

## INTRODUCTION

The programme cover for the 1967 Royal Shakespeare Company production of *The Taming of the Shrew* by Trevor Nunn shows a weathered wooden door daubed with 'RSC IN THE TAMING OF the a THE SHREW'.

It is tempting to see the cancelled articles as a message from theatrical professionals gently tweaking the noses of Shakespearian textual critics who have spent a large part of the last century debating at least three theories to explain the relationship of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* to an earlier, rougher version of a similar play called *The Taming of a Shrew* which despite being shorter contains more interventions and an epilogue for Sly, the beggar who opens Shakespeare's play and then disappears. The scholarly inconclusiveness alluded to by the programme cover has offered small help to modern players.

People buying programmes in 1967 were not seeking a debate over textual evidence, but a performance. The actors directed by Trevor Nunn produced a splendid one by most accounts; but Nunn, like all modern producers, was forced to decide whether Sly should disappear after his early scenes, return for an epilogue, or not appear at all. In fact, Nunn took full advantage of the Sly material in both versions and in this debate it may have been the stage practitioners who shifted scholarly opinion towards accepting the idea that Shakespeare himself originally wrote a completion to the Sly scenes that survive only as reflected in *A Shrew*. On the other hand, by emphasising the doubtful textual quality of *A Shrew* the debating scholars have given directors and actors licence to innovate in their treatment of Sly; licence which they often take up readily with intriguing results which will be discussed further in the stage history. As a consequence a few lines from the 1594 quarto of *The Taming of a Shrew*, despite its rough poetry, are heard frequently in Shakespearian performances (as the stage history following will reveal), and the entire text offers a window into stage practice of the early 1590s as well as into Shakespeare's version of the *Shrew* play. Most modern editions of *The Shrew*, including Ann Thompson's for the New Cambridge Shakespeare, print the extra Sly matter. This, the first modernised edition in ninety years, offers the full text.

### The debate over the origins of *A Shrew*

Since Alexander Pope incorporated lines from the quarto version of *The Taming of a Shrew* into his edition of Shakespeare's Folio version of *The Taming of the Shrew* over 250 years ago, students of Shakespeare have been aware of a close relationship between these two versions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To me it seems probable that the title *The Shrew* was created to distinguish two texts after *A Shrew* reared its head. 'The taming of a shrew' is the wittier title since it allows the play on the word *shrew* as both a

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This introduction will first take a look at the long twentieth-century debate over the origins of *A Shrew*, particularly difficulties critics have had with the ‘bad quarto’ theory – first announced by Peter Alexander and which has finally proved inadequate – and its modification into a theory that *A Shrew* probably represents a deliberate revision of Shakespeare’s original text. Thereafter the discussion will focus upon detailed comparisons of the plays from different angles, specifically, detailed comparison of the sources of *The Shrew* and *A Shrew*, plot by plot, followed by a look at important evidence for borrowing in *A Shrew*. Then follows a detailed comparison of parallels between the two plays and, just as significantly, a detailed comparison of the difference between the subplots. After a look at the textual background and date of the quarto, the introduction concludes by examining the play in production: speculating first upon the nature of Pembroke’s Men, the original players named upon the title-page, then examining the effects of *A Shrew* upon staging Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew* within the past century and a half.

The quarto play of 1594 was printed by Peter Short one generation, twenty-nine years, before the more fully Shakespearian version in the Folio. Twentieth-century critics have found it difficult to agree upon a theory to account for the variation between the two versions. The ‘bad quarto’ theory which at first appeared to offer an easy answer, in fact created a knotted debate. Perhaps rather surprisingly, given the seriousness with which critics developing the New Bibliography approached textual theory, they allowed the prejudicial overtones of their term ‘bad quarto’ (surely influenced by the vivid adjectives of that famous sentence by Heminge and Condell: ‘stolne’, ‘surreptitious’, ‘maimed’, ‘deformed’, ‘injurious’) to colour negatively their understanding of the textual position of plays so categorised. This appears to be the case regarding *The Taming of a Shrew*. Examining the debate over *A Shrew* earlier in the twentieth century, we can locate problems associated with the ‘bad quarto’ theory including the odd fact that labelling *A Shrew* ‘bad’ tended to direct attention *away* from close examination of the text. This review will look at two issues associated with *A Shrew*: (a) it will examine the difficulties critics have experienced with the ambiguity of the ‘bad quarto’ theory, which in the case of plays associated with Shakespeare has acted in the past to turn interest away from the parts of the text not found in ‘good’

disagreeable person (of either sex) or a small, allegedly venomous, mouselike creature. Introduction into the title of the definite article *the* limits this dual possibility. Usually *taming* suggests a large animal, such as a horse, and the notion of applying so much effort to a tiny animal – taming a shrew (mouse) – suggests a ridiculous activity, hence making for a witty title. It is deeper than that, however, because while a mouse, once captured, may be destroyed with little force, anyone genuinely wishing to tame one, to make it tractable, would find force useless. What is required is wit. The larger creature must match his or her mind to the smaller and the outcome is not so certain. This understanding lies at the heart of the *Shrew* plays in the theatre, where the possibility that the presumably more powerful man might lose the battle sets up the ironic climate for the action of the taming. Whether or not Shakespeare first chose the title *A Shrew*, the quarto version was published first, and the need at some stage to distinguish between these two versions must have suggested the more pedestrian title which appeared over the play in the First Folio. In the subsequent Shakespeare Folios ‘The Taming of a Shrew’ appears sporadically in the running titles and list of plays. (See also K. B. Danks, ‘*A Shrew* and *The Shrew*’, *N&Q* 200 (1955), 331–2, who considers the Folio title a compositor’s error; and note *Pericles* 4.6.63–4, where the metaphor of taming a woman is blunt.)

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versions, and (b) it will examine the 'bad' parts of *A Shrew*, a study which suggests that its compiler may have adapted the plot of Shakespeare's *The Shrew* deliberately and have added new material in the 'romantic' style to produce what could best be called an adaptation of Shakespeare's play. By closely examining these 'bad' sections we can, in fact, discover important and surprising new details in *A Shrew*.

Structurally, *A Shrew* is quite similar to *The Shrew* with three plot strands: the main plot of the taming of Kate the shrew, the subplot of the wooing of her sister(s) and the separate framing plot of a trick played by a lord on the drunkard, Sly, who is made to think he is a lord being shown the taming play. However, despite the similar titles and many similarities of plot and occasionally of language, *A Shrew* shows many striking differences from *The Shrew*. *A Shrew* is just over half the length, about 60 per cent that of *The Shrew*, and except for Kate and Sly, all the characters have different names. *A Shrew* is set in Greece, not Italy, it has a conclusion to the Sly frame tale not found in *The Shrew*, and its subplot differs in many particulars from *The Shrew*, most notably in giving Kate two sisters instead of one. *A Shrew*, then, offers textual critics a dilemma – why, when *A Shrew* contains so much in common with *The Shrew*, does it have such a large amount of material that is different?

Before the twentieth century, in the 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 it an alternative version of *The Shrew* filled with actors' corruptions, but preserving some lines of Shakespeare missing from the Folio.<sup>1</sup> 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. Many modern editors agree that the Sly scenes unique to *A Shrew* reflect something that Shakespeare probably wrote; they lack the textual confidence Pope displayed in incorporating them into *The Shrew*. When interest in source study blossomed in the eighteenth century, it is perhaps not surprising that *A Shrew* was declared a source play, and when scholars began to postulate lost source plays, apparently spurred by Malone's suggestion that Shakespeare began his career by revising the plays of others, Charles Knight suggested that both *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* must have derived from a lost source play.<sup>2</sup> Such a changing response that tends to mirror the broader critical interests of each period is good evidence of the ambiguous nature of the relationship between the two plays. Given this critical background, it was surely inevitable that a piece such as *A Shrew*, clearly containing material from Marlowe, and probably Shakespeare, in a mix not found elsewhere, would be labelled a 'bad quarto' after the theory of memorial reconstruction was advanced by critics of the New Bibliography early in the twentieth century.

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Pope, ed., *The Taming of the Shrew*, in *The Works of Shakespear*, 6 vols. (London: Jacob Tonson, 1723–5), II, 351.

<sup>2</sup> E. A. J. Honigmann, 'Shakespeare's "Lost Source-Plays"', *MLR* 49 (1954), 293–307, p. 293; Charles Knight, ed., *The Taming of the Shrew*, in *The Comedies, Histories, Tragedies, and Poems of William Shakspeare*, 2nd edn ('Library' edn), 12 vols. (London, 1842), II, 119–20.

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However, the label adhered poorly. By the early 1900s, in addition to the theoretical discussion, critical examination of the internal evidence in the two plays had turned up a few important facts: (a) it had been discovered that several quotations and paraphrases of plays by Marlowe were incorporated into the text of *A Shrew* in addition to lines that seemed to be imitations of Marlowe or other contemporary playwrights; (b) Alfred Tolman had pointed out that George Gascoigne's play, *Supposes*, of 1566 (and also, perhaps, Ariosto's *I Suppositi* from which Gascoigne translated his play) lay behind the subplot not only of *The Shrew*, but of *A Shrew* as well, although textually *Supposes* is closer to *The Shrew* than *A Shrew*.<sup>1</sup> These arguments led Wilhelm Creizenach to assert that *A Shrew* was the work of a 'plagiarist' of Shakespeare. For this edition I adopt the more neutral term 'compiler' since it indicates the use of borrowed material in *A Shrew* without pinning onto the sixteenth-century writer a label conveying our modern distaste for authorial borrowing. Creizenach's work, along with the work of W. W. Greg and other New Bibliographers who proposed 'memorial reconstruction' as an origin for a class of plays called 'bad quartos', led to Peter Alexander's single-page article in the *TLS* in 1926 proposing that *A Shrew* was a 'bad quarto' reliant solely upon Shakespeare's *The Shrew*. Alexander had previously argued that the texts of *The Contention* and *Richard, Duke of York* were 'bad quartos' of 2 and 3 *Henry 6*; and although his opinions of the *Henry 6* plays were taken up with approval by many critics, the case of *A Shrew* proved a different matter.<sup>2</sup> In retrospect, it seems that Alexander's comments on *A Shrew* provoked a crisis for the textual criticism of *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*; a crisis, possibly containing implications for the whole 'bad quarto' theory.

At first Alexander's opinions seemed to find favourable acceptance. Dover Wilson accepted them in his edition of *The Shrew* edited for Cambridge in 1928, and B. A. P. van Dam welcomed them.<sup>3</sup> However, the 1930s saw a strong negative reaction. When E. K. Chambers, who had accepted Alexander's arguments for 2 and 3 *Henry 6*, came to consider whether *A Shrew* were a 'bad quarto' he pronounced: 'I am quite unable to believe that *A Shrew* had any such origin.'<sup>4</sup> For him *A Shrew* remained a source play. T. W. Baldwin rejected the 'bad quarto' hypothesis in a review of Dover Wilson's edition.<sup>5</sup> Leo Kirschbaum delivered a setback to Alexander's theory in his influential article, 'A Census of Bad Quartos', by specifically refusing to include *A Shrew* in his list of more than twenty texts which he suspected of being 'bad quartos'.<sup>6</sup>

The 1940s saw the appearance of arguments that varied the 'bad quarto' theory by arguing that *A Shrew* reported a different version of *The Shrew*, probably by Shakespeare, now lost – a theory which Alexander had rejected in his *TLS* article without supplying any compelling reason. This variant 'bad quarto' theory was argued by Raymond Houk and more memorably by G. I. Duthie, who is most closely associated

<sup>1</sup> Knight, ed., *The Taming of the Shrew*, pp. 114–19; Alfred Tolman, 'Shakespeare's Part in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *PMLA* 5 (1890), 201–78; an offprint of this was issued, repaginated, as a book.

<sup>2</sup> Creizenach, iv, 686–98, and Peter Alexander, 'The Taming of a Shrew', *TLS* (16 September 1926), 614.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Taming of a Shrew', *ES* 10 (1928), 97–106.

<sup>4</sup> Chambers, *WS*, i, 372.

<sup>5</sup> *JEGP* 31 (1932), 152–6.

<sup>6</sup> *RES* 14 (1938), 20–43, p. 43.

with it in the minds of critics.<sup>1</sup> At its simplest, this theory seems to be a 'revision' theory arguing that Shakespeare (or somebody) revised *The Shrew* and that the alternative version only survives as reported in *A Shrew*. Although Greg was attracted to this idea, no one after Duthie showed much interest in developing the theory or defending it from attack.<sup>2</sup> The notion that Shakespeare revised his own work found little favour among scholars pursuing the principles of the New Bibliography. At about this time the theoretical debate begun by Alexander's *TLS* article seems to have turned into a struggle among three entrenched positions. It became customary to refer to the textual problem of *A Shrew* as a debate among three theories – the source theory, the 'bad quarto' theory and the 'ur-*Shrew*' theory (as the Duthie theory was dubbed). This tripartite model has not entirely passed from currency. The 1930s, 1940s and 1950s provided no major editions of *The Shrew* which might have produced a reassessment of the critical debate; nor did any edition of *A Shrew* appear.

A thaw came in the 1960s when the Pelican and Penguin editions of *The Shrew* appeared edited, respectively, by Richard Hosley and G. R. Hibbard. Hosley supported Alexander's original 'bad quarto' theory; Hibbard supported Duthie's alternative 'bad quarto' theory. Thereafter, the three important new editions of *The Shrew* in the early 1980s by Brian Morris for the Arden 2, H. J. Oliver for the Oxford single-volume Shakespeare, and Ann Thompson for the New Cambridge Shakespeare followed Alexander with the exception of Oliver, who nodded in the direction of Duthie's 'revision' theory. These texts all provide useful detailed summaries of the history of the modern textual debate.<sup>3</sup> But Morris, whose discussion is long, is not fully content with any theory, remarking:

Unless new, external evidence comes to light, the relationship between *The Shrew* and *A Shrew* can never be decided beyond a peradventure. It will always be a balance of probabilities, shifting as new arguments and opinions are added to the scales. Nevertheless, in the present century the movement has unquestionably been towards acceptance of the Bad Quarto theory, and this can now be accepted as at least the current orthodoxy.<sup>4</sup>

The 'current orthodoxy' is a description most critics would give to theories which they do not entirely trust to last. Morris's pessimism that the relationship between the *Shrew* plays is extremely complex and cannot be resolved finally without the discovery of new external evidence seems well founded. The nature of the crisis precipitated by Alexander's first article has not been thoroughly analysed. What is needed is another hard look at the implications of Alexander's applying to *A Shrew* the 'bad quarto' theory in his first *TLS* article which still serves as the basis for the 'current orthodoxy'. I would argue that Alexander's treatment of the important differences between *The Shrew* and *A Shrew* is inadequate.

<sup>1</sup> Raymond A. Houk, 'The Evolution of *The Taming of the Shrew*', *PMLA* 57 (1942), 1009–38, and G. I. Duthie, 'The Taming of the Shrew and The Taming of a Shrew', *RES* 19 (1943), 337–56.

<sup>2</sup> Greg, *SFF*, pp. 211–12.

<sup>3</sup> Morris, pp. 12–50ff.; Oliver, pp. 13–57; and Thompson, pp. 9–17; pp. 160–85. My edition of *A Shrew* includes an historical survey focused more upon that text (*A Critical, Old-Spelling Edition of 'The Taming of a Shrew', 1594*, PhD, University of London, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Morris, p. 45.

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Many critics would now admit that 'bad quarto' is an unfortunate label and it seems to me that the tale of twentieth-century criticism of *A Shrew* offers a prime example of the manner by which labelling a text as 'bad' has a chilling effect upon readers of that text, including textual critics.

One problem is that critics seem to have understood the term 'bad quarto' in two senses: one specifically Shakespearian, the other not. A. W. Pollard in 1909 had introduced the term 'bad quarto' in a specifically Shakespearian context in *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*, to characterise the earliest quartos of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry 5*, *Hamlet* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* which showed many verbal variants from later 'good' texts by Shakespeare despite obvious similarities (he included *Pericles* though no 'good' version survives of the 'bad' part). Pollard's aim was positive – to show that Heminge and Condell were not condemning all quartos as 'stolne and surreptitious' in the Folio preface. Only a handful of the quartos were 'bad'. A keen interest in how these 'bad' texts came into being soon led critics to the surmise that they were 'stolne' from stage performances either by memory or stenography. Memorial reconstruction came to be favoured, and W.W. Greg's analysis of *The Battle of Alcazar* and *Orlando Furioso* in 1923 implied that memorially reconstructed plays were not confined to Shakespearian texts and could vary significantly from their originals. A non-Shakespearian 'bad quarto' might reveal itself in a text found to exhibit characteristics of memorial reconstruction such as repetition and inclusion of parts of other plays. *A Shrew* could qualify as this sort of 'bad quarto'. Certainly the compiler of *A Shrew* could be seen to rely upon memory (and, possibly, notes), because he quotes *Dr Faustus*, a play not yet in print in 1594. If *The Shrew* had never appeared in the Folio, it is probable that the anonymous *A Shrew* would have fallen under strong suspicion anyway of being a 'bad quarto' of Greg's type. But *The Shrew* was printed and when *A Shrew* was compared with it, although it appeared to have many features of a memorially derived text, it showed greater variation from its 'good' version than other Shakespearian 'bad quartos' did from theirs. Critics who took a narrow view of what constitutes a 'Shakespearian bad quarto' would not admit it to the club. This, it seems to me, is what lies behind Kirschbaum's very terse comment upon *A Shrew*. He does not discuss whether *A Shrew* might be a memorially based text as he has with the 'bad quartos' he allows into his list, but says: 'Despite protestations to the contrary, *The Taming of a Shrew* does not stand in relation to *The Shrew* as *The True Tragedie*, for example, stands in relation to 3 *Henry VI*.' A 'Shakespearian bad quarto' must not show a great deal of variation, then.

Underpinning the notion of a 'Shakespearian bad quarto' is the assumption that the motive of whoever compiled that text was to produce, deferentially, a verbal replica of what appeared onstage. Lines that differ from the 'good' text fall under suspicion of being corrupt. Hence, Alexander seems to pay little attention to the variant matter in *A Shrew*. Ideally it should not be where it is. According to Alexander, the compiler relied only upon *The Shrew*, but proved unable to re-create the complex intrigue of Shakespeare, so he simplified the story line and borrowed passages from other plays to

<sup>1</sup> Kirschbaum, p. 43.



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give his re-named characters some dialogue. Here, I believe that Alexander falls under the negative influence of the term ‘bad quarto’. Critics other than Alexander in the 1920s, who were reading *The Shrew* and *A Shrew* and noticing the differences, must have felt the need for a better explanation of variations than an incompetent compiler. This, I believe, is the prime reason for the persistence of doubt over *A Shrew* among twentieth-century critics. Some of the subplot variations have real substance. For instance, unlike Lucentio and Bianca in *The Shrew*, their parallels in *A Shrew* – Aurelius and Phylema – are from different social ranks, he being a Prince of Sestos. What is more, when the Prince’s father, the Duke of Sestos, appears, he explodes in haughty anger to find his noble son married to a girl of the merchant class. Vincentio, the Duke’s parallel in *The Shrew*, is of the merchant class himself and seems rather inclined to reassure Baptista of his son’s worth than question Bianca’s (5.1.107–9). The issue of rank does not become a point of contention in *The Shrew*. Such coordination in *A Shrew* between the later actions of a noble father and the earlier actions of his son suggests that the compiler might be following some intelligible plan, but Alexander investigates no further than to satisfy himself of the compiler’s incompetence. In his last article on *A Shrew*, printed in 1969, Alexander revealed that his position on the variant matter in *A Shrew* had altered little in over forty years:

The compiler of *A Shrew* while trying to follow the sub-plot of *The Shrew* gave it up as too complicated to reproduce, and fell back on love scenes in which he substituted for the maneuvers [*sic*] of the disguised Lucentio and Hortensio extracts from *Tamurlaine* and *Faustus*, with which the lovers woo their ladies.’

Evidently the variant material is the ‘bad’ part of ‘bad quarto’, and as a consequence, not of much interest. The troubled reception of Alexander’s ‘bad quarto’ theory for *A Shrew* in the decades since he first presented it might have caused critics over forty years later to ponder. There are two points that throw doubt upon Alexander’s hypothesis that the compiler was a bungler and simplifier only:

- (a) If critics found that the subplot of *A Shrew* were merely simpler than that of *The Shrew*, who would protest at labelling it a ‘bad quarto’ report? The subplot contains elements and scenes not found in *The Shrew*. The difficulty with the subplot is not its simplicity but its complexity and differences.
- (b) The more incompetent the critic supposes the compiler to be, the more strongly will it be argued that the compiler would have been incapable of inventing all of the differences found in the subplot of *A Shrew* and developing them consistently. To argue that he is incompetent, ironically, strengthens the hands of those who argue in support of the revision theory: that there must have been another version from which this weak compiler took his new plot details.

In fact, there is evidence of coherent variation in the subplot of *A Shrew* which seriously undermines Alexander’s hypothesis of a weak compiler. In editing *A Shrew* I have made a close inspection of the ‘corrupt’ parts of the subplot and I believe that although the love story of the shrew’s two sisters is simpler than the Bianca plot of *The*

‘ Peter Alexander, ‘The Original Ending of *The Taming of the Shrew*’, *SQ* 20 (1969), 111–16, p. 114.

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*Shrew, A Shrew* does contain another coherent plot strand not found in *The Shrew*. As hinted above, it turns upon the consequences of distinguishing as noblemen two of the characters, father and son. Since Aurelius, the young nobleman, winds up wooing and marrying one of the 'shrewish' sisters of the final wager scene, the theme appears to be that marriage outside one's rank is fraught with danger. Rather than trace out the lines of the alternative plot in argument, I offer the following parallel synopses of the variant subplots. In order to make clearer the comparison, generic labels have generally been substituted for character names:

In *The Shrew* the subplot tells

a tale of a well-to-do merchant's son who, arriving from elsewhere to study, falls in love at first sight with the younger of two daughters of a rich gentleman (the older daughter being a shrew). The woman he admires is of roughly equivalent status to himself. Because she is already pressed by two wooers – one young, one old – he divides his resources by disguising himself as a tutor of lower rank and giving his servant his identity. In his disguise, the son competes with the younger of the woman's wooers and triumphs.

His servant, taking the son's name, outbids and displaces the older wooer by promising the woman's father a superior marriage settlement. It remains only to find a False Father to verify the servant's promises. This done, the young man secretly marries the woman. However, as soon as they have married, the son's True Father arrives. Though surprised at the mixed identities, he is pleased to find his son, and soon assures the woman's anxious father that his son is a worthy match.

The subplot in *A Shrew* tells

a tale of a young nobleman, Prince of Sestos, who arrives from elsewhere to study. He is greeted by a friend who has already fallen in love with the youngest of the three daughters of a rich merchant (the oldest being a shrew). Upon seeing the three daughters, the Prince falls in love at first sight with the middle daughter who apparently has no other suitors but is of lower status than he himself – a merchant's daughter. The Prince presents himself as a merchant, someone of equal rank. He disguises his servant as Prince of Sestos – his own rank. The Prince (as a merchant) woos and wins the woman in the same scenes in which his friend woos and wins the youngest daughter, making two parallel couples.

The Prince wins over the father by finding and presenting to him a False Father, a merchant (apparently also from Sestos) who offers assurances of great wealth to his son and bride. Before their wedding, when the two parallel couples are pledging their mutual loves, the Prince tests the woman he loves by asking her whether she would not rather marry the rich Prince of Sestos (his servant)? She says she would not, and the couples wed as planned. As soon as they have married, the son's True Father, the Duke, arrives. He explodes in fury to find his son marrying beneath himself and rounds on all, particularly the woman's father who protests ignorance. All beg the Duke's forgiveness and he at last relents, accepting the marriage.

Plot summaries are rough tools but undeniably useful in the case of these plays. The first observation is that the two subplots contain many parallels. In *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* most of the points of intersection between the main plot and the subplot are similar in both versions – examples are the shrew's wedding which subplot characters attend in both versions, and the encounter of the tamer and shrew with the True Father on the road to Padua/Athens. These parallel structural links suggest an intimate knowledge of the original text by whoever created the alternative version. In



addition to the element of a nobleman wooing in disguise, the subplot of *A Shrew* shows him testing the faithfulness of his bride-to-be. Plots based upon the testing of women, such as the tale of Griselda, are of venerable age, and this aspect of the subplot of *A Shrew* is compatible with the end of the play when the subplot and taming plot of both plays combine in the testing of three women for obedience to their husbands.

Another important observation is that the alternative subplots differ in comic type. That of *The Shrew*, as is well known, follows the classical style of Latin comedy with an intricate plot involving deception, often kept in motion by a clever servant such as Tranio. (Shakespeare took the names Tranio and Grumio from the *Mostellaria* by Plautus – just such a Latin comedy.) *Supposes*, from which both subplots derive, is another such play although it derives from a Renaissance Italian imitation of Latin comedies. On the other hand, the subplot of *A Shrew* has many elements more associated with the romantic style of comedy popular in London in the 1590s. The theme of a nobleman falling in love with a woman of lesser rank appears in romantic comedies such as Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, *Fair Em*, and other plays. Scenes between wooing lovers are also found in romantic comedies. Lucentio and Bianca have scarcely six lines of lovemaking 'alone' in *The Shrew* (4.2.6–10); in fact, Hortensio and Tranio are eavesdropping even then. By contrast, the audience of *A Shrew* at a similar juncture (Scene 11) is treated to a full scene of the most elaborate promises of love between the shrew's two sisters and their lovers. Although Shakespeare employs the conventions of romantic comedy by including in *The Shrew* occasional passages of elaborate description and classical allusion, passages in *A Shrew*, such as 9.31–2, seem plentiful and extravagant to the point of parody, with offers of

A thousand massy ingots of pure gold,  
 And twice as many bars of silver plate

The importation into *A Shrew* of extravagant language from the popular plays dated about 1590 – especially Marlowe's – has long been known. I believe that the subplot of *A Shrew* was also indebted to the structural principles of the popular romantic comedies where its plotting differs from *The Shrew*. To me it seems that *A Shrew* is an adaptation of *The Shrew*. Alexander's incompetent compiler should be dismissed in favour of a compiler more willing to intervene in the structure of the play.

Probably the single instance offering the clearest evidence of a process of adaptation between *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* is provided by a parallel passage between the subplots, which was indicated in print as early as 1886 in the margin of the Praetorius facsimile of *A Shrew*.<sup>1</sup> It occurs after Kate's wedding in a scene situated between her arrival at the tamer's house and the scene in which she is tempted with food by his servant: *A Shrew*, Scene 7, lines 21–9 (parallels begins with the word 'tame'):

[VALERIA] But tell me, my lord, is Ferando married then?  
 AURELIUS He is, and Polidor shortly shall be wed,  
 And he means to tame his wife ere long.  
 VALERIA He says so.

<sup>1</sup> Praetorius, pp. 30–1.

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AURELIUS Faith, he's gone unto the taming school.  
 VALERIA The taming school, why, is there such a place?  
 AURELIUS Ay, and Ferando is the master of the school.  
 VALERIA That's rare, but what *decorum* does he use?  
 AURELIUS Faith, I know not, but by some odd device or other.

In *The Shrew* the equivalent passage is found at 4.2.50–8 in the Folio scene in which Lucentio and Tranio inform Bianca that Hortensio has abandoned wooing her:

TRANIO I'faith he'll have a lusty widow now  
 That shall be wooed and wedded in a day.  
 BIANCA God give him joy!  
 TRANIO Ay, and he'll tame her.  
 BIANCA He says so, Tranio?  
 TRANIO Faith, he is gone unto the taming-school.  
 BIANCA The taming-school? What, is there such a place?  
 TRANIO Ay, mistress, and Petruchio is the master,  
 That teacheth tricks eleven and twenty long  
 To tame a shrew and charm her chattering tongue.

The lines, beginning with Tranio's 'Ay, and he'll tame her', constitute the closest verbal parallel between the two subplots. If the characters in *The Shrew* followed their equivalents in *A Shrew*, the conversation would be between Lucentio and Tranio with Lucentio taking the lead and Tranio playing the uninformed party, instead of the version in the Folio in which Tranio takes the lead and Bianca plays the uninformed party or 'straight man'. Since the speakers in *A Shrew* are not their customary equivalents in *The Shrew*, these verbal parallels also provide strong evidence that one version is an adaptation of the other: the verbal correspondence is too close to have been arrived at independently; the writer of one version necessarily had direct knowledge of the other version, at least in this passage. The other borrowings in *A Shrew* suggest that the most economic explanation of indebtedness is that whoever compiled *A Shrew* borrowed the lines from Shakespeare's *The Shrew*, or a version of it, and adapted them to a reorganised subplot.

It may seem heresy to suggest that a contemporary of Shakespeare would create the sort of adaptation that we associate with the late seventeenth century. While it is difficult to know the motivation of the adapter, we can reckon that from his point of view an early staging of *The Shrew* might have revealed an overly wrought play from a writer trying to establish himself but challenging too far the current ideas of popular comedy. *The Shrew* is long and complicated. It has three plots, the subplot being in the swift Latin or Italianate style with several disguises. Its language is at first stuffed with difficult Italian quotations, but its dialogue must often sound plain when compared to Marlowe's thunder or Greene's romance, the mouth-filling lines and images that on other afternoons were drawing crowds. An adapter might well have seen his role as that of a 'play doctor' improving *The Shrew* – while cutting it – by stuffing it with the sort of material currently in demand in popular romantic comedies, adding characters of noble rank – in other words, glamorising it.