens* are thrasht to make them short and limber,  
 When country wenches play with stool & ball,  
 And run at *Barly-breake* until they fall,  
 And country Lads fall on them in such sort,  
 That after forty weekes they rue the sport.

And on this day, the Feast to magnifie  
 Of merry *Bacchus*, which did here *reside*,  
 Within this *Tavern* met a company  
 Of true, kinde, honest, hearts, quite voyde of pride,  
 That good companions and good husbands are,  
 And known both how to spend and how to spere,  
 That can be merry and yet never quarell,  
 Nor drown their wits and reason in a Barrell.<sup>85</sup>

### The Carnavalesque War

If Shrove Tuesday was an Elizabethan and Jacobean aristocratic and folk celebration, in which food and drink, and a variety of sports were part of the season's merriment, it also embodied the festive thrashing and abuse common in that carnivalesque folk celebration. John Taylor describes the commencement of the season as follows:  
 Shrove Tuesday,

at whose entrance in the morning, all the whole Kingdome is in quiet, but by that time the clocke strikes eleuen, which (by the helpe of a knauish Sexton) is commonly before nine, then there is a bell rung, cald *The Pancake Bell*, the sound whereof makes thousands of people distracted, and forgetful either of manner or humanitie ...

Taylor's description of *The Pancake Bell* is typical of what Bakhtin calls the gratuitous characteristic of carnival celebration, in which nothing special is given to people but freedom. People are left alone to celebrate and the festivity 'opens simply with a signal marking the beginning of merriment and foolery.'<sup>86</sup> And, as simple as

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<sup>85</sup>See Alexander B. Grosart (ed.), *Occasional Issues of Unique or Very Rare Books*, vol. V (Manchester: C. E. Simms, 1877), pp. 152-3.

<sup>86</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, op. cit., p. 246.

that, a ringing bell in London was the signal for the Carnival revelry to start. After an amusing description of the pancake making, and the way the populace ‘doe deuoure [it] very greedily,’ Taylor continues his narrative describing the warlike characteristics of the occasion:

they have no sooner swallowed that sweet candyed baite, but straight their wits forsake them, and they runne stark mad, assembling in routs and throngs numberlesse of vngouerned numbers, with vnciuill ciuil commotions.

Then *Tim Tatters* (a most valiant villaine), with an Ensigne made of a piece of a Bakers mawkin fixt vpon a Broome-staffe, he displaies his dreadfull colours, and calling the ragged regiment together, makes an illiterate Oration, stuf with most plentiful want of discretion: the conclusion whereof is, that somewhat they will doe, but what they know not. Vntill at last comes marching vp another troope of Tatterdemalians, proclayming wars against no matter who, so they may be doing.<sup>87</sup>

Taylor’s *Tim Tatters* is likely to be the English version of a Carnival King (or, at least, a ‘lord of misrule’) with his ensign ‘fixt vpon a Broome-staffe’. His account of the ‘illiterate Oration’ is likely to be that of the Carnival King’s inauguration speech.<sup>88</sup> Next, Taylor proceeds to describe how the ‘war’ took place and how damaging it had been. In his journalistic style, he gives us an idea of the excesses committed by the youthful ‘infantry’ and how frequently it got out of hand. He complains:

So much for *Shroue-Tuesday, Iack-a-Lents Gentleman Vsher*, these have beene his humours in former times, but I have some better hope of reformation in him hereafter, and indeed I wrote this before his comming this yeere 1617 not knowing how he would behaue himself, but tottering betwixt Despaire and Hope, I leaue him.<sup>89</sup>

It is somewhat ironical that 1617 (when large-scale rioting broke out in three separate locations) was to become notable for having the blackest Shrove Tuesday

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<sup>87</sup>John Taylor, op. cit., p. 115.

<sup>88</sup>Laroque, after quoting Taylor’s *Tim Tatters*, takes his illiterate oration as a reminder ‘of the ridiculous orders issued at the Roman Saturnalia and also during the period of misrule of the Christmas festivals.’ François Laroque, op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>89</sup>John Taylor, op. cit., p. 115.

ever. In this year, Shrovetide rioters ‘engaged in acts of ritualised yet very real violence.’ While a pack of them destroyed Christopher Beeston’s new playhouse (the Cockpit) in Drury Lane, others smashed the windows and pulled the tiles from the roofs of Finsbury prison and released the inmates. A third group destroyed several houses in Wapping.<sup>90</sup> The 1617 attack on the Cockpit (which was known after that event as the Phoenix) is well documented<sup>91</sup> and—since this provides a significant piece of evidence for understanding Carnival as an opportunity for social struggle—I will return to this subject later. Indeed it is curious to notice an increase in Shrovetide vandalism from the late-Elizabethan period to the end of the Jacobean. The ritualized—although real—violence noted by Lindley is also likely to have been a ‘natural’ development of the violent football tournaments.

Football, a Shrovetide game, was banned by the Chester corporation as early as 1540, on the grounds of the ‘great inconvenience’ posed by ‘evil disposed persons’. Their dispositions, which were magnified by excessive drinking, could easily turn towards uproar and vandalism. Riotous activity, which, according to Hutton, ‘could involve thousands of people, craftsmen reinforcing the youths’, seems to have gained in force despite the fact that the ‘ringleaders sometimes received heavy fines and gaol sentences.’ However, as Hutton observes,

All in positions of national and metropolitan authority seem also to have shared the same ambivalence towards the development of Shrove Tuesday into a major time of misrule for London apprentices. Before 1598 there are no references to disturbances on that feast in the Middlesex quarter sessions records, although Lord Mayors did double the watch and warn the ‘prentices’ to stay indoors. After that, it seems clear that they started to ignore that advice with spectacular results, for Shrove Tuesday riots occurred in twenty-four out of the twenty-nine years of early Stuart London, normally in the suburbs and especially in the northern suburbs, where traditional areas of recreation were

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<sup>90</sup>See K. J. Lindley’s ‘Riot Prevention and Control in Early Stuart London’ in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, vol. 33 (1983), pp. 109-10.

<sup>91</sup>See Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearian Playing Companies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 124-125; *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1987]), pp.176-7; *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, third edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995 [1992]), pp. 14-5.

situated.... In 1612-14 one Shoreditch bordello was attacked every year until it was demolished.<sup>92</sup>

Insofar as the targets of London's Shrovetide riots could be either a playhouse or a brothel, the authorities' ambivalent posture towards the apprentices' abusive behaviour can perhaps be regarded as proof of a degree of social intolerance towards these commercial enterprises. But we also have to try to understand the London apprentices' disruptive behaviour in the context of the Carnival itself, for misbehaviour during Carnival was manifested not only in abusive language and gesture. As Peter Burke observed, there 'were three major themes in Carnival, real and symbolical: food, sex and violence.'<sup>93</sup> With respect to Burke's third theme, the further we go back to the past, the more aggressive become Carnival's features to our 'civilized' eyes. Sir James Frazer (1922) gives an account of the ancient festival known as *Radica*, which takes place at Frosinone, in Latium (an Italian province half-way between Rome and Naples), on the final day of the Carnival, and it is an important testimony of that surviving folk custom.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Ronald Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>93</sup>Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Temple Smith, 1978), p. 186.

<sup>94</sup>'A special feature of the festival is that every one must carry in his hand what is called a *radica* ('root'), by which is meant a huge leaf of aloe or rather the agave. Any one who ventured into the crowd without such a leaf would be unceremoniously hustled out of it, unless indeed he bore as a substitute a large cabbage at the end of a long stick or a bunch of grass curiously plaited. When the multitude, after a short turn, has escorted the slow-moving car [with the enthroned majestic figure of the Carnival, a colourful man of stucco about nine feet high with a rubicund and smiling countenance] to the gate of the Sub-Prefecture, they halt, and the car, jolting over the uneven ground, rumbles into the courtyard.... All eyes are turned anxiously to the door from which the Sub-Prefect himself and other representatives of the majesty of the law are expected to issue and pay their homage to the hero of the hour. A few moments of suspense and then a storm of cheers and hand-clapping salutes the appearance of the dignitaries, as they file out and, descending the staircase, take their place in the procession. The hymn of the Carnival is now thundered out, after which, amid a deafening roar, aloe leaves and cabbages are whirled aloft and descend impartially on the heads of the just and unjust, who lend fresh zest to the proceedings by engaging in a free fight. When these preliminaries have been concluded to the satisfaction of all concerned, the procession gets under way. The rear is brought up by a cart laden with barrels of wine and policemen, the latter engaged in the congenial task of serving out wine to all who ask for it, while a most internecine struggle, accompanied by a copious discharge of yells, blows, and blasphemy, goes on among

Thrashing and abuse were customs characteristic of Carnival's short reign. If on one hand, Carnival has succeeded (against Lent's will) in taking office and turning the world upside-down, on the other he is forced to 'suffer' at the end of his reign the consequences of the prevailing misbehaviour he has promoted. However, Carnival's 'condemnation' had a temporal symbolism rather than a religious one. As a scapegoat, Carnival's thrashing and abuse on the eve of Lent was a mocking ceremony of expiation for the excesses committed during his reign. Certainly Carnival had to be killed, but his death was not an end in itself; rather it had an ambivalent connotation. Life and death, crowning and uncrowning, triumph and reversal, praise and abuse, are the embodiment of the 'popular culture of humour' that functioned as a caveat against everything which pretended to be permanent and immutable. Nevertheless, the killing of the Carnival King at the end of his reign was highly ambivalent, for it represented the killing off of the old from which the new would spring. In this way Carnival's effigy was stoned, burned and, in some places, even a burlesque trial was enacted. Once again we are forced to remember Falstaff in *Merry Wives*' 'Carnival King' uncrowning: 'A trial, come!' (5.4.86). As part of the celebration, the 'offender' was inevitably condemned to death, and, very often, a satirical funeral took place. A good example of this type of revelry celebrated one Ash Wednesday in Provence is described by Sir James George Frazer:

An effigy called Caramantran, whimsically attired, is drawn in chariot or borne on a litter, accompanied by the populace in grotesque costumes, who carry gourds full of wine and drain them all the marks, real or affected, of intoxication. At the head of the procession are some disguised as judges and barristers, and a tall gaunt personage who masquerades as Lent; behind them follow young people mounted on miserable hacks and attired as mourners who pretend to bewail the fate that is in store for Caramantran. In the principal square the procession halts, the tribunal is constituted, and Caramantran placed at

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the surging crowd at the cart's tail in their anxiety not to miss the glorious opportunity of intoxicating themselves at the public expense. Finally, after the procession has paraded the principal streets in this majestic manner, the effigy of Carnival is taken to the middle of a public square, stripped of his finery, laid on pile of wood, and burnt amid the cries of the multitude, who thundering out once more the song of Carnival fling their so-called "roots" on the pyre and give themselves up without restraint to the pleasures of the dance.' Sir James George Frazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-3.

the bar. After a formal trial he is sentenced to death amid the groans of the mob: the barrister who defended him embraces his client for the last time: the officers of justice do their duty: the condemned is set with his back to a wall and hurried into eternity under a shower of stones. The sea or river receives his mangled remains.<sup>95</sup>

Although John Taylor's work was written in 1617, there is no doubt that the Shrove Tuesday celebration is an ancient festivity which, in some ways, survived in England until at least two hundred years ago. As Ronald Hutton puts it: 'Shrovetide likewise remained a time for misbehaviour, within or beyond generally acceptable limits, from the twelfth to the nineteenth century.'<sup>96</sup> The revelries could sometimes get completely out of hand, and the London apprentices sometimes had plans other than innocent merriment in mind (as we shall see later with respect to the Shrove Tuesdays of 1617 and 1618). Indeed, the carnivalesque 'masks' might conceal social resentments which could transform the riotous revelries into a Carnival of bloodshed; an occasion of this sort is described by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie in his work on the 1580 Romans' Carnival.<sup>97</sup>

### **Carnival Against Order**

If the Reformation had abolished the Catholic penitential observance prior to Lent, Shrove Tuesday still continued to be celebrated as a carnivalesque holiday. It was one of the holidays most eagerly awaited by the apprentices. As John Brand states: 'it appears from contemporary writers that this day was a holiday, time immemorial for apprentices and working people.'<sup>98</sup> It is referred to in Dekker's *Seuen Deadly Sinnes of London* (1606) as follows: 'they presently (like Prentices upon *Shroue-tuesday*) take the lawe into their owne handes, and doe what they list.'<sup>99</sup> Ben Jonson (1609)

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid., pp. 304-5.

<sup>96</sup>Ronald Hutton, op. cit., p. 244.

<sup>97</sup>Cf. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, op. cit.

<sup>98</sup>John Brand, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>99</sup>Thomas Dekker, *The Seuen Deadly Sinnes of London: Drawne in Seuen Seuerall Coaches, Through the Seuen Severall Gates of the Citie* (London: Printed by E. A. [Edward Alde] for Nathaniel Butter, 1606, p. 35.

mentions the London apprentices' riots of Shrove Tuesday in his *Epicoene* (I.i:157-9),<sup>100</sup> John Cooke (1611) refers to apprentices' most awaited holiday in his *Greenes Tu quoque, Or, the Cittie Gallant*,<sup>101</sup> and Robert Taylor (1613) sees it as a threatening event in his *The Hogge Hath Lost his Pearle*.<sup>102</sup> The latter is likely to confirm John Taylor's suggestion of the vandalism practised by youths who were 'armed with cudgels, stones, hammers, rules, trowe's, and hand-sawes'. Their 'weapons' (which were likely to have been displayed as a symbol of their hard professional apprenticeship) were used, according to Taylor, to put

Play houses to the sack, and Bawdy-houses to the spoyle, in the quarrell breaking a thousand quarrels (of glasse I meane) making ambitious brickbats breake their neckes, tumbling from the tops of lofty chimnies, terribly vntyling houses, ripping vp the bowels of feather-beds, to the inriching of vpholsters, the profit of Plaisterers, and Dirdawbers, the gaine of Glasiers, Ioyners, Carpenters, Tylers and Bricklayers.<sup>103</sup>

Although John Taylor's text describes apprentices' attacks on playhouses, as well as bawdy-houses, in the plural, there is only evidence, to date, of one attack on a theatre: the Cockpit in 1617, and an unsuccessful plan (the following year) to repeat the attack and to include the Red Bull.<sup>104</sup> Secondly, the evidence we have so far for attacks on brothels is that already mentioned by Lindley at Shoreditch. The attacks were extreme and were directed at specific targets; they also seemed to be rather more than gratuitous acts of vandalism committed by the crowd. According to Charles J. Sisson, the attack on the Cockpit, which occurred 'upon its opening, was a gesture of resentment by Clerkenwell [townsfolk] for the desertion of the Red Bull

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<sup>100</sup>See Ben Jonson, *Epicoene* in C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (eds.), *Ben Jonson*, vol. V (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), p. 169.

<sup>101</sup>See John Cooke, *Greenes To Quoque, Or, The Cittie Gallant* (London: Printed for John Trundele, 1614), Sig. C<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>102</sup>See Robert Taylor, *The Hogge Hath Lost his Pearle* (London: Printed for Richard Redmer, 1614), Sig. B<sub>3</sub>.

<sup>103</sup>John Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

<sup>104</sup>See official reports quoted in Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, vol. VI (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 54-7.

and the injustice done to Susan [Baskerville] in matter of notoriety.’<sup>105</sup> Although admitting that such motivation cannot be disproved, Gerald Eades Bentley dismissed Sisson’s hypothesis on the grounds that it seemed ‘excessively precise and informed for thousands of rioters in several parts of London.’<sup>106</sup> However, Bentley’s objection did not take into consideration London apprentices’ strong sense of belonging together. Although, as Steven R. Smith points out, they were ‘drawn from all parts of the kingdom and from diverse social backgrounds,... they thought of themselves and were thought of as a separate order or subculture.’ This can be attested by:

The existence of a large and diverse body of literature about and for apprentices, the evidence of their having met together formally as well as informally, and the frequency with which apprentices acted in concert during the Puritan Revolution to petition the government and to demonstrate in the streets.<sup>107</sup>

Without denying the existence of what Smith called a ‘somewhat hierarchical’ subculture, seen for instance in the fact that ‘the gentleman apprentice of a prominent East India merchant and the pauper apprentice of a humble shoemaker were as far apart socially as their masters’<sup>108</sup>, I would describe London’s apprentice subculture—in the term used by Victor Turner—as a real *communitas*. They (in a ‘number of 3. or 4000’) were divided into smaller groups appearing in different parts of the city at the same time, as the letter written by Edward Sherburne on 8th March, 1616 attests.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Charles J. Sisson, ‘The Red Bull Company and the Importunate Widow’ in *Shakespeare Survey*, vol. 7 (1954), p.68 n. 36. Sisson’s hypothesis was reached during the course of the examination of the Chancery suit of Worth v. Baskerville found in P.R.O. C 24/500/9 and 103.

<sup>106</sup>Gerald Eades Bentley, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>107</sup>Steven R. Smith, ‘The London Apprentices as Seventeenth-Century Adolescents’, *Past & Present*, no. 61 (November 1973), pp. 156-7. For more material concerning London’s apprentice activism see Mark Thornton Burnett, ‘Apprentice Literature and the “Crisis” of the 1590s’ in *The Year Book of English Studies*, vol. 21 (1991), pp. 27-38.; Mihoko Suzuki, ‘The London Apprentice Riots of the 1590s and the Fiction of Thomas Deloney’ in *Criticism*, vol. XXXVIII, n. 2 (spring 1996), pp. 181-217.

<sup>108</sup>Steven R. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>109</sup>This document is quoted in Gerald Eades Bentley, *op. cit.*, p. 54.



The attack on the Cockpit theatre is very important to us here. It does not really matter if it occurred because the apprentices were 'seeking to make justice on behalf of Susan Baskerville,' or because they were discontented, as Andrew Gurr suggests, as a result of 'having their plays taken away from the penny playhouse and transferred to a sixpenny venue.'<sup>110</sup> Why was the apprentices' fury not directed to other playhouses? Why did they also intend to destroy the Red Bull the following year? If it is true that they had particular targets, some motivation for these attacks no doubt existed. It is also most likely that the attacks on the Wapping houses and Shoreditch bordello had specific causes, although we can only guess what. The apprentices went on to resist London's authorities by 'beating the sheriff from his horse with stones'.<sup>111</sup> As Peter Burke remarks, riots 'took place over the rituals of charivari and Carnival in particular, because rituals of deposition, destruction and defamation—burning in effigy, for example—were suited for protests which the rioters wanted to make.'<sup>112</sup> So, London's Shrove Tuesday might be seen as a liminal period of Carnival type: 'regarded as a time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action, it can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs.'<sup>113</sup>

Although the apprentices' violent Shrove Tuesday riots can be understood as a possible means of social adjustment, this *real violence* cannot be fully understood unless we analyse the *ritualized violence* practised during the Carnival reign. It seems to have its roots in a more innocent folk custom, the killing of Carnival (a mocking symbol of expiation for the excesses committed during his reign, which took place on the Tuesday which was the last day of Carnival). Thus, the '*Shroue-Tuesday, Iacke-a-Lents Gentleman Vsher*' violent behaviour would have evolved from the innocent gesture of pelting the Carnival King into a real damaging protest. The English Jack of Lent was (like its continental Carnival counterpart) an 'effigy' (a puppet made of

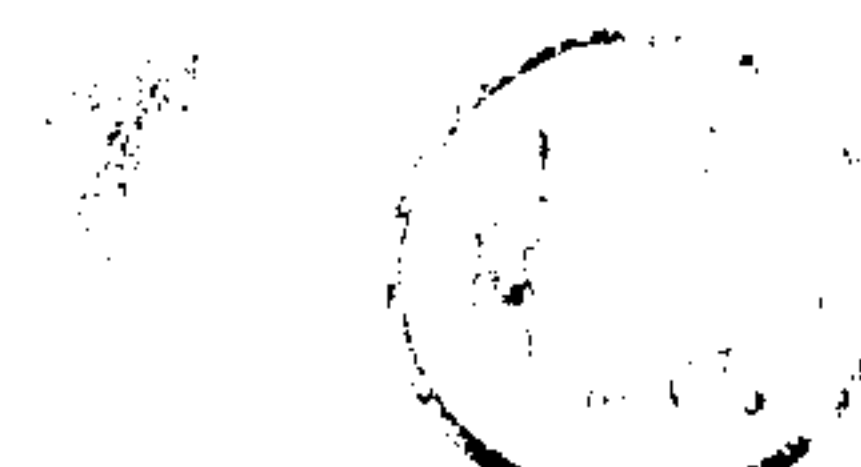
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<sup>110</sup>Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, third edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995 [1992]), p. 14.

<sup>111</sup>See Gerald Eades Bentley, *op. cit.*, p.55.

<sup>112</sup>Peter Burke, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

<sup>113</sup>Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 167.



straw and cast-off clothes) to be pelted. This can be confirmed by the way the figure is characterized in several texts to be found throughout the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. It appears in Thomas Nashe's *Have with yov to Saffron-Walden* (1596): 'For his stature he is such another pretie Jack a Lent as boyes throw at in the streete.'<sup>114</sup>; in Thomas Heywood's *Four Prentices of London* (c.1600): 'you olde Anatomy.... Nay you old Iack a Lent, sixe weeks and vpwards'<sup>115</sup>; in John Cooke's *Greens Tu quoque, or the Cittie Gallant* (1611): 'for if a Boy that is throwing at his Iack-alent chauce to hit mee on the shinnes: Why I say nothing, but, *Tu quoque*, smile, and forgiue the Child with a becke of my hand, or some such like token'<sup>116</sup>; in William Terilo's *Friar Bacon's Prophecy* (1604): 'And even upon Easter-day, All Jack a Lents were cast away.'<sup>117</sup>; in Ben Jonson's *Tale of a Tub* (1633): 'Thou, that when last thou wert put out of service, / Travaild'st to *Hamsted* Heath on a *Ash-we'nsday*, / Where thou dist stand six weekes the *Iack of Lent*, / For boyes to hoorle, three throwes a penny at thee' (IV.ii:47-50).<sup>118</sup> Indeed the immemorial custom of throwing at *Jack-a-Lent* is likely to have survived in England until at least the early nineteenth century.

A custom which my father remembered, but which has now long since died out, was kept at the beginning of Lent. A figure made of straw and cast-off clothes was carried through the little town of Polperro amid much noise and merriment; after which it was taken to the beach, where it was shot at, burnt, or it met with some other ignominious end.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>Thomas Nashe, *Have with yov to Saffron-Walden* in *The Works of Thomas Nashe* (vol. III), op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>115</sup>Thomas Heywood, *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood*, R. H. Shepherd (ed.), vol. II (London: John Pearson, 1874), p.186.

<sup>116</sup>John Cooke, op. cit., Sig. C<sub>2</sub> ff.

<sup>117</sup>William Terilo, [? pseud.], *A Piece of Friar Bacons Brazen-heads Prophecie*, J. O. Halliwell (ed.), *Percy Society: Early English Poetry, Ballads and Popular Literature of the Middle Ages*, vol. XV (London, 1845), p. 11.

<sup>118</sup>Ben Jonson, *A Tale of a Tub* in C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (eds.), *Ben Jonson*, vol. III (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), pp. 66-7.

<sup>119</sup>T. Quiller Couch (ed.), *Western Antiquary, or Devon and Cornwall Note-Book*, vol. 3 (Plymouth: Latimer and Son, 1884), p. 238, already quoted by A. R. Wright, *British Calendar Customs: England*, vol. I (London: Published for the Folk-lore Society by William Glaisner, 1936), pp.39-40.

No less than the continental King Carnival figure, the English Jack of Lent was filled with religious and profane symbolism. In Quiller Couch's accounts of the Cornish village, we find that the 'image was called Jack o' Lent and supposed to represent Judas Iscariot.' In Elderton's *Ballad of Lenten Stuffe* (1570) we find this ambiguous figure as follows:

Then Jake à Lent comes justlynge in,  
 With the hedpeece of a herynge,  
 And saythe, repent yowe of yower syn,  
 For shame, syrs, leve yower swerynge:  
 And to Palme Sondag doethe he ryde,  
 And sprots and herryngs by his syde,  
 And makes an end of Lenton tyde!<sup>120</sup>

Extreme as they were, the riotous revelries of London's Shrovetide seem to have been regarded as the symbolic thrashing of Carnival's effigy. The Bacchic spirit of the old Shrove Tuesday festivities, which were started by the ringing of the pancake bell, giving 'permission to the workers in shops, offices, and factories and to the children at school to cease work and join in the amusements and sports of the day,'<sup>121</sup> is best epitomized in Pasquil. Here we can find that Shrove Tuesday was a time

When mad 'brained Prentices, that no man feare,  
 O'rethrowe the dens of *bawdie* recreation,  
 When *Tailors, Coblers, Plaist'ers, Smiths & Masons,*  
 And every Rogue will beat down *Barbers Basons,*  
 Whereat *Don Constable* in wrath appeares,  
 And runs away with his stout *Halberdiers*.<sup>122</sup>

The English Shrove Tuesday sports—as we shall now see—also seemed to serve as reminders of the symbolism attached to Carnival's thrashing and abuse. Football,

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<sup>120</sup>This ballad is quoted by John Brand, *op. cit.*, p. 101. Brand (to whom I am greatly indebted), although treating the popular culture as 'vulgar and provincial customs', offers a range of references to the festivities I am dealing with, as to be found in the Elizabethan and Jacobean authors. Also see W. Carew Hazlitt, *Faiths and Folklore*, [whose work is a revision of Brand's book in a dictionary format], 2 vols. (London: Reeves and Turner, 1905).

<sup>121</sup>A. R. Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>122</sup>Alexander B. Grosart, *Occasional Issues of Unique or Very Rare Books*, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

along with throwing at cocks,<sup>123</sup> were the apprentices' favourite Shrove Tuesday sports. According to Dennis Brailsford,

Football, in various modes, was the most widespread of the Shrove Tuesday games, and also one which attracted most comments.... The damage to life and property that it usually risked would have otherwise been unbearable. It was still a sport of mass participation, a riot for apprentices or an affray for the peasants.<sup>124</sup>

On the basis of Stubbes' description of this war-like sport, Brailsford concluded that football in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period provided an occasion for the players to pay off old scores and was an opportunity for skulduggery. Whilst accepting that the original prompting of such a combative sport had been lost long before the Elizabethan age ended, Brailsford nevertheless acknowledged that the significance of folk games can hardly be appreciated without taking into account their primitive origins, i.e. the vestigial observance of supernatural rites attached to them.<sup>125</sup> The carnivalesque celebration from the past has certainly at times provided the opportunity and occasion for 'paying off old scores'.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, the Shrovetide games could sometimes be an opportunity for more pragmatic social adjustments. So, instead of blithely hoping for a better future, the misrule time was also used by the

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<sup>123</sup>In Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough* we find several accounts of animal thrashing related to harvest, and also animals used as scapegoats. See, pp. 447-64 and 538-46. Perhaps, that barbarous thrashing of cocks (and sometimes other animals over our period) had some link with those primitive rites long forgotten. To the RSPCA's despair, it is still a custom in some backward parts of Spain to thrash a donkey during Shrovetide.

<sup>124</sup>Dennis Brailsford, *Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 53.

<sup>125</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>126</sup>See Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 97-123. There we find that Shrovetide celebrations in France had provided the opportunity and occasion for political and religious struggle. See also Ladurie's micro-history of the 1580 Romans' carnival (op. cit.). Here in England it was no different: 'On Shrove Tuesday 1660, when demonstrations against the government were breaking out all over southern England, the Bristol apprentices kept within the letter of prohibition while insulting the spirit. Outside the Mayor's house they threw at geese and hens and tossed up bitches and cats and knocked down the sheriff who came to fulminate.... Their

populace to actively seek change and improvement. Thus, the wild Shrovetide football game would be the time and occasion for the populace openly to manifest its discontent. As Nigel Viney and Neil Grant put it,

it seems that football was sometimes used as a cover for a political riot. Landlords who enclosed common land for sheep, against the will of the local people, sometimes found that their new fences had somehow disappeared during a game of football.<sup>127</sup>

However, the riotous Shrove Tuesday revelries which took place during the Renaissance period in London cannot be properly understood unless we evoke the underlying forces behind these disruptive activities. Analysing the scenes of fighting and beating in Rabelais' *Pantagruel* as having a 'carnavalesque character', Bakhtin points out that

The very custom of the gauntlets is a carnival rite, linked with fertility, with procreative force, with time. Custom grants the right of a certain freedom and familiarity, the right to break the usual norms of social relations.<sup>128</sup>

In *Pantagruel* (Book 4, Chapter XII, XIV and XV) two mock wedding feasts are arranged for the sake of thrashing the guests. According to Bakhtin, this was a custom in some French provinces where 'during the wedding feast the guests cuffed each other jokingly'. As 'consecrated and legalized by custom', the 'victim' could not make any complaint. In his novel, Rabelais compares the violent thrashing of the Catchpole, in which the 'victim' 'was beaten to a pulp', to Avignon's carnival fight:

You may take my word for it that Avignon, in carnival time, never produced youngsters that played more melodiously at thump-socket

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actions helped to usher in a year in which, as is well known, monarchy, episcopacy, and holy days were restored together.' See Ronald Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 222-3.

<sup>127</sup>Nigel Viney and Neil Grant, *An Illustrated History of Ball Games* (London: Heinemann, 1978), p. 15.

<sup>128</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 200-1.

than these vassals of My Lord of Basché upon the person of Catchpole. The poor fellow fell, in a faint, to the ground.<sup>129</sup>

This recalls the beating of the transvestite Falstaff in *Merry Wives* as a notorious Shakespearean Carnival victim. In the last scene of the play, he considers the trickery played upon him: ‘See now how wit may be made a Jack-a-Lent when ’tis upon ill employment!’ (5.5.125-7). This licentious character with his fat body, gargantuan appetite and great fondness for sack is Shakespeare’s most notorious Lord of Misrule. In fact this Jack-a-Lent has all the attributes one might expect to find in his continental counterpart, King of Carnival, as he is portrayed in Breughel’s *Tournament Between Carnival and Lent*. Prince Hal describes him in *1 Henry IV* as ‘that trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloack-bag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly,... good, but to taste sack and drink it?... to carve a capon and eat it?’ (2.5.454-8, 460-2). In sum, he is Shakespeare’s carnivalesque butt: the English Jack-a-Lent archetype to be trashed and abused. He is a King of Carnival type, ‘crowned’ in *1 Henry IV*, ‘uncrowned’ in *2 Henry IV*, ‘killed’ in *Henry V*, and ‘re-born’ in *Merry Wives* then again, ‘crowned’ and ‘uncrowned’. In other words, a Jack-a-Lent to be ‘pelted’ again and again...

### **Carnival’s Ritualized Violence**

Although much of the symbolism relating to the ‘tournament between Carnival and Lent’ has now vanished, it was once a battle between two forces: one (Lent) represented by the finished, and immutable; the other (Carnival) the unfinished, and renewed. In this timeless succession of events, established community values were desecrated (or at least shaken), and a new attitude towards social life was urged. Indeed, the carnivalesque *agon* from the past would be considered a street riot if compared to current Carnival celebrations. When we now hear, for example, of a

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<sup>129</sup>This is the translation into English made by Hélène Iswolsky of the passage quoted by Bakhtin, op. cit., p. 201. The English translation can be found in François

hooligans' riot after a football match, we do not usually think of this violence as inherent in the sport itself. Even though the symbolism of the Carnival battle has long been forgotten, the gesture of throwing inoffensive pieces of paper (confetti) is still a reminder of the festive 'free fights' of the past in which real blows were a regenerative ritual rather than a gratuitously aggressive game.<sup>130</sup> Turning now to carnivalized literature, and in particular to my object of investigation, Shakespeare's *Shrew*, we must now ask how the play can be related to London's Shrove Tuesday folk customs. The answer to this lies in the carnivalesque grotesque violence portrayed in the play.

Although acknowledging that the folk culture of humour from the Middle Ages was not strongly reflected in the literature of the Renaissance (except perhaps by Rabelais), Bakhtin categorically affirms that, 'Without an understanding of it [Carnival imagery] ... a full appreciation of Renaissance and grotesque literature is impossible.' Moreover, Shakespeare is one of the Renaissance writers whom Bakhtin recognises as having used grotesque Carnival imagery to compose his works.<sup>131</sup> Paraphrasing Bakhtin I would say that if we ignore the grotesque Carnival imagery used in *The Shrew*, we will be unable to appreciate the play's retelling of the folktale in all its integrity.

In respect of the grotesque 'savagery' imaged in Kate and Petruchio's relationship in carnivalesque terms, it may perhaps be worthwhile to note the folk custom reported by Durandus as occurring in the City of Durham. There, on Easter Tuesday, the wives would beat their husbands, who, on the following day, would beat their wives.<sup>132</sup> As strange as that folk custom may seem in our 'civilized' present, it was not in fact a gratuitously silly game. On the contrary, if we analyse it from the perspective of folk culture, it has plenty of symbolism. The spouses' thrashing on the

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Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, vol. 2 (London and New York: Everyman's Library, 1929), p. 136.

<sup>130</sup>Throwing oranges (along with confetti, sweets and mimosa) is still a reminder of the festive free fight from the past to be found in the *Fasnacht* Carnival in Basle. Cf. Mark Dudley, 'Masked Basle' in *The Independent* (Saturday, 15 February 1997), p. 10.

<sup>131</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, op. cit., p. 11

<sup>132</sup>John Brand, op. cit., p. 180.

eve of Easter is likely to represent the death of the old and the birth of the new. Moreover, after Lent's sexual abstinence, fisticuffs between wife and husband is likely to be a ritualized form of resuming intimacy. Following the deprivations of the Lent quarantine, life regains its energy, vigour and plentifulness. After describing the sorrows of that season, Nicholas Breton beautifully depicts the arrival of Easter:

It is now Easter, and Jack of Lent is turned out of doores: the fishermen now hang up their nets to dry, while the Calfe and the Lambe walke toward the kitchin and the Pastry: The veluet heads of the forests fall at the loose of the Cross-bow: the Samman trowt playes with the fly, and the March Rabbit runnes dead into the dish: ... the Earth now beginnes to paint her vpper garment, and the trees put out their young buds, the little kids chew their Cuds, and the Swallow feeds on the flyes in the Ayre: the Storke clenseth the Brookes of the frogges, and the Sparhawke prepares her wing for the Partridge: the little fawne is stolne from the Doe, and the male Deere beginne to herd: the spirit of Youth is inclined to mirth, and the conscionable Scholler will not breake a holy day: the Minstrell cals the Maid from her dinner, and the Louers eyes doe troule like Tennis balls. There is mirth and ioy, when there is health and liberty: and he that hath money, will be no meane man in his mansson: the ayre is wholesome, and the Skye comfortable, the flowers odoriferous, and the fruits pleasant: I conclude, it is a day of much delightfulness: the Sunnes dancing day, and the Earths Holy-day.<sup>133</sup>

A brief inspection of Shakespeare's plays instantly reveals his close attachment to the folk culture of Carnival. The mixing of high and low, and the serious and comic, which are features we expect to find in his comedies, are also to be found in his tragedies and historical plays. Although Shakespeare has drawn an extensive gallery of grotesque characters: Falstaff, Sir Toby Belch, Sly, Caliban, the witches in *Macbeth*, and so forth, the grotesque imagery he uses (powerfully drawn in the Katherine and Petruchio plot, for example) is perhaps what makes him unmistakably bound to the popular culture of humour.

Having established the grounds for further analysis of *The Shrew*, another important matter may be introduced concerning this particular text: its relation to the



anonymous *The Taming of A Shrew*. This investigation, besides being intrinsically bound to any discussion of *The Shrew*, will offer further material for my analysis of the Shakespearean text as carnivalized drama.

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<sup>133</sup>N. B. [Nicolas Breton], *Fantasticks: Seruing for a Perpetvall Prognostication* (London, 1626), Sig. D3v.

## II – The *Shrew* Plays: Connections, Orthodoxy and Contentions

What is the link between *The Taming of The Shrew* and *The Taming of A Shrew* apart from the similarity of their titles? And what is the bearing of this question on my view of Shakespeare's *Shrew* as carnivalized drama? To answer the first question: I think it is impossible to discuss *The Shrew* while ignoring *A Shrew*. Their textual connections, in addition to being responsible for an apparently endless debate about their respective origins, are able to illuminate matters such as literary appropriation and use of sources in the Elizabethan period. I wish to suggest that *A Shrew*, rather than just a simple compilation, should be read as a sort of parody of its sources. To deal with the second question: whilst it is true that Christopher Sly appears in both plays, his expanded 'metadramatic' functions in *A Shrew* may offer some hints on the way the *Shrew* plays were received by the audience. Furthermore, his presence 'as a kind of Lord of Misrule presiding over a brief period of holiday from everyday conventions'<sup>1</sup> serves to emphasize the carnivalesque mood of the plays.

### *The Shrew* and *A Shrew*: Documentary Evidence

The first reference for the *Shrew* plays is the year 1594, when a play (entered in the Stationers' Register on the 'secondo die Maij') printed in London by Peter Short announced on its front page: '*A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called The taming of a Shrew. As it was sundry times acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Pembroke his seruants.*'<sup>2</sup> In the same year, on 11 June, '*the Tamyng of A Shrowe*' was played either by 'Lord Admeralle men' or 'Chamberlen men', or these two companies together, at 'Newington'. The difficulty, in Henslowe's diary, of identifying precisely which company performed which play is due to the fact that Henslowe does not

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<sup>1</sup>Ann Thompson (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995 [1984]), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>See facsimile, by photolithography, from the Duke of Devonshire's unique original, by Charles Praetorius (London: C. Praetorius, 1886).

provide us with sufficient detail.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps this short season (3 to 13 June) was given jointly by the two companies, after the long period of closure (1592-4), caused first by complaints from the puritans and then by the outbreak of plague.<sup>4</sup> After 1594, *A Shrew* was published in two further editions, in 1596 and in 1607. The title and text of *The Taming of The Shrew*, as we know it, appeared only in 1623 with the publication of the First Folio.

If, in some ways, the plays closely resemble one another with respect to theme and character development, in others they possess very different features. Although in both texts the inner play is set in a city of learning, in *The Shrew* the setting is Italy (Padua) while in *A Shrew* it is Greece (Athens). Although the characters of *A Shrew* (except the unnamed Lord, Katherina and Sly) have different names from those in *The Shrew*, most of them are the equivalents of their counterparts in the latter. While Baptista of *The Shrew* has two daughters (Katherina and Bianca), his counterpart Alphonsus in *A Shrew* has three (Katherina, Phylema and Emelia). This variation creates a marked difference in terms of dramatic conflict: while in *A Shrew* we have two pairs of young lovers (Polidor/Emelia and Aurelius/Phylema) and no extra suitors, in *The Shrew* Bianca's wooing plot is turned into something more comically dramatic since the obstacle to the young lovers' 'happiness' is not solely caused by the fact that Baptista has 'firmly ... resolved ... / ... not to bestow ... [his] youngest daughter / Before ... [he has found] a husband for the elder' (1.1.49-51).<sup>5</sup> Although romantic love is also the tenor of the Aurelius/ Phylema subplot in *A Shrew*, class conflict is revealed later in the play: 'Alfonso, I did not think you would presume / To match your daughter with my princely house / And ne'er make me acquainted with

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<sup>3</sup>See *Henslowe's Diary*, edited by R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 21-2. See also Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearian Playing Companies* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.75-6.

<sup>4</sup>See 'Plague Records' (Appendix E) in E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol. IV (Oxford, 1923), 347-9.

<sup>5</sup>Although using Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor's 1988 Oxford edition for my quotations of Shakespeare's other texts, all my quotations of *The Shrew*, unless stated, are from Ann Thompson's 1995 [1984] Cambridge edition. The Thompson edition has not only been influential but also it foregrounds matters of sexual politics, which I wish my reader to be conscious of.

the cause.’ (13.64-6).<sup>6</sup> These lines, as I will be discussing later, besides justifying the need for Aurelius’ disguise, also open up for discussion the question of marriage between people of different social strata.<sup>7</sup> Since in *The Shrew* the emphasis is given solely to the romantic love affair, Lucentio’s disguise has another connotation: besides facing Baptista’s restrictions, Lucentio has to deal with the fact that Bianca has already had two suitors before he arrives in Padua. As he immediately falls irresistibly in love with her (as Aurelius does with Phylema in *A Shrew*), to succeed in his aim of marrying her involves a struggle against the ludicrous lust of the elders (Gremio and Hortensio).

In Italianate fashion, probably derived from Ariosto’s *I Suppositi* which was known in England in Gascoigne’s version (*Supposes*),<sup>8</sup> *The Shrew* (in a more explicit fashion than *A Shrew*) is populated by *commedia dell’arte* archetypes such as Gremio (“the old pantaloon”);<sup>9</sup> Petruchio, who echoes the boastful *Capitano*; Curtis

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<sup>6</sup>All my references and quotations of *A Shrew*, unless stated, are from Stephen Roy Miller (ed.), *The Taming of A Shrew*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, The Early Quartos, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). My reason for this is that, since this is a carefully updated version of the play, I am following the same modern spelling pattern used for *The Shrew*.

<sup>7</sup>The point I am making here is also made by Miller in his edition of *A Shrew* quoted above.

<sup>8</sup>This text is acknowledged as the source for Bianca’s wooing plot. See Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol.1 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp. 111-158.

<sup>9</sup>To be precise, Gremio is the only one to be directly referred to under a *commedia*’s character mask. This happens twice in the 1623 First Folio: as ‘Gremio a Pantelowne’ in the stage direction at his first entrance (*Actus Primus*, line 348), and again he is called by Lucentio as ‘the old Pantalowne’ in *Actus Tertia*, line 1330. Cf. *The First Folio of Shakespeare*, The Norton Facsimile, Prepared by Charlton Hinman, second edition, with a new introduction by Peter W. M. Blayney (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), pp. 228, 236. With regard to the *commedia* devices which we can find in the play, I quote here Andrew Grewar’s comments on the subject. According to the author, ‘Besides this direct reference to Pantalone [in *The Shrew*], the scene shows various devices common in the scenarios of the *commedia dell’arte*: the inversion of the roles of master and servant, the servant wooing in the place of the master, the lover disguised as a pedant in order to gain access to the *innamorata*, and very possibly also the *lazzo* of the Latin “translation” [of Ovid in Lucentio’s ‘lesson’].’ See Andrew Grewar, ‘Shakespeare and the actors of the *commedia dell’arte*’ in David J. George and Christopher J. Gossip

(Sanders), Biondello and Grumio as *zanni* characters; and the young lovers, who are helped in the accomplishment of their love affairs by Lucentio's first servant Tranio (Valeria) and the second servant Biondello, in the same manner as in *commedia's* scenarios. As the play depicts it, an old *pantalone* (Baptista) is ready to give his young daughter in marriage to a friend next-door, the wealthy Gremio, who is also an old *pantalone*. The elderly men's ambitions are frustrated—as often happens in such a plot—by the youngsters' deception. Indeed, this widespread comic model is borrowed from Latin comedy in which the youngsters, in order to marry someone of their choice, have to struggle against the play's old society. This is a common plot device used over and over again in the Shakespearean period. However, it seems that in *The Shrew* there is a conscious willingness to signpost the play's intertextual relationship to the Italian *commedia* mode.

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(eds.), *Studies in The Commedia Dell'Arte* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993), p. 19. For more material concerning the acknowledgement of *commedia dell'arte* as an influence on the Shakespearean stage see also Andrew Grewar, 'The Old Man's Spectacles and Other Traces of The Commedia Dell'Arte in Early Shakespearean Comedy' in Christopher Cairns (ed.), *Scenery, Set and Staging in The Italian Renaissance: Studies in the Practice of Theatre* (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1996), pp. 289-317; Teresa J. Faherty, 'Othello dell'Arte: The Presence of Commedia in Shakespeare's Tragedy' in *Theatre Journal*, vol. 43, n. 2 (May 1991), pp. 179-94; Louise George Clubb, 'Shakespeare's Comedy and Late Cinquecento Mixed Genres'; and Ninian Mellamphy, 'Pantaloons and Zanies: Shakespeare's "Apprenticeship" to Italian Professional Comedy Troupes' both in Maurice Charney (ed.), *Shakespearean Comedy* (New York: New York Literary Forum, 1980), pp. 129-39 and 141-52 respectively; Richard Andrews, 'Scripted Theatre and the *Commedia Dell'Arte*' in J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewrin (eds.), *Theatre of the English and Italian Renaissance* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 21-54; Eugene Steele, 'Shakespeare, Goldoni, and the Clowns' in *Comparative Drama*, vol. II, n. 3 (Fall 1977), pp. 209-26; Robert C. Melzi, 'From Lelia to Viola' in *Renaissance Drama*, vol. IX (1966), pp. 67-81; Thelma Niklaus, *Harlequin Phoenix, or The Rise and Fall of a Bergamask Rogue* (London: The Bodley Head, 1965), pp. 126-133; Frances A. Yates, *A Study of Love's Labour's Lost* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), pp. 173-82; K. M. Lea, *The Italian Popular Comedy: A study in the commedia dell'arte, 1560-1620* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), pp. 339-55. For the contrary view see Kenneth Richards, 'Inigo Jones and the Commedia dell'Arte' in Christopher Cairns (ed.), *The Commedia dell'Arte from the Renaissance to Dario Fo* (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), pp. 209-25; and 'Elizabethan Perceptions of the *Commedia dell'Arte*' in Gunnar Sorelius and Michael Srigley (eds.), *Cultural Exchange between European Nations during Renaissance* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1994), pp. 213-27.

With respect to the intertextual relationship between the Italian *commedia* and *The Shrew* I have been suggesting, Ninian Mellamphy points out that the incidence of references to the genre, the ‘magnificoes, pantaloons, pedants in later Elizabethan literature, coupled with historical records of the activities of Italian actors in England and of English players in Europe, makes [it] virtually certain that Shakespeare’s contemporaries had a more than casual knowledge of the *commedia dell’arte*.’<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Louise George Clubb, in her essay on sixteenth-century Italian mixed genres, acknowledging the resemblance between Shakespeare’s practice and the *commedia dell’arte*, argues that the Italian improvised comedy and ‘the literary comedy were intimately related in the late cinquecento, so much so that the only true historical understanding of either is one derived from looking at them together.’ According to her, this intertextual relationship between the two genres, is traceable in

the late cinquecento repertory of theatrical structures, generic figures and frames ..., [which] were available in abundance, exported from Italy not only by the accounts of travellers and of Italian musicians employed at the English court, but in the innumerable editions of plays by the literary *commediografi* and in the performances of touring *comici dell’arte*, who continually refurbished their stock of scenarios for improvisation from the latest printed comedies, pastorals, and tragedies, in addition to acting many of them as written.<sup>11</sup>

The intertextual relationship between *The Shrew* and the Italian *commedia* is perhaps more profound than it appears at first glance, and it can be seen in various aspects of the play, of which I shall give more details when analysing the text’s carnivalesque mood. For now I would suggest that in addition to Gremio being characterized as a *pantalone*, the text gives another allusive reference to the servants of the Italian *commedia*: Biondello is textually related to Bergamo (‘Thy father? O villain! He is a sail-maker in Bergamo.’ [5.1.60]), the homeland of ‘Brighella and Harlequin, Bergamese valets, the first clever and sprightly, and the other a mere

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<sup>10</sup>Ninian Mellamphy, ‘Pantaloons and Zanies: Shakespeare’s “Apprenticeship” to Italian Professional Comedy Troupes’, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>11</sup>Louise George Clubb, ‘Shakespeare’s Comedy and Late Cinquecento Mixed Genres’, op. cit, p. 134.

dolt.<sup>12</sup> To return to my analysis of the relationship between *The Shrew* and *A Shrew* and their three-plot structure, one can say that the revelation of the young people's scheme, along with the expected reconciliation, would have ended Bianca's plot, if it were not—to paraphrase Dr Johnson—so well interwoven with Katherina and Petruchio's plot.<sup>13</sup> The third female character in *The Shrew* is the Widow whose counterpart in *A Shrew* is Alphonsus' third daughter Phylema.

One of the major differences between the two plays in terms of plot is the Sly/Slie<sup>14</sup> framework. While in *The Shrew* the 'Induction' scenes are reduced to two, i.e. an elaborate beginning and a second and final intervention (1.1.239-43), in *A Shrew* the tinker continues to make comments throughout the play he watches until—

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<sup>12</sup>See 'Carlo Goldoni on the roles and masks' (a transcript) in Kenneth Richards and Laura Richards, *The Commedia dell'Arte* (Oxford and Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p.139. See also (?) Nashe's *An Almond for a Parrat* (1590), where we have: 'coming from Venice the last Summer, and taking Bergamo in my way homeward to England, it was my happe, sojourning there some four or fiue dayes, to light in the felowship with that famous Francatrip's Harlicken'. Cf. *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, vol. III, Edited from the Original Texts by Ronald B. McKerrow, Reprinted from Original Edition with Corrections and Supplementary Notes by F. P. Wilson, 5 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), p. 342. Coincidentally or not, the fact that play is set in Padua could be another indication of the willingness of its author to link *The Shrew* with the Italian *commedia*. As Ann Thompson has pointed out, 'Padua was famous for its ancient university; compare *MV* [*The Merchant of Venice*] 4.1, where the Duke sends for advice from the learned doctor Bellario in Padua.' Quoting H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), pp. 58-61, she also reminds us that Padua was 'renowned as a "citadel of common sense against the new mythology [of witchcraft]"'. See Ann Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 59, note 2. Indeed, Padua was a perfect site for the outsider Lucentio to take 'A course of learning and ingenious studies' (1.1.9). For a link with the English Renaissance and the University of Padua, see also A. C. Partridge, 'Shakespeare and Italy' in *English Studies in Africa*, vol. 4 (1961), p. 121. Moreover, there is also something about this particular city which could offer one more clue concerning the Italian *commedia* hints one can find in the play. Although we do not know if this information was available to Shakespeare, the first record of a *commedia dell'arte* performance (25.2.1545) is assigned to Padua. Cf. Allardyce Niccoll, *The World of Harlequin: A Critical Study of the Commedia dell'Arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 163.

<sup>13</sup>See *Johnson on Shakespeare*, essays and notes selected and set forth with an introduction by Walter Raleigh (London: Oxford University Press, 1909), p. 96.

<sup>14</sup>Although I am using Stephen Roy Miller's modern spelling edition, to distinguish between the characters, I will use Sly for *The Shrew* and Slie for *A Shrew* as it appear in the 1594 Quarto. The spelling of Sly also appears as Slie in the 1623 First Folio.

completely drunk—he is carried out of the house. As well as opening the play in *A Shrew* (as his counterpart does in *The Shrew*), he also ends it. This remarkable contrast between the two plays is the main reason for the divergent theories about their origin. Although this is a contentious issue, modern editors (by editing the Sly scenes out of *A Shrew* into an appendix) have given readers a chance to fill the gap caused by what is thought of as being the text's most notorious fault: the freezing of Sly in the *aloft* position.<sup>15</sup>

The existence of *The Taming of a Shrew* has puzzled many critics who have expended considerable energy and talent in attempting to establish a relationship between the two plays and to establish their authorship. Their views are briefly as follows: first, there is the hypothesis that *A Shrew* is the source of *The Shrew*;<sup>16</sup> secondly that *A Shrew* derives from *The Shrew* (or more precisely, a 'bad' Quarto of

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<sup>15</sup>See Ann Thompson, op. cit., pp. 175-80; Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (eds.) *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 53; H. J. Oliver (ed.), *The Taming of The Shrew* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 233-5; Brian Morris (ed.), *The Taming of The Shrew*, The Arden Shakespeare, Second Series (London and New York: Routledge, 1988[1981]), pp. 303-5. As Stephen Roy Miller observes, 'Before the twentieth century, in two centuries of criticism after Pope first took notice of *A Shrew*, a host of theories was proposed to account for its differences from *The Shrew*. Changing critical fashions offered *A Shrew* a new niche from time to time. Pope apparently considered an alternative version of *The Shrew* filled with actors' corruptions (*sic*), but preserving some lines of Shakespeare missing from the Folio. Though he degraded some of the Folio lines in *The Shrew*, he incorporated into it lines from *A Shrew*, especially the Sly frame material not found in *The Shrew*, and subsequent editors retained them for about half a century until Edmond Malone removed them.' See Stephen Roy Miller, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>16</sup>See Eric Sams, 'The Timing of the Shrews' in *Notes and Queries*, vol. CCXXX (March 1985), p. 45; John W. Shroeder, 'The Taming of a Shrew and The Taming of The Shrew: A Case Reopened' in *Journal of English & Germanic Philology*, vol. 57 (1958), p. 426; Geoffrey Bullough, op. cit., pp. 57-8; G. Harrison (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew* (London: Penguin, 1951), p. 16; E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 327; R. Warwick Bond (ed.) *The Taming of The Shrew*, 2nd edition (London: Methuen, 1929), p. lx; Frederick J. Furnivall, in *The Taming of a Shrew: The First Quarto, 1594* (London: C. Praetorius, 1886), p. iii-iv; Richard Grant White, *The Works of William Shakespeare*, vol. 14 (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1865), pp. 389-91.



the 'original' printed in the First Folio)<sup>17</sup>; and the third is that both plays have a common source: an early 'lost original' by Shakespeare.<sup>18</sup> All these critical arguments are aspects of a long-term dispute over the relationship between the two plays. However, none is likely to prove conclusive. As Brian Morris argues, 'Unless new, external evidence comes to light, the relationship between *The Shrew* and *A Shrew* can never be decided beyond a peradventure.'<sup>19</sup> Indeed some critics have preferred to leave this difficult matter open. J. W. Shroeder, for instance, who is one of the most recent critics to support the earlier view that *A Shrew* was the source for *The Shrew*, wisely decided after arguing his case that this long debate 'ought in fairness to be kept open and alive.'<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>See Ann Thompson, op. cit., p. 174; Brian Morris, op. cit., p.31-2 and 45-6; Peter Alexander, 'The Original Ending of *The Taming of The Shrew*' in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 20 (1969), pp. 111-6; 'A Case of Three Sisters' in *The Times Literary Supplement* (July 8, 1965), p. 588; *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1951), p. xxiii; *A Shakespeare Primer* (Aberdeen: The University of Aberdeen Press, 1951), p. 149; and 'The Taming of The Shrew' in *The Times Literary Supplement* (September 16, 1926), p. 614; G. R. Hibbard (ed.), *The Taming of The Shrew*, New Penguin Shakespeare (London: Penguin, 1968), pp. 246-8; Richard Hosley, 'Sources and Analogues of *The Taming of The Shrew*' in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 27 (1963-4), pp. 209-308; and 'Was there a "Dramatic Epilogue" to *The Taming of the Shrew*?' in *Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900*, vol.1 (1961), 17-34; Henry David Gray, 'The Taming of A Shrew' in *Philological Quarterly*, vol. XX, no. 3 (July, 1941), p.325-33; Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson (eds.), *The Taming of the Shrew*, The New Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), pp.106-31; Samuel Hickson, 'Marlowe and the Old *Taming of a Shrew*' in *Notes and Queries*, vol. I, no. 13 (January. 26, 1850), p. 194, no.15 (February 9, 1850), pp. 226-27; and 'The Taming of The Shrew', no. 22 (March 30, 1850), pp. 345-7.

<sup>18</sup>See Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A textual companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 169; H. J. Oliver, op. cit., pp.22-8; W. W. Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio: Its Bibliographical and Textual History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 211-2; G. I. Duthie, 'The Taming of A Shrew and The Taming of The Shrew' in *The Review of English Studies*, vol. XIX, no. 76 (October, 1943), pp.352-6; Raymond A. Houk, 'The Evolution of *The Taming of The Shrew*' in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. LVII (1942), pp. 1037-8; Albert H. Tolman, 'Shakespeare's Part in the "Taming of the Shrew"' in *Publications of the Modern Language association of America*, vol. V (1890), pp. 228-9.

<sup>19</sup>Brian Morris, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>20</sup>John W. Shroeder, op. cit., p. 443.

The main problem facing critics is that the characteristics of *A Shrew* are distinct from the other Shakespearean texts labelled as ‘bad’ Quartos.<sup>21</sup> Significantly, Leo Kirschbaum in his influential 1939 ‘Census of Bad Quartos’, did not include *A Shrew* in his ‘list of twenty [Elizabethan and Jacobean] “maimed and deformed” texts.’<sup>22</sup> And while the ‘bad’ Quartos follow their supposed models quite closely, *A Shrew* possesses distinct characteristics which separate it from that category. Although a supporter of the ‘bad’ Quarto theory, Ann Thompson, one of the latest editors of *The Shrew*, thinks that in ‘any event it is not easy to see *A Shrew* as an ordinary “bad” quarto since in some ways it is strikingly different from *The Shrew*, and moreover it is not, objectively considered, a bad play in its own right’<sup>23</sup> Indeed, in the last two decades of the twentieth century there was a discreet but significant critical movement towards seeing *A Shrew* as a worthwhile object of investigation on its own terms. This movement may be noticed in Eric Sams’ article ‘The Timing of The *Shrews*’, 1985; in Leah S. Marcus’ article ‘The Editor as Tamer: *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*’, 1992, and in two recent editions of the play: Graham Holderness and Bryan

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<sup>21</sup>The term Bad Quarto was coined in the first decades of the twentieth-century by bibliographical critics to describe the early ‘corrupted’ editions of some Shakespearean plays such as 2, 3 *Henry VI* (*The Contention*), *Romeo and Juliet* (Q1), *Henry V*, *Hamlet* (Q1), *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. See A. W. Pollard, *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos: a study in the Bibliography of Shakespeare’s Plays, 1594-1685* (London: Methuen, 1909); and *Shakespeare’s Fight with the Pirates and the Problems of Transmission of his Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917); W. W. Greg (ed.), *Shakespeare’s Merry Wives of Windsor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910); and *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923); J. Dover Wilson, *The Copy for Hamlet, 1603*, and *The Hamlet Transcript, 1593* (London: Alexander Moring, 1918); A. W. Pollard and J. Dover Wilson, ‘The “Stolen and Surreptitious” Shakespearean Texts’ in *The Times Literary Supplement* (1919), issues: Jan. 9, p. 18, Jan. 16, p. 30, Mar. 13, p.134, Aug. 7, p. 420, Aug. 17, p.134; Peter Alexander, *Shakespeare’s Henry VI and Richard III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929). *The Taming of a Shrew* was put into this category in 1909 by Wilhelm Creizenach (see *Geschichte des neuen Dramas*, vol. IV, 1909, pp. 686-98). Creizenach’s view was taken further by Peter Alexander in his article (September 16, 1926), op cit., and was supported by John Dover Wilson (ed.) *The Taming of the Shrew* (1928), op. cit.

<sup>22</sup>Leo Kirschbaum, ‘A Census of Bad Quartos’ in *The Review of English Studies*, vol. XIV (1939), p. 21.

<sup>23</sup>Ann Thompson, op. cit., p. 170.

Loughrey's (1992) and Stephen Roy Miller's (1998).<sup>24</sup> If *A Shrew* is not considered a 'bad' Quarto by those who have carefully analysed the play, what (objectively speaking) seems to make the anonymous play even further removed from the usual 'bad' Quarto pattern is that 'editors characteristically mine the "bad" version of their play to patch up defective passages and infelicities of language in the "good" version ... But passages from *A Shrew* are not used to supplement *The Shrew*.'<sup>25</sup> It seems clear then that *A Shrew* is in fact an independent play. As we shall see in this chapter, *A Shrew*, like other subsequent plays derived from *The Shrew*, seems to be a parody of Shakespeare's text. However, whether *A Shrew* (as well as these 'derivative' texts) is good or bad is another issue entirely.

Thus, in trying to decide on the exact nature of the matter of the relationship between *The Shrew* and *A Shrew* we encounter considerable difficulties. A scholar dealing with the subject has to contend with a great deal of uncertainty on the matter. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, editors of the Oxford Shakespeare, can be taken as a fair example of the open-mindedness suggested by Shroeder as a way of approaching the vexed issue of the relationship between the *Shrew* plays.<sup>26</sup> In their essay 'No

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<sup>24</sup>See Eric Sams, op. cit., pp. 33-45; Leah S. Marcus, 'The Shakespearean Editor as Shrew-Tamer' in *English Literary Renaissance*, vol. 22 (1992), pp. 177-200. Marcus' article (now revised) has been published as a chapter headed as 'The Editor as Tamer: *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*' to be found in her book *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 101-31; Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey (eds.), *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, Called The Taming of A Shrew* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo and Singapore: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), pp. 13-36; and Stephen Roy Miller, op. cit. See also his PhD thesis: *A Critical, Old-Spelling Edition of 'The Taming of a Shrew', 1594* (University of London, 1993), and his 1998 old spelling edition for The Malone Society. Although Miller sees the text of *A Shrew* as nothing but a compilation of various sources (chiefly Marlowe's), the author who, in his own words, was encouraged by Steve Urkowitz's article ( See 'Good News About "Bad" Quartos' in Maurice Charney (ed.), *'Bad' Shakespeare: Revaluations of the Shakespeare Canon*, London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1988, pp. 189-205) has offered the most extensive analyses of *A Shrew* ever.

<sup>25</sup>See Leah S. Marcus, 'The Editor as Tamer: *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*', op. cit., p. 106. Marcus has also argued that *A Shrew* is less sexist than its critics have made it appear when contrasting it with *The Shrew*.

<sup>26</sup>This also reflects the relativity of ideas about authorship in the late 1970s. Since theatrical practice started to be taken into consideration with relation to straying from

Shrew, A Shrew, and The Shrew: Internal Revision in *The Taming of the Shrew*' (1987) they seem very open-minded about the way *A Shrew* was produced, whether by an 'author, copywriter, reporter – call him what you will' – who 'knows the story in advance,' and 'at some (though not all) points, can lay it out more efficiently.' Accordingly, they say:

we must keep our minds open to the possibility that at some points *The Taming of a Shrew* reflects Shakespeare's final text ... more fully than the Folio does.<sup>27</sup>

In this article as well as in their edition of Shakespeare's complete works (1988), they quite clearly regard *A Shrew* as an imitation of Shakespeare's original. However, they seem to be uncertain about the existence of a text prior to that of the First Folio: 'In our view Shakespeare's play was written first, not necessarily on the foundation of an early play.'<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, their uneasiness about the idea of an early *Shrew* play does not mean that they discard the hypothesis of an *Ur-Shrew*. In their Oxford textual companion to Shakespeare (1987), Wells and Taylor had already gone beyond that hypothesis by offering another suggestion. They argue:

The author of *A Shrew* is generally supposed to have invented additional passages, or have derived them from a common original, now lost. But there is another possibility, not so far explored. It is

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the privileged authority of the canonical text, the early modern texts have been acknowledged as being of multiple authorship. On this matter, see, for example, the seminal essay of Stephen Greenblatt, 'The Circulation of Social Energy' in his *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 1-20. See also Peter J. Smith, *Social Shakespeare: Aspects of Renaissance Dramaturgy and Contemporary Society* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1995), pp. 7-10. For the controversial issue of authority concerning textual criticism practice, see, for instance, G. Thomas Tanselle, *A Rationale of Textual Criticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); and Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983).

<sup>27</sup>Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, 'No Shrew, A Shrew, and The Shrew: Internal Revision in *The Taming of the Shrew*' in *Shakespeare: Text, Language and Criticism. Essays in Honour of Marvin Spevack*, edited by Bernhard Fabian and Kurt Tetzeli von Rosador (Hildsheim, Zürich and New York: Olms-Weidmann, 1987), pp. 368-9.

<sup>28</sup>Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (eds.), *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 25.

perfectly possible that the play as acted by Shakespeare's company included a continuation and rounding-off of the Sly framework written by Shakespeare himself at a later stage of composition than that represented by the Folio text, and that corresponding episodes in *A Shrew* derive from these.<sup>29</sup>

The originality of Wells and Taylor's suggestion is that it presupposes a revised form of the play, superseding that of the First Folio. According to them, *The Shrew*, as it stands, would be the 'old' version, and not the 'later' form of the play. The idea of a hypothetical later version of *The Shrew* by Shakespeare (which was subsequently lost) provides us with an alternative proposition in respect of the order in which the *Shrew* plays are supposed to have been created. In chronological sequence, we have first the old-fashioned view of the plays' order: *A Shrew* — *The Shrew*; secondly the 'bad' Quarto theory: *The Shrew* — *A Shrew*; and thirdly the theory of a lost *Shrew* which offers three distinct possibilities: firstly, *Ur-Shrew* — *A Shrew* — *The Shrew*; secondly, *Ur-Shrew* — *The Shrew* — *A Shrew*; and lastly, *The Shrew* — *Ur-Shrew* — *A Shrew*. Whilst the idea of a lost 'original' by Shakespeare does not dispel the idea of *A Shrew* as 'piracy,' it has the advantage of a supposedly more complete model: a version of the play featuring a whole Sly framework as it appears in *A Shrew*. Indeed, although it has become an orthodoxy, the idea of *A Shrew* as pirated text has certainly not been proved, nor even convincingly argued as a hypothesis.<sup>30</sup> Still if we embrace this view, we have the 'pirates' to thank for giving us a more 'complete' version of *The Shrew* in terms of the Sly framework than that contained in the 'authoritative' 1623 First Folio.

The idea of *A Shrew* as a pirated version of *The Shrew* was first suggested by Wilhelm Creizenach (1909), then developed by Peter Alexander (1926), who was supported by John Dover Wilson (1928). Since then *A Shrew* has been seen as a 'pirated version', a 'vamped copy', a 'patchwork', and an 'imitation', of either the First Folio version or of an *Ur-Shrew*. The anonymous play is said to be garnished

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<sup>29</sup>Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*, op. cit., p. 169.

<sup>30</sup>For a detailed discussion of the inadequacy of this orthodoxy concerning *A Shrew*, see Miller, op. cit., pp. 3-7.

not only with Shakespeare's material, but also, it is generally agreed, with lines revamped from Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* and *Tamburlaine 1* and *2* as well as Shakespeare's *The Shrew*. With rare exceptions, from Samuel Hickson (1850) onwards, the borrowings from Marlowe as well as from Shakespeare have been used by critics to demonstrate the spurious way the 'bad' *A Shrew* was composed.<sup>31</sup> Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey, who edited the play as a 'Shakespearean Original,' sought to defend the play against the tradition of comparative condemnation to which the text has been subjected. According to them, even stylistic 'comparisons seem ... unconvincing, their context frequently evincing a remarkable lack of attention to shifts in standards of poetic taste.'<sup>32</sup>

In general, however, the two texts' points of convergence and divergence are seldom viewed in the light of suggestions about the relationship between the two plays. Instead, any comparison between the two tends to demonise *A Shrew*, discrediting it in favour of Shakespeare's *The Shrew*. As Leah Marcus has pointed out: 'The "bad" version 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.'<sup>33</sup> In terms of the evidence we have so far (i.e. the 1594 Quarto and the 1623 Folio) concerning the relationship between the two texts, all one can positively say about the connection between them is their resemblance suggests that one is the source of the other; also that both have, to varying extents, hints of Marlowe's bombastic style. As a result, therefore, I suggest

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<sup>31</sup>To Hickson *A Shrew* was an imitation by Marlowe of Shakespeare's *The Shrew*, then he drew a set of parallel passages in order to show the dependence of the former on the latter. See Samuel Hickson's two articles under the same title: 'Marlowe and the old *Taming of a Shrew*' and '*The Taming of Shrew*' both in *Notes & Queries*, vol. I (1849-50), pp.194, 226-227 and 345-347, respectively. See also Frederick. S. Boas (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew* (London: Chatto & Windus and New York: Duffield and Company, 1908), pp. 91-8. The author claims he has more fully scrutinized the Marlovian passages than any earlier critic of *A Shrew*. See also Peter Alexander, op. cit.; R. A. Houk, op. cit.; G. I. Duthie, op. cit.; Brian Morris, op. cit., pp. 12-50; and H. J. Oliver, op. cit., pp. 13-34; Ann Thompson, despite acknowledging *A Shrew* as a 'bad' quarto, is very ambiguous about this classification. See her edition of *The Taming of The Shrew*, op. cit., pp. 164- 173.

<sup>32</sup>Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey, op. cit., p. 15. Also see pp. 13-17.

<sup>33</sup>Leah Marcus, 'The Editor as Tamer: *A Shrew and The Shrew*', op. cit., p. 106.

that we examine more closely what the exact nature of literary appropriation is. Is it theft? Or plagiarism? Or piracy?

### **A Stolen Piece or Just a Parody of Its Sources?**

Parody is a vast area of study,<sup>34</sup> and it is not my intention here to go deeply into this subject. However, in viewing *A Shrew* as a reworking of *The Shrew* rather than as a revamped text (as has been commonly suggested by critics), it would be useful to think of the 'parallel text' as something more than simply a compilation of its sources. First, a quick overview of the tradition of the Tudor educational system might help us understand the 'patchwork' composition of *A Shrew* (imitation, expansion, etc.) as a play comprehensively rooted in the lessons available to any student in an Elizabethan grammar school. An important tool of Tudor education was imitation, which required students to be acquainted with a great variety of classical material as models for their compositions. The idea was to make the pupils repeat, vary, and expand on the ethical judgements (*sententiae*) to be found in the classical authors as a method of teaching them Latin.<sup>35</sup> Hence, the ideas of repetition and variation are to be found in the educational material about rhetoric used in the classroom as well as in extramural rhetorical books. According to Marjorie Donker, the 'boys might have learned rhetoric from the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (incorrectly assigned to Cicero), but adult readers, resorting to the vernacular *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553) by Thomas Wilson, would have found there very much the same information that was in the *Ad Herennium*;... Rhetorical values of the schoolroom were inevitably the rhetorical values of practising speakers and writers.'<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, as Dana Gioia points out,

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<sup>34</sup>For the extension and complexity of the subject, see, for instance, Margaret A. Rose, *Parody: ancient, modern and post-modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and *Parody//Meta-Fiction: An Analysis of Parody as a Critical Mirror to the Writing and Reception of Fiction* (London: Croom Helm, 1979); Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York and London: Methuen, 1985).

<sup>35</sup>Marjorie Donker, *Shakespeare's Proverbial Themes: A Rhetorical Context for the Sententia as Res*, (Westport, Connecticut and London, 1992), p. 87.

<sup>36</sup>Marjorie Donker, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

‘At Rotherham School near Sheffield, weekly lessons in Shakespeare’s time consisted of two afternoons of Horace and two afternoons of Seneca’s tragedies [full of stirring rhetoric and striking *sententiae*], which the students translated into English. There was no more engrossing way to perfect a student’s Latin than by reading, memorizing, and reciting the plays of Seneca, Plautus, and Terence.’<sup>37</sup>

In several passages of *A Shrew* (as well as in *The Shrew*) we notice the ‘technique’ of repetition as a central idea, as a means of *exemplum*. Thus, the classical quotations employed by the anonymous author, as well as by Shakespeare and Marlowe, would have been in circulation much earlier than *A Shrew*, *The Shrew*, *Tamburlaine*, and *Doctor Faustus*.<sup>38</sup> This use is also true in the case of *Leander and Hero*, which was used by the author of *A Shrew*. This has been widely regarded as a kind of theft from Marlowe’s homonymous poem. In this respect Thomas Nashe’s text *Nashes Lenten Stvffe* (1599) is an instructive document: it asserts that the classical story was a popular love motif widely known throughout the Elizabethan period. According to Nashe, ‘euerie apprentise in Paules churchyard will tell you [the story of *Leander and Hero*] for your loue, and sel [it to] you for your money’.<sup>39</sup> It seems that the classical lessons the author of *A Shrew* would have learned in the grammar-school classroom exerted a great influence on his play. Perhaps, instead of accusing the anonymous

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<sup>37</sup>Dana Gioia’s ‘Introduction’ in David R. Slavitt (ed.), *Seneca The Tragedies*, vol. II (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. xi.

<sup>38</sup>As pointed out by Margaret Mann Phillips, Erasmus’ *Adages* ‘could spotlight one and another of the authors who were known at that time but inaccessible to the majority of readers, ... It was *prima facie* a book of Latin scholarship, drawn from the major authors known to the Renaissance [as, for instance,] Virgil, Horace, Propertius, Plautus, Terence, Cicero, the elder and the younger Pliny, Varro, Persius, Ausonius, Pausanias, Livy, Macrobius, Ulpianus; among the critics and grammarians Quintilian, Georgeos Trapezontius, Donatus, among the Fathers Jerome and Augustine, among the moderns Politian, Hermolous Barbarus and Philelphus. Ovid is not prominent (five mentions).’ See Margaret Mann Phillips, *The ‘Adages’ of Erasmus*, (Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 47. In Appendix III of the same book (pp. 393-403), she draws an extensive A to Z list of authors, according to the frequency of which they are quoted by Erasmus.

<sup>39</sup>Thomas Nashe, *Nashes Lenten Stvffe* in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, vol. III, op. cit., p. 195.



author of plagiarism,<sup>40</sup> we should consider the so-called Marlovian scraps (and any other author's material) found in *A Shrew* as an elaborate use of sources and—especially with those related to classical mythology—as a means of creating parody. If one chooses to regard the play as a kind of usurpation of Marlowe's and/or any other writer's works, one ignores in doing so just how imaginatively the author of *A Shrew* has used his sources. Even those classical references which have been so far identified as Marlovian scraps should not be viewed out of context. I suggest that the author consistently manipulated—in a parodic mood—the classical material he had learned from his Latin lessons in order to shape his version of the play.

By definition, plagiarism implies concealment of its source: it 'denies the fact of an original speaker by attributing the utterance entirely to the second speaker.'<sup>41</sup> Is that what occurs in *A Shrew*? In terms of Marlowe's material (and it is far from being merely a privilege of post-Shakespearean criticism to notice the fact) it seems obvious that the borrowings from Marlowe were intentionally used by the author to amuse an audience well acquainted with Marlowe's poetry and also, more importantly, with his grandiose style.<sup>42</sup> With respect to the Shakespearean material, and the so-called parallels to *The Shrew*, Stephen Roy Miller observes that the two most obvious—the title of the two plays (varying only in the use of an article) and the names of two chief

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<sup>40</sup>According to Wells and Taylor, '*A Shrew* takes as its bases a play by Shakespeare, renames the characters, refashions some of the scenes, omits others, adds others, paraphrases much of the dialogue and pads it out with bits of Marlowe and few lines translated from Du Bartas.... The crucial point, we suggest, is to realize that the *plagiarist* could exercise independent inventiveness, even if of an order greatly inferior to Shakespeare's' (emphasis added). Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, '*No Shrew, A Shrew, and The Shrew: Internal Revision in *The Taming of the Shrew**', op. cit., p. 367.

<sup>41</sup>Gary Saul Morson, 'Parody, History, and Metaparody' in Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, eds., *Rethinking Bakhtin* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1989), p. 65. See also Margaret A Rose, *Parody: ancient, modern and post-modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 69.

<sup>42</sup>It seems that there was a fashion of imitating Marlowe (specially *Tamburlaine*) for the sake of an audience avid to be entertained 'by his splendid rhetoric and glamorous stage effects without having to yield to the discomfort of unconventional ideas.' See Peter Berek, '*Tamburlaine*'s Weak Sons: Imitation as Interpretation Before 1593' in *Renaissance Drama, New Series*, vol. XIII (1982), pp. 55-82. Berek has been already quoted by Miller, op. cit., pp. 21-2.

characters (Sly and Kate) common to both texts—‘suggest that by changing the other character names, whoever produced the second text [*A Shrew*] was not seeking to disguise his source.’<sup>43</sup> Indeed, far from being one of the ‘stolen surreptitious copies’ as John Heminges and Henry Condell claimed, *A Shrew* openly acknowledges its sources. After the play’s title establishes the link with Shakespeare’s *The Shrew* we have (as in Shakespeare’s play) the drunk tinker being beaten out of the alehouse,<sup>44</sup> this time by a man (the Tapster). After the drunken row business (common to both texts, but shorter in *A Shrew*), Sly falls asleep. Then, as in *The Shrew*, we have a lord returning with his retinue from hunting. Next, instead of the ‘naturalistic’ conversation between these men about the day’s sport, we have the Lord breaking into the grandiloquent Marlovian style. There are four verbatim lines from Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* in that single speech:

*The Taming of a Shrew*

**Lord** Now that the gloomie shaddow of the night,  
**Longing to view Orions drisling lookes,**  
**Leaps from th’antarcticke World vnto the skie**  
**And dims the Welkin with her pitchie breath,**  
 And darkesome night oreshades the christall heauens,  
 Here breake we off our hunting for to night,  
 (1.10-15 [emphasis added])<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Stephen Roy Miller, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>44</sup>Analysing the difference between the two texts, Ann Thompson has observed that, having Sly being beaten out of the alehouse, the stage direction (often fuller in *A Shrew*) ‘gives a good impression of the usual stage practice’ concerning this scene. See her edition of *The Shrew*, op. cit., p. 46. Thompson is acknowledging contemporary scholarship’s view of the ‘reported’ texts, or ‘bad’ Quartos, which sees the stage directions and the ‘bad’ texts themselves as offering clues to the actual stage practice over the Shakespearean period.

<sup>45</sup>Here I am using the old spelling version to be compatible with *Faustus*’ quotation below. See *The Taming of a Shrew: The First Quarto, 1594*, op. cit., p. 3. Also, I am using bold instead of italics to emphasise both texts as a means of uniformity, since italics would mingle with the words in italic used in Marlowe’s text. The same procedure will be used in my quotations of any text when necessary.

*Doctor Faustus*

*Faustus* Now that the gloomy shadow of the night,  
 Longing to view *Orions* drisling looke,  
 Leaps from th'Antarticke world vnto the skie,  
 And dymys the *Welkin*, with her pitchy breathe:  
*Faustus*, begin thine Incantations,  
 (1.3.1-5 [emphasis added])<sup>46</sup>

It seems clear that the author of *A Shrew* does not conceal his sources, but instead openly reveals them. Moreover, in his fifth line, immediately after quoting Marlowe, he continues in a clear Marlovian vein. I would suggest that the anonymous author's willingness to make his audience aware of Marlowe's and Shakespeare's voices puts the reworking of his sources beyond the category of *plagiarism* once attributed to his play. Arguably this text would be better viewed in the light of *parody*. But even if we consider that *A Shrew* should be seen in terms of a more recent concept such as literary *pastiche*, which could possibly substitute for the term 'patchwork,' commonly employed by critics to describe *A Shrew*'s qualities as a composite text, we have to allow that both 'parody and pastiche not only are formal textual imitations but clearly involve the issue of intent. Both are acknowledged borrowings. Herein lies the most obvious distinction between parody and plagiarism.'<sup>47</sup> However, if we should prefer an older concept, then *cento* (a Latin word meaning something like patchwork) can perhaps help clarify the nature of *A Shrew*'s text. According to Bakhtin, *cento* was a specific genre, meaning certain types of texts which 'were constructed like mosaics out of the texts of others.... composed exclusively out of others' verse-lines and

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<sup>46</sup>Although I am using the Oxford (1987-98) edition of *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, this quotation is from the text B-1616. The text A-1604, as in Roma Gill edition (Oxford, 1990) reads 'shadow of the earth' instead of 'shadow of the night' as in *A Shrew*. See W. W. Greg, ed., *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: 1604 – 1616* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), pp. 176-7. See also Roma Gill (ed.), *Doctor Faustus in The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 10.

<sup>47</sup>Linda Hutcheon, op. cit., p. 38. For a comprehensive study of parody related forms such as burlesque and travesty, plagiarism, pastiche, quotation, satire, and so on, see Margaret A. Rose, 'Distinguishing parody from related forms' in her *Parody: ancient, modern and post-modern*, op. cit., pp.54-99.

hemistichs.’<sup>48</sup> The matter of distinguishing parody from a stolen piece was well understood in Shakespeare’s period. For instance, in *Every Man in His Humour* (1598), Ben Jonson (although ironically in this context) provides a familiar definition of the term.

*Clem.* ... How? This is stolne!  
*E. Kn.* *A parodie! a parodie!* With a kind of miraculous gift, to make  
 it absurder then it was. (5.5:25-27)<sup>49</sup>

Although we may guess that the Jonsonean character’s definition of parody is an Elizabethan conceptualisation, we should also bear in mind that it was a commonplace enough definition which is not too far removed from the modern significance we attach to the term.<sup>50</sup> Although he has not specifically analysed the implications of parody in *A Shrew*, Stephen Roy Miller has touched on the suggestion I am making here: that the anonymous text constitutes a parody of various targets. When analysing the subplot of Kate’s sisters’ wooing, Miller sees the classical allusions found in the text as ‘extravagant to the point of *parody*’ (emphasis added).<sup>51</sup> In this respect he does not differ very much from his predecessor, Frederick S. Boas, the early-twentieth century editor of *A Shrew* (1908). Boas was, in fact, the only editor before Bullough [1957], Alice Griffin [1966],<sup>52</sup> and Holderness and Loughrey [1992]). Boas employed such terms as ‘absurd’, ‘ridiculous incongruity’, ‘grotesquely inappropriate’, and so on, to describe the way the anonymous author

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<sup>46</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘From The Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse’ in Michael Holquist (ed.), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 69.

<sup>49</sup>Ben Jonson, *Every Man in His Humour* in C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (eds.), *Ben Jonson, The Folio of 1616*, vol. III, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 400.

<sup>50</sup>Leo Salinger, for instance, terms what he calls ‘strict parody’ as ‘purely reductive, mimicking the original so as to make it seem ridiculous and confining itself within the bounds of mimicry.’ See his *Shakespeare and The Traditions of Comedy* (Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 97.

<sup>51</sup>Stephen Roy Miller, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>52</sup>Alice Griffin has included *A Shrew* in her edition of *The Sources of Ten Shakespearean Plays* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1966), pp. 44-82.

made use of Marlowe's lines in *A Shrew*.<sup>53</sup> Boas' terms, like Miller's, relate to parody in the most traditional sense of the word: 'the comic refunctioning of other works';<sup>54</sup> seen as nothing more, that is, than a purely burlesque device.

Margaret A. Rose, analysing the etymology of the word, has argued that although Jonson 'had clearly emphasised the more "ridiculous" aspects of the form,' the meaning of the term, as applied by the ancients, implies that we can laugh with as well as at the parodied text.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, Rose observes that the 'negative' connotation the term acquired from the early modern period onwards derives from a mistranslation of ancient Greek into other languages. The Latin word *ridiculus*, which describes the comic aspects of parody, has (according to Rose) led some English critics to view the term negatively 'because of the association of the word ridicule with mockery in English, and to have thus made its eventual reduction to the burlesque more easy.'<sup>56</sup> The compelling desire to laugh with the parodied object may suggest the parodist's sympathy towards, rather than merely criticism of, his target or targets. This ambivalence towards the object of parody 'may entail not only a mixture of sympathy for the parodied text, but also the creative expansion of it in something new.'<sup>57</sup> In Bakhtin's view, far from being 'a naked rejection of the parodied object', 'the carnivalesque nature of parody' implies that everything 'has its parody, that is, its laughing aspect, for everything is reborn and renewed through death.'<sup>58</sup>

With respect to Shakespearean parody as an opportunity to laugh with as well as laugh at the parodied text, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* can be taken as a fair example of

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<sup>53</sup>Frederick. S. Boas, op. cit., pp., xxxi-ii.

<sup>54</sup>Margaret A. Rose, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid. As the author has observed, although John Florio's *Worlde of Wordes, Or Most Copious and exact Dictionarie in Italian and English* of 1598 had defined parody in relatively neutral terms, J. C. Scaliger's *Poetices libri septem* of 1561 was the source of some English critics' misinterpretation of the Latin word *ridiculus*. Also for the concept of parody as serious matter, see Joan Hartwig, *Shakespeare's Analogical Scene* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), pp. 4-7 and p. 196, note 9.

<sup>57</sup>Margaret A. Rose, op. cit., p. 51

the genre. Its main target (beginning with the title) is Shakespeare's *The Two Gentleman of Verona*. The courtly love and ideal of friendship shared by Valentine and Proteus in the latter play are echoed (in a parodic mode) in the friendship between Palamon and Arcite, and in their love for the same woman (Emilia), in the former. The text of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (as its Prologue reveals) is not ashamed to acknowledge that its argument is drawn from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*; it also recalls the Robin Hood folktale. This seems to function (and it appears at the very start of the play) as a mocking reference to Shakespeare's earlier *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Accordingly, the Prologue anticipates Chaucer's disapproval of the play from the grave: 'O fan / From me the witless chaff of such a writer, / That blast my bays and my famed works makes lighter / Than Robin Hood' (Prologue, 18-21). I suggest that the self-parody here relates to the way in which Shakespeare appropriates the Robin Hood folk legend in his earlier play. In *Two Gentlemen of Verona*—perhaps 'lighter than' the folk legend itself—Robin Hood is introduced in order to justify Valentine's remaining in what appears to be the outskirts of Milan instead of returning to Verona. After his banishment is announced (3.1.215-6) he leaves Milan (3.1.259). On his way home he is intercepted by the outlaws and has no choice but to agree to be their commander: 'By the bare scalp of Robin Hood's fat friar, / This fellow were a king for our wild faction,' (4.1.35-6). Then we hear from Valentine again in the last scene of the play when he rescues Silvia from the threat of being raped by Proteus: 'I'll force thee yield to my desire.' (5.4.59). The self-parody is also heard late in the play, when we hear about the misfortune of the Jailer's Daughter. Her song 'Hey nonny, nonny, nonny,' (3.4.21)<sup>59</sup> is borrowed directly from Ophelia's song in *Hamlet* 4.5.166

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<sup>58</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 127

<sup>59</sup>This particular scene is not attributed to Shakespeare (see Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *The Oxford Shakespeare*, op., cit., p.1225), however, considering that this is a shared work, presumably both authors knew and agreed with the whole text. Thus, it does not really matter who was responsible for this particular scene. The new play's borrowings were certainly known by the authors before it reached the stage. So this is why I use the term self-parody (i.e. to laugh at oneself) in the case of this particular play. See, for instance, Anthony Brian's Taylor analysis of the play-within-a-play in *Midsummer Night's Dream* as Shakespeare self-parody in his essay 'Golding's Ovid, Shakespeare's "Small Latin", and The Real Object of Mockery in "Pyramus and Thisbe"' in *Shakespeare Survey*, vol. 42 (1990), pp. 53-64.

(‘Hey non nony, nony, hey nony’). Although the Jailer’s Daughter’s song, as well as Ophelia’s, can be seen merely as a conventional *leit-motif*, I would suggest that its function is to act as an evocation of *Hamlet*’s heroine. This can be seen later in the play when the Wooer’s long description of his rescuing the Jailer’s Daughter from drowning (4.1.52-95) frustrates our expectation of having to witness the same tragic death suffered by Ophelia. To give force to this resemblance, the Wooer’s description of the episode of the near-drowning alludes to the imagery we hear from Queen Gertrude’s accounts of Ophelia’s death (4.7.138-157). Whereas in *Hamlet* we have lines such as: ‘Therewith fantastic garlands did she make / Of crow-flower, nettles, daises, and long purples, / ... / There on the pendent boughs her crowned weeds / ... / Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes’ (140-1, 144, 149), in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*: ‘A wreath of bull-rush rounded about her [the Jailer’s Daughter] stuck / Thousand freshwater flowers of several colours’. And instead of garlands: ‘Rings she made / Of rushes that grew by’. She may not have ‘chanted snatches of old tunes’ like Ophelia, but still she ‘to ‘em [the rings she made] spoke / The prettiest posies’ (84-5, 88-90). In addition *The Two Noble Kinsmen* alludes to and ‘corrects’ the betrayed Valentine’s incongruous giving of Sylvia to Proteus.

Just as he was able to laugh at himself, Shakespeare was also capable of laughing at the social mores of his time. As George Kitchin point out: in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, Shakespeare parodies ‘the macaronic language of Renaissance pedants, the “good Latine fools” represented by Holofernes, and the kindred folly of Spanish courtliness represented by Armada.’<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, Shakespeare was not immune to this sort of burlesquing by others. Seeing Thomas Middleton’s *The Puritan, or The Widow of Watling Street* (1606) as a frank parody of *Hamlet* (c. 1600), Kitchin observes that this play ‘does, in a crude fashion, attempt to make fun of some of the situations in *Hamlet* by transferring them to a bourgeois environment.’<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>George Kitchin, *A Survey of Burlesque and Parody in English* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1931), p. 43.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 47-8. As Kitchin has pointed out, ‘*The Puritan, or The Widow of Watling Street*, “written by W. S.,” 1607 ... was taken for Shakespeare’s work and

Although it may seem far fetched to view *A Shrew* as a parodic text, the author's fondness for Marlowe's bombastic style has long been acknowledged and his admiration for Shakespeare's play, especially the author's three-plot structure, seems to be clear in his rewriting of the play. It appears, then, that *A Shrew* is a carnivalesque mixture of praise and abuse towards its targets. As Peter Berek has observed, the 'anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew* uses Tamburlaine-like rhetoric indiscriminately—sometimes apparently mockingly,... and sometimes with apparent seriousness.'<sup>62</sup>

If we regard *A Shrew* as a recreation of *The Shrew*, and set it in contrast with Shakespeare's material, we can say that Bianca's subplot, for instance, has been creatively expanded. Kate has two sisters instead of only one. Although a third woman also appears in *The Shrew* in the person of the widow, by introducing the third female early in the play the anonymous author avoids the *deus ex machina* character of Shakespeare's Widow. In *The Shrew*, Hortensio, deep in love with Bianca and annoyed at his prospective bride's behaviour, suddenly announces that he is soon to get married to a widow ('Ere three days pass,' [4.2.38]) of whom we have never heard before.

To further this creative expansion of the source, *A Shrew* has a prince as the suitor of Kate's youngest sister: his disguise is an intertextual recollection of another popular theme related to constancy in lovemaking. An example of this folk theme can be found in the ballad *The Baron and the Maiden of Low Degree*, in which an aristocrat disguises himself as a peasant, and thereby finds his ideal lover. Then, as a test of his lover's constancy, he (now in his proper identity) comes to the maiden and proposes to her. She, without recognising him in his aristocratic apparel, and much in love with her 'peasant,' has no hesitation in refusing him.<sup>63</sup> In *A Shrew* the test of Phylema's constancy is carried out by Aurelius (the real prince) as follows:

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actually included in the Third and Fourth Folios. It is now seen to be a sort of burlesque of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*'. Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>62</sup>Peter Berek, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>63</sup>See *Old English Ballads* (Clarke's Cabinet Series: London, 1848-9), pp. 56-60.



What if the Duke of Sestos' only son  
 Which came with me unto your father's house  
 Should seek to get Phylema's love from me  
 And make thee duchess of that stately town?  
 Wouldst thou not then forsake me for his love?  
*Phylema* Not for great Neptune, no nor Jove himself,  
 Will Phylema leave Aurelius' love. (11.16-22)

As well as being a parody of 'romantic' lovemaking, as shown in the exaggerated exchange between the lovers (11.1-77), which again quotes profusely from Marlowe, the author also creates—as Miller observes—a social conflict.<sup>64</sup> Aurelius, the Duke of Sestos' heir, is in love with a low-ranking daughter of a merchant, and to succeed in his aim of marrying her he has no alternative but to disguise himself as someone of an inferior social class. Predictably he disguises himself as someone whose social status is equivalent to his lover's: a merchant's son. As I quoted earlier (on pages 59-60 of this chapter), conflict is revealed later in the play when the Duke, his father, arrives and mistakenly accuses Alfonso of misconduct (13.64-66).<sup>65</sup>

As we consider the ambivalent manner in which parodists deal with their targets, Shakespeare's *Shrew* appears to have been an enduring butt. As well as the anonymous *A Shrew* (1594), we have Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* (c.1611), in which the widowed Petruchio is tamed by his second wife Maria. Then in John Lacy's *Sauny the Scot, or The Taming of the Shrew* (1667), Petruchio tames his wife, now called Margaret, in a much coarser manner than did his predecessor. John Lacy's version was later to be appropriated by another parodist as in 1735 it became James Worsdale's *A Cure for a Scold*. The Sly framework was recreated in 1716 by Charles Jonson as *The Cobler of Preston*; also in 1716 this same

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<sup>64</sup>Cf. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>65</sup>Although, touching on the point, Peter Alexander has dismissed Aurelius' disguise as the one more failure of 'the Quarto plotter'. See Peter Alexander, 'The Taming of the Shrew', *The Times Literary Supplement* (September 16, 1926), p. 614. Without acknowledging Alexander's rather dismissive account of Aurelius' motivation (which has benefited my further investigation of the matter) Stephen Roy Miller has made a case for it arguing that 'Alexander's incompetent compiler should be dismissed in favour of a compiler more willing to intervene in the structure of the play.' Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

title was given by Christopher Bullock to his appropriation of the very same story of Sly. In 1754 David Garrick wrote *Catharine and Petruchio*, an afterpiece which would become the most enduring appropriation of Shakespeare's *Shrew*.<sup>66</sup> The intermingling of voices from the past with those of each particular epoch reveals that these appropriations of the Shakespearean *Shrew* expanded, corrected and reshaped the text according to the social and fashionable mores of each particular period. Whether they are good or bad literature is a matter of critical debate. However, if we regard parody in the broad Bakhtinian sense as, that is, an intentional dialogue between different points of view, then their 'languages and styles actively and mutually illuminate one another.'<sup>67</sup> In the specific instances of *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*, the texts have been actively employed to clarify one another in relation to bibliographical issues; the former—as a rewriting of the latter—has in one instance creatively 'improved' on its target in what is thought of by the majority of its critics as being the text's notorious fault: the freezing of Sly & co. in the *aloft* position. In *A Shrew* the anonymous author expanded the Sly plot (or at least recalled a hypothetical lost *Shrew*) and rendered the taming theme more clearly 'metadramatic' than it is in Shakespeare's play.

### **The Lack of a Complete Sly Framework and How it Affects the Play as a Whole**

Is the Sly framework a simple device to introduce *The Shrew*, or an integral part of the play's three-plot structure? This question is not easily answered. As Stanley Wells remarks, 'We cannot be certain whether the episodes involving Christopher Sly form a framework enveloping the main action, or whether that action emerges from them.... But in any case, there is undoubtedly a relationship between these episodes

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<sup>66</sup>Concerning the endurance of Garrick's afterpiece, Haring-Smith has observed that it 'was the sole version of Shakespeare's *Shrew* on the English and American stages from 1754 to 1844.' Tori Haring-Smith, *From Farce to Metadrama: A Stage History of The of the Shrew, 1594 - 1983* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1995), p. 15.

<sup>67</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, 'From The Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse', op. cit., p. 76.

and the play proper.’<sup>68</sup> If, on the other hand, we examine other Elizabethan plays in which an Induction is a self-contained piece clearly designed to introduce a given play to its audience, we notice that this does not seem to be the case in *The Shrew*. There is certainly no identification of the opening Sly scene in the 1623 First Folio<sup>69</sup> as an Induction until Pope’s edition of *The Shrew* in 1725, although from then on it appears in every edition of the play.

Additionally, in *The Shrew*, the characters of the ‘Induction’ are in a private residence, not a theatre. However, in the Induction device as it appears in Jonson’s plays, or in Beaumont’s *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the ‘Presenters’ are in the playhouse, and their functions are clearly to introduce the play. In *The Shrew* this function is not clear. The Sly plot, as we have it in the original First Folio, does not seem to be an Induction as it is employed in other such plays of the Jacobean period. On the other hand, the Sly framework does resemble the kind of sub-plot we have in Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* (c.1589) and in Peele’s *The Old Wives Tale* (1595). In these plays the characters in the framework, besides forming a conventional ‘device’ to establish the fictional world which the audience is about to see, are not simply ‘presenters’; rather, they are part of the play as a whole. Despite the fact that in *The Spanish Tragedy* the Ghost and Revenge plot is more obviously designed as a framework device, both of them are in a way ‘characters’ in the play. While Andrea (Ghost), as a dead person, is still a powerful influence on the society represented by the play, Revenge (as in morality plays) is an allegorical character—a subjective force—who orchestrates the tragedy’s course. In *The Old Wives Tale* the three boys (Antic, Frolic and Fantastic) ask Madge (whom they call ‘gammer’) for a winter’s tale, and, as the play unfolds, they fall asleep and the tale materializes in the form of a dream.

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<sup>68</sup>Stanley Wells, ‘‘The Taming of The Shrew’ and ‘King Lear’: A Structural Comparison’ in *Shakespeare Survey*, vol. 33 (1980), p. 56.

<sup>69</sup>See *The First Folio of Shakespeare*, The Norton Facsimile (Second Edition), Based on Folios in the Folger Shakespeare Library Collection, Prepared by Charlton Hinman, with a new introduction by Peter W. M. Blayney (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996).

In *The Shrew*, until the stage direction *Enter a Messenger* (which in some modern editions is written *Enter the Lord as a Messenger* after line 123 of Induction 2), whereupon the play is announced, what we really have is an elaborate beginning which includes the arrival of the players who, by chance, will take part in the practical joke on Sly. Prior to the announcement, Sly is in 'his' chamber and, having got rid of 'his' servingmen, is keen to go immediately to bed with 'his' wife: 'Madam, undress you and come now to bed' (Induction 2.113). Since 'she' gives 'medical' excuses not to be in bed with him 'for a night or two' (Induction 2.115), he has no alternative but to accept it resignedly:

*Sly* Ay, it stands so that I may hardly tarry so long, but I would be loath to fall into my dreams again. I will therefore tarry in despite of the flesh and the blood. (Induction 2.121-3).

From this point the Sly story seems to be re-routed, and we begin to see the elaborated characters of the first scenes transformed into simple 'Presenters'. In *A Shrew* the inner play is introduced just at the same point, though instead of the Page's excuse, we have the Boy being saved from Slie's lust by the Lord:

*Sly* Hark you mistress, will you eat a piece of bread? Come sit knee. Sim drink to her Sim,  
For she and I will go to bed anon.

*Lord* May it please you, your honour's players be come to offer your honour a play. (Induction 2.41- 45)

This announcement makes Slie temporarily forget his sexual appetite, though he does not lose his importance as one of the play's characters, as Sly in *The Shrew* does. In fact he is enthusiastic about everything which is offered to his 'Lordship': 'A play Sim, O brave, be they my players?' (2.46). When the Boy, taking advantage of the situation, escapes from Slie to ask the players to begin the performance, Slie orders his 'Lady': 'Do, but look that you come again.' (2.51). In *A Shrew* the Slie plot and the inner play continually interweave, thus creating a single piece. Moreover, the effect of Shakespeare's final Sly scene could be a signal of his plot abridgement. If so, the point where the final Sly scene is placed seems to have been carefully chosen.

While in *A Shrew* Sly's first intervening scene occurs at the moment when the play turns into something funnier ('Sim, when will the fool come again?' [3.309]), in *The Shrew*, Sly's final scene occurs just after the sugary scene in which Lucentio falls in love with Bianca at first sight.

There is no doubt that in both plays Sly/Slie (as well as the audience) is aware he is about to see something he can laugh at and in his reaction he displays his knowledge of popular entertainment. Before the inner play starts we hear Sly from *The Shrew* saying: 'Let them play it. Is not a comonty a Christmas gambold or a tumbling-trick?' (Induction 2.131-2). Or Slie from *A Shrew*: 'Is there not a fool in the play?' (2.47). While in the former Sly is advised by his 'Lady' that 'it is more pleasing stuff', to which he replies 'What, household stuff?' and is soon corrected 'It is a kind of history.' (Induction 2.134-6), in the latter Slie is simply answered by the Lord: 'Yes my lord' (2.48). Curiously, their reactions (despite the fact that both will eventually fall asleep) are remarkably different. While Slie (as his shared line with the Lord suggests) becomes excited by the idea of seeing a play, 'When will they play, Sim?' (2.48), Sly's reaction is more blasé: 'Well, we'll see't.' (Induction 2.137). Sly's reaction seems to be perfectly consistent in view of what happens in his next scene ('Would'twere done!' [1.1.242]) but quite inconsistent with his character's behaviour hitherto. Indeed, his lack of interest to the point of drowsiness is a signal we receive just before the inner play starts. The excitement he had shown before, when he had accepted his new condition as a 'Lord', and his desire to go to bed at once with his 'lady', have vanished completely. On the other hand, the Slie of *A Shrew* continues to follow the play excitedly, interfering in it, and enjoying the free drink to the point of falling asleep. I suggest that if the play had been revised, the excision of the Sly framework would have been carefully prepared before his last scene at the end of Induction 2. Therefore, the contrast between the Sly of Induction 2 and the Sly of the end of 1.1, seems to be a signal of the play's abridgement.<sup>70</sup> The tinker's changed

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<sup>70</sup>The contention that *The Shrew* was revised is suggested by many inconsistencies to be found in the text printed in the First Folio. This critical tradition is supported by Ann Thompson, op. cit., pp. 160-4; H. J. Oliver, op. cit., pp. 40-43; Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'The Original Ending of *The Taming of the Shrew*: A Reconsideration' in *Studies in English Literature*, vol. 18 (1978), pp. 201-15; Peter Alexander, 'The

behaviour would be an artificial accommodation to the text's new format. However, in the next chapter, I will consider the Sly plot in relation to the Jig farce as a possible explanation for the character's apparent silence during the rest of the show.

### Is Sly Still There?

In attempting to formulate a plausible explanation for the incongruous 'disintegration' of the Sly plot in the Folio version (and, we have to remember, the 'disappearance' of the entire Lord's household), critics have suggested a number of solutions. Some have suggested that it was a question of practical necessity, reducing the number of characters to fit a small company on a provincial tour. In his study of the subject, Wentersdorf found that 'economy in casting could be effected by cutting the Sly episodes from IV and V, in which case the actors of Sly and Lord could double as the Pedant and Vincentio, and the boy-actor who played the Page disguised as Sly's Lady could double as the Widow.'<sup>71</sup> Others have argued, on the same basis of provincial-touring needs, that a balcony required for Sly and his company positioned *aloft* on stage, made necessary the erasing of further Sly scenes. These suggestions have also been disputed for two simple reasons: first, the stage direction is still there, indicating the '*aloft*' position. Secondly, there is no reason to believe that those scenes could not be relocated (as in *A Shrew* where they occur at stage level) to resolve any staging problems. A more drastic solution for the problems of a large cast and stage incompatibility would be simply to erase the whole Sly framework. Why then did Shakespeare maintain it? The answer to that seems to be straightforward: the *Shrew* plays have a metadramatic structure.

Although the Sly/Slie framework is the most important device in the plays for establishing a critical distance between the inner play and the audience, it is not,

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Original Ending of *The Taming of The Shrew* in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 20 (1969), pp. 111-16; Thelma N. Greenfield, 'The Transformation of Christopher Sly' in *Philological Quarterly*, vol. 33 (1954); Ernest P. Kuhl, 'Shakespeare's Purpose in Dropping Sly' in *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 36 (1921), pp. 321-29;

nevertheless, the only means by which the *Shrew* plays' metadramatic features are presented, as I shall be discussing shortly. It is unfortunate that the post-Shakespearean desire to make *The Shrew* sound somehow more 'naturalistic' has led to the Sly plot simply disappearing from the play for centuries, causing an enormous loss to the play's carnivalesque mode. The stage history of the play provides testimony to the ways in which the play can be affected by a directorial decision to drop Sly. A quite recent and prominent example was Jonathan Miller's BBC production (1980), in which the director suppressed the Sly framework altogether. This was done, apparently, to make the play conform to the imperatives of television as a 'naturalistic' medium.<sup>72</sup> Miller also cut the Sly framework in his RSC production (1987). In his criticism of Miller's production, Graham Holderness argued: 'the self-reflexive and metadramatic potentialities of the Christopher Sly framework ... [exist] precisely to disrupt the stability of viewpoint upon which the imaginative totality of naturalism depends.'<sup>73</sup> I would add to this that besides distancing the inner play from

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<sup>71</sup>Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'The original ending of *The Taming of The Shrew*: A Reconsideration' in *Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900*, vol. 18 (1978), p. 204.

<sup>72</sup>It seems to be a tendency of radio, TV and film media to drop Sly. On the other hand, ignoring the efforts made by Benjamin Webster (1844) and Samuel Phelps (1856) in Britain, and Augustin Daly (1887) in the USA to restore Shakespeare's *Shrew* to the stage, the Sly framework started slowly reappearing on the stage as a substitute for Garrick's *Catharine and Petruchio*, or adaptations based on his enduring text, only in the first decades of the 20th century. However, coinciding with the victory of the suffragettes' movement, the stage has increasingly put Sly back where he belongs. See Tori Haring-Smith's Appendix B to her *From Farce to Metadrama*, op. cit., pp. 173-210.

<sup>73</sup>Graham Holderness, *Shakespeare in Performance: The Taming of the Shrew* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 100. See also 'Jonathan Miller interviewed by Graham Holderness' in the interviewer's edition of *The Shakespeare Myth* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 195-202. Holderness' book *Shakespeare in Performance* also analyses some other productions of the play such as John Barton (1960), Michael Bogdanov (1978), and Franco Zeffirelli's film (1966). For a detailed study of the stage history of the play see Tori Haring-Smith, *From Farce to Metadrama*, op. cit. For more material on the subject see, for instance, Jan Macdonald, "'An Unholy Alliance": William Poel, Martin Harvey and *Taming of the Shrew*' in *Theatre Notebook*, vol. 36 (1982), pp. 64-72; and '*The Taming of the Shrew* at the Haymarket Theatre, 1844 and 1847' in Kenneth Richards and Peter Thompson (eds.), *Essays on Nineteenth Century British Theatre: The Proceedings of a Symposium Sponsored by the Manchester University Department of Drama* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1971), pp. 157-170. See also Russell Jackson, 'Shakespeare on Stage from 1660 to 1990' in Stanley Wells (ed.),

any actual reality, the Sly plot also creates the environment for the staging of the folk shrew taming-theme to which his character (as is clearly shown in *A Shrew*'s final scene) is also related.

As we have already seen, it appears there is a symbiotic relationship between the Sly plot and the play as whole. Thus its 'incompleteness' in *The Shrew* should be regretted, though not merely because of a desire to see Shakespeare's play 'complete' (as *A Shrew*—by restoring Sly to where he belongs—actually is).<sup>74</sup> It is clear that the inner play is part of a practical joke on its privileged audience (Sly/Slye); also, as we shall see, it is a joke on those who believe, as Sander (the actor of *A Shrew*) suggests, that *The Taming of a Shrew* is 'a good lesson' for 'married men' (1.62). However, even if we disregard the absence of a rounding off of the Sly plot, *The Shrew* does not lose its metadramatic features. Both plays, from the beginning, create a critical distance between stage and audience. A great contrast exists, however, between the two plays in terms of their strategies for the interpolation of the folktale with regard to the fiction and 'reality' represented in them. If, in *A Shrew*, the 'moral' of its taming theme is interpreted by its privileged audience as a readily-applicable lesson,

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*The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1886), specifically, pp. 194-5, 205, 209-10. For a discussion (especially focussed on the last scene) in some film and video productions of the play, see Barbara Hodgdon, 'Katherina Bound; or, Play(K)ating the Structures of Everyday Life' in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 107, n. 3 (May 1992), pp. 538-53; see also Paul A. Jorgensen, 'The Taming of the Shrew: Entertainment for Television' in *The Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television*, vol. 10 (1956), pp. 391-398. For a survey of the stage story of the play see, for instance, Nancy Lenz Harvey, *The Taming of the Shrew: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), pp. 207-75.

<sup>74</sup>This issue has been the subject of scrutiny either to prove that *The Shrew* had once a round off Sly scene, or contesting it. For the former view see, for instance, Brian Mores (ed.), *The Taming of The Shrew* (1981), op. cit., pp. 39-45; Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'The Original Ending of *The Taming of The Shrew*: A Reconsideration' (1978), op. cit., pp.201-15; Peter Alexander, 'The Original Ending of *The Taming of The Shrew*' (1969), op. cit., pp. 111-16. For the opposite view, see, for instance, H. J. Oliver (ed.), *The Taming of The Shrew* (1982), op. cit., pp. 40-3; Richard Hosley, 'Was There a "Dramatic Epilogue" to *The Taming of The Shrew*' in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 1 (1961), pp. 17-34; Raymond A. Houk, 'The Evolution of *The Taming of the Shrew*' (1942), op. cit., pp. 1031-7; Ernest P. Kuhl, 'Shakespeare Purpose in Dropping Sly' (1921), op. cit., pp. 321-9.



in *The Shrew* we are given no clue to suggest what Sly is going to do about Petruchio's 'taming school' after his dream-like night of free drink, during which he was treated like a lord. And perhaps this was the main reason why the eighteenth-century parodists (Charles Jonson and Christopher Bullock) of *The Shrew* in 1716 (perhaps they appeared in this year to mark the centenary of Shakespeare's death) decided to expand on Shakespeare's Sly plot; in the process laughing with as well as laughing at their target.

Using the same argument as Richard Hosley (1961) of 'anti-climax'<sup>75</sup> as a possible reason for Shakespeare's choice of having disposed of Sly at the end of 1.2, H. J. Oliver (1982) argues that a final Sly scene, as it appears in *A Shrew*, would be inadequate because the audience (like Slie) will interpret the play as a moral lesson. This would accordingly ruin the author's intention of avoiding any 'engagement' with the farcical characters the audience had enjoyed laughing at before. As he puts it:

the play makes Sly drowsy and probably soon sends him to sleep. Are we to let *that* play 'preach morality' to us or look at it for 'social and intellectual substance'? The drunken tinker may be believed in as one believes in any realistically presented character; but we cannot 'believe' in something that is not even mildly interesting to him.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Richard Hosley, op. cit., p.29. To draw his conclusion Richard Hosley made a study of Elizabethan plays with or without a 'dramatic epilogue' and, just as in the other texts of the period, he concluded that *The Shrew* does not require that Sly be rounded off (pp. 20-34). One of the main problems with his statistics, as Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]) observes, is that he includes plays such as 'Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* where the Induction concerning the Stage-Keeper, Book-Holder and Scrivener is completely self-contained and there is no need for an epilogue of the kind that seems implied by the incomplete narrative of Sly'(p. 172). Besides *Bartholomew Fair*, he also includes in his statistics Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, *The Poetaster* (both with a 'dramatic epilogue'), and *Cynthia's Revels* (without). The induction, prologues or even the so-called 'dramatic epilogues' have little in common with the Sly/Slie framework found in the *Shrew* plays. In his list we also find plays such as Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, George Peele's *The Old Wives Tale* (both with 'induction' and 'dramatic epilogue') and John Marston's *The Malcontent* (without a 'dramatic epilogue'). Hosley's two first examples (as I have already discussed) are very close to the Sly/Slie framework, while in the last the Induction is a clear self-contained commentary upon the play to be performed.

<sup>76</sup>H. J. Oliver, op. cit., p. 40.

Oliver's analysis is consistent with his view of Shakespeare's aesthetic reasons 'for the "incomplete" framework'.<sup>77</sup> However it is not the fact that we have Sly drowsy after the first scene that would prevent the audience from seeing the play as an *exemplum*. Nor, on the other hand, just because in *A Shrew* Sly (who has enjoyed free drink all night long and, because of it, is completely drunk) has 'learned' how to tame his shrewish wife, should this be seen as an anti-climatic moralizing end to the play. In fact, it increases the play's farcical appeal. In the final dialogue between Sly and the Tapster, in which he is talking about his 'bravest dream', the audience can guess what is waiting for the drunkard at home.

*Tapster* I marry, but you had best get you home,  
 For your wife will course you for dreaming here to night.  
*Sly* Will she? I know how to tame a shrew.  
 I dreamt upon it all this night till now,  
 And thou hast waked me out of the best dream  
 That ever I had in my life.  
 But I'll to my wife presently,  
 And tame her too, and if she anger me.  
 (15.14-21).

Recalling Sander's advertisement for *The Taming of a Shrew* as a 'didactic lesson', and having Sly at the end of the play intending to apply it at home, one can say that the parodist makes sense of the words we hear in the folktale being dramatized on the stage. Here the joke is turned round. If there is any didactic lesson in this play, certainly it does not concern wifely submission. Sly, a shrew's husband who intends to put into practice the lesson he has 'learned', belongs with the same folktale source dramatized in the inner play. If we consider the *Shrew* play's intertextuality, we shall see that Sly's schooling is in tune with the folk tradition from which the main plot of the *Shrew* plays has been developed. In the folk tale, as we have it in the *Conde Lucanor*, it is a useless 'lesson' to a shrew's husband.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, if we think of

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>78</sup> See Don Juan Manuel, *El Conde Lucanor, Exemplo XXXV, Do lo que contesció a un mancebo que casó con una muger muy fuerte et muy brava*, Edición, Prólogo y Notas de Guillermo Serés, Con un Estudio Preliminar de Germán Orduna, Biblioteca Clásica, vol. 6 (Barcelona: Crítica, 1994), pp. 147-152. For an English translation see *What Happened to a Young Man Who Married a Strong and Ill-tempered Woman* in

*The Shrew*'s metadramatic features, by which we mean more than merely the device of a play-within-a-play, we can also see the Sly plot as belonging to the same dramatic strategy. Everything in the play is deliberately artificial, or rather theatrical. As Ann Thompson has argued, it seems that the use of Sly encouraged Shakespeare to create further layers of theatrical illusion all over the play: very often we witness a group of characters 'standing aside' watching another group performing. As she observes:

At the beginning the Lord and his men devise for themselves a performance ... but the entertainment is superseded when the players arrive and Sly joins the Lord as 'audience' rather than performer. Hardly have the first players, Lucentio and Tranio, begun their scene than they too are interrupted by the arrival of another group consisting of Baptista, his two daughters and Bianca's suitors. Greeting this as 'some show to welcome us to town' and 'good pastime', Lucentio and Tranio in their turn stand aside to enjoy the performance. A similar effect but in reverse is achieved at the end of 5.1 when the stage swiftly clears, leaving Katherina and Petruchio, who have themselves been standing aside 'to see the end of this controversy', alone for their first kiss.<sup>79</sup>

In thinking of the *Shrew* plays as metadrama, it is clear that they are far from being an example of the metaphysical depth Lionel Abel advocates in his *Metatheatre*. Nevertheless, their events and personages (to use Abel's metadramatic arguments) have already been theatricalized by Carnival imagery, folk tradition and other literary sources even before they reach the stage.<sup>80</sup> I suggest that it is not only the obvious characters in the inner play who are self-conscious participants; Sly too (the only one who supposedly does not know he is playing) is conscious of his existence as a personage. And this is true, not only because the conventions of Sly's clownish character are clearly at stake, but also because his role would require a clownish comedian. As Dean Frye aptly puts it, even if 'Dogberry is unconscious, Kemp certainly was not, and the clowns and fools seem to have had an especially close

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*The Book of Count Lucanor and Patronio*. A Translation of Don Juan Manuel's *El Conde Lucanor* by John E. Keller and L. Clarck Keating (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1977), pp. 137-141.

<sup>79</sup>Ann Thompson, op. cit., p.31

<sup>80</sup>Lionel Abel, *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1963), p. 60.

relationship with the Elizabethan audience.’<sup>81</sup> In *The Shrew*, Sly’s self-consciousness as a clown playing a lord (a ‘Lord of Misrule’) is notorious when he, after agreeing to play the lord, starts to speak in verse, which fits in with his new character, but goes completely against his previous one (the tinker). Moreover, not only has his speech become refined by verse lines, but it has also gained a ‘posh’ diction:

Am I a lord, and have such a lady  
Or do I dream? Or have I dreamed till now?  
I do not sleep: I see, I hear, I speak,  
I smell sweet savours and I feel soft things.  
And not a tinker, nor Christopher Sly.  
Well, bring our lady hither to our sight,  
And once again a pot o’th’ smallest ale.  
(Induction 2.64-71).

However, there is something odd about Sly’s refined diction. The above lines are Sly’s first speech after he had querulously refused to be treated as Lord (Induction 2.5-10, 15-21), in the same style and temper he showed at the beginning of the play (Induction.1.1-10). After the Lord and his men’s non-stop badgering (which runs from line 22 to 63) to persuade Sly of his lordship,<sup>82</sup> what seems to have really persuaded him was the mention of his lady: ‘the fairest creature in the world’ (Induction 2.62). As well as further developing the stereotype of a tinker as womanizer (of which I will give more details in the next chapter), it seems to confirm his self-conscious transformation. I suggest that, as a by-play, his two-line doggerel at the end of his verse lines reveal the tinker behind the lord’s mask.

If we closely analyse Sly’s second scene, we notice that the Lord’s ‘carnavalesque pageant’ starts with Sly being woken up and the deception plan being enacted. Unlike *A Shrew* in which Sly (perhaps because of the shortness of the play) is easily persuaded to play the lord, during this scene in *The Shrew* we have the impression

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<sup>81</sup>Dean Frye, ‘Shakespearean Parody’, *Essays in Criticism*, vol. XV (January 1965), p. 24.

<sup>82</sup>Thompson suggests that ‘Sly moves from prose into verse under the pressure of his companions.’ See Ann Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 55 n. 64-71. According to Oliver, ‘Sly speaks in verse as he begins to believe himself a lord.’ See H. J. Oliver, *op. cit.*, p. 101 n. 66.

that the deceived is in fact a deceiver. The way Sly sardonically deals with the new situation is shown when he, for instance, requests ‘once again a pot o’th’ smallest ale.’ Since small ale (as it was known in the period) was low in alcohol, Sly, by using a superlative, is clearly joking (and the audience would have known through their knowledge of his particular character type) about the kind of drink he is being served. Moreover, when the second Servingman—exaggerating the Lord’s words in suggesting that Sly should be told he had slept for ‘seven years’ (Induction 1.118)—says ‘These fifteen years you have been in a dream’ (Induction 2.75), Sly seems to be experimenting with the reaction of ‘his’ men by making ironic comments on their remarks and asking cunning questions:

*Sly* These fifteen years! By my fay, a goodly nap.  
 But did I never speak of all that time?  
*I Servingman* O yes, my lord, but very idle words,  
 For thought you lay here in this goodly chamber,  
 Yet would say ye were beaten out of door,  
 An rail upon the hostess of the house,  
 And say you would present her at the leet  
 Because she brought stone jugs and not sealed quarts.  
 Sometimes you would call out for Cicely Hacket.  
 (Induction 2.77-85).

Enjoying his drinks—though weaker than he is accustomed to drinking, they are, nonetheless, free—he goes even further in testing the nerves of his audience, both that on the stage and the real audience:

*Sly* Ay, the woman’s maid of the house.  
*I Servingman* Why, sir, you know no house, nor such maid,  
 Nor such men as you have reckoned up,  
 As Stephen Sly and old John Naps of Greece,  
 And Peter Turph and Henry Pimpernell,  
 And twenty more such names and men as these,  
 Which never were, nor no man ever saw.  
 (Induction 2.86-92).

After these supposedly convincing justifications, Sly agrees to play the role they are assigning to him: ‘Now Lord be thankèd for my good amends!’ To which the deceivers say in relieved unison: ‘Amen.’ (Induction 2, 93-4). In this respect Sly does

not differ very much from Katherina when she apparently accepts the role which is imposed upon her. During the episode of the sun and moon, in which she is arguing with Petruchio about what is really shining in the sky, what seems finally to convince her are Hortensio's wise words: 'Say as he says, or we shall never go.' (4.5.11). And so she remarks: 'be it moon or sun or what you please; / And if you please to call it a rush-candle, / Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me. (4.5.13-15). I shall return to this scene later in my analysis.

Despite being 'convinced', Sly continues to give signs of his awareness of the situation. When 'his wife' finally arrives, he (by exaggerating somewhat the fifteen years of sleep he has been told about) does not miss the opportunity of making a joke about the supposed lapse of time: 'Madam wife, they say that I have dreamed / And slept *above some fifteen years or more.*' (emphasis added). To which the incautious 'lady', in order to make the situation seem even more convincing, melodramatically remarks: 'Ay, and the time seems thirty unto me, / Being all this time abandoned from your bed.' (Induction 2.108-11). The 'lady' of *A Shrew* is even more flirtatious:

Oh that my lovely lord would once vouchsafe  
To look on me, and leave these frantic fits,  
Or were I now but half so eloquent  
To paint in words what I'll perform in deeds,  
I know your honour then would pity me.  
(2.36-40).

As we have already seen, in both *The Shrew* and *A Shrew*, the cunning Sly/Slie is keen to go immediately to bed with 'his' lady and this—as in the example of the inner play in which the hero and heroine go to bed at the end—would be the resolution of his plot. However his plot must continue and the inner play is announced just at this point. Sly's fictional function as privileged audience and thus a 'lord of misrule' to preside over that liminal period has been established.

Although the 1623 First Folio and the 1631 First Quarto of *The Shrew* do not provide any further mention of Sly & co., the stage direction (*They Sit and Mark*) at the end of their final appearance is a reminder that—although we do not hear their

voices as we do in *A Shrew*—they are still there. And once there, their presence may become noticeable by action. As Fiona Shaw, who played Kate's speechless scenes, reminds us: 'action is also language'.<sup>83</sup> Thus a character's silence on the stage does not mean that he or she is banished into non-existence. If this is true for any character, it is especially so for a clownish one. Even a sleeping Sly manages to be a loud presence on stage. This was demonstrated in Barry Jackson and H. K. Ayliff's modern dress production (of 1928), where a snoring Sly, who had fallen asleep during the play's final act, remained in his box until the last spectator left the theatre.<sup>84</sup> Perhaps we will never have a complete explanation for Sly's apparently mute presence on stage; nevertheless, as the parodic *A Shrew* has bequeathed to us, the clownish tinker is still there as the uncrowned lord of misrule of those country holiday revelries.

The literature of the period is particularly rich in the portrayal of tinkers as an archetype of misbehaviour. Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, for instance, reprehends Sir Toby Belch and company whose manners 'like tinkers', 'make an alehouse' of his 'lady's house' (2.3.85-6). Matheo in the second part of *The Honest Whore*, says to Orlando that his father-in-law (who is in fact Orlando now disguised as Pacheco) had 'swore like a dozen of drunken of drunken tinkers' (IV.i, 207).<sup>85</sup> Phylo in *The Scourge of Villanie*, calls them 'tynkering knaues'.<sup>86</sup> The intertextual quality of Sly as a folk type makes his figure immediately recognisable to an audience who were strongly aware of the sort of character they were seeing. As carnivalized drama, the *Shrew* plays appropriated a well-known folk character to create, from the beginning, an atmosphere of misrule which becomes exacerbated in the main plot. As shown even more clearly in *A Shrew*, he is the clownish mediator between stage and audience. Since I am analysing the plays as two 'autonomous' texts, the differences between Sly and Slie could be more revealing than disturbing. And this perhaps can

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<sup>83</sup>See 'Kate: Interpreting the Silence' in Carol Rutter's *Clamorous Voices: Shakespeare's Women Today* (London: The Women's Press Ltd, 1988), p. 8.

<sup>84</sup>See Tori Haring-Smith, op. cit., p.115.

<sup>85</sup>Thomas Dekker, *The Honest Whore*, Part II, in Fredson Bowers (ed.), *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), p. 187.

<sup>86</sup>John Marston, *The Scourge of Villanie*, The Bodley Head Quartos, Edited by G. B. Harrison (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1925), p. 4.

be seen better in the characters' lines rather than in the similarity of the structure of each character. This subject matter and the implications of the Sly character in the *Shrew* plays are the focus of the next chapter.



### III – Sly as a Clown

Clownish behaviour abounds among the characters of *The Shrew*. However the ‘official’ fool of the inner play, according to critical tradition, is Grumio. In this respect, he has the same attributes as Sander, his counterpart in *A Shrew*. Sander’s function as a fool is spotted by Slie: ‘Sim, when will the fool come again?’ (3.308). Like Grumio, Sander belongs to the stock ‘master-servant’ relationship easily found in the *commedia dell’arte* scenarios. Notwithstanding this, the main carnivalesque character which links the two fictional worlds represented in the plays to the audience is Sly/Slie. If in *A Shrew* the rounding off of the Slie plot provides clear evidence to support this view, in *The Shrew* Sly’s apparent silence would seem to make this view of his function in the play more difficult to justify. Perhaps further investigation of Sly as a clown type would help us to understand his ‘silence’ as something related to the conventions of the clowning to be as found in Shakespeare’s plays of the 1590s and, more specifically, in the conventions attached to Kemp’s clowning. These conventions associated with the clowns’ jig provide further material with which to shed light on Sly’s function in *The Shrew*. In this respect, David Wiles’ analysis (1987) of the conventions governing Kemp’s clowning and Charles Read Baskervill’s detailed study (1929) of the Elizabethan jig are (as far as my research is concerned) still the most comprehensive material available.<sup>1</sup> This material, I feel, supports my view of Sly as

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<sup>1</sup>In addition to those studies, Andrew Gurr’s *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1987]) contains an excellent analysis of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage jig, especially in relation to the companies’ money making and the evolution of the audience’s taste. Cf., especially, pp. 88, 157-8, 186-7, 196. See also E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol. II (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), pp. 551-3. Also noteworthy is the article of W. J. Lawrence, “‘He’s for a Jig or – – ’” in *The Times Literary Supplement* (Thursday, July 3, 1919), pp. 364-5. It is a concise but acute history of the jig as an entertainment loved by the nascent early modern proletariat and the consequent prejudice against it. For more material on Shakespearean clowning, see Bente A. Videbæk, *The Stage Clown in Shakespeare’s Theatre* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Green Press, 1996); Winifred Frazer, ‘William Kemp, Shakespearean Clown’ in *The Shakespeare Newsletter*, (Spring 1993), p. 10; Max W. Thomas, ‘Kemps Nine Daies Wonder: Dancing Carnival into Market’ in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 107 no. 1 (January 1992), pp. 511-23; Eric Rasmussen, ‘Setting Down what the Clown Spoke: Improvisation, Hand B, and *The Book of Sir Thomas More*’ in *The Library [The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society]*, sixth series, vol. 13 no. 2 (June 1991), pp. 126-36; Roberta

the major clownish role in the play, and this role would have been played by Kemp. However a question remains to be answered about the date of *The Shrew* and the date when Kemp became a member of the Chamberlain's Men. If *The Shrew* was written between 1589 and 1592<sup>2</sup> and Kemp had joined the Chamberlain's Men in 1594, the same year when the company was officially formed, how can one ascertain whether he ever played Sly or any other character in the play?<sup>3</sup> This question has been partially resolved since I accept the generally assumed view that the title *The Taming of a*

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Mullini, 'Playing the Fool: the Pragmatic Status of Shakespeare's Clowns' in *New Theatre Quarterly*, vol. I no. 1 (February 1985), pp. 98-104; Chris Harris, *Will Kemp: Shakespeare's Forgotten Clown* (Waddesdon, Buckinghamshire: The Kylin Press, 1983); Eugene Steele, 'Shakespeare, Goldoni, and the Clowns' in *Comparative Drama*, vol. 11, no. 3 (Fall 1977), pp. 209-26; Richard Levin, 'Elizabethan "Clown" Subplots' in *Essays in Criticism*, vol. XVI no.1 (January 1966), pp. 83-91.

<sup>2</sup>Brian Morris (1988 [1981], p. 65) proposes 1589 as the date for *The Shrew*, Ann Thompson (1995 [1984], p. 3) 1590, Wells and Taylor (1987, p. 109) 1590-1, and H. J. Oliver (1982, p. 32) 1592.

<sup>3</sup>Baldwin, for instance, suggests that Kemp played Grumio, while the role of Sly he does not assign to any particular actor. Cf. Thomas Whitfield Baldwin, *The Organization and Personnel of The Shakespearean Company* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1927), pp. 243, 405. See also Table II between pp. 228-9. Haring-Smith suggests that Kemp 'could have played both Sly and Grumio if Sly remained onstage only for the Induction and first scene.' Tori Haring-Smith, *From Farce to Metadrama*, op. cit., p. 9. Although not very clear about the matter, David Wiles, in his single comment on *The Shrew*, points out that 'If we regard the role of Launce as a turning point for Shakespeare, we can look back on earlier clown types in his writing as experiments. The verse-speaking Plautine servants in *The Comedy of Errors* gave way to the prose-speaking Grumio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Grumio's Italian name indicates that he is still of a kind with his master, and that he is conceived as a function of a master-servant relationship.' When analysing the usage of the term 'clown' in contrast to 'fool', he states: 'In Shakespearean dialogue generally, the word "fool" is used with an enormous freedom. The word "clown" is never found outside stage directions unless used *of*, or (for ironic effect) *by* the character who is designated as *the* clown of the play. Likewise, Peter Onion in *The Case is Altered*, Sly in *Taming of A Shrew*, and the country gentleman in the Praeludium for *The Careless Shepherdess* all speak of their affection for the "fool" in plays.' On the other hand, if he meant to assign Grumio's role (the 'three-inch fool' [4.1.19]) to Kemp, it would contrast immensely with his description of Kemp as a 'remarkably solid physique [which] made it easier for him to impose a still presence and to dominate the forty-foot width of the stage.' David Wiles, op. cit., p. 74, 68-9 and 106, respectively. The small figure of Grumio is also corroborated by his lines 'Now were not I little pot soon hot' (4.1.4). As Ann Thompson (1995 [1984], p. 111 n. 4) observed, Grumio's line 'was proverbial for a small person who gets angry quickly. From this reference and those at 8 [4.1.8] and 19-20 [4.1.19-20] below it is clear that the original actor of Grumio's role was a small man.

*Shrew* which is given by Henslowe perhaps refers to Shakespeare's play *The Taming of The Shrew* which was played in June 1594. This view is based on the following points: firstly, Henslowe's carelessness with respect to his use of the indefinite articles,<sup>4</sup> thus it is not difficult to imagine a slip between *a* and *the*; secondly, and perhaps more importantly, his account of the company involved in the enterprise.<sup>5</sup> As H. J. Oliver has stated, the 1594 'performance would have been of the genuine Shakespeare play – since Shakespeare's own company is somehow involved – and not of what we mean by *A Shrew*'.<sup>6</sup> Accepting this view, I can develop my analysis of Sly—the major clownish role in the play—as it was performed on 11 June by Kemp, and not by any other actor. To begin with, I will examine Sly in relation to clown types going back to Tarlton.

### **Christopher Sly: an Elizabethan Tramp**

Modern editions of *The Shrew* have speech-headings for the drunkard as Sly; however, in the First Folio version he is named Beggar. Apart from the stage

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<sup>4</sup>See Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>5</sup>The early 1590s were indeed a period of enormous difficulties for theatrical activity as a nascent entertainment industry. The outbreak of plague, followed by the puritans' attack on such activity, was responsible for the longest period of closure of the theatres. This was one of the factors which provoked, for instance, the division of the old company known as the Queen's Men into two branches and their final bankruptcy. It also made necessary the amalgamation of some companies, and the transferring of actors with their plays scripts from one company to another. It is how theatrical historians explain the interchangeability of the companies' repertoire during the period. Cf. Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, third edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995 [1992]), especially pp. 33-1; E. A. J. Honigmann, *Shakespeare: the 'lost years'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 59-61. See also G. M. Pinciss, 'Shakespeare, Her Majesty's Players and Pembroke's Men' in *Shakespeare Survey*, vol. 27 (1974), pp. 129-36; and 'The Queen's Men, 1583-1592' in *Theatre Survey*, vol. 11-12 (1970-71), pp. 50-63; Scott McMillin, 'Casting for Pembroke's Men: The *Henry VI* Quartos and *Taming of A Shrew* in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. XXII, n. 2 (Spring, 1972), pp. 141-59.

<sup>6</sup>H. J. Oliver, ed., *The Taming of The Shrew*, op. cit., p. 32. See also Brian Morris' edition of the play (1981), op. cit., p. 57; Ann Thompson's (1995 [1984]), op. cit., p.

direction at the beginning of the play (*Enter Begger and Hostes, Christophero Sly*), nobody else, except Sly himself, calls the tinker by his name. The existence of Sly's complete name in the stage direction is considered by Hibbard 'an afterthought, derived from the text (Induction.2.5), and may well be an addition made by the prompter.'<sup>7</sup> It might be, however, that the name *Christophero Sly* (the *Don Christo Vary* of *A Shrew*) is there as a 'type mark' for the character.

In attempting to improve the play's text, some modern editors have actually added more inconsistencies to it, such as the addition made by Hibbard when the Lord is instructing the Huntsmen how to go about deceiving Sly: 'And when he says he is Sly, say that he dreams' (Induction 1.62).<sup>8</sup> In the First Folio the same line says: 'And when he says he is, say that he dreames' ([Induction 1.] 68).<sup>9</sup> If any correction is needed here, the addition of 'Sly' does not seem a good choice.<sup>10</sup> Although the tinker had already uttered his name while being thrown out of the alehouse, the Lord and his

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2; and Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>7</sup>G. R. Hibbard (ed.), *The Taming of The Shrew*, The New Penguin Shakespeare, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 162. This is a traditional view also supported by more recent editors of the play. Cf. Brian Morris (1988 [1981]), op. cit., p. 153; H. J. Olivier (1982), op. cit., p. 89; and Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]), op. cit., pp. 156-7.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 57. Although not emending that line, and seeing it as making 'acceptable sense', Brian Morris (1988 [1981]) takes Samuel Jonson's emendation (1765) as a 'persuasive suggestion ... [against] the argument that F's compositor might easily have read "Sly, say" in his copy as a repetition .' Cf. Brian Morris, op. cit., p. 157 n. 62.

<sup>9</sup>*The First Folio of Shakespeare*, The Norton Facsimile, op. cit., p. 226.

<sup>10</sup>It is not my intention to rebuke standard emendations which aim to correct the abundant obvious mistakes found in the First Folio. Doubtless, many sensible emendations provide a series of corrections without which the common reader would not be able to follow the text properly. However, there are some 'improvements' which strongly interfere with the text, resulting in a misinterpretation of it. For an account of problems found in the 1623 Folio version, see, for instance, Ann Thompson's 'Textual Analysis' in her 1995 [1984] edition of *The Shrew*, op. cit., pp. 156-8. And for a more close examination of emendations rendered in the text by former editors, see notes on collation through her edition. See also Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *Textual Companion*, op. cit., pp. 109-11, 169-74. For a critical account of the problems concerning corrections of Shakespeare's texts, see Stanley Wells, *Re-Editing Shakespeare for the Modern Reader* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); for the specific case of *The Shrew*, see pp. 20, 24, 28, 41-3, 51-2, 65.

men apparently do not yet know who he is. Sly tells them his name only 82 lines later, precisely at the point that modern editions mark as Induction 2.5.<sup>11</sup>

Objecting to the substitution of *Beggar* for *Tinker* or *Sly*, Holderness and Loughrey argue that the ‘substitution of an original emphasis on personality and the individual subject (whether the focus is on a character or the character’s putative creator) is a clear instance of modern editors imposing anachronistic values on an early modern text’.<sup>12</sup> Alan Posener, rejecting Holderness and Loughrey’s view, points out: ‘Shakespeare (a snob by all accounts) took the aristocratic view of his character

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<sup>11</sup>Oliver suggests that *he is*—which refers back to the previous line (‘Persuade him that he hath been lunatic’)—‘must be, lunatic, if he thinks he hear such a nonsense correctly.’ Cf. H. J. Oliver, *op. cit.*, p. 93 n. 61. Thompson (1984) taking the Folio ‘reading [as] awkward, but tolerable’, follows what seems to be now the standard view that ‘when he says he must be mad now.’ Cf. Ann Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 49 n. 60. Wells and Taylor, recalling Wilson (1928) ‘he’s Sly’, observe that ‘Wilson [1953] withdrew his reading because the lord “had not so far heard Sly’s name”’. However, according to them, it is ‘not a necessary objection’. Cf. ‘Textual Notes’ to *The Taming of the Shrew* in their 1987 *Textual Companion*, *op. cit.*, p. 171. Wilson who had previously followed Johnson’s emendation (1765), also suggests that the ‘missed’ word would be ‘lunatic’. Cf. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and Jonh Dover Wilson (eds.), *The Taming of the Shrew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 130 n. 63.

<sup>12</sup>Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey, ‘Text and Stage: Shakespeare, Bibliography, and Performance Studies’, *New Theatre Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 34 (May, 1993), p. 191 n. 18. According to them ‘virtually all modern editors take him [Sly] at his own word and promote him in their “Dramatis Personae” to “tinker” (e.g., Arden, New Penguin, New Cambridge). Wells and Taylor (1986) admit him “drunkard and beggar”, but still with all other editors alter his speech-headings from “Beg” to “Sly”(and to “Slie” in their original spelling edition).’ *Ibid.* Apart from the 1986 Oxford edition, the authors did not identify the other editions they criticise. Holderness and Loughrey’s article is indeed part of a debate proposed by the editors of the *New Theatre Quarterly* on the issue of ‘the relationship between the bibliographical and scholarly problems of editing Elizabethan texts, changing perceptions of “authority” and theatrical and political conceptions, old and new, which may affect all these.’ Cf. vol. 10, no. 39 (August, 1994), p. 263. This has produced a series of essays which began with Brian Park’s ‘Bowers of Bliss: Deconflation in Shakespeare Canon’, vol. 6, no. 24 (November, 1990), pp. 357-61; followed by Stanley Wells’ ‘Theatricalizing Shakespeare’s Text’, vol. 7, no. 26 (May, 1991), pp. 184-6; Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey (1993), *op. cit.*; and Alan Posener, ‘“Materialism”, Dialectics, and Editing Shakespeare’, vol. 10, no. 39 (August, 1994), pp. 263-6.

[say, the Lord's view] and gave him the speech-heading.'<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, we have to bear in mind that there was a fine line dividing the activities of tinkers and beggars in Elizabethan times, and these two occupations were typically viewed as interchangeable. In *The Fraternity of Vacabondes*, a 1575 tract written by John Awdeley, the type is described as follows: 'A Tinkard leaueth his bag a sweating at the Alehouse, which they term their Bowsing In, and in the meane season goeth abrode a begging.'<sup>14</sup>

Although Holderness and Loughrey's political view is fairly acceptable ('the systematic effacement from social obtrusion of beggars was an aspiration of the state in Elizabethan times as much as it is today'),<sup>15</sup> I suggest that in both cases the discussion loses its focus on the central issue. It does not really matter how Sly—beggar, tinker, drunkard or whatever—appears in the speech-headings. He is individualized in *A Shrew*'s speech-headings as Slie without causing any interference to the way in which the character is depicted. The way Sly behaves, and is named and described by the other characters, is how his public image is perceived by the

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<sup>13</sup>Alan Posener, op. cit., p. 265.

<sup>14</sup>*The Fraternity of Vacabondes. As wel of ruflyng Vacabondes, as of beggerly, of women as of men, of Gyrlles as of Boyes, with their proper names and qualities* in Edward Viles and F. J. Furnivall (eds.), *The Rogues and Vagabonds of Shakspeare's Youth*, The New Shakespearean Society (London: N. Trübner & Co., 1880), p. 5.

<sup>15</sup>Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey, op. cit., p. 191. To attest the authors' view, we have another tract of 1567 by Thomas Harman entitled *Caueat or Warening for Commen Cursetors Vulgarely Called Vagabones*. His entry for 'A Dronken Tinckar' says: 'These dronken Tynckers, called also Prygges, be beastly people, and these young knaues be *the wurst*. These neuer go *with* out their Doxes, and yf their women haue anye thing about them, as apparell or lynnens, that is worth the selling, they laye the same to gage, or sell it out right, for bene bowse at their bowsing ken. And full sone wyll they bée wearye of them, and haue a newe. When they happen one woorke at any good house, their Doxes lynger alofe, and tarry for them in some corner; and yf he taryeth longe from her, then she knoweth he hath worke, and walketh neare, and sitteth downe by him. For besydes money, he looketh for meate and drinke for doinge his dame pleasure. For yf she haue threé or foure holes in a pan, hee wyll make as many more for spedy gaine. And if he se any old kete, chafer, or pewter dish abroad in the yard where he worketh, hée quicklye snappeth the same vp, and in to the boogit it goeth round. Thus they lyue with deceite. ... Thus with picking and stealing, mingled with lytle worke for a colour, they passe their time.' See Edward Viles & F. J. Furnivall, op. cit., 59. (I maintain the odd accents we see in this passage exactly as they appear in the original quoted text).

audience. I certainly agree with Holderness and Loughrey that *beggar* is there to emphasize Sly's character; however his indigence—rather than being a naturalistic picture—is there as an intertextual signpost to the type who is involved in the action. With this point in mind and seeing the play as carnivalized drama, I will examine the signs by which Sly may be described as belonging to a clown type dating back to Tarlton.

There is no doubt that the *Shrew* plays deal with the world of the theatre, and Sly (the beggar, the tinker, etc.) is a notorious character who belongs among the lowest echelons of that world. As a tinker he is directly related to the category of itinerant beggars and performers in general (OED). In 1597, Act 39 Eliz. c. 4 § 2 placed 'All Juglers Tynkers Pedlars and Petty Chapmen wandring abroad' in the same category. This Act was actually a renewal—with amendments—of the 1572 Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds and for the Relief of Poor & Impotent. The Act, which was designed as a means of social control, in practice also restrained the activities of the 'Common Plaiers'. As a result, anyone who did not belong 'to any Baron of this Realme, or any other honorable Personage of greater Degree ... shalbe taken adjudged and deemed Rogues Vagabonde and Sturdy Beggars'.<sup>16</sup> Maybe this is the reason why Sanders (in *A Shrew*) is boastful about his blue coat: 'Now hang him that has not a livery coat to slash it out amongst the proudest of them.' (3.206-8); and for Sly (at the opposite end) to shout out against being called a rogue—except that Sly himself claims to be *Christopher Sly*. Conversely the other characters call him 'rogue', 'beggar', 'peasant', 'drunkard', and (mockingly) 'lord'.

The Sly/Slie character is strongly embedded in the old clowning tradition. His attitude towards his persona resembles the archetypal outlook of a clown. His clownish behaviour entitles him to be crowned as a 'mocking king' and, in the case of the *Shrew* plays, to be considered a lord—a 'Lord of Misrule', who will preside over that world turned upside-down. Since he is the most abject and indigent creature of his community, this certainly establishes the basis on which Sly could be perceived as

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<sup>16</sup>See [39 Eliz. c. 4, A. D. 1597-8] in Sir A. Luders (ed.), *Statutes of The Realm*, vol. 4, Part II (London, 1810), p. 899.

belonging to the fool's gallery. These kind of 'requirements' are found, for instance, in Tarlton's projected character. According to David Wiles,

Tarlton's licence to play the fool derives from the assumption that, through being the ugliest, poorest and stupidest member of the community, he is entitled to the office of Lord of Misrule. Tarlton assumes a cover of naivety, and presents himself as being penniless. He cultivates a reputation for drunkenness. These aspects of his projected character are the frame which lends form to his anarchy.<sup>17</sup>

The way Sly defines himself is very close to the old tradition by which Tarlton projected his persona as a clown:

*Sly* I am Christophero Sly — call not me 'honour' nor 'lordship'. I ne'er drank sack in my life, and if you give any conserves, give me conserves of beef. Ne'er ask me what raiment I'll wear, for I have no more doublets than backs, no more stockings than legs, nor no more shoes than feet — nay, sometime more feet than shoes, or such shoes as my toes look through the overleather.

...  
*Sly* What, would make me mad? Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath; by birth a pedlar, by education a cardmaker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, if she know me not. If she say I am not fourteen pence on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lying'st knave in Christendom. What, I am not bestraught! Here's —

(Induction 2.5-10, 15-21)

The medieval 'amateur misrule tradition'—from which Tarlton's clowning was derived—is, I suggest, also the folk convention on which the Sly/Slie framework is developed. This tradition, which was widely diffused, involved the community (city, village, institution or great household) electing its Lord of Misrule, chosen among males from the lowest rank, to preside at festivals such as Whitsun and Christmas.<sup>18</sup> *The Shrew* and *A Shrew* (as plays rooted in a folktale, and in the carnivalesque

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<sup>17</sup>David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown: Actor and Text in The Elizabethan Playhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 21.

<sup>18</sup>David Wiles, *op. cit.*, p. 20.



humour attached to it) recreate the atmosphere in which Sly/Slie, a poor drunkard, is invested as a lord to preside over a typical country holiday festival.

### A Tarltonesque Figure

It is irrelevant to seek proof here as to whether or not the anecdotes about Tarlton contain any truth. What really matters is to recognize how our Elizabethan clown embodied a particular set of ‘qualities’ which established his persona. More than any one character in a given play, his figure was acknowledged by the audience as a persona. As Wiles states: ‘This merging of man and role is a quality that Tarlton’s successors were to retain.’<sup>19</sup>

Tarlton’s cultivated persona as a poor country man, ugly, a cuckold, a drunkard, and someone incapable of ruling his wife had created the context in which the ‘combate of wit’ between him and his audience was carried on. *Tarlton’s Jestes* (1611) are a description of how he employed that ingenious self-constructed image as a means of catching out his ‘unaware’ opponents in order to ridicule them with his ‘unexpected’ cleverness. In fact, his cultivated ‘bad’ qualities were part of an elaborate technique designed to encourage his ‘opponents’ to challenge him. His supposed vulnerability was an invitation (as we can see in some passages of his *Jestes* book)<sup>20</sup> to be humiliated to begin with and then have the last laugh. Having licence to abuse and be abused in return, his character has the same attributes of the carnivalesque ‘Jack a lent’ already examined in the first chapter. As Tarlton played a part, so he would also interact with his audiences, who were already familiar with every aspect of his persona. In fact, Tarlton’s ‘bad’ qualities are rooted in the Medieval Vice tradition. And in considering Sly as a clownish character who is also rooted in that tradition, we can say that even his name bears some meaning.

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 16

<sup>20</sup>Cf. *Tarlton’s Jestes* in W. Carew Hazlitt (ed.), *Shakespeare Jest-Books* (London: Willis & Sotheran, 1864).

In analysing the Medieval Vice tradition and how it was appropriated by the Elizabethan professional stage, and paying particular attention to Shakespeare's clown/Vice (such as, for example, Lancelot in *The Merchant of Venice*) David Wiles observes that 'the nature of Vice was encapsulated in his name, [and] it was common for a Vice to expound the meaning of his name. Shakespeare follows convention [centuries of tradition] to the extent of using a name that is emblematic'.<sup>21</sup> This convention, according to Wiles, gives to the name of Lancelot (and to those of his fellow clowns Launce, of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and Falstaff) phallic overtones. As we consider the character of Sly in the *Shrew* plays and the stage use of emblematic names, it is worthwhile to examine the meanings attached to his name as an intertextual appropriation. For instance, William Sly, in John Webster's Induction to John Marston's *The Malcontent* (c. 1604), seems to make capital of his own surname when he reminds the audience of it. He was a well-known player by that time,<sup>22</sup> and—in his asking for the company actors: 'Where's Harry Condell, Dick Burbage, and Will Sly?' (Induction, 10-11)<sup>23</sup>—he reminds the audience who was behind the 'mask'.

According to the OED, the meanings of sly, when applied to persons, are: adept or skilful in artifice, using cunning or insidious means or methods; deceitful, guileful, wily and underhand. Will Sly of the *Malcontent's* Induction is full of wiles in his occupation of the stage: like the character of Kemp in *The Travels of Three English Brothers* who claims he is 'somewhat hard to study' but has his 'small sack of

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<sup>21</sup>David Wiles, op. cit., p. 8

<sup>22</sup>Thomas Whitfield Baldwin, *The Organization and Personnel of The Shakespearean Company* (Princeton University Press, 1962) p. 412, suggests that William Sly, 'who had just graduated', played Hortensio in *The Shrew*. However, William Sly—by that time—had a career of, at least, four years. Will Sly's first appearance on the Elizabethan stage is recorded four years earlier (1590) in *2 Seven deadly Sins* played by the Stranger's Men. Cf. Edwin Nungezer, *A Dictionary of Actors* (Cornell, Yale and Oxford: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 331-2. So, by 1604 he had already a career which had lasted for, at least, seven years.

<sup>23</sup>Since H. Harvey Wood's three volumes edition of John Marston's plays has no line numbering, I am using here a single volume of Marston's *The Malcontent*, edited by W. David Kay (London: A & C. Black and New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), p. 9.

wit'(9.77-79),<sup>24</sup> Will Sly claims to be 'one that never studied the art of memory' but is nevertheless able to 'walk but once down by the Goldsmiths' Row in Cheap, take notice of the signs, and tell you them with a breath instantly.' (Induction, 101 and 104-106). In a clown's vein, he declares that he has the play's jests ready in his 'table-book'. And in his function as a mocking Blackfriars gallant, he has Sincklo as his foil. Furthermore, through his clownish prerogative, he does not fear hissing. Conversely, Will Sly addresses himself to the audience saying: 'I'll hold my life thou took'st me for one of the players.... Hiss at me! He that will be laughed out of a tavern or an ordinary shall seldom feed well or be drunk in good company' (4-5 and 9-11). In the case of the Sly/Slie of the *Shrew* plays, the meaning attached to his name is reinforced by his professional occupation. As a tinker he is already stereotyped as a deceiver. As we have already seen (page 102, note 16), this is exactly how Harman conceived it. According to him, the tinkers have many means of making their work more profitable; to assist in the process 'they lyue with deceite'.

When Sly is thrown out of the alehouse in *The Shrew's* first scene, he strongly reacts against being treated as a rogue saying: 'The Slys are no rogues. Look in the Chronicles, we came in with *Richard Conqueror*' ('Induction 1', 3-4). These words have often been taken as Sly confusing Richard Coeur-de-Lion with William the Conqueror. No doubt this is quite possible since Sly is not intended to be an intellectual, but this may also be a pun on the name Sly relating it to a certain clown type.<sup>25</sup> Indeed *Richard* Tarlton was one of those people (certainly the most important

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<sup>24</sup>See John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins, *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* in Anthony Parr (ed.), *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, (Manchester University Press: Manchester and New York, 1995), p. 105. According to David Wiles, this play (1607) dramatizes the meeting that happened in the summer of 1601 in Rome between Kemp and Sir Anthony Shirley. Accordingly, says Wiles, 'Day did at least know Kemp well, for he wrote for Worcester's Men in 1602, so the scene is of some value for its impression of Kemp's character.' See David Wiles, op. cit., pp. 36-7.

<sup>25</sup>Shakespeare is said to have made this kind of pun of himself with the name *Conqueror*. In 13 March 1601, after a performance of *Richard III* (played by Richard Burbage), 'there was a citizen greue soe farr in liking with him, that before shee went from the play shee appointed him to come that night vnto hir by the name of Ri: the 3. Shakespeare overhearing their conclusion went before, was intertained, and at his game ere Burbidge came. Then message being brought that Rich. the 3<sup>d</sup> was at the

of them) who in 1583 had raised the ‘common player’ to the status of Queen Elizabeth’s Men. Moreover, Tarlton is one who—alongside Thomas Wilson—figures in the *Chronicle of England*.<sup>26</sup> So fact then, along with Richard Tarlton, the clowns (‘The Slys’) and, by extension, the players were entered in the Chronicles.

When Sly describes his professional status, we have something like a statement of his clown’s descent: ‘by birth a pedlar, by education a cardmaker, by transmutation a bearherd, and now by present profession a tinker’. (Induction 2, 17-19). His birth as a pedlar directly links him to the entertainment in public markets. The pedlar would attract customers in the public square by announcing his goods in the form of rhyming couplets. Autolycus, one of the clownish characters in *The Winter’s Tale*, gives us an example of a pedlar who, as a vendor of small wares, sings his rhymes in a jestmonger vein:

Lawn as white as driven snow,  
Cypress black as e’er was crow,  
Gloves as sweet as damask roses,  
Masks for faces, and for noses;  
Bugle-bracelet, necklace amber,  
Perfume for a lady’s chamber;  
Golden coifs, and stomachers

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dore, Shakespeare caused returne to be made that William the Conquerour was before Rich. the 3. Shakespeare’s name William.’ This passage is quoted in E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 202. Also quoted in S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare’s Lives*, New Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 17.

<sup>26</sup>‘Comedians and stage-players, of former time were vere poore and ignorant, in respect of these of this time, but being (nowe) growne very skilfull and exquisite Actors for all matters, they were entertained into the service of diuers great Lords, out of wich companies, there were xii. of best chosen, and at the request of Sir Francis Walsingham, they were sworne the Queenes servants, & were allowed wages, and liveries, as groomes of the chamber: and untill this yeere 1583, the Queene hadde no players, among these xii. players, were two rare men, viz. Thomas Wilson for a quicke delicate refined extemporall witte, and Richard Tarleton for a Wondrous plentifull pleasant extemporall wit, hee was the wonder of his time: hee lyeth buried in Shore-ditch Church.’ See entry for *Players* in *The Annales, or Generall Chronicle of England*, [which] begun first by maister Iohn Stow, and after him augmented with matters forreyne, and domestique, anncient and modern, vnto the ende of this present yeere 1614. by Edmond Howes, gentleman, Londini Impensis Thome Adms. (1615), p. 697.

For my lads to give their dears;  
 Pins and poking-sticks of steel,  
 What maids lack from head to heel  
 Come buy of me, come, come buy, come buy;  
 Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry. Come, buy!  
 (4.4.219-30)

Autolycus, in his own words, suggests his kinship with the Vice tradition ('Vices, I would say, sir.' [4.3.93]). Feste in *Twelfth Night* is even more explicit about his origins as a clown, 'like the old Vice' (4.3.127). Autolycus is indeed a fool/Vice as described by Wiles. His outlook is also defined by his professional occupation. If Autolycus is now a pedlar, he is, like Sly, also an archetype of a particular 'professional' environment in Elizabethan times. Being sly, he describes himself to the Clown—though he pretends to speak about someone else—as a person who has had 'many knavish professions' and is 'settled only in rogue' (4.3.98). According to him, he 'hath been since an ape-bearer, then a process-server—a bailiff—then he compassed a motion of the Prodigal Son, and married a tinker's wife.' (4.3.94-6).<sup>27</sup> Although his mention of having been a process-server, or bailiff, seems to form a contrast with the 'knavish professions' he has listed, his other occupations are related to the world of entertainment. He was 'an ape-bearer', or in other words, a keeper of a performing ape. He has also 'compassed a motion of the Prodigal Son'; and this, according to Orgel, means that he 'either acquired or went about with a puppet-show'.<sup>28</sup>

As a pedlar by birth, Sly of *The Shrew* belongs to an environment which relates him to the world of jestmongers. By 'education' he is a cardmaker, which gives him the status of a plain Englishman. By 'transmutation' he returns to the world of popular entertainment as a bear-herd.<sup>29</sup> Sly's basic characteristics, a 'drunkard' and a 'simple

<sup>27</sup>Ann Thompson has already noticed that Autolycus, like Sly, 'has had a similar career in marginal occupations'. Cf. her edition of *The Shrew*, op. cit., p. 53 n.16-18.

<sup>28</sup>See Stephen Orgel (ed.), *The Winter's Tale* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 167 notes 93-4.

<sup>29</sup>Establishing the difference between Armin and his predecessors, David Wiles points out that 'the projection of multiple identities is the staple of Armin's clowning. It is this quality which above all else sets him apart from Tarlton's eternal peasant and

peasant', embody Tarlton's projected image. On the other hand, being by 'education' a cardmaker and by 'transmutation' a bear-herd, these characteristics associate him with Kemp's projected image as a common Englishman having also the clown's plebeian taste as a lover of 'Beare-bayting'.<sup>30</sup> Now, 'by present profession' he is a tinker which—as well as confirming his low status—once again relates him to the world of the public square. To be precise, it merges him with—and places him inside—a whole world of popular merriment. In *Two Maids of More-clacke* (1609) written by Robert Armin (the last Shakespearean Clown) we find the evidence which links a tinker to the world of mountebanks: 'Lady. Is this the tinker you talke on? / Hum. I madame of Twitnam, I have seene him licke out burning fire brands with's tongue, drink two pence from the bottome of a full pottle of ale, fight with a Mastie, & stroke his mustachoes with his bloody bitte fist, and sing as merrily as the sobrest Querester.' In this play, *Toures* is depicted as an archetypal tinker. In his own words to his boy, he says: 'Tis rare to be a tinker boy, worke inough, wench inough, and drinke inough'. So, like a 'Querester' at work he is known as 'the merry tinker of Twitnam'.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, his is part of the Elizabethan players' family tree. As M. C. Bradbrook points out, 'The players themselves represented the heralds and minstrels; the liveried household servants; the provincial craftsmen; and the humble "lads of the parish" with a kettle for a helmet and wooden sword. For many of them were sons of such men.'<sup>32</sup>

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Kemp's plain Englishman.' See David Wiles, op. cit., p. 139. Moreover, Kemp was considered the 'Vice-gerent General to the Ghost of Dick Tarlton.' Cf. the 'Dedicatory Epistle to Kemp' in (?) Thomas Nashe's *An Almond for a Parrot*, *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, vol. III, op. cit., p. 341.

<sup>30</sup>*Kemps nine daies wonder* (ed.) Susan Yaxley (Stibbard, Norfolk: Larks Press, 1985), p. 5.

<sup>31</sup>Robert Armin, *The History of the Two Maides of More-clacke* in J. P. Feather (ed.), *The Collected Works of Robert Armin*, vol. 2, (New York and London: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1972), Sig. C 3<sup>v v</sup>

<sup>32</sup>Muriel Clara Bradbrook, *The Rise of The Common Player: A Study of Actor and Society in Shakespeare's England*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), p. 38.

### **Sly: A Major Clownish Character Played by The Company's Major Clown**

In *The Shrew* we have two of Sly's elaborated scenes at the beginning of the play, and a third final scene, in which (as we have already seen) he does not seem particularly enthusiastic about the show which is presented to him. In *A Shrew* the mediation between these two worlds is made clear early in the play when Slie says: 'Sim, stand by me and we'll flout the players out of their coats.' (2.53-4). Slie interrupts the show he is watching three times, and his short lines—which add nothing to the main plot—have an impromptu flavour.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, his seemingly irrelevant interruptions resemble nothing so much as a clown's by-play. For example, referring to Valeria and Kate's entrance he says: 'O brave, here's two fine gentlewomen.' (3.315). This, according to Miller, is 'Sly's error, surely intended as humour. Valeria must hear this and react visually.'<sup>34</sup> While accepting Miller's view, I would add that Slie's lines seems to corroborate the view that the Elizabethan stage was highly self-conscious. Slie, using his clownish prerogative, is mocking the cross-gender convention, since Valeria (now as man) could be the one who doubled up as his 'lady'.

In *The Shrew* the speechless Sly does not give us such a clear idea of his function as his counterpart in *A Shrew* does. However, Sly's well-planned scenes at the beginning of the play, which are useful as a picture of a tinker's disruptive behaviour, strongly contrast with his 'mute' presence as the play progresses. Perhaps his frustrated wooing was to be enacted as a jig at the end of *The Shrew*. This would also

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<sup>33</sup>Technically Slie does not disrupt the show, his interference (like the Sly single one) always happens between scenes, except for the moment he interferes in the middle of a scene at 13.45-54. However it happens, according to the stage direction, after *Phylotous and Valeria runs way*, and a new situation develops.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 78 n. 316. According to Wentersdorf, Slie's 'mistake' is an echo of the First Folio version (2.1). Thus, since that scene 'opens with the entrance of Katherina and Bianca,... the Sly episode in the Quarto must here embody the reporter-writer's memory of the action in the Shakespearean version.' Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'The Original Ending of *The Taming of the Shrew*, op. cit., p. 208. Strongly rejecting Wentersdorf's view, H. J. Oliver argues that 'the order of the action is not quite the same in the two texts at this point and it would seem too stupid even for a reporter to keep "gentlewomen" and not notice that it was wrong. An alternative explanation remains possible: Sly was to be represented as befuddled once again.' H. J. Oliver, op. cit., p. 28.

offer a new interpretation for Sly's seeming apathy when we hear of him for the last time in the play; and his words 'Would 'twere done!' would gain a new significance in this context. In this case—as a by-play—a clown who is waiting to do his show lets the audience know of his impatience.

The jig as an extra show offered on the Elizabethan and Jacobean public stage is well documented. The relationship between this kind of entertainment and Kemp's clowning has already been investigated by scholars such as Chambers, Wiles and Gurr. Moreover, the jig is the sole subject of Baskerville's intense investigation. Therefore, since the subject has already been so well-analysed, it is unnecessary within the scope of this work to deal with this topic extensively. Nevertheless, it will be useful to give some information about the jig in order to help establish the direction of my argument in terms of seeing Sly as a Tarltonian clownish role, and Kemp the comedian who plays it.

### **The Jig as an Afterpiece**

Although only a few English jigs have survived, the characteristics of this type of additional entertainment are referred to by various authors of the period. Thomas Nashe, for instance, at the end of his *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Diuell* (1592), alludes to it, comparing his own work to the kind of entertainment seen in the public theatres: 'I streight leapt ouer to the latter end, / Where like the quaint Comædians of our time, / That when their plays is doone doe fall to ryme'(19-21).<sup>35</sup> And, as Charles Read Baskervill points out, although 'the fuller and more definite records of the stage jigs begin' to appear shortly after Tarlton's death, it is likely that this kind of entertainment had emerged during his career 'simply because he is the first actor around whose name anecdote and allusion gathered.'<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Tarlton

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<sup>35</sup>Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penillesse his Suplication to the Diuell* in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, Edited From the Original Texts by Ronald B. McKerrow, Reprinted from the Original Edition with Corrections and Supplementary Notes, by F. P. Wilson, vol. I (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), p. 244.

<sup>36</sup>Charles Read Baskervill, *The Elizabethan Jig* (The University of Chicago Press,



had developed the jig's 'varied possibilities to such a point that at his death the foundation was already laid for its astonishing popularity during the next two or three decades.'<sup>37</sup>

There are several well-known instances in Shakespeare's plays where a kind of extra entertainment is suggested, or even specified. Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* says he will 'get Peter Quince to write a ballad' of his dream, which he will sing 'in the latter end of a play'. (4.1.211) The Epilogue in *2 Henry IV* says: 'If my tongue cannot entreat you to acquit me, will you command me to use my legs? And yet that were but light payment—to dance out of your debt.'(17-19). In *Antony and Cleopatra* (c. 1606), Shakespeare is showing us more than just a manifestation of Cleopatra's grief in her awareness of a coarse mockery of her tragic story as a stage jig:

*Cleopatra* Nay, 'tis most certain, Iras. Saucy lictors  
Will catch at us like strumpets, and scald rhymers  
Ballad us out o' tune. The quick comedians  
Extemporally will stage us, and present  
Our Alexandrian revels. Antony  
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see  
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness  
I'th' posture of a whore.

*Iras* O, the good gods!

*Cleopatra* Nay, that's certain.

(5.2.210-18)

Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour* (1599) also refers to this kind of extra entertainment after a play: 'a thing studied, and rehearst as ordinarily at his comming from hawking or hunting, as a jigge after a Play' (2.2.36-9).<sup>38</sup> It also appears in John Marston's *Iack Drums Entertainment: or The Comedie of Pasquill and Katherine*

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1929), pp. 105-6.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>38</sup>Ben Jonson, *Every Man out of his Humour* in C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (eds), *Ben Jonson*, vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 467.

(1600) where we have ‘As the Iigge is cal’d for when the Play is done’ (Act I)<sup>39</sup>. And this kind of show—probably a clown’s jig—was witnessed at the Globe by the Swiss tourist, Thomas Platter, on 21 September 1599, after a performance of ‘the first Emperor Julius’.<sup>40</sup>

Notwithstanding its popularity, the jig farce tended to be seen as offensive to educated taste. Edmund Spenser’s Thalia (the muse of comedy) in her laments about a ‘golden age’ which is gone alludes to that fashion as ‘vaine toyes the vulgare entertaine’. So, as the ‘sweete delights of learnings treasure’ have gone,

In stead thereof scoffing Scurrilitie,  
And scornfull Follie with Contempt is crept,  
Rolling in rymes of shameless ribaudrie  
Without regard, or due Decorum kept,  
Each idle wit at will presumes to make,  
And doth the Learneds taske upon him take.<sup>41</sup>

While Spenser only elegantly alludes to it, other authors such as John Fletcher (in the prologue to his *The Fair Maid of the Inn*) and Ben Jonson (in his epistle ‘To the Readers’ to his 1612 Quarto edition of *The Alchemist*) and Thomas Dekker (in his 1613 pamphlet *A Strange Horse-race*) quite clearly show their abhorrence for this kind of extra entertainment. While Dekker complains that the plebeian custom has been ‘clapt at, and every rhime / prais’d and applauded by a clam’rous chime’,<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>John Marston, *Jacke Drums Entertainment* in H. Harvey Wood (ed.), *The Plays of John Marston*, vol. III (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyed, 1939), p. 193.

<sup>40</sup>See *The Journals of Two Travellers in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England: Thomas Platter and Horatio Busino*, edited by Peter Razzell (London: Caliban Books, 1995), pp. 26-27. See also O. J. Campbell and E. G. Quinn (eds.), *The Reader’s Encyclopedia of Shakespeare*, (London: Methuen, 1966), p. 634. Platter’s accounts of assisting two plays in London is also quoted integrally in Gurr’s *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, op. cit., p. 222.

<sup>41</sup>Edmund Spenser, *The Tears of the Muses*, William A. Oram, Einar Bjorvand, Ronald Bond, Thomas H. Cain, Alexander Dunlop and Richard Schell (eds), *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 276-7.

<sup>42</sup>Thomas Dekker, *A Strange Horse-Race, At the end of which, comes in The catsh-pols Masque. And After that the Bankrouts Banquet: Which done, the Divill,*

Jonson laments that ‘in this Age, in Poetry, especially in Plays: wherein, now, the Concupiscence of Iigges and Daunces so raigneth, as to runne away from Nature, and be afraid of her, is the onely point of art that tickles the Spectators.’<sup>43</sup> As Chambers points out, this enduring afterpiece known as jig was

At first, perhaps, nothing more than such dancing, with the help of a variety of foreign costumes, as was also an element in the early masks, it developed into a farcical dialogue, with a musical and Terpsichorean accompaniment, for which popular tunes, such as *Fading*, were utilized. This transformation was perhaps due to the initiative of Tarlton, to whom several jigs are attributed. But he was followed by Kemp and others, and in the last decade of the sixteenth century the jig may be inferred from the Stationers’ Registers to have become almost literary type. Nashe in 1596 threatens Gabriel Harvey with an interlude, and ‘a Jigge a the latter end in English Hexameters of *O neighbour Gabriell, and his wooing of Kate Cotton*.<sup>44</sup>

It is clear that this Carnival-like show was highly esteemed by the popular audience and, perhaps for this reason alone, it was deplored by the snobbish English Renaissance élite. Dekker, in the pamphlet cited above, whilst at the same time showing his disgust for this kind of show, paints a vivid picture of the carnivalesque

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*falling sicke, makes his last will and Testament, this present yeare 1613*, (London, 1613), Sig. C3<sup>v v</sup>

<sup>43</sup>Although I am using C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson edition of Jonson’s Plays, here I am quoting a facsimile copy printed in 1927 of the 1612 Quarto, to be found in The British Library. In this copy we have the following publisher’s note: ‘This edition of Ben Jonson’s *The Alchemist* printed and made in England in 1927. London, 1927 a facsimile copy.’ My reason for this is that both the 1616 and the 1640 have omitted the word ‘Iigges’ only found the earlier edition of the play. For a textual analysis of the play, including a comparison between the three editions, see Herford and Simpson, op. cit., vol. V, pp.275-81.

<sup>44</sup>E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), pp. 551-2. According to Lawrence, ‘In its perfect form the jig was a rhymed farce based on some old folk-tale and entirely sung and danced to popular tunes. Generally arranged for four or five characters, it was purely an after-piece and rarely lasted more than twenty minutes or half an hour. But it had no [*sic.*] slightest resemblance to the modern music-hall medley, with its rapid transitions and mere snatches of tune. Not more than four or five airs were pressed into service in any jig; and the air, once introduced and sung to by various characters, was not interrupted until some new development of the action took place.’ W. J. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 363.

entertainment. He gives us a colourful image of how the jig farces might have seemed to the ‘groundlings’<sup>45</sup>:

Now, as after the cleare strame hath glided away in his owne current, the bottome is muddy and troubled; and as I have offten soene, after the finishing of some worthy Tragedy, or Catastrophe in the open Theatres, that the Sceane after the Epilogue hath beane more blacke (about a nasty bawdy Jigge) than the most horrid Sceane in the play was: The Stinkards speaking all things, yet no man understanding any thing; mutiny being amongst them, yet none in danger: no tumult, yet no quietnesse: No mischief begotten, and yet no mischief borne: the swiftness of such a torrent, the more it overwhelmes, breeding the more pleasure.<sup>46</sup>

According to the records, on October 1, 1612 the General Session of the Peace at Westminster issued ‘An Order for suppressinge of Jigges att the ende of Playes’.<sup>47</sup> However the fashion of having a jig as part of a given play seems to have been a custom which survived—at least in the more popular theatres such as the Fortune, the Curtain and the Red Bull—until late in the Jacobean period. Referring to the Order of 1612 to suppress jigs at the *end* of plays and to the persistence of jigs, despite the Order, Lawrence sees that a ‘way suggested itself to the players whereby they could at once evade this edict and get rid of the undesirable type of deadhead. And they

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<sup>45</sup>The word I am using here (‘groundlings’) is, according to Shepherd and Womack, clearly used by Hamlet as a joke: ‘if “groundling” was in ordinary Elizabethan use at all, it seems to have meant a kind of fish; by applying it to the people standing on the ground in the theatre, Shakespeare is inviting the actor to tease them, just as Jonson teases them, more deviously, by calling them “under-standing gentlemen”’. Simon Shepherd and Peter Womack, *English Drama: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), p. 111. For an extensive analysis of the ‘word, and [how] the prejudice it expresses, have become naturalized ... in the critical discourse’ (p.111), see their Chapter 4: ‘The Image of Elizabethan Drama’, section 4: ‘Groundlings’, pp. 110-121.

<sup>46</sup>Thomas Dekker, op. cit., Sig. C3<sup>v v</sup>

<sup>47</sup>This edict, which is quoted in Lawrence (1919), p 364, Baskervill (1929), p. 116; and Gurr (1996), ‘Appendix 2’, p. 234, can be found in John Cordy Jeaffresson, *Middlesex County Records*, vol. II (London: The Middlesex County Records Society, 1887), pp. 83-4.

took it. Instead of giving the jig at the end they presented it in one of the earlier intermissions.<sup>48</sup>

Indeed, this type of additional entertainment seems somehow to have survived to an even later period. In James Shirley's prologue to his *The Doubtful Heir* (c.1640)—specially written to be presented at the Globe—we find the author's excuses for a lack of such extra entertainment.

All that the Prologue comes for, is to say,  
Our Author did not calculate this play  
For this meridian; the Bankside, he knows,  
Are far more skilful at the ebbs flows  
Of water, than of wit; he did not mean  
For the elevation of our poles, this scene.  
No shews, no dance, and what you most delight in,

...

No bawdry, nor no ballads; this goes hard;  
But language clean; and, what affects you not,  
Without impossibilities the plot:  
No clown, no squibs, no devil in't; ...<sup>49</sup>

Although the Tarltonian model (influencing successors such as William Kemp, Thomas Greene, William Rowley, and others)<sup>50</sup> continued to delight audiences until

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<sup>48</sup>W. J. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 364. As evidence for his conclusion Lawrence quotes Shirley's *The Changes, or Love in a Maze* (1632). However, as an article in a newspaper supplement, Lawrence's quotation has no bibliographic references. Thus, I have found Shirley's play in Alexander Dyce (ed.), *The Dramatic Works and Poems of James Shirley*, vol. II (London: John Murray, 1833). There we have: '... Many gentleman / Are not, as in the days of understanding, / Now satisfied without a Jig, which since / They cannot, with their honour call for, after / The play, they look to be serv'd up in the middle: / Your dance is the best language of some comedies, / And footing runs away with all.' (p. 339). The above quotation has some differences from Lawrence's, most of which just relate to contractions and capitals. However there is one, which I feel must be a misprint, and which occurs in the third line: instead of 'without a jig', Lawrence's quotation reads 'with a jig'.

<sup>49</sup>James Shirley, *The Doubtful Heir*, Alexander Dyce (ed.), op cit., vol. IV, p. 279. Also see James Shirley, *Six New Plays* (London, 1653), Sig. A3, in which the front page announces: 'As It was Acted at the private House at Black-Friers, Never printed before. London, 1652'. For an extensive comment on the nature of Shirley's prologue see Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, op. cit., pp. 193-6.

late into the Jacobean period, Tarlton's extemporaneous acting style belonged to an era which is likely to have diminished in resplendence with Kemp's departure from Shakespeare's company (c. 1599). As Gurr observes, 'a reference in 1613 to John Shank leaving the Fortune for the Globe suggests that he stopped performing jigs when he joined his new company. The abandonment of jigs may have been an expression of choice by the company as much as a necessity following Kemp's departure.'<sup>51</sup> However, whether or not the jig had stopped being performed on the Globe stage shortly after Kemp left the company is not really relevant to my analysis. More significant is the fact that Kemp, who was the company's clown, remained a shareholder in the company at least until 1599, and his comedy routines might well have been maintained. Thus, as a jig-maker, 'the Vice-gerent general of Tarlton's ghost' might have his afterpiece performed as a treat for the audience. As W. J. Lawrence, observes, 'when time and season permitted the audience had the right after the play to call for any particular jig in the players' repertory that the whim of the moment suggested.'<sup>52</sup>

Having established what I believe are the grounds on which the Sly role can be seen as having some links with the earlier Shakespearean clown type, I am now in a position to examine the Sly plot in the light of conventions governing Kemp's clowning. This reinforces my suggestion that Sly's apparent silence is part of that convention. Thus his silence in the play's script does not necessarily mean that he has ceased to act simply because he has delivered his last words.

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<sup>50</sup>Although Robert Armin is said to be Tarlton's apprentice (see *Tarlton's Jests*, op. cit., pp. 216-7), he is recognized as a new breed of Shakespearean clown. As a more modern clown, perhaps he was more self-conscious of his role as an actor. This suggests that he, as a playwright, would have followed the rules of a scripted text rather than acting as an improviser.

<sup>51</sup> Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, op. cit., p. 157. The reference to John Shank can be found in William Turner, *A Dish of Lenten Stuffe* (1613) as follow: 'That's the fat foole of Curtain, / and the leane foole of the Bull: / Since *Shanke* did leave to sing his rimes, / he is counted but a gull. / The players of the Banke side, / the round Globe and Swan, / Will teach you idle trickes of love, / but the Bull will play the man.' Cf. H. E. Rollins (ed.), *A Pepysian Garland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 35. See also Gurr's 'Appendix 2', *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>52</sup>W. J. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 363.

### Kemp's Clowning Conventions

Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (c. 1591), a play which also features in Henslowe's list for the season given at Newington Butts in June 1594 by the Admiral's and Chamberlain's Men, has a short part for a clown. This self-contained clown's episode is viewed by Wiles as likely to have been written for the benefit of Kemp's clowning. His reason for believing this is that Kemp was affiliated with Strange's Men, the company which was the first to have possession of the play-text. Moreover, as the author noticed, the text is the only early Shakespearean play in which the word clown appears in the stage directions.<sup>53</sup> Despite the Sly plot having, as we have already seen, a symbiotic relationship with the inner play, it is also a self-contained piece. I suggest that—like the clown's short episode in *Titus Andronicus*—the Sly plot, in a more substantial manner, was also created for the benefit of Kemp's clowning.

If we examine the clownish roles in the *Shrew* plays, we can see a huge difference between the inner play 'fools' and Sly/Slie. If, on one hand, we take Grumio and Biondello in *The Shrew* and Sander and Polidor's boy (Catapie) in *A Shrew*; and, on the other, Tranio in *The Shrew* and Valeria in *A Shrew*, a fundamental difference between the first group and the second lies in their function as stock characters (although all of these characters are clownish servant types). Tranio and Valeria play the clever servants, while the others are butts of their masters. As leading fools of their type, Grumio and Sander mirror the treatment they receive from their master by turning the other servants into their butts. As stock characters, whatever cleverness and/or stupidity they possess constitutes the only means they have of dealing with the circumstances of their social condition. Although all these characters have their elaborate clownish parts, none appears to have the last word in their scenes. This might suggest the existence of a further impromptu, except perhaps in Biondello's longest scene for he finishes it with a jingle (3.2.71-6). And Grumio ends the scene,

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<sup>53</sup> See David Wiles, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 74. According to the 1594 Quarto title-page *Titus Andronicus* was first played by Derby's Men (i.e., Strange's), then Pembroke's, and lastly by Sussex's. See Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-1. See also E. A. J. Honigmann, *Shakespeare: the 'lost years'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 59-60.

in which he is the leader of the clownish servant group, by asking for silence at his master and mistress' arrival (4.1.89-90). Although in *A Shrew* we have two self-contained scenes between Sander and Catapie (3.217-40 and 5.1-46), all the other fool-servant scenes in both plays are intertwined with the plot. As Wiles observes, as a solo entertainer, 'Kemp ... always dominates the stage. Writers do not make him cramp his functioning as part of a master/servant relationship, or trying so to function.... Kemp's roles seem to be structured to allow him to rehearse his own section of the play.' (p. 106). If this is true of characters such as Peter in *Romeo and Juliet* and Dogberry in *Much Ado*, it applies even more in a play like *The Shrew* where the plot of the clownish tinker is not directly linked to the inner play.

With reference to Sly/Slie there is still a marked difference between the two plays. While in *The Shrew* Sly always has the last line, in *A Shrew*, apart from his first scene and his impromptu-like interventions, Slie's scenes are always closed by the Lord. Sly's scenes always tend to occur before the beginning of a new scene. Therefore if any additional words were to be added by means of improvisation they could have been accommodated without disturbing the play's flow. This is exactly what happens in *A Shrew*, even when the impression is given that Slie has interrupted a particular scene. A good example of this occurs at the critical moment of a particular scene in which Slie's interference serves to demonstrate his anxiety: 'I say we'll have no sending to prison' (13.45). This comment is very well placed for it would amuse the audience, as the tinker was threatened with prison for wrongdoing at the beginning of the play. And, with respect to the clown's convention, even in this case, Slie's seeming interference in the play's business actually occurs (as I have already stated on page 112, note 34) before a new situation takes place.

As Wiles observed, all Kemp's 'roles are structured in order to allow for at least one short scene in which he speaks directly to the audience.' (p. 107). In Sly's speeches in *The Shrew* at the end of his scenes there is always an element which, I suggest, forms a kind of flirtation with the audience which knows very well the type of character he is. As an anti-hero of the misrule tradition, Sly engenders an immediate emotional response in an audience which could be either on his side or



against him. For instance, in his first scene on threat of being arrested, rather than run away he says: 'Let him come, and kindly' (Induction 1.11). Typical of farce, Sly's words generate an expectation of further developments which is frustrated by the Lord's arrival on the scene. When the inner play is announced, Sly speaks in the first person plural: 'Well, we'll see't'. However this does not seem to refer to his 'lady' to whom he addresses the next line. Instead his words seem to incorporate the audience in the theatre, whose representative he is. Or, insofar as Sly is playing a 'lord', his words could also be interpreted as relating to the plural of majesty. However, his nostalgic line 'We shall ne'er be younger' seems to refer to his own situation as a frustrated lover, and the audience, again, would recognize what the tinker was referring to. According to Wiles, as a general rule, sexual consummation was denied to the clown most of the time. This was reserved for the lovers in the plays; the clown's successful wooing had to wait for the jig at the end of the play.<sup>54</sup> In *A Shrew* this situation is also suggested in Sander's seemingly odd declaration of his desire towards Emelia, which provokes the anger of Polidor's boy:

But in my mind, sirrah, the youngest is very pretty wench,  
and if I thought thy master would not have her, I'd have a  
fling at her myself. I'll see soon whether 'twill be match or  
no. And it will not, I'll set the matter hard for myself, I  
warrant thee. (5.23-7)

As the angry Catapie, offended by this, threatens to cut off one of the legs of his master's rival, Sander's response is similar to Sly's frustration: 'O cruel judgment!' (5.30). Sander's apparent piece of nonsense can be understood if we see his words

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<sup>54</sup>See David Wiles, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-60 and 111-2. Analysing the conventions governing Kemp's scripted roles Wiles observes that 'In his Plautine *Comedy of Errors*, Shakespeare closes off the narrative of Dromio's relationship with Nell. The classically trained [George] Chapman secures a wife for Pego. These are exceptions to the general rule ... Gratiano can be married off, but not Launcelet. Costard, Launce and Bottom fail to bring their wooings to any kind of conclusion. The relationship between Juliet's nurse and "her man" is not clarified. The original Cob never comes on stage to be reconciled with his wife. Cock is dragged away from an embrace with the bawd. Jenkin pledges his hand and heart to Sisly Milk-pale, but we are not apprised of the outcome. Singer's clown fares no better than Kemp's.' p. 112.

as an anticipation of a clown's jig, in which his pleas for a match could have some chance of fulfilment. Appropriately, it is the clownish characters who remind the audience of the carnivalesque show at the end of the play. In his analysis of the subject, David Wiles examines the 1601 Quarto version of Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* for evidence of the 'ever methodical' playwright's control over the jig business which would be presented after his play. In this version, which was written to be performed at the Curtain by the Chamberlain's Men, we have sixteen characters; and, as Wiles reminds us, at the end of the play when—except for Cob—all the other characters are on stage for the final scene, Clement promises he will entertain everyone with 'the very spirit of mirth' (5.3.443).<sup>55</sup> Thus, according to the author,

It is reasonable deduction that the player of Cob is absent from the final scene because he is making ready to provide this 'spirit of mirth'. Three other characters are off the stage prior to Clement's announcement: Peto, in his borrowed armour, Matheo and Bobadilla have been told to 'sing some ballad of repentance ... to the tune of *who list to leas and a soldier's life*'. There is no reason why we should not take Jonson at his words, or almost. These three actors are going to re-emerge, dressed in extraordinary costumes, to join Cob, the clown, and to sing a kind of ballad. 'Matheo', having failed to respond to Clement's challenge to 'make verses ... *extempore*', will have a second chance.<sup>56</sup>

Early on in *The Shrew*, Sly's final scene perhaps contains clues which allow us to see his words as an advertisement for his jig at the end of the show. As already stated, his words in this context would gain a new significance. It is interesting to note that at the moment we have already almost forgotten Sly, our attention is recalled by his 'lady' as she complains he is not minding the play: 'My lord, you nod'. Besides affirming that he is ('Yes, by Saint Anne, do I'), Sly says: 'Comes there any more of it?', and 'Would 'twere done!' (1.1.239-41). These, as far as the script's text is concerned, are Sly's last words. If we consider these words alongside those in which he shows the type of entertainment he seems to be acquainted with ('a comonty, a Christmas gambold or tumbling trick' [Induction 2.132-3]), we obtain a

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<sup>55</sup>Ben Jonson, *Every Man in His Humour*, C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (eds.), *Ben Jonson*, vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 289.

stronger reference to the type of extra show which was also offered by Shakespeare's company in the 1590s. Furthermore, when Sly suggests that the play would be 'household stuff' (Induction 2.135) this may be an echo of 'a ballad, of master Kemps *Newe Jigge of the Kitchen-Stuff Woman*', which was entered to William Blackwall on May 2, 1595. Unfortunately, this is a lost piece; however, as Baskervill points out, the 'railing of kitchen-stuff woman ... is usual in ballad literature. In the ballad printed by Ford as Text 17, a husband and a wife who is a kitchen-stuff rail at each other.'<sup>57</sup> This ballad, with the main title removed, is, according to the secondary title, *A merry discourse 'twixt him [a tinker] and his [wife] Joane*, and was written by Edward Ford.<sup>58</sup> This piece, dealing with ordinary folk (the street workers) is a good example of a recurring theme frequently found in the literature of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period and, as Baskervill suggests, Kemp's lost jig would have been one of the same sort. Thus, if a jig were to have followed the *Shrew* plays, I suggest that one of this type would have been highly appropriate. So, let us examine why.

At the end of *A Shrew* we have Slie saying 'I'll to my wife presently, / And tame her too, and if she anger me', and the Tapster decides to go home with him to 'hear

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<sup>56</sup>David Wiles, op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>57</sup>Charles Read Baskervill, op. cit., p. 291. The reference given by Baskervill to Ford's ballad as Text 17 is in fact the number he gives to it in the Part II of his book. Cf. pp. 423-7. Ford's ballad can be also found in the *Roxburghe Ballads*, vol. I, op. cit., pp. 248-53. Although *Kemps nine daies wonder* (1600) is the only work we can securely attribute to Kemp, the title quoted above alongside three others, entered in the Register by 1595 as 'the Third and last parte of Kemps a merrie new Jigge betwene Jenkin the Collier and Nansie, 'a ballad intituled *A Pleasant newe Jigge of the broome-man*', with the name Kemps on the side entry, and *Kemps newe Jigge betwixt, a souldior and a Miser and Sym the clown [Singing Simpkin]*. Cf. Baskervill, op. cit., pp. 107-8. Adding to *Singing Simpkin*, a proper jig with four characters, Wiles acknowledges as attributed to Kemp three other proper jigs. Of those two (*Singing Simpkin* and *Rowlands god sonne*) are English and the other two German versions (*Roland genandet* and *Zwery Schone newe Lieder*). According to him, *Singing Simpkin* and *Roland genandet* are 'certainly Kemp's', while the others are, 'at the least, modelled on his style.' David Wiles, op. cit., pp. 48 and 197 n. 18. All the jigs mentioned by Wiles are printed by Baskervill (1927), pp. 437-49 and 491-7.

<sup>58</sup>As Baskervill points out, Edward Ford began his activities in the 1630s 'as the stage jig declined'. However, his piece 'was almost certainly designed for singing dramatically'. Baskervill, op. cit., p. 172.

the rest that thou hast dreamt tonight' (15.20-23). This would fit in with the possibility of Slie's story being continued as an extra entertainment, which in turn, might bear a resemblance to the domestic brawl between the drunkard tinker and his wife related in Ford's ballad. In this respect, the description of a tinker found in Harman's work (1567) cited above is very helpful. According to him, tinkers 'neuer go with out their Doxes'; also if 'their women haue anye thing about them, as apparel or lynnens, that is worth the selling, they laye the same to gage, or sell it out right, for bene bowse at their bowsing ken.' This picture, besides making clear that the popular image of a tinker is always paired with that of his woman, also confirms his drinking habits as the main reason for his wife's proverbial shrewishness. Indeed, in Ford's *A merry discourse*, this kind of behaviour is the reason for the quarrel between the tinker and his wife Joane: 'Away! / ... / For whilst a drunkard thou thus remaine / ... / What 'tis for to injure a loving wife so, / In pawning her goods, and making her be / A scorne to her neighbours, and all long of thee.' (p. 326, 328). A happy ending is made possible because the tinker promises to mend his ways, and in return his wife (a kitchen-stuff woman) will perform her job to assist her man: 'Then, *Jacke*, take up thy budget straight, / thy kettles, brasse enough / And I will follow thee and cry, / Maides, have you any kitchen-stuffe [to be repaired]?'<sup>59</sup> In *The Shrew* we cannot be absolutely sure that Sly, like Slie, has a wife, although in fact we do not hear that Slie has a wife until the end of *A Shrew*. As we only hear this because the Tapster mentions her, it seems that (as a typical tinker) his marital status is taken for granted in the *Shrew* plays. Nevertheless, even if we cannot be sure about Sly's marital status, the tinker says something that would confirm his type to his audience. When his 'lady' says: 'I am your wife in all obedience', his response is suggestive of someone who knows all about that matter: 'I know it well' (Induction 2.103-4). And, when he asks what to call her: 'Al'ce' or 'Joane' (106), he refers to the usual female names attributed to the lovers of ordinary folk (even Kate is one of these names). Indeed a Joane is the tinker's wife in Ford's ballad mentioned above. These snippets of information which would establish Sly as an archetypal tinker would also make his audience aware of what kind of jig farce they could expect at the end of the play. If

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<sup>59</sup>*Roxburghe Ballads*, vol. I, op. cit., pp. 326, 8, 30.

we allow that the content of Ford's ballad formed a model for the *Shrew* plays' afterpiece, it would not only be a satisfactory resolution for the clown's wooing, but also a farcical outcome for his 'learned lesson': 'surprisingly', instead of taming his wife (as Sly intended to do) the clown has to submit himself to her will in order to have 'physical satisfaction.' These 'antics', deeply rooted in the popular misrule tradition, would have been strongly recognisable to a contemporary audience. As we are going to see in the next section, the *Shrew* plays, as carnivalized drama, retain the world of the clowns' entertainment as an intertextual feature in the plays' main theme as well. And it is perhaps why the Sly/Sly plots are so well interconnected with the inner play.

### **The Clowns' Context**

In the strong resolution Petruchio forms to win Kate's favour, he makes a clear allusion to the farce jigs: 'wealth is burden of my wooing dance' (1.2.65). According to Baskervill, 'In the Renaissance, vigorous dancing was considered appropriate to the wooing, and it would seem still more suitable to the drollery and mockery of the satiric jig or the lively and comic action of the farce jig.'<sup>60</sup> Indeed, Petruchio and Kate's wooing scene is strongly embedded in the clowns' extemporaneous 'battle of wits'; a technique explored by various authors over the period such as John Marston in *The Dutch Courtesan*, and Ben Jonson in *Epicoene, or the Silent Woman*. And Shakespeare will explore it again, in a rather different vein of humour, in *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*. While in the latter the dispute is between a kind of 'philosopher clown' (Feste) and his courtier opponent (Viola), in the former it occurs between would-be lovers (Beatrice and Benedick). In this sense, both *Much Ado* and *The Shrew* resemble the device found in the fool's wooing jigs. While in *Much Ado* the technique is explored in a 'romantic' vein, in *The Shrew* its coarse style is directly attached to the 'antics' type of humour. In this respect, *Tarlton's Jest-Book* is a valuable document in connection with this technique.

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<sup>60</sup>Charles Read Baskervill, op. cit., p. 144. See also Michael West, 'The Folk Background of Petruchio's Wooing Dance: Male Supremacy in *The Taming of the*

A rivalry between an old suitor and a young gallant is also characteristic of this kind of entertainment. Gremio's archetypal character plays an important role in this kind of farce. As Baskervill puts it, 'The old wooer in the singspiel has an obvious kinship to the pantaloon who appeared in early Italian farce, became popular in plays, and passed into the drama of many countries. This kinship may be due to earlier adaptations of the pantaloon either English or German.'<sup>61</sup> Kate, like Tarlton's 'nut-browne lasse' to be found in his *country wench's* jig, is referred to by Petruchio as being 'as brown in hue / as hazel-nuts' (2.1.244-5). As in the *Famous Victories*, Petruchio says: 'everyday I cannot come to woo.' (2.1.111), 'we will be married a Sunday.' (2.1.313)<sup>62</sup> and his pleading 'kiss me, Kate' is heard several times in the play (2.1.313, 5.1.116, and 5.2.180). The phraseology common to *Famous Victories*, *The Shrew* and *A Shrew* and other plays over the period, can be found in the old mummings' wooing plays, ballads and jigs. The wooing of the maid Dalia by the country clown Grimball in George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* (Part I, 4.71), written in 1578, burlesques in particular the type of song in which a kiss is begged and vehemently refused: 'Gri. Come smack me, come smack me, I Long for a smouch, / Da. Go pack thee, go pack thee, thou filthie fine slouch.'<sup>63</sup> The scene in which Ferando is mocked by his servant Sander for his ridiculous wooing (3.190-3) resembles a feature to be found in the old ballads. This applies as well to Gremio being mocked by the youngsters. Kate's threat towards any possible wooer 'with a three-legged stool' (1.1.64) also appears in a dialogue ballad entitled *A merry Dialogue betwixt a married man and his wife, concerning the affairs of his careful life*, in which a shrewish wife threatens her husband with a three-legged stool.<sup>64</sup>

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*Shrew*', *Shakespeare Studies*, vol. VII, (1974), pp. 65-73.

<sup>61</sup>Baskervill, op. cit., p. 262.

<sup>62</sup>As Ann Thompson has observed, this is a refrain of several ballads such as 'I mun be married a Sunday', 'sung by Ralph Roister Doister in 3.3 of Nicholas Udall's play of that name, written c. 1550.' Cf. Ann Thompson (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew*, op. cit., p. 93 n.313.

<sup>63</sup>Not only the stanza which asks for a kiss, but the whole wooing scene between the clown Grimball and the maid Dalia is likely to be a routine echoed by Katherine and Petruchio's scene. See George Whetstone, *The Right Excellent and Famous Historie of Promos and Cassandra* (London, 1578), Sig. ff. The Tudor Facsimile Texts, under the supervision and editorship of John S. Farmer (London, 1910).

<sup>64</sup>See *The Roxburghe Ballads*, vol. II, op. cit., pp. 487-491.

However, the most important element, which clearly defines the type of entertainment the strolling company is skilled at offering, is the reference to Soto, ‘a farmer’s eldest son’ (Induction 1.1.80).<sup>65</sup> This seems to suggest that the play the audience is about to see is akin to the clowns’ wooing farces. Again as Baskervill remarks, ‘A Seasonal lord and his eldest son heir—sometimes the farmer’s eldest son and heir—frequently appear, and the “Eldest Son” is a fairly constant figure among the rivals of the mummers’ wooing plays.’<sup>66</sup> We can also see that in addition to all the ‘colourful’ references that the play seems to make to Warwickshire, its hero (the deceased Antonio’s heir), before he is introduced to Gremio is identified by him as a ‘countryman’ (1.2.183). The epithet clearly alludes to a rustic, an antic and a clown.

Indeed, the character echoes the ‘farmer’s eldest son’ seen by the Lord in a previous performance the company had given. And his background references also relate him firmly to the type. For instance, when referring to Katherine as his goods, the imagery he uses is that of a farmer: ‘my field, my barn, / My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything’ (3.2. 220-1); or when boasting about his Herculean strength to face all sort of perils, he compares the sound of a woman’s tongue as being ‘not half so great a blow to hear / As will a chestnut in a farmer’s fire?’ (1.2.202-3); again his rustic origin is at stake. Echoing the mocking lord ‘Christopher Sly, old Sly’s son of

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<sup>65</sup>The uncertainty about the reference to Soto and its link with the name of the actor Sincklo, which appears in the speech-heading in the First Folio, has made some critics link the episode to a hypothetical earlier version of Fletcher’s *Women Pleas’d* (c. 1620). See, for instance, Brian Morris (1988 [1981]), op. cit., p. 158 n. 86; H. J. Olivier (1982), op. cit., pp. 94-5 n. 85. Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]), op. cit., p. 50 n. 84. As the play the company is about to show is set in Italy, and also concerning its *commedia dell’arte* mode, perhaps it is worth noting that in Jonson’s *Volpone, or The Fox* (c. 1606), Act II Scene II, Volpone is disguised as a mountebank who calls himself Scotto of Mantua and woos Celia (222-48). See C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, op. cit., vol. V, pp. 56-7. According to R. B. Parker, Scotto of Mantua was ‘an Italian actor who gained a considerable reputation as a juggler and sleight-of-hand artist when he visited England between 1576 and 1583. ... by 1605 his name in England was synonymous with clever trickery.’ R. B. Parker (ed.), *Volpone, or The Fox* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), pp. 148-9 note 22. See also Kenneth Richards’ ‘Elizabethan Perceptions of the *Commedia dell’Arte*’ in Gunnar Sorelius and Michael Srigley (eds.), *Cultural Exchange between European Nations during the Renaissance* (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 1993), p. 219.

<sup>66</sup>Charles Read Baskervill, op. cit., pp. 249-50.

Burton-heath', Petruchio (who is likely to be a farmer's eldest son) is a character clearly rooted in the mummers' wooing farce, and thereby entitled to play the 'lord of misrule' of the inner play. In acting like a clown, the tamer could easily be identified with Sly's Tarltonesque character. In fact, Petruchio's clothes at his wedding are a mixture of clown and beggar. In being identified with his privileged audience (Sly), the comedy's hero could be seen as a parody of a tamer.

The strong bond found in the *Shrew* plays with the popular humour of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance enables us to see their style in the light of the 'carnivalized literature' theorized by Mikhail Bakhtin. If, on one hand, Sly/Sly, a 'lord of misrule', can be related to the most important festival of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period (i.e. Christmas), we can see that, on the other, the inner play delves into the popular carnivalesque folk culture. Indeed, the plays' language and symbolism are strongly linked with the mirth to be found in the public squares in this period.



#### IV - A Carnivalized Battle Between the Sexes

‘There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signor Benedick and her’  
(*Much Ado About Nothing*: 1.1.58-9)

I have been suggesting throughout this thesis that Shakespeare’s plays, and especially *The Shrew*, are carnivalized drama. In this last chapter, I will take a step further by analysing the controversial issue of the ‘battle between the sexes’ in the light of Carnival’s grotesque realism. To do so, I will concentrate exclusively on the *Shrew* plays, and apply the ideas so far discussed in order to clarify my point of view. To support my argument I will examine a range of elements to be found in the Shakespearean text which, according to Bakhtin’s theory, are to be found in carnivalized literature. My intention is to examine each of these elements in turn, providing a sequence of exemplary cases rather than a developmental argument. From this sequence a particular mode of approach to *The Shrew* should then begin to be suggested. We begin the discussion by focusing on the heroine and hero’s dramatic function in the play.

Katherina has already been associated with a type of comic character known in Greek as *alazon*. The term, as used by Northrop Frye, comes from Aristotle’s *Ethics* as well as from a short pamphlet called *Tractatus Coislinianus*.<sup>1</sup> The *alazons* or impostors are, according to Frye, to be placed in three categories. As central to the *alazon* group he recalls the Latin *senex iratus* or oppressive father: a character typified by his rages and threats, obsessions and gullibility. Then comes the *miles gloriosus*: a man of words rather than deeds, and finally the pedant. Whilst placing

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<sup>1</sup>This term is explained by Frye as follows: ‘With regard to the characterization of comedy, the *Tractatus* lists three types of comic characters: the *alazons* or impostors, the *eiron*s or self-deprecators, and the buffoons (*bomolochoi*) This list is closely related to a passage in the *Ethics* which contrasts the first two, and goes on to contrast the buffoon with a character whom Aristotle calls *agroikos* or churlish, literally rustic. We may reasonably accept the churl as a fourth character type, and so we have two opposed pairs. The contest of *eiron* and *alazon* forms the basis of the comic action, and the buffoon and the churl polarize the comic mood.’ See Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971 [1957]), p. 172.

Katherina in this category, he argues that female *alazons* are rare. In fact, besides Katherina he draws only one more example of the type: Molière's *précieuse ridicule*. In his view, Katherina (*The Shrew*) 'represents to some extent a female *miles gloriosus*', and Molière's *précieuse ridicule* 'a female pedant'. However, he makes the following point: the 'menace' or siren who gets in the way of the true heroine is more often found as a sinister figure of melodrama or romance than as a ridiculous figure in comedy.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, Frye did not go on to examine the further implications concerning Katherina as an *alazon*, nor did he make any comment on Petruchio as the 'menace' who gets in her way. To be sure, Petruchio is not 'a sinister figure'. Yet, neither can he be classified as a plain, ridiculous stock character to be found in comedies. So, how indeed can he be classed? The problem here is that Petruchio and Katherina's plot does not readily fit into Frye's theory. Although his analysis (in which comedy is described as 'the mythos of spring') is invaluable to our understanding of the archetypal structure of the genre, we cannot satisfactorily apply it to *The Shrew* because of the complexity of the play. According to this archetypal structure:

What normally happens is that a young man wants a young woman, that his desire is resisted by some opposition, usually paternal, and that near the end of the play some twist in the plot enables the hero to have his will. ... At the beginning of the play the obstructing characters are in charge of the play's society, and the audience recognizes that they are usurpers. At the end of the play the device in the plot that brings hero and heroine together causes a new society to crystallize around the hero, and the moment when this crystallization occurs is the point of resolution in the action, the comic discovery, *anagnorisis* or *cognitio*.<sup>3</sup>

Certainly this formula can be comfortably applied, for instance, to Anne and Fenton's plot in *Merry Wives*. But, even in Bianca's subplot of our play, the comic reversal revealing her shrewish disposition is a threat to the happy ending. Indeed, the most striking feature of *The Shrew* in terms of this archetypal structure is that the play

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 163.

reverses the formula. The happy ending, if any, is reserved for the technically opposed characters: Katherina the heroine '*alazon*' and Petruchio the hero '*eiron*'.

Perhaps more helpful to our discussion of the *Shrew* plays' main plot is Frye's analysis of the Aristotelian rustic type, the *agroikos* (churl), 'whose role is that of the refuser of festivity, the killjoy who tries to stop the fun ... More often, however, the churl belongs to the *alazon* group'<sup>4</sup> The function of obstructive personages as killjoys is what interests us at this point. In our texts this role is alternately played first by a shrew, and secondly by a tamer. On the other hand, one can say that hero and heroine also play as the opposed pair named by Frye as the 'buffoon' and 'churl'. If as '*eiron*' and '*alazon*' their contests are 'the basis of the comic action', they also 'polarize the comic mood' more than any other pair of 'buffoon' and 'churl' presented by the play. Frye's theory then, whilst useful up to a point, needs to be supplemented and enlarged on by another body of theory, in this case that of Bakhtin's theory of carnivalized literature.

Although Baptista/Alphonsus is the one who decides that the fairy Bianca/Philena/Emelia cannot be wooed, the real killjoy of the plays' society is Kate. Her bad temper blocks any possibility of festivity. Her bad temper creates an unbearable atmosphere, which affects everybody including herself; nobody is allowed to have fun. As I have already indicated in my first chapter, the *Shrew* plays' taming-theme is strongly rooted in the cultural forms of Carnival type. Thus, as I shall demonstrate in this chapter, the battle between the sexes described in the plays resembles the grotesque battle of Carnival and Lent. This resemblance does not only refer to the obvious battle between hero and heroine. I suggest that the grotesque imagery employed to retell the shrew saga can clearly be seen as a threefold movement: to employ the Bakhtinian terms, we have first carnivalesque battle, then the uncrowning of the carnivalesque spirit, followed by renewal. In other words, the plays allude to the festive cycle of Carnival, Lent, and Easter. As we shall see in detail, the symbolic elements of the cycle are clearly represented in the plays as follows: first, abusive language, transvestism, disguise, grotesque dressing, thrashing,

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 176.

food and drink, followed by fast, vigil, and abstinence, then back to festivity, laughter, and sexual intimacy. All these can be summarized in the inner play as follows: Carnival misrule, Lent quarantine and Easter renewal. We also have to remember this is an enactment, 'a carnival-within-a-carnival'. This means that Kate's 'metamorphosis' from shrew to model wife is no more than a Carnival fantasy. Indeed, the plays themselves take charge of destroying (or uncrowning) the fantasy they have created by presenting Kate's taming as an enactment. Unless this is made clear on the stage, *The Shrew* is meaningless. To begin with I shall analyse the intertextual elements of the main theme, which can perhaps be traced in the folk oral tradition.

### **A Carnivalized Drama**

If we think of the *Shrew* plays as carnivalized literature, we can see both texts as a consistent combination of elements characteristic of public entertainment, classical literature, and an ascetic view of matrimony shaped in a serio-comic mode. As Mikhail Bakhtin pointed out, it is almost impossible to distinguish precise and stable boundaries within the realm of the serio-comic literature. However, he says: 'For all their motley external diversity, they [the genres of serio-comical] are united by their deep bond with *carnivalistic folklore*. They are all—to a greater or lesser degree—saturated with a specific *carnival sense of the world*, and several of them are direct literary variants of oral carnival-folkloric genres.'<sup>5</sup>

According to Bakhtin, the vitality of popular culture from ancient times to the Renaissance provided nourishment for what he called *Carnivalized Literature*. In order to make his theory intelligible, Bakhtin analysed the history of popular comic culture of the period that stretches from the ancient Graeco-Latin to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. As far as his analysis is concerned, this carnivalesque vision of the world can be detected in a number of literary genres which were developed at 'the close of classical antiquity, and again in the epoch of Hellenism. These genres, which

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<sup>5</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, op. cit., p. 107.

according to him were counterpoised by the ancients ‘to the serious genres—the epic, the tragedy, the history, classical rhetoric, and the like’,<sup>6</sup> were classified as belonging to the realm of the *serio-comical* literature. Bakhtin argues that the works put into the serio-comic category were fairly diverse externally but bound together by an inner kinship. As assigned by the ancients themselves, these genres are: the mimes of Sophron, the ‘Socratic dialogues’ (as a special genre), early memoir literature (*Ion of Chios*, *Critias*), pamphlets, the whole of bucolic poetry, Attic comedy, ‘Menippean satire’ (as a special genre) and several other genres as well.

As far as this concerns my analysis of Shakespeare’s *The Shrew*, one of the most important aspects of the serio-comic genres to be seen in the play—and this can also be seen in other Shakespearean texts—is their ‘deliberate multi-styled and heterovoiced nature’.<sup>7</sup> According to Bakhtin,

Characteristic of these genres are a multi-toned narration, the mixing of high and low, serious and comic, they make wide use of insert genres — letters, found manuscripts, retold dialogues, parodies on the high genres, parodically reinterpreted citations; in some of them we observe a mixing of prosaic and poetic speech, living dialectics and jargons (and in the Roman stage, direct bilingualism as well) are introduced, and various authorial masks make their appearance.<sup>8</sup>

The *Shrew* plays (like any other Shakespearean drama) are, in Bakhtin’s sense, a dialogue of ‘voices’. The plays appropriate classical and contemporary literature, popular entertainment, and ecclesiastic, temporal and secular discourse. In the latter, category, we mainly hear the language of the public square; this is used in the plays primarily because their main theme derives from a very ancient earthy motif: *the battle between the sexes*. I would suggest that a possible new way of looking at the Shakespearean *Shrew* is to regard its main theme as an intertextual reassessment of the folk culture of Carnival. Indeed, a full analysis of the *Shrew* plays demands a close examination of their carnivalesque mood, which is comprehensively built upon

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 106-7.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

the folktale from which their main theme derives. As Ann Thompson observes: ‘Discussion of Shakespeare’s sources for *The Shrew* has been confused, firstly by the existence of *A Shrew* and secondly by the reluctance of literary scholars to deal with folktale oral tradition.’<sup>9</sup> My intention here is to make the discussion of the subject as extensive as possible, in order to clarify a reading of Shakespeare’s *Shrew* as carnivalized drama.

We begin with the work of Geoffrey Bullough (1957) on Shakespeare’s sources. In his analysis of *The Shrew* the author argued that the Petruchio and Katherina plot must be regarded as ‘a variant of the Shrew theme common in fabliaux from classical times.’<sup>10</sup> To reach his conclusion, Bullough examined several folktales to be found in, for instance, *A Hundred Merry Tales* (1526); *Tales and Quick Answers* (?1535); Bonaventure Des Périers’ collection of French folk-literature; *Fabliaux et Contes des 12<sup>me</sup> et 13<sup>me</sup> Siècles* (1781); Scoggin’s *Jests* (licensed 1565-6); and, especially, *A Merry Jest of a Shrewde and Curst Wyfe, Lapped in Morrelles Skin, for Her Good Behavyour* (c. 1550),<sup>11</sup> in all of which the ridiculous battle for supremacy between the sexes is the humorous business.

A more recent study on the subject is the work of the folklorist professor Jan Harold Brunvand who—using the historic-geographic or ‘Finnish method’ of folktale analysis—shed light on the shrew-taming theme by showing that it belongs to a widespread oral and literary tradition throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Although his work, a doctoral thesis at Indiana University, was produced in 1961, it

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<sup>9</sup>Ann Thompson (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew*, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>10</sup>See Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, Vol. 1 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp. 57-68.

<sup>11</sup>Bullough renders this title as *The Ballad of the Curst Wife Wrapt in a Morell’s Skin*. Cf. Bullough, op. cit., p. 63. However, the title *A Merry Jest of a Shrewde and Curst Wyfe, Lapped in Morrelles Skin, for Her Good Behavyour* appears in all commentators and editors of *The Shrew*. See the ballad in *Shakespeare’s Library*, vol. IV, edited by W. C. Hazlitt (London: Reeves and Turner, 1875), pp. 415-48.

did not come to light until 1991 when his book was published.<sup>12</sup> As Brunvand acknowledged, the idea of the taming theme in *The Shrew* as being related to the oral folk tradition had been suggested in the past, although these views had not been taken into serious account by editors and critics. Brunvand reviewed the works of the few folklorists who had suggested that the shrew oral tradition was a possible Shakespearean source for Katherina and Petruchio's plot; among them were Karl Simrock (1831), Heinrich Pröhle (1853), Reinhold Köhler (1868) and Mykhaylo Dragomanov (1898). Unfortunately, these researchers were not as well equipped as Brunvand was in 1961 to possess an accurate view of the subject. Brunvand had analysed some thirty-five literary versions of the taming tale and three hundred and eighty-three oral forms of it. He pointed out that

The title 'Taming of the Shrew,' apart from Shakespeare's comedy [and the anonymous *A Shrew*], is often loosely applied to various folktales, literary works, and subliterary works in which a bad wife is improved. However, by folklorists the designation has been chiefly reserved for Tale type 901 in the Aarne-Thompson *Types of the Folktale*, summarized there as follows: 'The youngest of three sisters is a shrew. For their disobedience the husband shoots his dog and his horse. Brings his wife to submission. Wager: whose wife is the most obedient.' This plot, or part of it, is recognizable in several early European literary sources, such as the Middle High German poem *Der vrouwen zuht*, an Old French fabliau *De la Dame Escollée*, a chapter in the fourteenth-century Spanish *El Conde Lucanor* of Don Juan Manuel, one of Straparola's stories from the sixteenth century, and others.... In addition, there are many folktale analogues of the tale, mostly unpublished, from Europe and the East.<sup>13</sup>

Using the historic-geographic method, Brunvand accounts for some thirty countries or national groups where oral versions of a tale type related to the *Shrew* plays can be found. As far as his analysis is concerned, some traits found in both plays are unmistakably bound to that widespread folk oral tradition, while others are

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<sup>12</sup>Indeed, part of Brunvand's work was published earlier as an article. Cf. Jan Harold Brunvand, 'The Folk Origin of *The Taming of the Shrew* in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 17 (1966), 345-59.

<sup>13</sup>Jan Harold Brunvand, *The Taming of The Shrew: A Comparative Study of Oral and Literary Versions* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1991), p. 3.

local variations on the theme.<sup>14</sup> The absurd statements (frequently relating to animals) to which the wife has to agree in order to continue the trip back to her father's home were obviously adapted in the *Shrew* plays to make some of the folktale's traits conform to the theatrical medium. Nevertheless, the striking lecture on women's obedience is a trait to be found only in *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*. This is what distinguishes these versions from their sources and—as I will discuss in the last section of this chapter—adds more material to the plays' intertextuality in terms of parody.

Brunvand's work represents a great advance in understanding the *Shrew* plays' taming theme as belonging to the popular comic tradition. Thus one can build on his achievements to analyse the plays' main motif as firmly rooted in the carnivalesque mood of medieval and Renaissance popular culture. In Tale type 901, which Brunvand traced as being Shakespeare's source for *The Shrew*, the husband tames his shrewish wife by frightening her instead of using physical violence. As the author observes,

There are few taming tales in oral tradition based on miscellaneous cruelty to the wife. These are variously related to the Taming of the Shrew Complex, but they are neither numerous nor very widely

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<sup>14</sup>Other analogues found in the *Shrew* plays: the shrew is the oldest of three daughters; the father is a wealthy man (a merchant); the father personally warns the suitor, friends warn the suitor; father insists that shrew be married first; father offers a large dowry; the groom arrives late for the wedding, he is poorly dressed, he rides on an old nag or a sick horse, he refuses to stay for the wedding celebration; the newly-wedded couple ride home on horses, the taming process occurs on the trip home after the wedding, or at the couple's home, or on a trip to visit the wife's parents; some features concerning the horse on the trip home are also alluded to in *The Shrew* (4.1.53-60): in the folk tale the husband causes wife's saddle girth to break and the wife is forced to walk home over rough ground which spoils her cloths. In the play, according to Grumio's accounts, 'her bridle burst' and 'she waded through the dirt'. Other elements: wife is deprived of food, husband throws food from the table; throws bedding to the floor; mistreats his servants; the wife must agree to absurd propositions for the sake of the trip; the father-in-law's house as place or occasion for the test, after dinner; a cash wager made by the husband's for the most obedient wife; the doubling of the dowry; the husband's outline for the test: the wife has to come at once when called, remove the cap and throw it to the floor, and politely reply to husband's summoning. Cf. Brunvand, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-111.



known. Generally they appear to be either literary plots, unique inventions, or garbled versions of more standard tales.<sup>15</sup>

I would argue that we can accept Brunvand's view that there is no 'physical violence' in *The Shrew* only if we disregard the disastrous trip to Petruchio's country house after the wedding, and Kate's starvation and forced vigil; in fact it is clear that there *are* forms of physical punishment in *The Shrew*. These features (apart from the vigil) also appear in some variant forms of the folktale. 'Physical violence' of this sort is a common trait to be found in the folk taming theme tradition. However, the *Shrew* plays' violence is far from being such as described in *A Merry Jest of a Shrewd and Curst Wyfe, Lapped in Morelles Skin, for Her Good Behavyour* of the 1550s. Neither can it be compared to the physical violence inflicted on women as described by the barbarous employment of the 'cucking', or 'ducking-stool', the 'scold's bridle' and the like, which, according to Linda Boose's analysis, 'were used in bodily punishments meted out in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century English villages and towns to women judged as guilty of so egregiously violating the norms of community order and hierarchy as to have been labelled "scolds" or "shrews."' <sup>16</sup> However, another form of public humiliation which is also discussed by Boose—the 'Skimmington' (an English form of 'Charivari', or 'Rough Music')—is suggested in *The Shrew*; and—as I shall discuss later—is a latent carnivalesque threat in the play.<sup>17</sup>

The carnivalesque literature of the Renaissance is particularly fertile in portrayals of women as a threat to men. In terms of the carnivalesque folk battle between the

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>16</sup>Linda Boose, 'Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly Member' in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 42, n. 2 (Summer 1991), p. 185. For more material concerning punishment inflicted on women, see D. E. Underdown, 'The Taming of the Scold: the Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England' in Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (eds.), *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 116-36.

<sup>17</sup>For a discussion of 'Rough Music' as an expression of hostility (whether light or savage) taking place during the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century in some English villages and towns, see E. P. Thompson, 'Rough Music Reconsidered' in *Folklore*, vol. 130:i (1992), pp. 3-26; also the same author "'Rough Music": Le Charivari anglais' in *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, n. 2 (27<sup>e</sup> année,

sexes, we can see the *Shrew* plays as a reassessment of the ambivalent 'moral' drawn by the fables, farce jigs, jest books, and ballads to be found over the period. In *A Hundred Merry Tales*, for instance, we find several stories related to the battle between the sexes, and seen all together, one could say that the 'bruises' are equally shared by wife and husband. Here, for example, we find a fable relating to the mastering of a wife in which a young married man believes 'that [it] was a good policy to get the mastery of her [the wife] in the beginning'. However, his mastering-strategy proves to be a failure, and he becomes a victim of his own foolish behaviour. He commands his wife, who is cooking dinner, to take a hot pottage from the fire and carry it around the kitchen putting in different places at his 'pleasure'. Under threat she obeys, though not without questioning his foolish instructions. Finally, after asking her to take it high up a ladder, he ends up with whole hot pottage poured on his head. The wife triumphantly remarks: 'now been the pottage there as I would have them.' *A Hundred Merry Tales* was printed in 1526 by John Rastell, the brother-in-law of Sir Thomas More, and it was the first jestbook to be written in the English native tongue, rather than a translation from French, Flemish, or Latin. Its contents seem to have been drawn from the English oral tradition and the moral tag lines are clearly appendages provided by the compiler. Thus, in the tale quoted above, Rastell (in an Erasmian fashion)<sup>18</sup> uses the tale's content as an *exemplum* to draw a moral *sententia* as follows: 'By this tale men may see it is no wisdom for a man to attempt a meek woman's patience too far, lest it turn to his own hurt and damage.'<sup>19</sup>

What the direct language of popular humour recorded in this tale tells us is that the arrogance and foolishness of a husband can have a limit, even for a patient wife. The punch-line 'now been the pottage there as I would have them' is perhaps more hilarious than the damaging action itself. Indeed, the humour of the wife's reaction

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mars-avril 1972), pp. 285-312; Violet Arford, 'Rough Music or Charivari' in *Folklore*, vol. 70 (December 1959), pp. 505-18.

<sup>18</sup>Cf., Desiderius Erasmus, *Adages*, vols. 31-4, translated by Margaret Man Phyllips with notes by R. A. B. Mynors in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, various editors, 66 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974-88).

<sup>19</sup>P. M. Zall (ed.), *A Hundred Merry Tales and Other English Jestbooks of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Lincoln, Nebraska and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), pp. 123-4.

consists of the similarity of her sentence to the kinds of unreasonable statements used by the husband to justify his foolish commands.

The stereotype of men as victims of the 'marriage yoke' (also a prolific popular theme) is nicely depicted by the tale 'Of the wedded men that came to heaven to claim their heritage.'<sup>20</sup> Like the tale examined above, this tale has all the basic ingredients found in the ballads and clown's jig. In a serio-comic mode it shows that heaven, without questioning, is ready to accept a primordial truism: the wife is always to be blamed for the husband's faults. However, enough can be enough, even for the indulgent Saint Peter. The old excuse of the 'yoke of marriage' as a guarantee of free admission to heaven can have a limit, even for the lenient judge at the paradise's gate. So, although it can seem complacent, patriarchal heaven is well aware of men's feeble excuses. In having the third man condemned to hell, folk laughter unmask this ridiculous ready-made truth. As Herbert E. Ryle points out,

The man [Adam], enabled to deny the charge, seeks to excuse himself by laying the blame primarily on the woman, and secondly on Jehovah himself, for having given him the woman as his companion. Guilt makes the man first a coward, and then insolent.<sup>21</sup>

The energetic popular comic tradition of the Middle Ages and Renaissance always made capital out of men's hypocrisy as something to be laughed at. In the *Shrew* plays, while a boy is instructed to play the obedient wife of a drunkard, in the inner comedy a player acts as a shrew to be transformed into an obedient wife of a braggart. In the inner play, which is also part of a practical joke on Sly (who is possibly a henpecked husband), the 'tamed shrew' acts just like as the mocking model of an obedient wife played by Bartholomew: 'My husband and my Lord, my lord and

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 85-6. This was also a widespread theme to be found in the literature of the Continent. See, for instance, Niccolò Machiavelli's *Belfagor*; in a serio-comic mode, his novela epitomizes the popular comic imagery of women as 'troublesome' creature even to the devil himself. Cf. *Macchiavelli: The Chief Works and Others*, translated by Allan Gilbert, vol. 2 (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1965), pp. 879-77.

<sup>21</sup>Herbert E. Ryle (introductions and notes), 'The Book of Genesis' *Cambridge Bible*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), p. 53.

husband, / I am your wife in all obedience.’ (Induction 2.102-3). Bartholomew’s hyperbolic vow, which is paralleled in Kate’s final demonstration of obedience is (as I intend to further demonstrate in this chapter) an important ‘metadramatic’ feature of the play.

Now, to conclude my analysis of the folk tradition from which the *Shrew* plays’ taming-theme seems to derive, it is important to stress that a variant existed of the Tale type testifying that the success of the taming could not be transmitted to others. As in the folktale the shrew is tamed; however, what the story goes on to tell us is that when a friend, or as in Conde Lucanor’s example, the tamer’s father-in-law, tries to apply the same trick to his shrewish wife, the strategy proves a failure.<sup>22</sup> This is also what happens in the *Shrew* plays. Ferando/Petruchio’s ‘taming school’ proves to be (as discussed earlier) an ineffective place of learning. Rather than providing a didactic lesson on male supremacy, the *Shrew* plays are theatrical appropriations of the old carnivalesque theme in which the focus is the battle between the sexes. In the folktale the device of a narrator who tells a story which he has heard from someone else creates an effect of distancing the listener from any actual reality. In their reassessment of the folktale, the *Shrew* plays substitute the ‘once upon a time’—which implicitly begins such narratives—with theatrical artificiality. Thus, stating the taming of Katherina as an enactment, the *Shrew* plays achieve the same result as in the folktale: the plays’ ‘moral’, if any—the enforced taming of the shrew—occurs in what might be called the liminality of a theatrical representation. It is distanced from any actual reality. Furthermore, as we are going to see in the next section, the unmasking of the convention of having boys playing women, which, in addition to accentuating the plays’ ‘metadramatic’ qualities is, I suggest, a device consciously used to increase their carnivalesque mood.

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<sup>22</sup>Cf. ‘Example 35’ in *The Book of Count Lucanor and Patronio*, translated by John E. Keller and L. Clark Keating (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1977), pp. 137-41.

### Boys Playing Woman in the Carnavalesque Shrew

In *The Shrew* the stage direction announces ‘*Enter Players*’ who are greeted by the Lord: ‘Now, fellows, you are welcome’ (Induction 1.75). And it is clear that they are, as usual, an all-male company. In *A Shrew*, which—to borrow Ann Thompson’s words—often has fuller stage directions than *The Shrew*, we have ‘*Enter two of the players with packs at their backs and a Boy*’. It seems reasonable to think that, as in *Hamlet*, by showing the arrival of the all male strolling company, the plays have no intention of concealing the fact the women in *The Taming of the Shrew* are boy players. Moreover, the custom by which women were to be played by boys in women’s apparel is disclosed early in the Induction. As soon as the Lord has given instructions to the players on how to participate in his carnivalesque pageant, he gives instructions to Bartholomew/the Boy on how he should play a ‘wife’ to Sly/Slie’. If, in *A Shrew*, Slie’s ‘wife’ is a boy player of the strolling company, in *The Shrew* ‘she’ is the Page (also a boy player) in the Induction. There are two recent essays on the subject by Michael Shapiro and Juliet Dusinberre, both dated 1993. In general terms, while Dusinberre suggests that the awareness of boys playing women has ‘modified [the] audience perceptions of the power structures represented in the fiction of *The Taming of the Shrew*’<sup>23</sup>, Shapiro sees it as way of enhancing the ‘metatheatrical’ features of the play. Indeed, Shapiro’s ‘Female Impersonation in “*The Taming of the Shrew*”’ is very helpful at this point in my analysis. His view of the theatrical and social constructedness of the female role in *The Shrew* offers a new dimension to the way *The Shrew* might have been perceived by the original audience. Thus, the Lord’s detailed instructions to Bartholomew on how to play a woman’s part are similar to the ways in which the strolling company’s boy actors playing female roles in the inner play would have been instructed. It would have made the audience aware that this kind of instruction was somehow part of a boy’s apprenticeship as a specialist in female impersonation. After his instructions, the Lord says: ‘I know the boy will well usurp the grace, / Voice, gait, and action of a gentlewoman.’ (Induction 1.127-8). With regard to the Lord’s final speech in the first scene of the Induction, Michael Shapiro suggests that ‘perhaps remaining alone on stage ... [gives] additional

emphasis to his final eight lines, which might be considered a soliloquy directed at the playhouse audience.<sup>24</sup> Thus, this would reinforce the audience's awareness of the roles of women as played by boys both in the Induction and in the inner play. Referring to the impersonation of Sly's 'wife' by the Lord's page, Holderness points out that in 'place of the usual spectacle of a boy-actor-impersonating-woman, the Elizabethan spectators saw a boy player, acting the part of a page, directed by specific "instructions" (Ind.I.126) to "usurp the grace" (127) of the female sex.'<sup>25</sup> In *A Shrew* we do not have such detailed instructions; however it is clear that Sly's 'wife' is the company's boy player. Katherina as well as the other women are like the Page of the Induction—clearly boy-players later to be transformed into counterfeit women. As Meredith Ann Skura argues, the 'Lord does not offer Sly his own wife, but he offers him a funny play about a wife to laugh at.' Thus, according to Skura, the fact that the sort of 'wife' offered to Sly 'is a page in drag', reminds us 'that "Katherine" in the inner play is also a boy actor'.<sup>26</sup> Using this mechanism, the *Shrew* plays distance the show from any possible illusionist reception of it and enhance its carnivalesque mood. With regard to crossdressing as carnivalesque reversal, it is noteworthy that the 'battle for breeches' (as a widespread folk theme) was a constant subject of the Shrovetide (*Fastnachtspiel*) plays written by Hans Sachs for the Nuremberg Carnival in the sixteenth century.<sup>27</sup> In this kind of Carnival entertainment—as in the English morris dance—the women's parts were traditionally played by men. In these circumstances, the grotesque debasement of the woman's body acquires an even more pathetic character. In his analysis of the inversionary system of images of Shrovetide festivity in Hans Sachs' *Fastnachtspiel* plays, John E. Tailby drew attention to the 'further dimension' added by the fact that the women's roles were played by men. His

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<sup>23</sup>Juliet Dusinberre, 'The Taming of the Shrew: Women, Acting, and Power' in *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, vol. XXVI, n. 1 (Spring 1993), p. 68.

<sup>24</sup>Michael Shapiro, 'Framing the Taming: Metatheatrical Awareness of Female Impersonation in *The Taming of the Shrew*' in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, vol. 23 (1993), p. 153.

<sup>25</sup>Graham Holderness, *Shakespeare in Performance: The Taming of the Shrew* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 9.

<sup>26</sup>Meredith Anne Skura, *Shakespeare the Actor and the Purposes of Playing* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 103.

<sup>27</sup>See Mary Beare, *Hans Sachs: Selections*, (Durham: University of Durham, 1983), pp. lxxv-lxxxv.

view—with which I agree—states: ‘When vulgar references are made to the parts of the female body, it is even more poignant when the body grabbed or prodded is in fact that of man “suitably” padded out and dressed.’<sup>28</sup>

The fact that no ‘real’ woman features in the *Shrew* plays is an important aspect of the texts that we have to take into consideration. Indeed, the only ‘real’ woman in *The Shrew* (the Hostess, who is also a male player) leaves the stage after the first scene and is not seen again.<sup>29</sup> In *A Shrew*, even the equivalent of this character (the Tapster) is a man.<sup>30</sup> Clearly, the female characters in the practical joke and in the inner play of both texts are men acting as women. In this respect the plays are akin to jig farces’ wooing, and its equivalent in the morris dance, in which the wooed lady (whose favour is won by the fool) was clearly a robust male in woman’s apparel. Perhaps it is noteworthy that Katherina, on a couple of occasions in the play, refers to herself in the third person (1.1.62 and 3.2.26). Although one can say that (up to a point) it is not unusual that someone refers to her/himself in the third person, in the particular case of this comedy it could be described as self-conscious role-playing. Indeed, Hortensio’s description of Katherina after having the lute broken on his head is very suggestive:

*Baptista* What, will my daughter prove a good musician?

*Hortensio* I think she’ll sooner prove a soldier!

Iron may hold with her, but never lutes.

(2.1.140-2)

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<sup>28</sup>John E. Tailby, ‘Sachs and Nuremberg *Fastnachtspiel*’ in Robert Aylett and Peter Skrine (eds), *Hans Sachs and Folk Theatre in The Late Middle Ages*, (Lewiston, New York and Lampeter: E. Mellen Press, 1995), p. 189.

<sup>29</sup>According to Juliet Dusinberre, Sly calls the Hostess boy ‘because she is a boy’, and this should be taken as a theatrical awareness of a boy-actor behind the mask. Juliet Dusinberre, *op. cit.*, p. 67. Shapiro has the same opinion. Cf. Michael Shapiro, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

<sup>30</sup>Thompson has argued that ‘*A Shrew*, which often has fuller stage directions than *The Shrew*, reads *Enter a Tapster, beating out of his doores, Slie droonken*, and this gives a good impression of the usual stage practice.’ Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]), *op. cit.*, p. 46.

As we have already seen, Shakespeare frequently drew attention to the stage convention of men playing women. However, it has never been made so clear as it is in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, and in *The Shrew*. In all these plays the convention is unmasked by the introduction of a male company which performs before a specific audience. In all three instances, the players perform a particular play, with a particular purpose, for a particular audience. While in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet*, the players act before a mixed-gender assembly, in *The Shrew* the only 'female' in the audience is Bartholomew, a boy in woman's apparel. We have to remember that transvestism is also part of Carnival's reversal. So, we have to take this aspect of the play into careful consideration, i.e. the fact that the *Shrew* plays, as historically-constructed texts, have deliberately emphasised that the shrew's taming is played by an all-male company of actors. As Carol Rutter points out,

like Bartholomew, who never gets completely enclosed in 'her' role-play, Kate never fully erases the player, the man in the role-play beneath the woman's part. All the men and women here are man. And because that is so, the generated actions they role-play in *Taming of the Shrew* can be more acutely inspected as cultural performance.<sup>31</sup>

The custom in the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre of having boys/men playing the women's parts, which we take for granted as a convention is—as in 'Thisby and Pyramus' played by master Quince's actors in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—

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<sup>31</sup>Carol Rutter, 'Kate, Bianca, Ruth, and Sarah: Playing the Woman's Part in *The Taming of the Shrew*' in Michael J. Collins (ed.), *Shakespeare's Sweet Thunder: Essays on the Early Comedies* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, and London: Associated University Presses, 1997), p. 192. Rutter's view on the subject was developed, according to her, 'after seeing the 1991/2 Cheek by Jowl *As You Like It*, an all-male actor production that, by self-consciously displaying the gap between (male) actors and (female) characters, reanimated the Elizabethan notion of performance as role-play and released in the audience the pleasurable freedom of watching Rosalind as role, as a collection of performance strategies, not as a woman, a representative of universalized or psychologized femininity. An all-male company meant, stylistically, that performances were alienated, not personalized. It meant, politically, that women in the audience were permitted to laugh without defensiveness at a play-thing that was itself laughing at "women's" postures and posturing.' p. 212, n. 28. Apropos of Rutter's comment, I myself have had the same experience seeing an all-male performance of *Henry V* by The Globe Theatre Company (1997), directed by Richard Olivier.



inherent in the *Shrew* plays' carnivalesque spirit. In unmasking that convention from the beginning, the plays are free to go deep into the Carnival grotesque realism inherent in the folktale. So, it is not surprising that Garrick, in his *Catherine and Petruchio*, transformed the taming theme into a farcical love story. I would suggest that rather than the Shakespearean carnivalesque shrew taming, it is Garrick's farcical love story between a shrew and a tamer that is the tradition we have inherited. If we could, for a moment, think of a performance whereby a man instead of a woman plays the scold Katherina, it would certainly give us a new dimension to the Shakespearean text. I would suggest that in making clear that the women were played by boy-actors, the *Shrew* plays took advantage of this convention to enhance the grotesque character of the carnivalesque battle between the sexes depicted in them. Jean E. Howard, in her analysis of the Elizabethan attitude to crossdressing, informs us that 'men actually wearing women's clothes ... are so thoroughly "out of place" that they become monstrous.' Hence, as she continues, this 'shameful' situation as it appears in comic forms can be exemplified by Falstaff dressed as the wise woman of Brainford, being 'roundly beaten by the misogynist Ford.'<sup>32</sup> I suggest that the abusive treatment of Kate's body in the *Shrew* plays is no less than carnivalesque licence which is endorsed by the way the show is framed. To develop my point, it is necessary to think of that convention allied to the type of strolling players depicted in the texts.

If the Lord's conversation with the players enables us to foresee the kind of play they will perform, it also provides us with material to understand the sort of company to which they might belong. So let us examine this issue. While in *A Shrew* the status of the company is made clear by the description of the actors' arrival '*with packs at their backs*' (stage direction at 1.55)<sup>33</sup>, in *The Shrew*, although the Lord praises one of the actor's skills as a wooer, he shows great concern about the players' capacity to

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<sup>32</sup>Jean E. Howard, 'Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle' in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 39, nos. 1-4 (1988), p. 424.

<sup>33</sup>Perhaps the strolling company's entrance in *A Shrew* was the usual stage practice employed in *The Shrew* as well. With regard to the first stage direction in the former, Thompson considers: '*A Shrew*, which often has fuller stage directions than *The Shrew*, reads *Enter a Tapster, beating out of his doores Slie Droonken*, and this gives a good impression of the usual stage practice.' Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]), *op. cit.*, p. 46.

sustain the performance. This is clear in both plays. While in the more concise *A Shrew* he expresses his concern in one line: ‘See that you be not dashed out of countenance’ (1.1.68), in *The Shrew* he employs more lines to verbalize his doubts:

There is a lord will hear you play tonight –  
 But I am doubtful of your modesties,  
 Lest over-eyeing of his odd behaviour  
 (For yet his honour never heard a play)  
 You break into some merry passion  
 And so offend him; for I tell you, sirs,  
 If you should smile he grows impatient.  
 (Induction 1.89-95)

The Lord’s concerns about the actors’ capacity to sustain their performance, and the seeming stupidity of Sander (*A Shrew*) who confuses ‘comedy’ for ‘commodity’ (1.57) shows that the rank of this strolling company is rather more akin to that of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* than that of *Hamlet*. Significantly, the Lord’s concern about the strolling players is similar to the doubts he has about how his men (the improvised actors) ‘will stay themselves from laughter’ (Induction 1.130).

If we are able to see *The Shrew* outside the realm of a ‘romantic comedy’<sup>34</sup>, we can also perhaps think afresh about the heroine and hero’s appearance. If, on the one hand, we can envisage Katherina as being performed by a robust youth who will ‘sooner prove a soldier’, on the other, there is nothing in the play to testify to the good-looking lover (Petruchio) we are accustomed to seeing on the stage and on the

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<sup>34</sup>Bean, for instance, argues that ‘Kate is tamed ... in the spontaneous manner of the later romantic comedies where characters lose themselves in chaos and emerge ... liberated into bonds of love’. John C. Bean, ‘Comic Structure and the Humanizing of Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*’ in Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Green and Carol Thomas Neely (eds.), *The Woman’s Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), p. 66. For the idea of a love affair between Kate and Petruchio see, for instance, Anne Barton’s ‘Introduction’ to *The Taming of the Shrew* in G. Blakemore Evans (ed.), *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), p. 108; Margaret Lael Mikesell, “‘Love Wrought These Miracles’”: Marriage and Genre in *The Taming of the Shrew*’ in *Renaissance Drama*, vol. 20 (1989), pp. 141-167; and Dodson Frances Rhome, ‘Shakespeare’s Comic Women: Or Jill Had Trouble With Jack!’ in *Ball State University Forum*, vol. 25 (1984), pp. 20-28.

screen. Certainly the hero and heroine are not ‘classic’ figures of lovers. As in the *commedia* scenarios, these positions are left to Lucentio and Bianca, while in *A Shrew* they are played by Aurelius and Emelia, and Polidor and Philena. In fact the hero acts like the fool, as is implied by Kate’s insult: ‘What your crest – a coxcomb?’ (2.1.219)—and by Saunders’ comments on his wooing: ‘i’faith you’re a beast’, and ‘You spoke like an ass to her’ (3.186, 190).

Perhaps the name of the actor Sincklo, as it appears in the First Folio, is a clue to establish the way in which the play was originally performed. It is significant that the name Sincklo appears in the text at the moment when he has to refresh the Lord’s memory about who had ‘played a Farmer’s eldest son’. In addition, the Lord addresses the actor personally: ‘I have forgot your name’. To which Sincklo promptly answers: ‘I think ‘twas Soto that your honour means.’ Then the Lord replies: ‘’Tis very true, thou didst it excellent.’ (Induction 1.80, 82, 84). There is no doubt that this piece of dialogue refers to nothing less than Sincklo’s ability as a low comedian. To make this point we have to pause to examine the ‘facts’ about the actor.

In addition to his appearance in *The Shrew*, one *J Sincler* is mentioned as one of the actors in the ‘plot’ for *The Second Part of Seven Deadly Sins* (c.1590).<sup>35</sup> Sincklo (or Sincler) also appears in the speech headings of the First Folio text of *3 Henry VI* (c. 1590) in the Quarto version of *2 Henry IV* (c.1600), and in John Webster’s Induction (c.1604) to John Marston’s *The Malcontent*. According to Allison Gaw, the physical characteristics attributed to him by Hostess Quickly and Doll in *2 Henry IV* such as ‘nut-hook’, ‘tripe-visaged’, ‘thin man’, ‘famished’, ‘starved bloodhound’, ‘Goodman death’, ‘goodman bones’, ‘atomy [skeleton]’, ‘thin thing’, and the like (5.4.7-30), make Sincklo unique as a character type<sup>36</sup> and, because of this, she assigns

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<sup>35</sup>See detail of this ‘plot’ in Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574 – 1642*, Third Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 37.

<sup>36</sup>Gaw’s explanation for this, although debatable, has some truth in it: ‘Unlike corpulency, age, differences of complexion, and the like, extreme thinness is not easy to simulate artificially. An actor can pad to any extent for the part of Falstaff, but he cannot, at a given performance, remove flesh in order to play the Apothecary.... Costume can do something, and make-up more, to emphasize sliminess; but for

other roles to him such as the Apothecary of *Romeo and Juliet*, and Starveling (the Tailor) in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Thinking of Sincklo's ability to 'play character comedy' as he did in *The Malcontent*, she argues that 'doubtless Sincklo had met the histrionic demands of the part creditably.' Moreover, she reverses the opinion that he was a hired actor. Accordingly, Gaw suggests that Sincklo

was a member of the Strange-Chamberlain-King's company in 1592, in 1597 (the latter the year after the probable composition of *Romeo and Juliet*), and as late as 1604. We know that there is a strongly marked case at hand in which apparently his thinness especially fitted him for the assigned part [the Apothecary], and in which the evidence seems not susceptible of any other reasonable explanation than that Shakespeare himself cast him and built the scene around his physical peculiarity.<sup>37</sup>

In fact, it is pointless to say that the thinness of a character has always to be stated in a given text in order to have an actor of this physique play it. Certainly, there are a handful of characters in Shakespeare's gallery which can be performed either by a large or a slim actor. However, Gaw assigns to Sincklo only minor roles with such 'terrible' characteristics of extreme thinness as we found in *2 Henry IV*. Moreover, we have to bear in mind that the adjectives used by Doll and Hostess Quickly come from the mouths of two wrathful women who are employing as many abusive terms as they can. On the other hand, the famished aspect of the Apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet* helps to enhance the sordid and lugubrious atmosphere of that scene. Gaw's reason for seeing Sincklo as a minor actor is as follows:

At all events, we have our subordinate actor—one not mentioned in the formal lists of the principal actors in the company prefixed to Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* (1598) or *Sejanus* (1603), or in the royal Patent of 1603 or in the Folio of 1623, and so unimportant

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purposes of comparison the Elizabethan hose were decidedly revealing, and the fact that the Elizabethan actors gave their public performances under the full light of the afternoon sun, and on a projecting stage that brought them much closer to the audience than is usually the case today, rendered it impossible for them to make the lavish use of cosmetics now customary, and forced them to rely to a greater extent upon realistic methods.' See Allison Gaw, 'John Sincklo As One of Shakespeare's Actors' in *Englische Philologie*, vol. XLIX (Halle, 1926), p. 291.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 301

that almost invariably the rôles thus specifically assigned to him are for one brief scene only.<sup>38</sup>

Although Gaw's article became very influential in establishing the idea of Sincklo as an actor of singular features,<sup>39</sup> the fact that he is not mentioned in the formal lists is what makes the critics regard him as a hired player, and also as a performer of 'minor roles'. The 'evidence' for the latter is the name Sincklo attached to 'less important' characters. However, what can one then say about the great names such as William Kemp and Richard Cowly (both in the First Folio's list) playing characters such as Peter in *Romeo and Juliet*, or Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado About Nothing*? Contrary to the former opinion that the insertion of some of the actors' names was the responsibility of a prompter or a printing house composer, it is now widely accepted that this was the responsibility of none other than the author himself. To agree with Gaw, who has seen Sincklo's name 'singled out for some special reason', I would suggest that his name appears as a reminder of the type of player required to fit the role. Juliet Dusinberre, although for different reasons from my own, has suggested that Sincklo 'named as the Second player ... seems more than accident as the play constantly obliges the audience to remember that behind the character in the play is an actor who has his own reality and his own relation to the other figure on the stage'.<sup>40</sup> Because she assigns only minor roles to Sincklo, Gaw is puzzled by his appearance in *The Shrew* in such a prominent position. Seeing no dramatic function in the Lord's recollection of *Soto*, she conjectures:

Extraordinary as the case would be, this needless passage with its emphasis on part, scene, and actor, seems quite pointless unless it is a reference by Shakespeare to an actual part in an actual play once taken by Sincklo — though why he, a subordinate actor, should be thus picked out for public compliment it is difficult to see. As this wooing scene is the only hint of such *romance* [my italics] that appears in any

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 300-1.

<sup>39</sup>See, for instance, Edwin Nungezer, *A Dictionary of Actors and of Other Persons Associated with the Public Representation of Plays in England before 1642* (Cornell, Yale and Oxford University Press, 1929), pp. 326-7. See also G. R. Hibbard (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew*, op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>40</sup>Juliet Dusinberre, op. cit. p., 69. Dusinberre suggests that Sincklo played the role of Gremio. Ibid., p. 72.

of Sincklo's parts, it might be that the reference was recognition given him for a scene out of his usual line in which he had shown unexpected competence, mentioned in good-natured compensation for the fact that no other play giving him a similar opportunity had since been produced. Evidently there is back of the matter some company history with which we are not acquainted. If something of this kind is not the *raison d'être* of the passage, what reason can be suggested?<sup>41</sup>

Although Gaw's article is very helpful in establishing Sincklo's versatility, I cannot agree with the 'evidence' which renders him an actor of only minor roles. However, the fact that he does not figure in the 'formal lists' seems likely to confirm his role as a hired actor rather than necessarily a minor one. If he were a minor actor, why then would he take such an important position in the King's Men's version of *The Malcontent* as he did. In fact, Gaw does not assign any character in *The Shrew* to Sincklo. Thus, unless we assign to him one of Petruchio's servants (obviously double roles), the only 'minor role' (indeed an elaborate one) is the Page. Even Biondello has more lines than those assigned to Sincklo in any of Shakespeare's plays in which he is 'featured'. On the other hand, the idea of 'minor roles' seems to be very elastic. G. R. Hibbard, for instance, who holds the same opinion as Gaw that Sincklo was 'a performer of minor roles in Shakespeare's company', has assigned to him the role of Gremio. Hibbard, citing G. E. Bentley, offers an explanation for the supposed incongruity found in *The Shrew*. Thus, since John Fletcher's *Women Pleas'd*, which has a character called Soto, was written 'somewhere between 1619 and 1623', and 'since his [the Lord's] description of Soto's role does not tally with what happens' in the latter play, the only way to explain the 'mystery' is to imagine (like Gaw) the existence of an unknown text. As he points out:

Most modern critics are of the opinion that Fletcher's play, which is, for him, rather old-fashioned and not at all well constructed, is probably a revision of a much older play that is no longer extant, and that it is to the part of Soto in this lost play that Shakespeare is referring here.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Allison Gaw, *op. cit.* p. 299.

<sup>42</sup>G. R. Hibbard, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

To allow Sincklo (a man who is believed to be just the absolute opposite of a conventional lover) to play Petruchio would provoke an enormous disturbance in the Shakespearean canon. On the other hand, because he is not a shareholder in the company it seems incorrect to attribute to him a substantial role such as Petruchio. However, if we are unable to recognize the a clear link between the ‘Farmer’s eldest son’ and Petruchio, the exchange between Sincklo and the Lord about *Soto* is rendered meaningless. Leo Salingar’s observation on this subject suggests that Petruchio is ‘presumably, the player who had “wooded the gentlewoman so well’.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the mention of a ‘gentlewoman’ whom the actor had wooed so well is no more than an ironic anticipation of what is going to happen on the stage. If Sincklo himself was not the actor responsible for Petruchio’s role, I suggest that his name is there as a type mark for the wooer. Thus, if Sincklo’s name is there to function as a signal for the special features required for the role—the idea of a thin man playing Petruchio—then the contrast between him and Katherina, who was perhaps a vigorous youth, should have made the situation grotesquely hilarious, and the spectacle of her submission even more amusing to the original audience. In this respect, perhaps when Katherina abusively calls Petruchio a ‘joint stool’, she is—if we wish—referring to the actor’s thinness. Since the ‘metatheatrical’ features with respect to boys impersonating women in *The Shrew* is a very important issue in terms of the carnivalesque reading of the *Shrew* plays I am proposing here—especially in terms of Kate’s final surrender—I will return to this subject in the last section of this chapter. For now, I will make a brief account of some features found in the plays which would reinforce the idea of the *Shrew* plays as a celebration of a carnivalesque holiday in the country. This will further develop the idea that the practical joke on Sly/Slie, as well as the strolling players’ performance, are revelries taking place in what might be called a liminal period characteristic of a holiday.

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<sup>43</sup>Leo Salingar, *Shakespeare and The Traditions of the Comedy*, op. cit., p. 272.

## The Holiday Spirit

In both plays the season is likely to be a winter holiday. While the parodic *A Shrew* makes this clear by quoting Marlowe's rhetoric on Orion,<sup>44</sup> in *The Shrew* we hear of the cold both in the Sly plot and in the inner play. If in the latter the season can be grasped in the comments of the Second Huntsman on Sly: 'Were he not warmed with ale, / This were a bed but cold to sleep so soundly' (Induction 1.28-9). If in the former we hear about the season from Grumio, who arrives home deathly cold: 'thou know'st, winter tames man, woman, and beast; for it hath tamed my old master, and my new mistress, and myself, fellow Curtis.' (4.1.16-18). The spirit of a festive holiday prevails throughout as soon as the plays open. Slie/Sly, after enjoying himself in an ale-house, is thrown out on a charge of bad behaviour. Then the Lord and his retinue arrive from hunting which they plan to continue the next day. On finding the sleeping Slie/Sly, they decide to continue their holiday mirth by crowning the drunk tinker as a lord. Just as on a typical holiday in the countryside, a company of strolling players arrives offering entertainment. After a brief conversation with the players, the

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<sup>44</sup>I suggest that, as in *Doctor Faustus* (1604 first edition), the mention of *Orion* is used by the author (parodying Marlowe's bombastic style) as a convention to state the season and time of the day. Perhaps the anonymous author combining the idea of hunting with that of a drunk and sleeping Slie, is using *Orion* as a mythological allusion. *Orion* was a giant hunter, and there are several legends about the hero who, after his death, was metamorphosed into a constellation. According to one of these stories, he was thrown into a deep sleep by Dionysus, and was deprived of his sight by Oenopion. Metaphorically speaking, it is exactly what the Lord does with the sleeping Slie. If, on the one hand, the bombastic reference to Orion could relate to the hunting expedition from which the Lord and his men are returning, and the subsequent discovering of the drunk and sleeping Slie, on the other, since the constellation of Orion is set at the beginning of November, it could be an allusive way of telling us in which season the action is taking place. Since at this time of the year storms and rain are frequent, Orion is often called *imbrifer*, *nimbosus*, or *aquosus*. (See entry for Orion in G. E. Marindin's *A Smaller Classical Dictionary of Biography, Mythology, and Geography*. A New Edition of Sir William Smith's Larger Dictionary, Thoroughly Revised and in Part Re-written, (London: John Murray, 1910), p. 417. See Also *Virgil's Aeneid*, trans., Michael Oakley (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd and New York: E. P. Dutton & Co Inc, 1957), pp. 16 and 67. The Lord's words ('the gloomy shadow of the night, / Longing to view Orion's drizzling looks' [emphasis added]) is surely confirmation that they are having a cloudy night and not a starry sky. Literally, the reference to bad weather conditions makes the drunk Slie, who is sleeping rough, a more indigent figure; in other words, a perfect candidate to impersonate the 'lord of misrule' of that winter festival.



Lord encourages them to perform the kind of play he has in mind (in *A Shrew* the play is suggested by one of the players, Sander). Praising the excellence of one of the actor's performances (Sincklo as a wooing groom), he subtly encourages them to perform something similar to a play he has seen being enacted by the company. The clue he gives them is his description of 'a farmer's eldest son' who 'wooded the gentlewoman so well', which can be easily related to the personages of the jig-wooing farces. In fact, the plays' main theme is very close to Slie/Sly's expectation of holiday entertainment. By having the tinker soundly grasp the play's motif as 'household stuff' (Induction 2,136), the play clearly suggests the popularity of such a theme.

In order to promote his 'carnavalesque pageant', the Lord has to abdicate his position. His uncrowning is absolutely consistent with the carnivalesque spirit. During Carnival celebrations distinctions of class and hierarchy are meant to be temporarily suspended. Thus, Carnival promotes a *mésalliance* which is characteristic of its freedom. In *A Shrew*, as soon as a 'lord of misrule' is crowned, the Lord says: 'Now take my cloak and give me one of yours, / Al fellows now' (1.35-6). After instructing the actors, he asks them to say they 'are his [Slie's] men and I [he himself] your fellow' (1.66). In *The Shrew*, since he will act as one of Sly's attendants, his carnivalesque disguise is implicit. Now he is among his own servants. There is no distinction between them. As soon as they are masquerading, they are ready to participate in that 'carnavalesque pageant'.

Just as in a true carnivalesque holiday celebration, there is abundance of food and drink in the Lord's house. Like Sly/Slie, who is regally fed, the actors, before their performance, have been nourished in the same fashion: 'Go, sirrah, take them to the buttery / And give them friendly welcome every one. / Let them want nothing that my house affords'(Induction 1.98-100). This is no different in *A Shrew*. Here we have one of the actors (Sander) cunningly asking for food as stage properties: 'My Lord, we must have a shoulder of mutton for the property, and a little vinegar to make our devil roar.' (2.2.83-4). To this request the Lord, who understood the point, says: 'Very well, sirrah, see that they want nothing.' (2.85).<sup>45</sup> Since the holiday spirit is

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<sup>45</sup>Miller has come to a similar conclusion about Sander's intention. According to him, 'no devil appears in his play, but Sander is perennially hungry. This request for

established, we are now prepared to see other carnivalesque imageries presented in the play by means of action and language. To demonstrate this, I intend to give a fuller description of such imagery in the following section.

### **Grotesque Imagery: Carnavalesque Thrashing and Abuse**

According to Bakhtin, the ‘down-to-earth’ imagery found in the folk culture of humour in the Renaissance had not yet acquired the negative connotations that the aestheticism of subsequent periods has attached to it. Still bound to the Middle Ages’ popular culture of humour, the grotesque imagery presented in the literature of the Renaissance remains ‘ambivalent and contradictory’.<sup>46</sup> As Knowles puts it, ‘Grotesque realism celebrates the grotesque body occluded by the aesthetics of neoclassical beauty, the body with genitals and orifices, a body of organic process rather than the self-contained body of proportional beauty’<sup>47</sup>

It is my contention that the *Shrew* plays are profoundly bound to the grotesque realism of carnivalesque mirth in which the descending movement is not opposed to the ascendant. In Bakhtin’s terms, they are part of the same system of images in which crowning and uncrowning, high and low, birth and death, are complementary. Thus, the ‘degradation’ and ‘debasement’ of the body to be found in the *Shrew* plays are a clear example of that system of images. In his analysis of the *Elizabethan Grotesque*, Neil Rhodes points out that ‘the tone of the grotesque in pamphlet literature and grotesque in the drama depends upon the festive sanction given to certain kinds of baiting, beating and vilification’. And this kind of body degradation is what happens in *The Shrew* where, as Rhodes remarks, ‘verbal vituperation is indivisibly fused with physical punishment.’<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the physical and verbal abuse to be found in the

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stage properties sounds suspiciously like a request for supper, though Ferando does need meat for his dagger at 8.23 SD.’ Stephen Roy Miller, op. cit., p. 63, n. 84.

<sup>46</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

<sup>47</sup>Ronald Knowles, ‘Introduction’ to his edition of *Shakespeare and Carnival*, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>48</sup>Neil Rhodes, *Elizabethan Grotesque* (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 16, 96.

*Shrew* plays is part of a system of images pertaining to grotesque realism. According to Bakhtin,

The importance of abusive language is essential to the understanding of the literature of the grotesque. Abuse exercises a direct influence on the language and the images of this literature and is closely related to all other forms of ‘degradation’ and ‘down to earth’ in grotesque and Renaissance literature.<sup>49</sup>

More than in *A Shrew*, the carnivalesque thrashing and abuse are fully developed in *The Shrew*. While in the former abusive language is restricted to the low comic scenes and thrashing is more a matter of threats than deeds, in the latter the language of the marketplace and carnivalesque cuffing are pervasive. The emphasis given to these features creates an enormous contrast to the well-to-do setting which is the background to the play. The play pictures its social environment as a world upside-down. In *The Shrew*, except for the Lord, who orchestrates the ‘carnavalesque pageant’, nobody in the play escapes from being deceived or verbally abused and, very often, sound cuffs are distributed among them. Abusive language is heard from the very start of the plays. While in *A Shrew* the first words we hear are: ‘You whoreson drunken slave’ (1.1), in *The Shrew* they are as follows:

*Sly* I’ll peeze you, in faith.  
*Hostess* A pair of stocks, you rogue!  
*Sly* Y’are a baggage, (Induction 1.1-3).

Although in the Induction, Sly—a ‘monstrous beast’, ‘a swine’ (1.22)—is the focus of mischief and abuse, one of the Lord’s huntsmen does not escape from being verbally abused. For his opinion that the dog, Belman, is as good as the Lord’s favourite Silver, he is immediately abused: ‘Thou art a fool.’ (Induction 1.24).

As part of this holiday celebration, the inner play has the license to abuse and debase everybody. There is no respect for age, sex, family ties, or social status. Thus, in Bakhtinian terms, everything that represents the ‘completed and finished’ is

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<sup>49</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, op. cit., p. 27.

entitled to be mocked, debased and uncrowned by the regenerative power of laughter. So Gremio proposes that Katherina, in the presence of her father, should be ‘carted’ away like any other offender against the social order (1.1.55).<sup>50</sup> He also has no reservations about calling her a ‘fiend of hell’ (1.1.87). Katherina, in her turn, has no qualms about debasing everybody who gets in her way. She shows little respect for her father and sister, and even less for any of her neighbours or potential suitors. For the latter, she has a ‘special treat’. As she tells Hortensio, if she had one as her lover,

... doubt not her care should be  
To comb your noddle with a three-legged stool  
And paint your face, and use you like a fool.  
(1.1.63-5)

These words of Katherina’s have been interpreted by editors as a threat to break Hortensio’s head (and indeed she does attack him later, using a lute) and paint his face with blood.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, this powerful image is highly representative of the grotesque. The grotesque knows no boundaries between gender and age and it subverts all notions of decorum. In *A Shrew*, by reserving the abusive language for the low comic scenes, the anonymous author seems to be seriously committed to the archetypal structure—already given in Frye’s theory—as a means of building up his comedy. While in *The Shrew* even Bianca’s wooing scene is full of cursing utterances and sexual innuendo, in *A Shrew* Kate’s sisters’ wooing scenes (abundantly filled with classical references) are sugary and romantic. Indeed the greatest cursing scene occurs between Kate and Valeria during the lute lesson. Apart from this scene and Ferando’s short wooing one, abuse (however restrained) can always be found in the scenes featuring Sander. However, the scenes between the lesser characters (Sander and Polidor’s boy) are far more consistent with what Frye calls a contest between the

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<sup>50</sup>Editors glosses ‘cart her’ as Gremio is calling Katherina a prostitute. See, for instance: Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]), op. cit., p. 62, n. 55; Brian Morris (1988 [1981]), op. cit., p. 175, n. 55; H. J. Olivier (1982), op. cit., p. 109, n. 55. I suggest that Gremio is referring to here to the Skimmington (or Rough Music), an English form of Charivari, which I will analyse later in this chapter

<sup>51</sup>See, for instance, Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]), p. 62, n. 65; H. J. Oliver (1982), p. 109, n. 65; and Brian Morris (1981 [1988]), p. 175, n. 65.

‘buffoon’ and ‘churl’, those ‘whose function it is to increase the mood of festivity [rather] than to contribute to the plot.’<sup>52</sup>

In one of these scenes the proud blue-liveried Sander sets out to abuse the boy whom he regards as inferior to him. It is noteworthy that, acting as *commedia*’s *zanni*, emphasis is given to the servants’ eagerness for food. This aspect of *commedia*’s servants, which is central in Goldoni’s recreation of the constantly starving Bergamese character (*The Servant of Two Masters*), is also highlighted in *The Shrew*. When Hortensio mentions food and drink, Grumio and Biondello say in unison: ‘O excellent motion! Fellows, let’s be gone.’ (1.2.272-3). Prior to this (in the same scene), Grumio has already shown his carnivalesque appetite as he talks (without any relation to what is going on) of ‘a good dinner’ (1.2.211). In their first scene in *A Shrew*, the ‘outraged’ Sander (‘Souns, “friend well met?” I hold my life he sees not my master’s livery coat. Plain “friend”, hop-of-my thumb, know you who we are?’ [3.218-9]), abusively relates the boy’s name to food.

*Boy* My name sirrah, I tell thee sirrah, is called ‘Catapie’.

*Sander* Cake-and-pie? O my teeth waters to have a piece of thee.

*Boy* Why slave, wouldst thou eat me?

*Sander* Eat thee? Who would not eat Cake and pie?

*Boy* Why villain, my name is ‘Catapie’.

(3.232-6)

Sander’s abusive words would also seem to be a double entendre. Thus, ‘Catapie’ would appear to be a pun on ‘catamite’. At their second meeting (in which food is again an important item of their conversation) Sander’s anger at being called a ‘boy’, is assuaged by the boy’s description of the carnivalesque abundance they will have at the wedding celebration (5.12-8). However, Sander’s food dream is mercilessly interrupted by the boy who reminds him of his new mistress. He tells Sander: ‘Thy mistress is such a devil, as she’ll make thee forget thy eating quickly, she’ll beat thee so.’ (5.19-20). After he is put down by the boy in such a manner, another dream comes to his mind, this time about sex. Telling the boy about his desire to ‘have a fling at’ his master’s lover enrages the boy who threatens to cut off one of Sander’s

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<sup>52</sup>Northrop Frye, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

legs. This topsy-turvy situation, in which a boy threatens to beat a man, becomes even more threatening when the boy says: ‘In regard of thy beggary, hold thee, there’s two shillings for thee to pay for the healing of thy left leg which I mean furiously to invade or to maim at the least’ (5.33-5).

In the fashion of a *zanni*, Sander cunningly escapes from what might have become the play’s major carnivalesque fight scene. After the boy’s boastful onslaught, Sander attempts to take advantage of the situation by retaining the money and, of course, his leg: ‘O supernodical fool! Well, I’ll take your two shillings, but I’ll bar striking at legs.’ (5.36). Sander’s consent to be beaten in exchange for money corresponds to the carnivalesque wedding thrashing we find in, for instance, Rabelais’ *Pantagruel* (Book IV, Chapters XII, XIV, XV), in which the Catchpole is ‘beaten to pulp’ as a means of earning his living (as is explained in Chapter XVI).<sup>53</sup>

Once again we have to recognize that *A Shrew*, for some reason, has avoided going too far with anything which could be considered abusive. In addition to steering clear of physically thrashing high-class people, if there is verbally abusive treatment of a superior person, it is uttered only by Sander (the conventional licensed fool). Conversely, in *The Shrew* there is no such distinction; abusive language is abundant and it affects everybody. Even the character we envisage as untouchable (the ‘venerable’ father of the beloved Bianca) is verbally abused by her ‘suitor’, the disguised Tranio, when referring to Katherina’s ‘disposal’:

’Twas a commodity lay fretting by you.  
 ’Twill bring you gain, or perish in the seas.  
 (2.1, 317-8)

If even Baptista—the father of Bianca, the most desired ‘jewel’—is not free from direct abuse, the others certainly receive their quota. So, Katherina is abused by Gremio and Hortensio, who in turn, albeit indirectly, abuse her father. She abuses them all, as well as her father and sister. Lucentio is abused by his servant Tranio. Tranio abuses Baptista and, more vehemently, Gremio who, in retaliation, abuses him.

Lucentio abuses Hortensio, who also abuses him. Petruchio abuses Grumio and all his other servants. Grumio abuses Petruchio. Together they abuse the Tailor. Katherina abuses Petruchio, and *vice versa*. Together they abuse Vincentio. Vincentio is abused by Biondello, Tranio, the Pedant, and also by Baptista. He, in return, abuses them all. Katherina is abused by the Widow, who also abuses her. Bianca is abused by Katherina, and she does not fail to abuse Katherina, and also Petruchio, Hortensio, and her husband. In fact, the carnivalesque abuse in *The Shrew* is an almost endless list. However, the most subversive scene of abuse (that in the church, to which I will return later in this section) is only reported. I suggest that the presentation of such an ‘outrageous’ scene on the stage would not have been tolerated.<sup>54</sup> The wedding ceremony is not even mentioned in *A Shrew*.

Whilst we only hear about the highly abusive wedding ceremony, the play shows us a carnivalesque street riot, which also involves the police. The riot occurs upon Vincentio’s arrival in Padua, and everyone is dragged into it (5.1.50-140). The grotesque ‘rescue’ of Katherina after the wedding is another example of festive abuse. Armed with his ‘old rusty sword tane out of the town armoury, with a broken hilt and chapeless [without a sheathe]<sup>55</sup>; with two broken points’ (3.2.43-5), Petruchio holds Katherina and defiantly says:

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<sup>53</sup>See François Rabelais, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-2.

<sup>54</sup>In *Much Ado* (4.1.1-112) we have the ‘non-wedding’ scene, in which Claudio refuses to marry Hero on the assumption she is not the modest bride she is supposed to be. Although this is a very shocking situation, the interrupted ritual of marriage in this case is not an offence to the religious service itself as it is in *The Shrew*. In fact, the possibility of refusing to accept the matrimonial bonding is also part of the wedding rites. So, here we have the Friar asking: ‘If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, I charge you on your souls to utter it.’ (4.1.12-4). I suggest that in *The Shrew* to have had this highly abusive scene reported instead of staged would perhaps have been a strategy to avoid suppression for mocking the religious rite of matrimony. In support of this suggestion (as discussed in chapter II) the play seems to have been staged shortly after the long closure of the theatres. Indeed a delicate moment. On the other hand, dealing with ‘matters of religion’ as well as ‘of the governuance of the state of the common weale’ was forbidden as early as 1559. This specification is found in the Proclamation issued on 16 May 1559 (509), in the first year of Elizabeth I’s reign. This Proclamation is quoted in E. K. Chambers’ *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. IV (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 263.

<sup>55</sup>Cf. Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]), *op. cit.*, p. 102, n. 44.

And here she stands. Touch her whoever dare,  
 I'll bring mine action on the proudest he  
 That stops my way in Padua. Grumio,  
 Draw forth thy weapon – we are beset with thieves!  
 Rescue thy mistress, if thou be a man.  
 – Fear not, sweet wench, they shall not touch thee, Kate;  
 I'll buckler thee against a million.

(3.2.222-8)

Petruchio's grotesque 'rescuing' of Katherina might be more than a senseless mad act. In fact, it seems to be a 'rescuing' from the kind of noisy and abusive mirth which would take place during wedding celebrations. According to Bristol,

In the early modern period the ceremonial forms of marriage were accompanied (and opposed) by parodic doubling of the wedding feast in forms of charivari. This parodic doubling was organized by a carnivalesque wardrobe corresponding to a triad of dramatic agents – the clown (representing the bridegroom), the transvestite (representing the bride) and the 'scourge of marriage,' often assigned a suit of black (representing the community of unattached males or 'young men').<sup>56</sup>

The excessiveness of the carnivalesque wedding celebration, which was prohibited by the Church in France<sup>57</sup> is perhaps consistent with the English clergy's condemnation of the kind of domestic celebration which would take place after the wedding ceremony's rites. Thomas Bacon condemned such celebrations as 'vayne, madde, and unmenerlye fashion.' Although not actually mentioning 'rough music' (as charivari was known in England), his description of the abusive mirth which took place after the banquet clearly suggests the kind of noisy ribaldry common to wedding feasts. According to him, 'the poore bryde [must] kepe foote with al dauncers and

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<sup>56</sup>Michael D. Bristol, 'Charivari and the Comedy of Abjection in Othello' in Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry (eds.), *True Rites and Maimed Rites; Ritual and Anti-Ritual in Shakespeare and His Age*, op. cit., pp.83-4.

<sup>57</sup>Maria Leach and Jerome Fried (eds), *Dictionary of Folklore Mythology and Legend*, Vol. 1, (New York, 1949), p. 212. As the authors explain, 'The constant element in the charivaree [the American name] has been the noisy mock-serenade produced by a discordant din of noise-making instruments and rustic and domestic implements-horns, cowbells, kettles, dishpans, boilers, tin plates ...' See also, OED, and Emile Littré, *Dictionnaire de La Langue Française*, (Editions Universitaires, 1958).



refuse none, how scabbed, foule, droncken, rude, and shameles soever. Then must she oft tymes heare and se much wyckendenesse and meny uncomely word; and that *noyse and romblyng* endureth even tyll supper.’<sup>58</sup> (emphasis added). I suggest that Petruchio is referring to this kind of ribaldry when he says:

Go to the feast, revel and domineer,  
Carouse full measure to her maidenhead,  
Be mad and merry – or go hang yourselves.  
But for my bonny Kate, she must with me.  
(3.2.213-16)

Annabel Patterson also refers to this sort of carnivalesque mirth in her analysis of Pyramus and Thisbe’s scene in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. According to her, the ‘bawdry’ in that scene ‘would have “sorted” well with the sexual ambience of the Renaissance wedding festivities as well as with their archaic precedents in bedding rituals’. To support this Patterson quotes George Puttenham’s *The Art of English Poesie* (1589), in which the author remarks: ‘if there were any wanton or lascivious matter more then ordinarie which they called *Ficenina licentia* it was borne withal for that time [the wedding festivities] because of the matter no lesse requiring.’<sup>59</sup> I think that Puttenham’s words help us to make sense of Petruchio’s lines.

It is important here to make a distinction between the wedding Charivari and other forms which were performed as a manifestation of public censure against unpopular people, or against someone who had transgressed the established social order. These might also be regard as a form of political protest, and anyone could become a victim of such a public display. In *The Shrew*, as we are going to see shortly, it seems a latent threat. The demonstrations would feature a carnivalesque procession with someone (or an effigy representing the offender) on top of a cart, accompanied by rough music. This kind of carnivalesque pageant might be staged as a manifestation of public censure against a husband who was beaten by his wife. Indeed, any local

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<sup>58</sup>Thomas Bacon, *The Christen state of matrimony*, (London, 1543), Fol. xlix.

<sup>59</sup>Annabel Patterson, op. cit., p. 63. Cf. George Puttenham, *Art of English Poesie* (Menston, England: The Scolar Press Limited, 1968), p. 43. I suggest that the modern

‘scandal’ could inspire these noisy masked demonstrations.<sup>60</sup> This sort of public humiliation is described in Thomas Platter’s *Travels in England*. Platter did not himself witness such an event, although his description of the carnivalesque pageant does coincide with that of Davis and other historians. In a generalization, he stated that ‘the good [English] wives often beat their men, and if this is discovered, the nearest neighbour is placed on a cart and paraded through the whole town as laughing-stock’.<sup>61</sup> Sometimes the situation could be even more outrageous: the offender himself/herself might be ‘carted’, instead of merely being pulled along in effigy. Gremio appears to refer to this kind of humiliation when he suggests: ‘To cart her [Kate] rather! She is too rough for me.’ (1.1.55). Certainly, Katherina is an unpopular person, and her marriage is an uncertain match. Furthermore, she has shouted in the street that if she had a husband she would beat him, and make a fool of him. Hence, some kind of public humiliation is almost certain to take place during their wedding feast. Petruchio’s boisterous assertiveness is also, I would suggest, significant in terms of the eventual possibility of his becoming a henpecked husband.

Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret;  
 I will be master of what is mine own.  
 She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,  
 My household-stuff, my field, my barn,  
 My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything  
(3.2.217-21)

Petruchio’s lines suggest that, since he will be master of what he owns, there will be no such thing as charivari to humiliate him. As a rustic, ‘a farmer’s eldest son’ he

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‘stag night’ and ‘hen night’ are residues of the *Ficenina licentia* described by Puttenham.

<sup>60</sup>See Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1976), especially pp. 116-7, 139. Also see her article ‘The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France’ in *Past & Present*, n. 50 (February 1971), pp. 41-75. For more material on the subject, see David Underdown, *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 99-103; E. P. Thompson, ‘Rough Music Reconsidered’, *op. cit.*; and ‘“Rough Music”: Le Charivari anglais’, *op. cit.*; Violet Arford, ‘Rough Music or Charivari’ in *Folklore*, vol. 70 (December 1959), pp. 505-18.

claims Katherina to be his goods and (in a clown's fashion) he repeats Sly's words when talking of Katherina as his 'household-stuff'.<sup>62</sup> With respect to the carnivalesque humiliation which Petruchio has avoided, we can perhaps catch a glimpse of how their wedding feast would have ended up if the couple had not left. Indeed, a week after the wedding, the potential for humiliation is still latent, for we have Tranio telling Petruchio: "'Tis well, sir, that you hunted for yourself – / 'Tis thought your deer does hold you at bay'(5.2.55-6). Before this we witness a verbal fight between Katherina and the Widow:

*Katherina* 'He that is giddy thinks the world turns round.'  
 I pray you tell me what you meant by that.  
*Widow* Your husband, being troubled with a shrew,  
 Measures my husband's sorrow by his woe –  
 And now you know my meaning.  
*Katherina* A very mean meaning.  
*Widow* Right, I mean you.  
*Katherina* And I am mean indeed, respecting you.  
 (5.2.26-32)

This verbal duel is instigated by the husbands as though they were at a cock-fighting ring. It also provides an opportunity (as in Tranio's remark quoted above) for the husbands to make sexual innuendoes.

*Petruchio* To her, Kate!  
*Hortensio* To her, widow!  
*Petruchio* A hundred marks, my Kate does put her down.  
*Hortensio* That's my office.  
*Petruchio* Spoke like an officer! Ha' to thee, lad.  
*He drinks to Hortensio.*  
 (5.2.33-37)

If Petruchio/Ferando, by leaving his wedding feast before it starts, has managed to avoid the carnivalesque humiliation to which he and his bride would almost certainly

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<sup>61</sup>Thomas Platter in *The Journals of Two Travellers in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England*, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>62</sup>Since we hear this epithet from Sly and from Petruchio, could it be an advertisement for the jig after the play? Indeed, 'household-stuff' sounds very similar to Kemp's jig 'Kitchen-stuff' examined in the previous chapter.

have been subjected, a week later he has completely reversed the situation by having transformed his shrew into a submissive wife. If abusive language is pervasive in *The Shrew*, another feature which is related to Carnival's grotesque realism, physical trashing, is vigorously presented in the play. In terms of this feature, *A Shrew* seems to be very mild if we compare it to *The Shrew*.

And if abusive language in *A Shrew* is rather restricted, we can also say the same about the carnivalesque physical thrashing, for although there are a few threats of physical violence, they are rarely carried out. Whilst in *The Shrew*, Katherina strikes Petruchio, in *A Shrew*, although she verbally abuses the courteous Ferando ('Was ever seen so gross an ass as this?'[3.150]), a physical thrashing never materializes:

*Kate* Hands off I say, and get you from this place,  
Or I will set my ten commandments in your face.  
(3.152-3)

Neither does Kate break Valeria's head with the lute as she threatens to. Throwing the lute on the floor, she curses Valeria with innuendo: 'There take it up and fiddle somewhere else.' (4.34). The only real physical thrashing to occur involves Ferando's servants. As Ferando arrives home after the wedding, as the stage direction has it, '*He beats them all*' (6.26) on the allegation that Sander has hurt his foot when helping him off with his boots. Then, claiming that the meat is 'burnt and scorched', again as the stage direction states, '*He throws down the table and meat and all, and beats them.*' (6.28), and again '*He beats them all*' at 6.36. The next and final scene of physical violence is brought on when Sander teases Kate about food, for which, according to the stage direction, '*She beats him.*' (6.26). Indeed, the beating of servants, found in abundance in *The Comedy of Errors* and the *Shrew* plays, is in line with the Italianate mode of these texts. In the *commedia* scenarios the *zannis* are frequently beaten by their master, and sometimes the servants find a way (either by using a stratagem or by disguising themselves) of beating their master in return.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Cf. Flaminio Scala, *Scenarios of the Commedia dell'Arte*, translated and edited by Henry F. Salerno (New York: Limelight Editions, 1992). Also see Luigi Riccoboni,

If in *A Shrew* the thrashing is only inflicted by socially-superior characters (the ‘mad’ Ferando and his hungry wife) upon their inferiors, in *The Shrew* physical abuse, which is only a threat until Petruchio’s arrival, is commonplace. Petruchio, who like Katherina abuses everybody who gets in his way, starts the business and ‘*wrings him [Grumio] by the ears.*’ (stage direction between 1.2.17-9). Next, after having Bianca tied, Katherina strikes her and she tries to repeat this in the presence of her father (2.1.1-30). Afterwards we hear of what happened to Hortensio, whilst trying to teach Katherina the lute (2.1.142-55). As a comic reversal, instead of being frightened about what has happened to Hortensio, Petruchio (about to confront Katherina) says: ‘Now, by the world, it is a lusty wench! / I love her ten times more than e’er I did.’ (2.1.156-7). Like those who ultimately are always able to woo the lady and win her favour—such as the clown in the jig farce or the fool in the morris dance—Petruchio expects to have to cope with a great deal of disparagement. After all, the lady in question is not the ‘gentlewoman’ which the Lord has referred to in his interchanges with the actors. Indeed, Petruchio’s lovely wench will strike him later.

In the wedding ceremony Petruchio seems to have paid no respect to his solemn marriage rites. According to Gremio he has transformed his matrimonial service into a ritual of misrule. In this respect, it seems an echo of what Stubbes describes as the behaviour of a Summer Lord and his retinue in their disrespect for the church service: ‘they goe to the Churche (though the Minister bee at Praier or Preachyng) dauncyng and swingyng their handkercheefes ouer their heades, in the Churche, like Deuilles incarnate, with suche a confused noise, that no man can heare his owne voice.’<sup>64</sup> According to Gremio’s description of the event, Petruchio seems to have gone far beyond his assumed role as a Lord of Misrule:

I’ll tell you, Sir Lucentio: when the priest  
Should ask if Katherina should be his wife,  
‘Ay, by gogs-wouns!’ quoth he, and swore so loud  
That, all amazed, the priest let fall the book,  
And as he stooped again to take it up,

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*Discorso Della Commedia All’Improviso e Scenari Inediti*, a cura di Irene Mamczarz (Milano: Edizioni Il Polifilo, 1973).

<sup>64</sup>Philip Stubbes, *Anatomy of Abuses*, op. cit., p. 93.

This mad-brained bridegroom took him such a cuff  
 That down fell priest and book, and book and priest!  
 'Now take them up', quoth he, 'if any list.'  
 (3.2.148-55)

Indeed, such a narrative (a 'story-telling theatre') emphasises even more the kinship of this comedy with the folktale from which its main theme derives. By means of narration, it distances the more 'shocking' scenes from any actual reality. The bridal journey back to Petruchio's home, which I will analyse shortly, has the same effect. Although we do not witness these scenes, the detailed description of the events adds more force to the play's grotesque realism.

In contrast to *A Shrew*, in which the carnivalesque thrashing is inflicted only on inferiors, in *The Shrew* this kind of 'treat' can affect anybody at all levels of society. If Grumio, 'misrepresenting' his master's orders (wisely) does not thrash him ('I should knock you first, / And then I know after who comes by the worst.' (1.2.13-14), later, when telling Curtis about the journey back, and imitating his master's style, he does not miss the opportunity of striking an equal:

*Grumio* Lend thine ear.  
*Curtis* Here.  
*Grumio* (*cuffing him*) There.  
*Curtis* This 'tis to feel a tale, not hear a tale.  
*Grumio* And therefore 'tis called a sensible tale, and this  
 cuff was but to knock at your ear and beseech listening.  
 (4.1. 43-8)

The journey back, as described by Grumio, is as grotesque as the wedding ceremony. From his long account we hear that the bridal journey back to Petruchio's country house has included 'body degradation', 'physical violence', 'curse' and 'abuse'. As he speaks, Grumio assembles a grotesque mosaic of these occurrences. We can visualise, as he continues

in how miry a place, how she was bemoiled, how he left  
 her with the horse upon her, how he beat me because  
 her horse stumbled, how she waded through the dirt to  
 pluck him off me; how he swore, how she prayed that

never prayed before; how I cried, how the horses ran  
away, how her bridle was burst, how I lost my crupper,  
with many things of worth memory which now shall die  
in oblivion, and thou return unexperienced to thy grave.

(4.1.55-62)

Carnival's grotesque realism is indeed the system of images used in Grumio's tale. Petruchio's grotesque 'strategy of domestication consists of depressing Katherina's spirit through exhibitions of squalor.'<sup>65</sup> Returning to the staged carnivalesque violence, Petruchio's arrival is a 'festival' of thrashing and abuse. As well as striking his servants and throwing food and crockery at them ('There, take it to you, trenchers, cups and all' [5.1.136]), he verbally abuses all of them employing as many insults as he can find: 'knaves', 'loggerhead', 'rascals', 'rogue', 'peasant swain', 'whoreson, malthorse drudge', 'whoreson villain', 'beetle-headed', 'flap-eared', 'heedless joltheads'. By creating this kind of scene, Petruchio/Ferando echoes the folktale from which his taming programme derives. In the folktale the victims are animals rather than servants: a cat, a dog and a horse, which are killed because they do not obey the tamer's command of bringing him water to wash himself. When there are no more animals left, the wife, frightened of becoming the next victim, brings water to her husband. Petruchio's command ('Some water, here. What ho!' [4.1.120]) and the indiscriminate physical violence against his servants that follows, are references to the folktale taming programme. I would suggest that even the apparently incongruous mention of Troilus, his spaniel (a breed of dog known for its affectionate nature and keen scent, though, like Shakespeare's homonymous hero, it can be ferocious when pursuing its victims), and his cousin Ferdinand, whom Kate 'must kiss and be acquainted with' (4.1.123) are also part of Petruchio's strategy to scare Katherina. Thus, as in the folktale, Katherina has now entered an environment in which Petruchio's commands must be attended to with promptness, and physical thrashing is the norm.

Indeed, the carnivalesque thrashing is not over. As in *A Shrew*, Katherina of *The Shrew*, being starved and teased by Grumio about food, soundly '*Beats him*' (stage direction at 4.3.31). The final victim of the carnivalesque thrashing is Biondello. For

abusing his master's father, he is beaten by him (5.1.46-51). The abusive language and physical thrashing so far analysed seem to be in consonance with the grotesque realism that Bakhtin describes as sharply differing from the classical as well as from the naturalistic mode of images.<sup>66</sup> Grotesque realism exaggerates the dimensions of everything in the *Shrew* plays. From the conventional lovers' plot to the battle between the shrew and her tamer, everything is blown out of proportion. The actions of the characters are carnivalesque stereotypes of social behaviour; and Kate, as the image of a 'monstrous' *shrew*, is a suitable catalyst to bring about the other's 'monstrosity'. In the next section I shall discuss the treatment of this kind of 'monstrous' figure in relation to the grotesque realism that is a feature of Bakhtin's Carnival.

### Shakespeare's 'Monstrous' Shrew

We shall start this discussion by acknowledging a peculiar feature regarding the relationship between women in *The Shrew*. In fact, they do not relate to each other. And this is very unusual in the Shakespeare canon, especially in comedies. As Marianne Novy has already observed, Katherina 'is the only Shakespearean comic heroine without a female friend at any point in the play'.<sup>67</sup> With respect to women as a whole in the play, the only point at which they appear to be talking together occurs off-stage, as we hear from Katherina when she answers Petruchio's enquiry about the whereabouts of Bianca and the Widow: 'They sit conferring by the parlour fire' (5.2.103). If in Shakespeare's other plays we have several pairs of women associated with each other, why does this seem to be carefully avoided in *The Shrew*? Simon Shepherd has noticed that even in a play like *The Comedy of Errors*, in which the focus is 'the topsy-turviness created by a pair of twins', the women are allowed 'to talk together as women'. And, as he observes, on these occasions 'one of the

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<sup>65</sup>Neil Rhodes, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>66</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

<sup>67</sup>Marianne L. Novy, *Love's Argument: Gender Relations in Shakespeare* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p. 60.



recurrent scenes, is that of inspection of suitors.’<sup>68</sup> In the scene between Katherina and Bianca (also siblings like Adriana and Luciana) we have some echo of this comic strategy: ‘Of all thy suitors here I charge thee to tell / Whom thou lov’st best’ (1.28-9). However, their grotesque rivalry is the focus of the scene. To allow them to be associated with each other would provoke the kind of carnivalesque topsy-turviness described in other texts, such as, for instance, Fletcher’s *The Woman’s Prize*. To allow them more space than men would put the women on top, and this would undermine the taming process. However, as we shall see later, Kate’s taming is open to question and even her final gesture of submission is capable of being read as an embodiment of women as dominant. I suggest that Kate’s isolation as the ‘monstrous’ shrew as well as the ‘monstrous’ submissive wife is a necessary feature of her socially-constructed role.

This ‘monstrous’ female is indeed pictured as a grotesque naïve spinster, but with her own sharp wit: she has ‘a sting in the tongue’. She belongs to the same gallery of characters as Beatrice, also a spinster; however, the basic difference between these two is that Katherina is ‘she’ and Beatrice is she. In another words, as I have shown in a previous section of this chapter, the *Shrew* texts make clear that Kate’s character is a representation of a representation; she is not a real woman, but a cross-dressed performer. In employing this mechanism, the *Shrew* plays distance the show from any possible illusionist reception of it. As I have already suggested, it is the display of this particular convention that enables the plays to appropriate Carnival’s grotesque realism. Kate’s behaviour is that of a ‘play-thing’; it is not a psychological portrait of feminine sexual immaturity waiting to be ‘cured’ by a forceful male. Although we cannot deny that Shakespearean ideas of a ‘natural performed’ piece do have some connection with modern ideas about naturalness on stage, *The Shrew* seems not be a good example of that practice. The ‘metadramatic’ features of the play, which I hope to have demonstrated, seem to conspire against this early-modern ‘natural’ style of representation.

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<sup>68</sup>Simon Shepherd, op. cit., pp. 158-9.

With regard to the way Kate is depicted, Phyllis Gorfain's analysis of Ophelia as 'a paradigm of the Female Grotesque' can perhaps help us to understand the carnivalesque imagery of women found in the Shakespearean *Shrew*. According to her, *Hamlet's* heroine is 'a double-bodied figure of exuberant excess and morality which dominates carnivalesque texts'. As Gorfain puts it, 'the female figures created in carnival celebrations embody ambivalence as they are frequently depicted as pregnant, disorderly or mad – a threat to male order and a licentious release from it'.<sup>69</sup> In Shakespeare's *Shrew*, the 'stark mad, or wonderful froward' Katherine (1.1.69) is a loud example of such a portrayal of carnivalesque female grotesque. This carnivalesque vision of women is a contentious issue in terms of Bakhtin's theory. Thus, I shall now examine Bakhtin's view on the subject and will draw attention to some of the controversy it has raised.

Contrasting the popular comic tradition with the ascetic tradition, Bakhtin argues that these two lines of thought 'are profoundly alien to each other.' However, as he observes, since 'the latter very often borrowed its symbols from the comic line; this is why scholars frequently combine and confuse the two lines in their research.' In discussing women in terms of these two traditions, he observes that while

the ascetic tendency of medieval Christianity ... saw in woman the incarnation of sin, the temptation of the flesh ..., [In] The popular tradition ... Womanhood is shown in contrast to the limitations of her partner (husband, lover, or suitor); she is the foil to his avarice, jealousy, stupidity, hypocrisy, bigotry, sterile senility, false heroism, and abstract idealism... She represents in person the undoing of pretentiousness, of all that is finished, completed, and exhausted. She is the inexhaustible vessel of conception, which dooms all that is old and terminated.<sup>70</sup>

Bakhtin's view has been criticised for showing no interest in the language of gender and in the position of women in society, and gender it has been argued that is a

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<sup>69</sup>Phyllis Gorfain, 'Play and the Carnavalesque in *Hamlet*' in Ronald Knowles (ed.), *Shakespeare and Carnival* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 1998), p. 162.

<sup>70</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, op. cit., p. 240.

blind spot in his theory.<sup>71</sup> This is indeed serious criticism; however, as Karen Hohne and Helen Wussow observe, ‘there is no such a thing as *woman’s language*, or for that matter woman’s languages, in Bakhtin. There cannot be, and, we would argue, there should not be a language totally possessed by one class, one gender, one social body.’<sup>72</sup> In fact Bakhtin makes no distinction between gender, ethnicity, or any other socially-related group to shape his theory of heteroglossia; rather what he takes into account is ‘a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships’.<sup>73</sup> Although it is beyond the scope of my analysis to deal with this issue at length, we might take note in the present context of Derrida’s provocative thought on the sex issue: ‘What is more if there is a multitude of sexes (because there are perhaps more than two) which sign differently then I will have to assume (I—or rather whoever says I—will have to assume) this polysexuality.’<sup>74</sup> According to Hohne and Wussow, ‘to speak of a single-sexed language’ would be the same as ‘to

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<sup>71</sup>See, for instance, Wayne Booth, ‘Freedom of interpretation: Bakhtin and the challenge of feminist criticism’ in Gary Saul Morson (ed.), *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p.163 ff.; Nancy Glazener, ‘Dialogic Subversion: Bakhtin, the Novel and Gertrude Stein’ in Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (eds.), *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 109; Diane Prince Herndl, ‘The Dilemmas of a Feminine Dialogue’; and Patricia Yaeger, ‘Afterword’ both in Dale M. Bauer and Susan Jaret McKinstry (eds.), *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic* (Albany: State University Press, 1991), p. 10 and pp. 240, 244 respectively; Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed, ‘The Framing of the shrew: Discourses on Hysteria and Its Resisting Voices’ in David Shepherd (ed.), *Bakhtin, Carnival and Other Subjects*, Selected Papers from the Fifth International Bakhtin Conference University of Manchester, July 1991, *Critical Studies*, vol. 3, n. 2 – vol. 4, n. 1/2 (Amsterdam – Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1993), p. 177. For more feminist criticism, see, for instance, Mary Russo, ‘The Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory’ in her *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), pp.53-75. Mary Russo’s chapter was printed earlier as an article in Teresa de Laurentis (ed.), *Feminist Studies: Critical Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 213-29; Patricia Yaeger, ‘Emancipatory discourse’ in *Contemporary Literature*, vol. XXVII, n. 2 (1986), pp. 246-56; Ruth Ginsburg, ‘Bakhtin’s Ur-Chronotope: The Womb’ in David Shepherd (ed.), *Bakhtin, Carnival and Other Subjects*, op. cit., pp. 165-76.

<sup>72</sup>Karen Hohne and Helen Wussow’s ‘Introduction’ of their edition of *A Dialogue of Voices: Feminist Literary Theory and Bakhtin* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. xi.

<sup>73</sup>M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, op. cit., p.263.

<sup>74</sup>Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other*, Christie McDonald (ed.), trans. Peggy Kamuf (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), p. 52.

move toward a monologism'. The implicit otherness here is essential to Bakhtin's theory of polyphony.<sup>75</sup> According to his theory, this 'Babel' of conflicting voices is what makes the polyphonic novel different from the epic genre, in which a single voice is heard—that of the hero, for example. If society's voice is to be represented as a whole, then contrary voices need to be heard in order to give a dialogic character to the discourse. Otherwise, it would be monologic. So, if we are going to talk about an oppressive patriarchal language, it 'must speak in conflict with the languages of the others [which] it tries to marginalize and silence.'<sup>76</sup>

Transferring these ideas to carnivalized drama, and seeing it as a polyphonic system, it would be unhistorical not to acknowledge the voices of those in power as the louder ones; however, the voice of the oppressed is also heard in contrast to the dominant voice. In the specific case of Shakespeare's *Shrew*, if we wish to be serious about the patriarchal issue it raises, we have to examine the society which produced it. Without wishing to exaggerate the moral authority of the play, the text can perhaps be said to be a valuable additional source of information about Elizabethan mentalities, and not, as I should like to demonstrate, an endorsement of them. To agree with Ann Thompson: 'The real problem lies outside the play, in the fact that the subjection of women to men, although patently unfair and unjustifiable, is still virtually universal. It is the world which offends us, not Shakespeare.'<sup>77</sup> However, the carnivalesque pattern of images used in Shakespeare's *Shrew* merely seems to widen the gap between modern sensibilities<sup>78</sup> and the world which produced the play. Perhaps an analysis of the play in the light of the Bakhtinian Carnival grotesque realism could (I

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<sup>75</sup> As Joki observes, the word 'men' in Hélène Iswolsky's translation of Bakhtin's *Rabelais and his World*, 'must be understood as meaning "human beings", "persons", "people", because in the original Bakhtin uses the word *luidi*, which has those meanings in Russian.' Ilkka Joki, 'The Dialogicality of Grotesque Realism' in David Shepherd (ed.), *Bakhtin, Carnival and Other Subjects*, op. cit., p.89.

<sup>76</sup> Karen Hohne and Helen Wussow, *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]), op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>78</sup> In 1897 Bernard Shaw, in his article of 6th November in *Saturday Review*, criticized especially the last scene of *The Shrew* as 'altogether disgusting to modern sensibility.' Cf. Edwin Wilson (ed.), *Shaw on Shakespeare* (London: Cassell, 1962), p. 180.

hope) help us to understand the *Shrew* plays' 'offensive' contents as, in fact, a critical portrait of the society which produced it.

To discuss the portrayal of Kate in particular, I would suggest that Carnival's grotesque realism offers a productive way of looking at the subject. Her portrait is part of a system of images which is, to recall Bakhtin, totally alien to the classical canon. The grotesque image of women in the folk culture of humour, 'like other images in this tradition, is given on the level of ambivalent laughter, at once mocking, destructive, and joyfully reasserting.'<sup>79</sup> Grotesque realism chastises avarice, meanness, greed, falsehood, naivety, jealousy, pride, foolishness, authoritarianism, and so on. Whilst these are also the targets of many kinds of humour, Carnival's grotesque realism is the crudest form of them all. It brings all these aspects of the human condition down to earth. It reduces them to ashes in order to bring about renewal. As Longstaffe has observed, rejection 'of the individual is affirmation of the collective for Bakhtin, for grotesque laughter mocks the individual in the knowledge that the collective will survive'.<sup>80</sup>

As a carnivalesque shrew, Katherina in the Shakespearean version of the play is not merely a shrew; she is the shrew. She is an archetype of a shrew, who is later to be transformed into the archetype of a modest wife. In reality, however, she is a caricature of both types, for she is a carnivalesque representation of both the shrew and the humble wife. If she is considered a 'shame' to woman's condition as the shrew, she is also 'shameful' as the model wife. While for the ladies of *The Shrew* (5.2.123-34) Katherina's sense of duty is outrageous: a 'silly' (as the Widow puts it) and 'foolish duty' (as Bianca cries out), in *A Shrew* (14.100-10) their rage against Kate 'for making a fool of herself and' them is also strongly heard. But Kate is not the only one to be chastised by Carnival's grotesque realism; her 'monstrosity', as I have said, is used in the *Shrew* plays as a catalyst to bring about the others' 'monstrosity'. In these circumstances, the Shakespearean audience may have found, as Rutter suggests, 'that the play interrogated *male* cultural practice and *male*

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<sup>79</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, op cit., p. 241

spectator positions by demonstrating the constructedness of gender roles”<sup>81</sup> This is perhaps why all the personages in the *Shrew* plays are like stock characters. Using Carnival’s grotesque realism as its medium, the plays magnify this ‘constructedness of gender roles’ to show the paradox of fixed rules. In this exaggerated and distorted mirror of human behaviour, the show given by the strolling players laughs at the commonplaces of patriarchal society as depicted in the play; and one of these targets is the settling of a dowry. If on one side we have the social archetype of a shrew, on the other we have an archetypal society managing the conventions of its social life, and the settling of the bride’s dowry, which we are going to examine now, is perhaps a good example of the carnivalesque treatment of an established social custom.

### **Buying and Selling Marriage as Goods on a Market Stall**

*Baptista* Faith, gentlemen, now I play a merchant’s part,  
And venture madly on a desperate mart.

(2.1.315-6)

The presentation of a bride’s dowry as part of the marriage contract was an old social custom which prevailed over the early-modern period, and survived until quite recently. The settlement would depend, of course, upon the extent of the wife-to-be’s family wealth. According to T. E., the cost of this social custom of providing a dowry in the Middle Ages would depend on the feudal lord’s scarcity of resources and the affluence of his tenants and was largely met by the latter. But, as T. E. observes, during the third year of the reign of Edward I (*West. 1. Cap. 35*),

the Law was made certaine, the Lord shall have aide of his tenants, as soone as his daughter accomplish 7. yeares age [when shee is able to deserve and have dowere] for the marriage of her.’ That aid meant ‘xx. s. of a whole knights fee, and xx. l. land and soccage, and so forth, according to the rate more or lesse.’<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Stephen Longstaffe, “‘A short report and not otherwise’”: Jack Cade in *2 Henry VI* in Ronald Knowles (ed.), *Shakespeare and Carnival*, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>81</sup> Carol Rutter, op. cit., p. 212, n. 28.

<sup>82</sup>T. E., [?Thomas Edgar], *The Lawes Resolutions of womens Rights: Or, The*

Despite the popular discontent likely to have been aroused by such a law (writes John Cordy Jeaffreson), James I, using his royal prerogative ‘ventured to issue writs for the payment of another royal marriage-tax.’ This occurred during the arrangements for his daughter’s wedding. This ‘expedient brought to the king’s exchequer no more than 20.000 *l.*, whilst the cost of the celebration amounted to 53.294 *l.*, in addition to the 40.000 *l.* assigned as the bridal portion.’<sup>83</sup>

Money (one of the principal concerns for those in search of a wife) was a subject which occupied the pens of many authors of the period. While for the satirists the greed present in such an enterprise was an object of ridicule, for the clergy it was seen as a blasphemy against the sacred blessing of matrimony. To Thomas Bacon, a ‘reasonable manne whether he be rytch or poore will always, haue respect vnto the feare of God, to honestye, to faithfulness, to laboure and vertue, and not the bagge of money.’<sup>84</sup> Alexander Niccholes was one who vehemently attacked such a blasphemous enterprise. To his mind,

It is a fashion much in vse in these times to choose wiues as Chapmen sell their wares, with *Quantum dabitis?* what is the most you will giue? and if their parents, or guardians shall reply their virtues are their portions, and others haue they none, let them be as dutfull as *Sara*, as virtuous as *Anna*, as obedient as the *Virgine Mary*; these to the wise man, every one a rich portion, and more precious then gold or *Ophir*, shall be nothing valued, or make up where wealth is wanting; these may be adiuncts or good additions, but money must be the principall, of all that marry, and (that scope is large) there are but few that undergoe it for the right end and use, whereby it comes to passe that many attaine not to the blessednesse therein.<sup>85</sup>

Notwithstanding that the bride’s dowry was a legalized institution over the period, *The Shrew* does not fail to criticize this social arrangement. All prospective husbands in the play’s society are willing to tell Petruchio what the situation is. Despite benefitting from his friend’s decision to woo Katherina, Hortensio warns: ‘she is

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*Lawes Provisions for Woemen*, Lib. I, (London, 1632), p. 7.

<sup>83</sup>John Cordy Jeaffreson, *Brides and Bridals*, vol. I (London, 1872), p. 215.

<sup>84</sup>Thomas Bacon, *op. cit.*, Fol. xiii.

<sup>85</sup>Alexander Niccholes, *A Discourse of Marriage and Wiving*, (London, 1620), p.7.

intolerable curst, / and shrewd and forward so beyond measure' (1.2.85-6). Later Gremio, another who would benefit from Petruchio's decision, shows his concern. 'Hortensio, have you told him all her faults?' (1.2.180). Even her father, the one responsible for finding a husband for his daughter, has a comment to make about the situation: 'She is not for your turn, the more my grief.' (2.1.62). In *A Shrew* there is no such advice; in fact it is Ferando who wisely acknowledges the situation. To the surprise of his friend Polidor, who had intended to ask Ferando's help in the matter, he anticipates his future: 'Faith, I am even now a-going./ ... / To bonny Kate, ... / The devil himself dares scarce venture to woo her' (3.111,14-5). In both plays—as in the folktale—Kate's wooer is motivated by desire for wealth. This, apparently, causes the bridegroom to forget about the troubles ahead and propose to a 'notorious' shrew like Katherina. Paying no heed to his friend's warning ('were my state far worse than it is, / I would not wed her for a mine of gold!' [1.2.87-8]), Petruchio replies: 'Hortensio, peace. Thou know'st not gold's effect. / Tell me her father's name and 'tis enough.' (1.2.89-90).

In *A Shrew* the bargain is also taken into account. As Ferando says to his friend Polidor, Kate's father 'hath promised me six thousand crowns' (3.142). So, to Polidor and Aurelius' surprise, Ferando's suddenly arrives, ready to take up the challenge. Then, later, Alfonso reminds him of money: 'Hark you sir, look what I did promise you / I'll perform, if you get my daughter's love.' (3.133-34). Certainly, Ferando's motivation for accepting the enterprise is no different from that of Petruchio. However, if in *A Shrew* the social custom is taken for granted, *The Shrew* hyperbolically places emphasis on the dowry argument. Although in both plays Ferando and Petruchio are not ashamed of the gamble they are taking as a means of increasing their wealth, in *The Shrew* 'the selling' of Katherina takes on a new dimension. As Tranio's abusive language testifies (2.1.317-8), the play has no intention of treating this social custom as unremarkable. Instead of taking for granted Petruchio's financial motivation for accepting the challenge, the play renders it far more noticeable than does *A Shrew*. As Grumio grotesquely summarises the situation:



Nay, look you, sir, he tells you flatly what his mind is.  
 Why, give him gold enough and marry him to a puppet or  
 an aglet-baby or an old trot with ne'er a tooth in her head,  
 though she have as many diseases as two-and-fifty horses.  
 Why, nothing comes amiss, so money comes withal.

(1.2.74-9)

Grumio's abusive statement comes from one who knows his master's intentions very well. And Petruchio does not conceal his intentions. If in *A Shrew* Alfonso is the one who reminds the bridegroom of the reward, in *The Shrew* it is the greedy Petruchio who brings up the subject. Indeed he treats his prospective wedding as business (2.1.110-23). If the dowry of Katherine is agreed promptly, the process of asking for Bianca's hand is turned into a carnivalesque auction. As Gremio and the disguised Tranio start to abuse each other verbally, Baptista intervenes: 'I will compound this strife. / 'Tis deeds must win the prize' (2.1.330-1). After a ridiculous bidding battle between Gremio and Tranio, in which a huge quantity of money, land, several ships, and all sort of goods have been offered, the auctioneer's hammer finally favours the latter. Baptista's treatment of his young daughter's marriage ('Tis deed most win the prize, and he of both / That can assure my daughter greatest dower / Shall have my Bianca's love.' [2.1.331-3]) is a clear demonstration of how commercial enterprise outweighs any consideration about human feelings. Thus, even if the disguised Tranio has won the bid for now, as Baptista puts it: 'on Sunday following shall Bianca / Be bride to you, if you make this assurance. / If not, to Signor Gremio.' (2.1.384-6). As we can see in this scene, the whole situation is a farce in which a 'zealous' father is deceived solely by his greed. Although he has checked that an assurance can be provided, since this assurance is a fraud, provided by a fake father on behalf of a fake son, Baptista continues to be deceived in the same fashion. If the whole situation was not part of a major deceiving plan, he would have ended by giving his daughter in marriage to a servant pretending to be the heir of a rich merchant from Pisa. As Tranio in his soliloquy puts it: 'that's a wonder – fathers commonly / Do get their children, but in this case of wooing / A child shall get a sire' (2.1.398-400). As the plan to deceive succeeds, the 'pantaloon' is trapped by his greed. Thus, having exposed Baptista's stupidity, Carnival is creating laughter at the expense of the patriarchy's pretence of having total control over everything in its

domain. This example provides a caveat for the final resolution of the plays. For there is no safe place for the patriarchal society portrayed in them; everything is in the process of changing. If Baptista seems certain that his obedient daughter will accept his decision to marry her to whomever he judges a match, he later has to face the reality of the stolen marriage as proof that his control over his daughter is a fancy. Although the taming-theme is the focus of my analysis, in this section I have tried to show that the Carnival's laughter in the Shakespearean *Shrew* is not exclusively directed towards the struggle between a shrew and her tamer, but to the whole society shown in the play. Now, since I believe this point has been made clear, I will concentrate on the plays' main subject which I take to be the confrontation between two opposite forces: a strong women and the patriarchy's anxiety about keeping or losing control over everything in its domain. As we are going to see, these two opposing forces are engaged in a battle which alludes to the tournament between Carnival and Lent.

### **The 'Battle of Carnival and Lent'**

The Lenten atmosphere predominates in Padua/Athens until the arrival of Ferando/Petruchio: he is the one, and the only one, who challenges the 'Lenten- maiden'. Investing himself as a 'Carnival King', he embarks on a carnivalesque battle which will transform the all-pervasive 'gloomy atmosphere' of Padua/Athens. To the despair of pantaloons and the stock lovers, Bianca is locked in, and deprived of being freely courted: 'Why will you mew her up, / Signor Baptista, for this fiend of hell, / And make her bear the penance of her tongue?' (1.1.87-90). Indeed, Kate's behaviour affects the entire society of the play. The newly-arrived Lucentio (hopelessly in love) soon realises how sad the situation is: 'Ah, Tranio, what a cruel father's he!' (1.1. I.i,175-83). If Bianca and her suitors are unhappy, the hopeless Baptista has even more reason to be discontented. Having two daughters to give in marriage, but without any prospect of being able to perform his patriarchal duty (and, especially, without any prospect of getting the bad-tempered Katherina off his hands), he laments: 'Was ever gentleman thus grieved as I?' (2.1.37). Though the situation seems to present no solution, it does provoke the rise of the Carnival spirit as a means

of fighting back against the Lenten atmosphere. And the occasion and opportunity are provided by Baptista (the gullible ‘pantaloon’), who, in order to alleviate his young daughter’s boredom, has decided: ‘Schoolmaster will I keep within my house / Fit to instruct her youth.’ (1.1.94-5). Thus, Lucentio and his clever servant Tranio are the first ones to start the carnivalesque masquerade which will change the prevailing atmosphere provoked by the ‘Lenten-maiden’. Lucentio, like the Lord of the ‘Induction’, is uncrowned as a master by crowning his servant to take his position. Like the Lord of the ‘Induction’, he promotes a carnivalesque *mésalliance*. From now on during this carnivalesque period he is the humble man, while Tranio impersonates the master (Lucentio):

Thou shalt be master, Tranio, in my stead;  
 Keep house, and port, and servants, as I should.  
 I will some other be – some Florentine,  
 Some Neapolitan, or meaner man of Pisa.  
 ’Tis hatched, and shall be so. Tranio, at once  
 Uncase thee, take my coloured hat and cloak.  
(1.1.193-8)

This carnivalesque masquerade will take over the Paduan scenario. So, we have Tranio disguised as Lucentio; Hortensio disguised as Litio, a man from Mantua ‘Cunning in music and the mathematics’ [2.1.55]); Lucentio, who in the first instance was disguised as Tranio, now as Cambio, a ‘young scholar that hath been long studying at Rheims, as cunning in Greek, Latin, and other languages’ [2.1.77-9]). The same happens in *A Shrew*: there we have Aurelius first disguised as his servant Valeria, and then as a son of a rich merchant of Sestus. Then, obeying different motivations, while Phylotus of *A Shrew* is masked as Aurelius’ father, in *The Shrew* it is the Pedant who becomes Vincentio, the father of the fake Lucentio. In *A Shrew*, even the Duke of Sestus, the counterpart of Vincentio, comes to Athens as a person other than himself. Obeying different motivations from that of *The Shrew*, Valeria is first disguised as Aurelius, then as the music tutor to Kate, and finally as the Duke of Sestus’ son.

If this masquerade has turned the Paduan/Athenian world upside-down, the arrival of Petruchio/Ferando will turn the scene into a carnivalesque battleground. As a ‘Carnival King’, he defies the ‘Lenten-maiden’ in a way she has never been defied before. As he remarks:

I am as peremptory as she proud-minded,  
 And where two raging fires meet together  
 They consume the thing that feeds their fury.  
 Though little fire grows great with little wind,  
 Yet extreme gusts will blow out fire and all.  
 So I to her, and so she yields to me,  
 For I am rough, and woo not like a babe.  
 (2.1.127-33)

To embark on his fight, he has planned to behave like the wooers we find in the old ballads such as *Good Counsell for young Wooers*. There we find that the wooer ‘must not be daunted, whatever she [any woman] say’. In one of his verses, advising how to gain the favour of ‘a wench with a blacke brow’ the author says:

For take this from me, a blacke wench is still proud,  
 And loves well to heare her praise set forth aloud;  
 Although she accuse thee of flattery oft,  
 And tell thee she cannot abide to be scoft,  
 Yet never leave praying her—for, if thou dost,  
 Thy speeches, thy paines, and thy love is all lost.<sup>86</sup>

The ballad’s author further insists that the wooer must ‘marry in hast’. So, in a clown’s vein, Petruchio tells the audience, while waiting for his Kate, that he will

... woo her with some spirit when she comes!  
 Say that she rail, why then I’ll tell her plain  
 She sings as sweetly as a nightingale.  
 Say that she frow, I’ll say she looks as clear  
 As morning roses newly washed with dew.  
 Say she be mute and will not speak a word,  
 Then I’ll commend her volubility

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<sup>86</sup>*The Roxburghe Ballads*, op. cit., p. 41. We have no way of knowing which came first: the play or this ballad signed M. P. and ‘Printed in London for F. C.’ However, it is most probable that ‘literary ballads’ had their origins in the oral folk tradition.

And say she uttereth piercing eloquence.  
 If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks  
 As though she bid me stay by her a week.  
 If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day  
 When I shall ask the banns, and when be married.  
 (2.1.165-76)

As in the ballad quoted above, Petruchio's pragmatic form of wooing will succeed irrespective of what the bride does or says. If in *A Shrew* Ferando is not as pragmatic as Petruchio in establishing his wooing programme, he is driven by the same determination and certainty of success. As he says:

... she and I must woo with scolding sure,  
 And I will her to't till she be weary,  
 Or else I'll make her yield to grant me love.  
 (3.119-21)

In both plays the audience is aware that it does not matter what Kate says or does, Ferando/Petruchio will be victorious in his determination to marry her. However, the main appeal is in the way that the 'wooing dance' is carried on. And *The Shrew* does provide an exciting 'wooing battle'. The 'battle of wits' is indeed an elaborate technique to be found in Shakespeare's plays and in those of his contemporaries. This 'wooing duel', can be found, for instance, between Benedick and Beatrice (*Much Ado About Nothing*), the King of Navarre and the Princess of France (*Love's Labour's Lost*), and Rosalind and Orlando (*As You Like It*). In these plays the 'merry war' between the sexes is far from being the cursing 'duel' we have between Kate and Petruchio. This 'battle of wit', with its easy flow of short and shared lines creates a calculated mood of 'extempore' action.

*Katherina* Asses are made to bear and so are you.  
*Petruchio* Women are made to bear and so are you.  
 (2.1.195-6)

According to Simon Shepherd, this 'verbal tennis-match between man and woman' is the formal arrangement of the set at wit. Furthermore, as Shepherd observes, 'the witty contest is a verbal intervention [in the male world]. Sets at wit take place on the

stage in a society where some commentators felt that women should be silent.’<sup>87</sup> If this verbal battle does not sound particularly witty in the lines quoted above, the repetition of the other’s words as repartee is, as Shepherd has demonstrated, also part of that technique. On the other hand, the easy flow of lines found in Petruchio and Katherina’s wooing scene are composed of praise and abuse which are, in Bakhtin’s terms, an ambivalent form of address proper to the speech of the marketplace. Indeed their wooing ‘battle’ is a mixture of mocking praise and sheer abuse. For instance, after Petruchio compares her to the mythological Diana, Katherina replies: ‘Where did you study all this goodly speech?’ To which Petruchio answers: ‘It is extempore, from my mother-wit’; then she makes her point: ‘A witty mother! Witless else her son.’ (2.1.252-4). According to Bakhtin, such a form of address is only possible when certain limits in people’s relationships are removed. In such circumstances, abusive language becomes synonymous with intimacy and frankness. Thus, ‘the usual speech patterns begin to break up. A new, familiar pattern is constructed in which current polite words begin to appear false, stereotyped, narrow and especially incomplete.’<sup>88</sup>

With respect to the language used in Katherina and Petruchio’s wooing scene, Eric Partridge’s analysis of Shakespeare’s bawdy can perhaps help us to clarify this point. Partridge argues that Shakespeare was not like Rabelais in his use of scatology. According to him, Shakespeare ‘took very little pleasure in the anatomical witticism and the functional joke unless they were either witty or sexual... if one may essay a fine, yet aesthetically important distinction, Shakespeare may have had a dirty mind, yet he certainly had not a filthy mind.’ However, as the author acknowledges, we can find in his plays some direct references to ‘urination and chamber-pots; to defecation and close-stools; to flatulence; to podex and posteriors.’<sup>89</sup> A more recent work concerning the material body represented in the drama of early modern England is Gail Kern Paster’s *The Body Embarrassed*. Analysing Autolycus’ scene in which

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<sup>87</sup>Simon Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women: Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth-Century Drama* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1981), pp. 151-2, 157.

<sup>88</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, op. cit., p. 421.

<sup>89</sup>Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare’s Bawdy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 9-10.

he, pretending ‘urinary need ...’, invokes a familiar phrase: “Walk before toward the sea side.... I will but *look upon the hedge* and follow you.” (4.4.826-28, emphasis added), she observes that the Arden editor (1966), ‘glossing Autolycus’s behaviour here, dismissed the business as “merely a dramatic device (chiefly for the groundlings).” Admittedly, if Autolycus had simply wanted to get away from the two rustics for a while, an excuse clearly might have been fashioned *otherwise*.’ As she argues: ‘What is at stake editorially is Shakespeare’s part in his text’s excretory humor.’<sup>90</sup>

If Katherina’s words have other meanings than those of an ‘innocent’ piece of furniture, Petruchio, who promises to challenge the maiden as she has never been challenged before, is afforded the opportunity of making a double entendre. As she compares him to a ‘movable’, ‘A joint-stool’ (2.1.193-4), a piece to be sat on, he punningly retorts: ‘Thou hast hit it. Come, sit on me.’ (2.1.194). To which Katherina, also punningly, inverts the situation replying: ‘Asses are made to bear, and so are you.’ (2.1.195). As Partridge reminds us, the pronunciation of ass was the same as *arse*. This can be confirmed by the plain language of *A Shrew*. Here, the same abusive term is used by Valeria during the lute lesson as a retort to Kate’s insult:

*Valeria* That stop was false, play it again.  
*Kate* Then mend it thou, thou filthy ass.  
*Valeria* What, do you bid me kiss your arse?  
 (4.24-6)

In *The Shrew*, since the situation continues with Katherina physically on top of Petruchio, or *vice versa*, his expedient, according to Partridge, is to make a rude sound.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 27-8.

<sup>91</sup>In his entry for *buz!* or *Buzz!*, Partridge takes Petruchio and Hamlet’s expression as a synonym for flatulence. Although Partridge’s gloss can be contentious he points out, ‘This is the Elizabethan convention—Shakespeare’s, anyway—for that “rude noise” (an anal emission of wind) which in theatrical slang, is known as *raspberry*’ Eric Partridge, *op. cit.*, p. 83. Similarly to what has been pointed out by Paster in the

*Petruchio* Alas, good Kate, I will not burden thee,  
 For, knowing thee to be but young and light –  
*Katherina* Too light for such a swain as you to catch,  
 And yet as heavy as my weight should be.  
*Petruchio* Should be? – Should buzz.  
 (2.1.198-202)

As the ‘fight’ continues, Kate does not assume herself to be vanquished; again (as the shared line tells us) she inverts the situation: ‘Well ta’en, and like a buzzard.’ (II.i, 206). This time, using another abusive term, which seems to refer to ‘a kind of hawk that cannot be trained, hence a foolish or unobservant person who will only hit things by chance.’<sup>92</sup>

If Petruchio, ironically, had become more excited about Katherina when he hears of Hortensio’s misfortune, it is not long before he experiences the soldier-like strength of his wooed bride. Holding back the angry Kate, who is about to leave after the bawdy episode of tail, tongue, and tongue in the tail, Petruchio protests that he is a gentleman. So, as an ironic but physical challenge to his protested gentility, ‘*She*

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case of Autolycus, *The Shrew*’s editors do not take into consideration any scatological meaning in their glossing for Petruchio’s Buzz! According to Ann Thompson, ‘This seems a little feeble (as Katherina says): Petruchio puns on “bee”, hence “buzz” which also means “rumour” or “scandal”; he implies that he has heard stories of Kate’s promiscuity. Waldo and Hebert ... point out that the singer of a drone bass part is said to “buzz the burden”, thus continue the musical quibbles.’, p. 88, n. 202. In H. J. Oliver’s view, ‘F1’s “Shold be, Should buzze” may be re-punctuated in various ways, none of them beyond dispute. (i) Petruchio catches up the phrase “should be” and retorts that he is interested not in what she *should* be, only in what she is; (ii) “be suggests to him “bee” and so “buzz like a bee”; but (iii) “buzz” was also an interjection of impatience: “nonsense”; and (iv) the noun “buzz” could mean rumour, as in *Lear*, I.4.326, and so Petruchio may even be implying further that rumour of what she *is* is very different from what she should be. *Well ta’en* As the following reference to the buzzard makes clear, not [*sic.*] a genuine compliment: rather, ““that’s what you expected to say”.’, p. 145, n. 207. Brian Morris’ gloss is not very different, accordingly: ‘Petruchio puns on “be” and “bee”, on “buzz” in the senses of (i) the buzz of a bee, and (ii) a busy rumour, or scandal (*OED*, *sb.*<sup>1</sup> 1 and 3. Cf. *Lr.*, I.iv.326, “Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike’. *OED* adds, under a separate entry (*Buzz*, *int. Obs.*) “Said in the *Variorum Shakespeare* (1803) to have been a common exclamation (of impatience or contempt) when anyone was telling a well-known story”. Cf. *Ham.*, II.ii.389, and Jonson, *Alchemist* (H. & S, V.308), I.ii.169-70.’, p. 207, n. 206.

<sup>92</sup>Ann Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 88, n. 202.



*strikes him*' at 2.1.213. Taken by surprise, Petruchio promises to cuff her back if she strikes him again. Making humorous capital of his anger, Kate puns: 'So may you lose your arms'(2.1.219). Thus, her physical threat becomes a mocking comment on Petruchio's posing as a gentleman. This battle between 'Lent and Carnival' is also pictured in *A Shrew*. Here, Kate threatens Ferando instead of actually striking him. Indeed, she gives him the opportunity of making the physical contact he is attempting. So, being threatened with striking for having asked for a kiss, Ferando entices her:

*Ferando* I prethee do Kate, they say thou art a shrew,  
 And I like thee the better for I would have thee so.  
*Kate* Let go my hand for fear it reach your ear.  
*Ferando* No Kate, this hand is mine and I thy love.  
 (3.154-7)

After his victory in the first round of the battle against the Lenten spirit, Petruchio/Ferando fixes the wedding date. He then retires from the scene to prepare himself for an even more spectacular demonstration as a 'Lord of Misrule'. As described by Biondello, Petruchio's arrival is indeed a Carnival grotesque display, with him as a 'Jack of Lent' on horseback accompanied by his usher Grumio, all three in their 'dreadful colours'. Then the 'monstrous' groom transforms his wedding ceremony into a carnivalesque thrashing. Back from the church, he enacts the rescue of his bride from a potentially dreadful situation. From now on his battle against the Lenten spirit will take a different form. Since he refuses to stay for his marriage celebration, he starts to act as a killjoy; and he adopts Katherina's shrewishness even more vehemently. By this astute position reversal, the 'Lord of Misrule' can address the audience: 'Thus have I politicly begun my reign' (4.1.159). In order to do so, he kills the Carnival spirit and evokes Lent. Perhaps this is why he utters fragments of old ballads such as: 'Where is the life that late I led?' (4.1.111) and 'It was the friar of orders grey, / As he forth walkèd on his way' (4.1.116-7). If so, he is not only alluding to his new life, but also to the austerity of the 'orders grey' (perhaps the Franciscans) that he will establish in his house from now on. Indeed, he creates in his house the same 'atmosphere of sorrow' as we find in Baptista's house under Katherina's shrewish domain. Contrary to the idea that Petruchio has an arrangement with his servants against Katherina, such as was witnessed in the last RSC production

of the play (1996), directed by Gale Edwards, what we actually see in the play are servingmen completely astonished by the new behaviour of their master: ‘Peter, didst ever see the like.’ (4.1.150). In fact, as soon as they hear Petruchio returning, they quickly disband: ‘Away, away, for he is coming hither.’ (4.1.158). There is no room for carnivalesque *mésalliance* under the Lenten regime Petruchio is imposing.

The Lenten spirit is observed in all its rigour. Firstly, by fasting: ‘for this night we’ll fast for company.’ (4.1.148); the imagery of fast related to *Carne vale* (farewell to meat) as a form of restraint imposed by Lent seems to be quite clear in this context. The ‘choleric’ food denied to Kate is always meat. If in *The Shrew* she is tantalized with ‘neat’s foot’, ‘a fat tripe’, and ‘beef’ (4.3.17-30), in *A Shrew*, ‘beef’, ‘sheep’s head’, and ‘a fat capon’ (98.7-18) are all treats related to the Carnival’s abundance which is now forbidden. Then we are told that Petruchio is ‘In her chamber, / Making a sermon of continency to her’ (4.1.153-4). Finally there is the enforcement of vigil: ‘she shall watch all night’ (4.1.176). Following the Lenten restrictions—fast, vigil and sexual abstinence—comes the tailor’s scene in which Katherina remarks: ‘Belike you mean to make a puppet of me.’ (4.3.103). Pretending to have misinterpreted Kate, Petruchio retorts: ‘true, he [the tailor] means to make a puppet of thee.’ (104). This scene, in which Petruchio inspects Kate’s new garments, has been read by Barbara Hodgdon as being Petruchio’s displacement of his sadistic fantasies by ‘verbally (in the theatre, literally) dismembering Kate’s dress.’<sup>93</sup> Dismembering is indeed the word here. According to Neil Rhodes’ analysis of the grotesque, ‘the substance of almost all Elizabethan execration is the figurative violation of the body ... The common principle is a reductive physicality which involves the dehumanising or dismembering of the object of scorn.’<sup>94</sup> As Fiona Shaw, playing Katherina, remarks: by seeing parts of her dress come away in Petruchio’s hand, ‘Kate looked as though she was dismembered.’<sup>95</sup> Although there is no stage direction to guarantee that Kate’s gown is placed on her body, this is somehow suggested by Petruchio: ‘Thay tailor stays thy

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<sup>93</sup>Barbara Hodgdon, ‘Katherina Bound; or, Play(K)ating the Strictures of Everyday Life’ in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 107, n. 3 (May 1992), p.359.

<sup>94</sup>Neil Rhodes, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>95</sup>Carol Rutter, *Clamorous Voices: Shakespeare’s Women Today*, op. cit., p. 18.

leisure, / To deck thy body with his ruffling treasure.’ (4.3.59-60). If Kate’s new garments were to be tried on Katherina’s body (for Kate’s new cap, in *A Shrew* we have the following stage direction at 10.5: *She set it on her head*), Petruchio’s action of examining and tearing it up could gain even more significance with respect to his Carnival reversal. Like Slie of *A Shrew* who, when deposed as a lord, is stripped of his lordly apparel, the tailor’s scene would allude to the ritual of Carnival’s dismemberment. Thus, like a puppet of Jack of Lent, Katherina would be figuratively torn into pieces. Indeed, Petruchio creates an image of Katherina’s new garments as befitting to a grotesque puppet, starting with his description of her cap: ‘Why, this was moulded on a porringer – / A velvet dish! Fie, fie, ’tis lewd and filth. / Why, ’tis a cockle or a walnut-shell’ (4.3.64-66). And he proceeds in his description to make the cap seem as ridiculous as possible: ‘a paltry cap’, ‘A custard-coffin’, ‘a bauble’, and the like (4.3.67, 81-82). After ‘pelting’ Jack of Lent, Petruchio’s Lenten austerity can also be observed by his refusal of ostentatious clothes, which is reinforced by his sermon on the subject:

Even in these honest mean habiliments.  
Our purses shall be proud, our garments poor,  
For ’tis the mind that makes the body rich,  
And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,  
So honour peereth in the meanest habit. (4.3.164-8)

As time goes by and Easter succeeds Lent, the joys of life are restored. Now it does not matter whether the sun or moon is shining, the turbulent Carnival and the gloomy Lent are gone, and the peaceful mirth of Eastertide takes its place. Food, drink, fun, and resumed sexual intercourse celebrate the advent of the new season. As Petruchio puts it: ‘Nothing but sit and sit, and eat and eat’ (5.2.12). Also, as the winner, he can finally go to bed with his wife and savour the joys of the renewed season. What has been suggested in this section is that the *Shrew* plays allude to the threefold festivity of Carnival, Lent and Easter. This can be observed in the plays by three distinct shifts in the action: a Paduan/Athenian carnivalesque battle, the installation of a Lenten atmosphere at Petruchio/Ferando’s house and the Easter renewal on the way back to Padua/Athens.

### The *Shrew* is Tamed: a Parody

The *Shrew* plays cannot be properly analyzed as carnivalized literature unless we also take into consideration the question of parody, and this is the matter I intend to discuss in this last section. As well as classical and contemporary literary quotations, the *Shrew* plays also employ temporal and secular allusions as a form of parody. For instance, when the starving Katherina complains to Grumio that Petruchio has married her in order to starve her, she alludes to the Prodigal son parable and, ironically, to the decline of the Elizabethan sentiment of charity:

Beggars that come unto my father's door  
 Upon entreaty have a present alms;  
 If not, elsewhere they meet with charity.  
 But I, who never knew why to entreat,  
 Nor never needed that I should entreat,  
 Am starved for meat, giddy for lack of sleep,  
 With oaths kept waking and with brawling fed,  
(4.3.4-10)

Katherina's words also echo Marlowe's *I Tamburlaine* (4.4), in which Bajazeth and Zambina are tortured by hunger. It is thought that Bajazeth's sequence is also alluded to in *A Shrew*: when Tamburlaine says to Bajazeth: 'here, eat sir, take it from my swords point' (4.4.42-3),<sup>96</sup> there is a visual allusion to this in *A Shrew*: 'Enter [Ferando] with a piece of meat upon his dagger's point' (at 8.23-24).<sup>97</sup> The most interesting thing about this scene with respect to the Marlovian allusion is what happens next. Although Polidor intervenes, suggesting Kate should have a chance to have supper, Kate fights back, in the same style as Bajazeth. If Bajazeth takes the meat 'and stamps upon it' (indeed he has to take the meat, or, as Tamburlaine

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<sup>96</sup>Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*, edited by David Fuller, *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, vol. V (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 58.

<sup>97</sup>Cf. Brian Morris (1988 [1981]), op. cit., p. 259, n. 35. See also Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]), op. cit., 126, p. 126, n. 35. According to Miller, 'Just how the meat is handled here is not entirely clear. At 8.26 Ferando might presumably hand the dagger to Sander to take it away. But a moment later Polidor asks Sander to 'let it stand', and Ferando replies 'Well sirrah, set down again' (8.33-4). This last implies that the meat has been put onto a table, probably onto a dish.' Stephen Roy Miller (1998), op. cit., p. 96, n. 23.

threatens, 'Ile thrust it to thy hart.' [4.4.42]), Kate has also a way of showing her pride. Refusing Polidor's help, Kate (not without a double entendre, already suggested by Ferando's gesture) says: 'Nay nay, I pray you let him take it hence / And keep it for your own diet, for I'll none. / I'll ne'er be beholding to you for your meat.' (9.6.35-7). These *dramatic* exaggerations, borrowed from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, are in consonance with the play's parodic mode. As Gary Morson argues, although is it not essential to parody, exaggeration is 'one of several techniques parodists use'.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, the hyperbolic statements and images used in the *Shrew* plays are consistent with their carnivalesque mood. With this in mind we can now analyse what is without doubt the crux of the *Shrew* plays: Kate's controversial speech at the end of the plays.

As regards the 'modern sensibility', the problem with the *Shrew* plays is not exactly the taming process itself. During this process, and despite the harshness of Petruchio's method, Kate's struggle to maintain her position is admirable. And this struggle is witnessed until late in the play. During the tailor's scene, she is still the strong woman we have known from the beginning. And if it is true for Katherina of *The Shrew* ('Your betters have endured me say my mind, / And if you cannot, best you stop your ears' [4.3.75-6]), it is no less true for Kate of *A Shrew* ('if you not like it, hide your eyes' [10.38]). The real 'problem' is Kate's surrender which is acknowledged in her lecture on women's obedience. Her final speech has been an embarrassment for critics, directors and actresses playing the role. This, as a result, has provoked two distinct approaches to her final surrender: first that, her speech is sincere and she has really changed, or it is ironic and she is still a shrew but has learned how to deal with her husband. With both views we have the happy-ending of an 'authorized' Shakespearean comedy. Dealing especially with Kate's final speech, Barbara Hodgdon's article 'Katherina Bound; or, Play(K)ating the Strictures of Everyday Life' is an excellent critical analysis concerning the uneasiness which has been provoked by Kate's surrender at the end of *The Shrew*. According to her:

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<sup>98</sup>Gary Saul Morson, 'Parody, History, and Metaparody' in Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson (eds.), *Rethinking Bakhtin: Extensions and Challenges* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1989), p. 70.

By either gliding over signs of the father in Kate's speech (accepting them as "natural") or assuming that Kate is merely performing and does not believe what she says, readers can produce a scene similar to the happy rape, the fully authorized scene for female sexuality—authorized precisely because it is mastered and controlled.<sup>99</sup>

Thinking of Kate's surrender and specifically of her final speech, one can say that perhaps Shakespeare's *Shrew* has become irreconcilable with today's concerns about gender equality. However, seen as carnivalized drama, Kate's hyperbolic speech on women's obedience to their husbands is, I would suggest, a parody of the wedding rites. While in *The Shrew* Katherina's 'solemn' discourse is a mingling of Elizabethan commonplaces about the nature of women and the state of marriage, in *A Shrew* some of Kate's lines appear to have been borrowed from Du Bartas's *La Semaine*.<sup>100</sup> However, Kate's lines also allude to the priest's customary blessing words during the matrimonial ceremony: 'may you be blessed by the Lord, who made the Universe of nothing!'<sup>101</sup> Indeed Kate's long sermon (in this shorter text, her speech comprises 29

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<sup>99</sup>Barbara Hodgdon, op. cit., p. 542.

<sup>100</sup>For an extensive analysis of Du Bartas's *La Création du Monde ou Première Sepmaine* (or *Semaine* in modern French spelling) as a source for Kate's final speech in *A Shrew*, see Miller's 'Appendix 3' in his Cambridge edition of the play (1998), op. cit., pp. 147-52. See also George Coffin Taylor, 'Two Notes on Shakespeare', second note: 'The Strange Case of Du Bartas in *The Taming of a Shrew*' in Supplement to *Philological Quarterly*, vol. XX, n. 4 (October 1941), pp. 373-6. The problem about this hypothesis are the dates of the English translations and the copy used by the author of *A Shrew*. In fact the only known translation which matches some of *A Shrew*'s lines is Joshua Sylvester's *The Divine Weekes* (1605). Miller's analysis states that, given the popularity of Du Bartas during the period, in addition to suggesting that a possible translation was made by Sir Philip Sidney before his death (1586), the author of *A Shrew* would have many opportunities to make use of *La Semaine* as a source for Kate's sermon. For a slightly idiosyncratic analysis of the *Shrew* plays' appropriation of Du Bartas, see Richard Hillman, 'The Creation according to Kate' in his *Shakespearean Subversions: The Trickster and the Play-Text* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 31-39.

<sup>101</sup>John Cordy Jeaffreson, op. cit., p. 88. According to Jeaffreson's account, 'The ceremony of placing the ring on the bride's ring-finger, was followed by the priestly utterance of benediction'. The utterance already quoted above 'was followed by the recital of verses of the 68th Psalm, and the delivery of other blessings, that terminated the proceedings at the church-door.... The wedding at the porch was followed by its solemn celebration in the priest's quarter of the temple itself; a celebration in which the sacred canopy was held ... the chief of the official clergy pronounced the sacramental benedictions that purged the excellent mystery of wedlock of every taint

lines) seems to be a recollection of what might be a long and boring lecture uttered by the priest during the marriage rites:

Th'eternal power that with his only breath  
 Shall cause this end and this beginning frame –  
 Not in time, nor before time, but with time confused –  
 For all the course of years, of ages, of months,  
 Of seasons temperate, of days and hours,  
 Are tuned and stopped by measure of his hand.  
 The first world was a form without a form,  
(14.116-22).<sup>102</sup>

And she goes on to describe the Creation up to Adam and Eve, and the 'original sin' in order to justify (on ecclesiastical grounds) the subordination of the wife to the husband. This set piece is carefully written to obey the well-known pattern of giving *exempla* to close the sermon by means of a *sententia*. If the intertextuality of Kate's discourse in *A Shrew* can perhaps be related to the wedding ceremony, Katherina of *The Shrew*, also evoking the Bible (more precisely, the New Testament) goes a step further in her parody of the state of marriage. Indeed her 44-line speech is highly ambivalent. It is a mixture of temporal and secular prescriptions involving the material body. Katherina alludes to St Paul's exhortations (Ephesians: 5.22-33) to preach the subjugation of women to their husbands; this is probably drawn from the Anglican Homily on Matrimony and from the marriage ceremony itself.<sup>103</sup> However,

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of carnal passion, and declared it to typify the Saviour's union with His Church.', pp. 91, 94. This kind of long ceremonial sermon is perhaps what Leonato wished to avoid in *Much Ado About Nothing*: 'Come, Friar Francis, be brief. Only to the plain form of marriage, and we shall recount their particular duties afterwards.' (4.1.1-3).

<sup>102</sup>In Joshua Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas we have: 'Th'immutable devine decree, which shall / Cause the Worlds End, caus'd his originall: / Neither in Time, nor yet before the same, / But in the instant when Time first became. / I meane a Time confused; for the course / Of yeares, of monthes, of weekes, of dayes, of howers, / Of Ages, Times, and Seasons is confin'd / By th'ordred Daunce unto the Starres assign'd. / Before all Time, all Matter, Forme, and Place; / God all in all, and all in God it was: / ... / That first world (yet) was most forme-lesse *Forme*, A confus'd Heap, a *Chaos* most diform, / A Gulph of Gulphes, a Body ill compact, / An ugly medly, where all difference lackt: / Where th'Elements lay jumbled all together, / Where hot and colde were jarring each which either;' Quoted in Miller's 1998 edition of *A Shrew*, p. 152.

<sup>103</sup>Cf. Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]), op. cit., pp. 28-30, 38-41. Also cf., 'A Homilee of the state of Matrimonie' in *The Second Tome of Homilees* (London,

she subverts the ecclesiastical view by allocating it in a secular discourse. St Paul's exhortation on the issue is an imperative: 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.' The wife has to obey her husband because 'the husband is the head of the wife'. To the husband, however, the only prescription is 'to love your wives'. Thus, 'let every one of you in particular so love his wife as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.' According to Katherina's sermon, the wives have to obey because 'Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper / Thy head, thy sovereign (5.2.146-7); he is the one 'that cares for thee / And for thy maintenance'. After all, the only return he asks for is 'But love, fair looks and true obedience'. (5.2.146-8). According to her rationale, 'Such a duty as the subject owes the prince', the wife owes to her husband; if not obedient, 'What is she but a foul contending rebel / And graceless traitor to her loving lord.' (5.2.146-8, 153-6, 159-60).

As a parody of the wedding rites, in which women are urged to show unquestioning reverence for their husbands, wifely disobedience is treated, to quote Leah Marcus, as 'a form of "petty treason" against her "king" and husband.'<sup>104</sup> If this can be viewed as a mingling of ecclesiastic and temporal power, the advantage of such a prescription lies in an idealized married life of modesty and comfort. And if a wife attends to her duty she obtains a cosmetic benefit, as Katherina's words imply. Hence, the woman should not be unkind and scornful because, as 'she' tells them: 'It blots thy beauty as frosts do bite the meads / ... / A woman moved is like a fountain troubled, / Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty'. Even worse, she will cease to be desirable: 'And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty / Will deign to sip or touch one drop of it.'. Then, referring to a woman's body as 'soft', 'weak' and 'smooth', 'Unapt to toil and trouble in the world',<sup>105</sup> she (with a double entendre) remarks: 'But

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1571). Here we find terms that are echoed in Kate's sermon in both plays: 'the husbände is the head of the woman ... ye woulde acknowledge the authoritie of the husbände, and referre to hym the honour of obedience.... obeying their husbändes, as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord,' pp. 483-4.

<sup>104</sup>Leah Marcus, 'The Shakespearean Editor as Shrew-Tamer' in *English Literary Renaissance*, vol. 22 (1992), p. 186.

<sup>105</sup>The image of woman's 'weak and feeble' body, an Elizabethan orthodoxy, was in fact used by Elizabeth I to show her strength: 'I know I have the body of but a



that our soft conditions and our hearts / Should well agree with our external parts?' (5.2.139, 142-5, 165-7). If Katherine's words can be read as a serio-comic discourse, in *A Shrew* Kate's sermon is more concerned with the ecclesiastic pattern of negative images of woman. In the latter, women have to obey their husbands because, as Eve's descendants, it implies they are also to be blamed for man's fall.

In both plays the sermon on women's obedience itself can be read as a transgression of the rules on what should distinguish a 'modest' woman from a loquacious one. Some critics have already noticed that Kate's final speech is too long, and too grandiloquent to be taken seriously.<sup>106</sup> Kate's lines amount to a loud discourse which seems incompatible with the womanly modesty she is preaching. Even for the independent Widow, it is unimaginable to have a woman publicly preaching morals to others: 'Come, come, you're mocking. We will have no telling.' (5.2.132). However, in spite of the Widow's protest, Kate's lecture dominates the end of the play. It is only at first sight that her discourse appears to set out what a submissive wife ought to be. In the same way as Sly who, as soon as he agrees to play the lord, changes his diction, Katherine, who is now the submissive wife, surely should have adopted a form of discourse appropriate to her new condition. The final scene in the *Shrew* plays is, I suggest, also a parody of the classical *symposia* (table talk) which we find, for instance, in Plutarch's *Moralia*. On these occasions, usually after a banquet, women retired to another chamber (exactly as in the *Shrew* plays) while the men would engage in deep philosophical debate. If, on the one hand, classic formal table talk is always 'sublime', filled with 'profound wisdom', on the other, 'medieval grotesque realism had its own original symposium, that is, the tradition of festive speech.'<sup>107</sup> The 'table talk' in the *Shrew* plays is indeed a carnivalesque excess.

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weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain or any prince of Europe should dare invade the boards of my realm ... I myself will take up the arms; I myself will be your general'. Elizabeth I addresses to the English troops in 1588 at the Spanish Armada threatens to invade England. Cf. George P. Rice Jr. (ed.), *The Public Speaking of Queen Elizabeth: Selections From Her Official Addresses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), p. 98.

<sup>106</sup>See, for instance, Coppélia Kahn, 'The Taming of the Shrew: Shakespeare's Mirror of Marriage' in *Modern Language Studies*, vol. V, n. 1 (1975), pp. 98-9.

<sup>107</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *op. cit.*, pp. 285 and 283.

It evolves from the men's discussion about controlling their wives to their making a bet on which of the wives is the most obedient, resulting in Kate's hyperbolic lecture on women's submission.

The table talk found in Milton's *Paradise Lost* is most interesting in terms of the position of woman in ascetic literature in contrast with that of the popular comic tradition. There, although the naked virtuous Eve is present, she does not speak a word throughout the *symposium* as it runs from Book V to Book VIII. When the conversation between the angel Raphaël and Adam reaches an obscure level—why God has created the whole universe for the sake of a diminutive earth—Eve is 'perceiving where she sat retir'd in sight' (Book VIII, 41). As a 'modest' woman, and still a model of a chaste wife, Eve

Yet went she not, as not with such discourse  
 Delighted, or not capable her ear  
 Of what was high: such pleasure she reserv'd  
*Adam* relating, she sole Auditress;  
 Her husband the relater she preferred  
 Before the Angel, and him to ask  
 Chose rather; hee she knew would intermix  
 Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute  
 With conjugal Caresses, from his Lip  
 Not Words alone pleas'd her. (Book VIII, 48-56).<sup>108</sup>

The idealized model of woman's modesty can be traced back to Plutarch who, as a strong influence upon Renaissance reformers, established a set of rules governing marital life. Jeremy Taylor is one of those who made use of Plutarch's *Advice on Marriage* to write his *The Marriage Ring*.<sup>109</sup> Plutarch's essay on marriage (a wedding-present 'For Pollianus and Eurydice', two young friends of his) is, I think, a very helpful document in terms of understanding Kate's discourse in the *Shrew* plays

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<sup>108</sup>See B. A. Wright (ed.), *John Milton The Complete Poems*, Introduction and Notes by Gordon Campbell, (New York, 1980), p. 80.

<sup>109</sup>See James Brogeden (ed.), *Illustrations of The Liturgy*, Vol. III (London, 1842) pp. 117-60. Taylor also made use of Plutarch's work in his *Duty of Masters of Families*, and in his *Rules for married Persons*. See Reginald Heber (ed.), *The Whole Works of Jeremy Taylor*, Vol. IV (London, 1839), pp. 79-82, and pp. 159-60 respectively.

as a contrast between the 'sublime' themes of the classic symposium and the tradition of popular festive speech. According to Plutarch: 'A wife should speak only to her husband or through her husband, and should not feel aggrieved if, like a piper, she makes nobler music through another's tongue.'<sup>110</sup>

Kate's lecture is indeed a contrast to the moralizing tracts of the period. Although she adopts a range of Elizabethan commonplaces, she does more than simply echo an ideological discourse. Her lecture is a parodic discourse and, as Robert R. Wilson aptly puts it, 'no one parodies another without borrowing the other's voice for the purpose. ... Carnavalesque speech does not destroy or even replace the official voice of authority, it merely complements it, brings it forward to reveal its hidden features.'<sup>111</sup> Moreover, the carnivalesque version of that discourse is being overtly declaimed by a boy-player (perhaps a robust male). As I have already stated, it seems that the play's text is quite willing to acknowledge this. And the awareness that Kate is performed by a boy-player seems to be once more at issue when we hear from Petruchio that she has brought along Bianca and the Widow by means of 'her womanly persuasion' (5.2.120). It sounds like an ironic comment related to 'her' real gender, since some lines earlier Petruchio commanded his 'model wife': 'Go fetch them hither. If they deny to come, / Swinge me them soundly forth unto their husbands' (5.2.104-3). As Ann Thompson glosses it, *swinge me* in this context means beat them on my behalf.<sup>112</sup> If we take Petruchio's words as ironical comments on Kate's 'soldier-like' strength, it seems clear that 'she' would be seen in 'her' performance as a he behind the mask (from now on I will put the pronouns referring to Kate in inverted commas as a reminder that 'she' is played by a male actor). So, 'her' lecture on women's obedience, I suggest, must have sounded ironical to the original audience. And irony here does not suggest winks to the audience, or to Petruchio, or even a special way of delivering the words. It seems that it was given by the performance itself. As Shapiro suggests, in the 'original performance, given

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<sup>110</sup>Donald Russell (ed.), *Plutarch Selected Essays and Dialogues* (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 291.

<sup>111</sup>Robert R. Wilson, 'Play, Transgression and Carnival: Bakhtin and Derrida on *Scriptor Ludens*' in *Mosaic: A Journal for Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, vol. XIX/1 (Winter, 1986), p. 77, 79.

the spectators' metatheatrical awareness of female impersonation, a straightforward delivery of the speech would have produced still deeper irony'.<sup>113</sup> The irony would have been achieved by the hyperbolic gesture towards obedience combined with the audience's awareness that, like Bartholomew's, the obedient wife at the end of the show is a theatrically-constructed role. If Carnival's grotesque realism shows human behaviour through a distorting glass, then in the *Shrew* plays—by having men openly playing women—this distortion of women's behaviour and mannerisms was likely to have been magnified. As a carnivalesque picture, the texts cast doubts on the imagery and discourse they are expounding; and the plays' open-ends, according to Bakhtin, are also characteristic of the carnivalesque genre, and represent one of their dramatic resources.

This open-endedness, which I shall examine shortly, creates a serious problem in terms of the 'morality' the plays are supposedly preaching. Indeed, the plays' final resolution provides a rather doubtful lesson to the married men in the plays' society. Carnival misrule has provoked the collapse of what was considered stable and immutable. Shrewish behaviour has multiplied, while the shrew has supposedly been tamed. Nevertheless, even this new crystallized society is not shown as finished and immutable. Indeed, Shakespeare's *Shrew* subverts the so called 'romantic' pattern of his late comedies, in which the happy-ending at the play's close is a movement towards incorporation of the young lovers into a new crystallized society. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, for instance, this pattern also becomes subverted: 'Our wooing doth not end like an old play'. Thus, the happy-ending, though 'too long for a play', has to wait at least 'a twelvemonth an' a day / And then 'twill end.' (5.2.860, 63-4). The instability we find in the *Shrew* plays accords with Bakhtin's idea of Carnival as liberating, and always open to change. For Bakhtin, one of the most important aspects of carnivalized literature is that it creates 'an indeterminacy, a certain semantic open-endedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality.'<sup>114</sup> This important aspect, which I will examine now, is essential to a conclusion of my reading of the *Shrew* plays as carnivalized drama.

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<sup>112</sup> Cf. Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]), op. cit., p. 150, n. 104

<sup>113</sup> Michael Shapiro, op. cit., p. 165.

The discontinuation of the Sly plot in *The Shrew* is considered by H. J. Oliver as open-ended.<sup>115</sup> However I propose here to examine some of the other open-ends created by the text. These open-ends are all directly related to the tamed and the taming. The most obvious (as already discussed) is Petruchio/Ferando's 'taming school' as model. It appears to be a hopeless model for Hortensio/Polidor, just as it is likely to be for Slie. Although in *The Shrew* we do not hear from the other women after Katherina's lecture, for they have been enraged by 'her' demonstration of submission, it is not difficult to foresee what is going to happen next; for if we hear no criticism from them, we also do not hear any approval. Perhaps Petruchio's last words can textually clarify what is going on during Katherina's lecture: 'We three are married, but you two are sped.' (5.2.185). In *A Shrew* this situation is made even more explicit. Here we have the newly-wedded couple (Emelia and Polidor) delivering the last lines in the inner play which confirm the folktale's 'morality':

*Emelia* How now Polidor, in a dump? What saist thou man?  
*Polidor* I say thou art a shrew.  
*Emelia* That's better than a sheep.  
*Polidor* Well since 'tis done, let it go. Come, let's in.  
 (14.157-60)

To turn now to the tamed: has Kate really been tamed, according to the text? Casting doubt on 'her' transformation, Kate's agreement to play in the sun and moon scene creates an open ending, which will be reinforced at the end of the play. Examining this scene we can see that while in the shorter *A Shrew*, Kate surrenders almost immediately and agrees to call the sun the moon, in *The Shrew* Katherina listens to Hortensio's advice: 'Say as he says, or we shall never go.' (4.5.11). Then, Katherina, though not without self-consciousness ('Forward, I pray, since we have come far'), agrees with Petruchio: 'be the moon or sun or what you please / And if you please to call it a rush candle, / Henceforth I vow it shall be for me.' (4.5.12-5). *Henceforth* we hear no more argument between the couple. So, is 'her' consent a naturalistic metamorphosis, or simply a new mask assumed by the character?

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<sup>114</sup>Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, op. cit., p. 7

<sup>115</sup>H. J. Oliver, op. cit., p. 40.

Later in the play we have Katherina unconditionally obey even Petruchio's silliest commands, such as when she throws her cap underfoot. Coincidentally, Petruchio's command to dispose of Katherina's cap refers back to language he uses earlier to mock it: 'Katherina, that cap of yours becomes you not: / Off with that *bauble* (5.2.121-2 [emphasis added]). Now, 'she' is not simply an obedient woman; 'she' is acting as Petruchio's puppet; 'ventriloquizing' the male stereotype of women's nature, and their expectation of what ideal wives should be, is 'her' final act. Boose points out that 'Ironically enough, if *The Taming of the Shrew* presents a problem to male viewers, the problem lies in its representation of a male authority so successful that it nearly destabilizes the very discourse it so blatantly confirms.'<sup>116</sup> I would replace Boose's word 'nearly' by totally. And this is, of course, a calculated feature of the text. Furthermore, in offering to place 'her' hand under 'her' husband's foot as a token of 'her' duty she performs an exaggerated gesture appropriate to the archetype 'she' is playing. If *A Shrew* bears any significance to the way *The Shrew* was performed in the 1590s, Ferando's 'embarrassment' at Kate's gesture of laying her hand under his foot ('Enough sweet, the wager thou hast won' [14.144]), was the same as Petruchio's apparent 'embarrassment' when Katherina of *The Shrew*, instead of actually laying 'her' hand under 'her' husband's foot simply offers to do so ('if he please' [5.2.179]). To prevent 'her' from going further, he says: 'Why, there's a wench! Come on and kiss me, Kate' (5.2.180).

Katherina's exaggerated sense of duty is indeed a parody of the very duty she is preaching. Her sense of duty provokes a carnivalesque open ending, which is amplified by Lucentio's words: "'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tamed so' (5.2.189); these are the very last words we hear in the play. According to Frances E. Dolan, 'The play concludes with the exchange between Hortensio and Lucentio evaluating what they have just seen.'<sup>117</sup> However, Lucentio's words do not sound like

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<sup>116</sup>Lynda E. Boose, op. cit., p. 179.

<sup>117</sup>Frances E. Dolan (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew: Texts and Contexts* (Boston and New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1966), p. 36. See also Ann Thompson (1995 [1984]) on this topic. As the author questions: 'Has Katherina really been tamed, or is she, as the woman in Wyatt's sonnet ("Whose list to hunt: I l

a reply to Hortensio, who in his turn is greeting Petruchio: ‘Now, go thy ways; thou hast tamed a curst shrew.’ (5.2.188). Notwithstanding this, Dolan is partially correct in his conclusion. As the author puts it: ‘By closing on this expression of amazement, the play leaves open to question the extent and duration of Petruchio’s success.’<sup>118</sup> The play is certainly open to question, though this does not, I would suggest, hinge upon the extent and duration of Petruchio’s successes. Lucentio’s line seems more complex in its implications than simply an illusionist observation about Katherina and Petruchio’s future. Everything is completed in the liminality of a theatrical performance. The conclusion of the play is in keeping with the rest of it: a carnivalesque representation of an old story in which a shrew is tamed. However, the last words we hear are possibly the most open ending of all the open endings we can find in the play. Lucentio’s words open to question the patriarchal authority represented in the play by the ‘taming’ of Katherina. Although the fictional Petruchio has won his wager, the play definitively does not move to a monologic ‘clarification’ of Kate’s taming.

This open dialogue the play leaves us at its end invites us to be sceptical about any truth that we, any more than the original audience, could possibly find in the play with respect to its final ‘resolution’. If Sly in *A Shrew*, who has ‘dreamt upon it all this night’ (15.18) thinks he knows ‘now how to tame a shrew’ (15.17), it seems clear that—just as in the folktale—this simple resolution is no more than a fool’s dream. Next, perhaps a jig, in which Sly/Slye would have the chance to put his ‘learned lesson’ into practice, formed part of the carnivalesque show as a whole. Then, perhaps, the ‘household stuff’ would have been a clown’s routine after the presentation of the *Shrew* plays. The extra show (like a ‘Bottom’s Dream’) would have been provided by Sly/Slye who intends to go to his ‘wife presently, / And tame her too’ (15.21). The Tapster’s eagerness to go home with him and, as he says, to ‘hear the rest that thou hast dreamt tonight’ (15.21-2), would have formed an even

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know where is an hind”) describes herself in rather different context, “wild for the hold, though I seem tame”? This poem provides a powerful illustration of a related use of the hunting and taming metaphors of the Petrarchan tradition which *The Shrew* inherits.’, op. cit., p. 39

<sup>118</sup>Ibid.

more carnivalesque ‘resolution’ to the show. Since *The Taming of a Shrew* was played for the benefit of Slie/Sly, a fool, who is thinking of putting into practice the ‘good lesson’ the play has provided to those ‘that are married men’, he is likely to suffer the consequences of allowing himself to ‘believe’ in a theatrical fantasy. This form of conclusion to the show would be analogous to the folktale.

Concluding my analysis, I can agree with Simon Shepherd when he says: ‘I don’t think *Shrew* does offer us a certain way of reading Shakespeare’s view on marriage’<sup>119</sup> With respect to the carnivalesque version of the taming-theme, I would stress that what seems to be at issue in the *Shrew* plays is the patriarchy’s anxiety about keeping or losing control over everything in its domain (including wives). And this is textually stressed by Petruchio when he enumerates Katherina as one of his possessions. And the carnivalesque *Shrew* exposes the uncertainties of this claim by leaving it open to question. The carnivalesque mode of approach suggested by the exemplary cases discussed in this chapter have, I hope, helped us to see the *Shrew* plays’ contents as a critical portrayal of the society which generated it. And the texts establish laughter by introducing the darker side of Carnival, which in the plays (especially in *The Shrew*) is vividly represented by abusive language, physical thrashing and grotesque imagery. This system of images tends to exacerbate the human ‘monstrosities’ in order to destroy them by the regenerative power of laughter. As we have seen, anyone in the plays is likely to be a victim of Carnival’s rough sense of humor. In this sense, Kate, the shrew, is the main carnivalesque emblem around which other emblematic figures revolve. The carnivalesque pattern of images used in the plays is perhaps what makes the play ‘disgusting to modern sensibility.’<sup>120</sup> As David K. Danow points out, ‘carnival attitude promises joyous renewal but may well deliver something less desirable as well.’<sup>121</sup> However, it is important to stress that, in the Bakhtinian sense, the grotesque imagery depicted in the *Shrew* plays is part of a system of images which had not yet acquired the negative connotations we ascribe to

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<sup>119</sup>Simon Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women*, op. cit., p. 162.

<sup>120</sup>George Bernard Shaw in Edwin Wilson (ed.), *Shaw on Shakespeare*, op. cit., p. 180, already cited on page 172, footnote 78.

<sup>121</sup>David K. Danow, ‘The Carnivalesque-Grotesque’ in his *The Spirit of Carnival* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995), p. 34.



it. Perhaps what is alien to us is the 'good' and the 'bad' which Carnival brings about at once. This produces what Bakhtin calls an 'ambivalent laughter'. Carnavalesque laughter, rather than providing a release, tends to lead towards further instability, reminding us that everything is in a state of becoming. In leaving the show open-ended, the Shakespearean *Shrew* leaves the decision about whether Kate has been tamed to the audience. In this sense, Lucentio's final words in *The Shrew* have the same provocative implications we find in Slie's final scene in *A Shrew*.

## Conclusion

I hope to have presented an alternative reading of *The Shrew* as carnivalized drama, and with respect to the relationship between *The Shrew* and *A Shrew* I hope to have offered a new way of looking at it. Examining the plays as independent texts is a method of seeing their similarity and differences as complementary rather than being dismissive of the latter play. Turning aside from any literary judgement we might make about *A Shrew*, it is a text which deals with the same subjects found in *The Shrew* in a quite different manner. Thus, instead of demonizing it, we should see it as useful material to help our understanding of Shakespeare's text. In fact, despite all objections which have been made to the anonymous text, it has proved helpful as complementary source in terms of the Sly plot. I benefited from this and was able to amplify my view of Sly's character as a clown's role and also to contextualize it with the main plot. And, as suggested by my analysis, Sly's 'silence' in *The Shrew* does not necessarily mean that he has ceased to play his part in the play.

*A Shrew*, with its *stage directions* that are more fully-developed than we find in *The Shrew*, can help us have a feeling of how the play might have been staged in the 1590s. However, I would like to stress that any kind of generalization in terms of a text from the past is a dangerous matter. In fact we do not know exactly how the plays were performed and how the audience would have received them. Thus, any reading of a text from the past is open to question. Nevertheless, as living documents these texts can always tell us something about the society and the period they represent. In this respect, a carnivalesque reading of the *Shrew* plays has, I hope, opened new possibilities for our understanding of the texts' treatment of the social mores pictured in them. According to this reading, it seems that the concern in this period about patriarchal oppressiveness was in many ways similar to our own. To paraphrase Stephen Orgel, where there is patriarchy, there is rebellion against the father.<sup>1</sup> The *Shrew* plays, in my view, expose the anxieties of a system under constant threat of subversion. Perhaps what seems alien to us is the Carnival grotesque realism

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<sup>1</sup>See Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 124.

appropriated by the *Shrew* plays to depict the inconsistencies of the patriarchal ideology. For this reason, perhaps, we should see Shakespeare's *Shrew* as a problem play. For if we see in the *Shrew* plays a carnivalesque version of an old controversy, we are perhaps offered another dimension to—and completely novel possibilities for insight into—the difficulties present to us by these texts.

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