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Educating Shrews: *Taming of the Shrew*, women's education, shrew stories

Sue Wiseman

I am grateful to Emma Bartel, Gilles Bertheau, Alison Findlay, Christine Sukic and the two readers. Remaining errors are my own. I am grateful to colleagues in Paris for such a fascinating and reviving conference after so long time perforce online.

1 How might we situate *The Taming of the Shrew* alongside other roughly contemporary writing exploring similar issues? Responding to this question, what follows investigates two topics which feature in *The Taming of the Shrew* and elsewhere: shrew stories and the role of women in education. It sets side by side the scenes of education in the play and women's deep involvement in the education of girls in early modern England, to argue that from distinct perspectives *Shrew* and shrew stories and prescriptive literature address the place of men and women in the education of girls to become marriageable subjects capable of mediating the imperatives of love and obedience to sustain a companionate marriage and household. It explores the possibility that putting together the two helps us to see more clearly that we see this drama of the making of a companionate union played out, repeatedly, on the Renaissance stage. Having considered education, gender and obedience in several genres it returns to *Shrew* more specifically to discuss what this comparison helps us see about how the drama of education for marriage is played out in this text.

2 In taking as its starting place that most tendentious of plays, *The Taming of the Shrew*, this essay aims to explore the possibility of deepening engagement with its educational contexts. The number of early modern versions of the idea of the tamed shrew show it was understood as 'good to think with', and decades of critical and directorial reflection on Shakespeare's text (by Frances E. Dolan, M.J.Kidnie and in this volume by Dympna Callaghan amongst others) demonstrate that now, as in early modern England, shrew stories prompt reflection on both the nature of theatrical representation and gender relations.[1] What more can *Taming of the Shrew* tell us about specifically the area

of women and education? Taking on a range of primary sources and drawing on both relatively *Shrew*-specific as well as wider scholarship this essay situates the play in relation to the pervasive presence of women in the education of girls – and bears in mind that education for women was always, in part, for marriage.

I

> MOTHER. Who made you?
> CHILD. God.
> MOTHER. Why did God make you?
> CHILD. To serve him.[2]

3 In putting before us the importance of household education this catechism invites us to think about gender and education in early modern England, particularly who the educators were and how its purposes might be understood. The violent potential of education is restrainedly but strikingly visible in this catechism's emphasis on obedience and service, but what are we to make of its educational delivery by a mother to a child – indifferently male or female? Designed as a tool of specifically maternal literate-oral education, the catechistical set form designedly guides the energies of women educators, themselves almost likely to be "graceless traitors" (5. l.106) as are uncatechised infants. However, it does so at a moment when female skills in reading and writing were becoming steadily more widespread and were valued in relation to the upbringing of children.[3] This catechism, then, offers an example of simple texts often having complex implications. It prompts us to attend to the centrality of women in girl's education and to their role in the management of household education in a conceptually wide sense of the term embracing guidance in including moral and instrumental precepts as well as learning and skill. It invites us to think about how the education scenes of *Shrew* and the rich range of writing on education on and by women disclose what work these might be doing in shaping marriageable female subjects – and we should think about household education.

4 As M. J. Kidnie succinctly comments, it is because of *Shrew*'s repeated scenes of teaching and learning that it "has come to seem one of Shakespeare's most difficult comedies".[4] The scenes of education in *The Taming of the Shrew* are much visited, but as Elizabeth Hutcheon remarks, surprisingly little has been said on them as education.[5] Extant scholarship tends to follow Lynn Enterline's argument that attention to humanist education makes visible possible "interrogation" of love and mastery, and therefore focusses on "reading the play back into the institutional training" in humanist rhetoric. [6] In the case of the many formal and informal educational scenes in Shrew, however, such a focus is only partly productive for several reasons. While the play's own rhetoric is definitely aware of these issues, their prominent thematic presence of them is limited to Bianca's schoolroom experience. The focus on the education offered to Bianca and Kate as humanist is also only partly convincing. In the scene in the schoolroom the dubious status of Ovid's *Heroides* as material for female education is foregrounded. Its status as material for female education is arguably always already compromised; for all that the example is the chaste Penelope, early modern moralisations of Ovid sought to shape it for women, even those attempts suggest a nagging doubt that it can be rendered harmless to women – in early modern culture Ovid's odour of sexual enticement is unexpugnable. Also, any domesticating inflection brought with the *Heroides* must be weighed against the more evident violence of some

of the scenes of learning (not that humanist education was, in practice, mild). Third, it can be argued that the Bianca scenes knowingly replay the relationship women have to reading classical texts as seduction (most significantly Paolo and Francesca in Dante's *Inferno* but also in many other places). Fourthly, as the play presents it, Bianca's ability to resist seduction and maintain chastity during the scenes in which she learns Latin does not rest not on humanist education. Rather, her ability to withstand seduction seems to be the product of a different kind of learning – she has internalised moral lessons and ways to make courtship tend to marriage. Moreover, what we are witnessing in Bianca's education in the schoolroom is inescapably not humanist education but a parody of it – a deliberate guying of the schoolroom as a zone of drawing out in its replaying as a zone of comic seduction.[7] An additional striking absence from the discussion of the rhetoric of the schoolroom is how such oratory operated in relation to the theatregoers' different experiences of education – for whereas all would recognise scenes of learning, many would be less familiar with rhetorical subtleties important as those were for those who knew them and for the actors engaged to shape them into character. For all these reasons, even in the scene that explicitly stages the schoolroom, it is hard to concur that the education scenes in *Shrew* "tak[e] seriously" the power of humanist education to shape women, and also troubling to think that the educational or taming scenes "allow" Katherine to "become a fluent and comprehensible speaker".[8] However, building on the work of Elizabeth Anne Mackay on the play's vernacular language and Jeff Dolven's attention to educational violence and beating, this essay addresses these scenes as more quotidian scenes of education.[9] Audiences would be much more reliably familiar with the vernacular contexts. In the light of this, there is a case for attending to the scene of learning and teaching in this play alongside the contexts known to its audience in education for marriage and in shrew stories.

5 Besides the narrow issue of the play's engaging of humanism (which it does, but in complex and distancing ways) it is informative to set its scenes of women's education – both Bianca's education and Kate's education or taming – alongside previously unexplored contexts of women's education. Like the rote-learned catechism, the lesson Bianca starts in Act 3, scene 1 of *The Taming of the Shrew* seems to be a conned translation exercise in which she is to not to translate but repeat Penelope from Ovid's *Heroides*. Two things happen. First, where Lucentio is to "conster" or interpret the Latin, and as he does so the classical story is intercut with erotic pedagogy: "I have told you before", the disguised Lucentio repeats, "I am Lucentio, [...] son unto Vincentio of Pisa, [...] disguised thus to get your love" (3.1. 31-33) to which she replies, "presume not [...] despair not" (3.1.44). Second, she also, like the child in the catechism, follows the exercise in repeating the Latin words her tutor ordains – "presume not, *celsa senis,* despair not" (3.1.44). The scene of Latin rather than catechistical learning, here, plays out the scene of danger, as Bianca abandons her script. It seems that the scene itself is a repetition, for Bianca asks "Where left we last?" (3.1.26) and she may learn by such repetition – "in time I may believe" (3.1.49). The injunction to learn by repeating, not by replying, is of course most violently asserted by Petruchio, first in the naming of the moon and sun by order not actuality ("[i]I shall be [...] what I list", 4.5.10-23) and then, more disturbingly, perhaps, when Petruchio over-rides Kate's modesty by insisting she kiss him in the street, "Nay, I will" (5.1.123-130, l. 128).

6 Bianca is located in comedic versions of classic schools of seduction – reading Ovid with a man and in a music lesson. The dubious nature of what is learned plays out subtly

elsewhere; Traino opens his love in the voice of Dido.[10] However, even if, notionally, Bianca is learning from Ovid's Penelope in *Heroides* I to copy Penelope in avoiding subjection to masculine desire, Bianca and Penelope are similar and different in more complex ways. First, Bianca is a virgin rather than a wife and so while Penelope can only avoid and deflect misdirected desire, because Bianca's tutors are in fact marriageable young men rather than the opportunistic tutors they play, they represent marital potential rather than the danger towards which their masquerades gesture. The scene neatly delivers us the knowledge both of Bianca's double role as chaste virgin and her obedience to the imperatives shaping that. She shows us that she knows that she should avoid the seductions of tutors as the peril of the schoolroom and music lesson. And she knows a viable possibility and that she ought to make productive opportunities for genuine courtship. That she knows and acts to make the scene productive is a skill not taught in the humanist schoolroom.

7 Amongst several scenes of learning it is only the three women in the play, Katherine / Kate, Bianca and the widow, who are presented as taught and, in varying degrees, learning by repetition or reiteration and by command. Kate and the widow learn lessons through the modes of contradiction, thwarting and physical punishment. The violent scenes of female learning sit alongside much less discussed scenes of masculine learning. Throughout *Shrew*, men learn informally from example: Hortensio learns from Petruchio; the male servants learn how to be, or play, masters; the fathers learn to accept young men making the crucial life step into household formation. The liminal students, Hortensio and Lucentio, induct themselves into householdership through peer-to-peer competition; teaching, and by learning from the one of their number who, as a soldier, has already taken many steps into a *vita activa*, and who now needs money and wife to support a household. As a coming-of-age comedy, *Shrew* shows men as well as women learning. Scenes of the education of women sit within a full canvassing of status and learning in the play in which the young subjects learn to be marriageable.

8 The play's emphasis on scenes of learning points towards consideration of the genres of teaching and learning that tend towards marriage for both women and men. In terms of what it might mean to learn to be marriageable, once we set these scenes of learning against not an imagined real world but against other texts outlining women's education, role experience and the repeated retellings of shrew stories, we can set the play's methods of making obedient subjects against other scenes of education – and in doing so constellate *Shrew* with related texts tracing the deployment of power in education.

9 Thus, in thinking about "how to interpret the gender politics of a comedy that dramatises a woman married against her will and 'tamed' by her husband", the play's jostling scenes of education and obedience offer not answers but striking condensations of issues which, at the same time as existing in the play, have echoes and contrasts in wider society.[11] That the education of Bianca and Katherine is undertaken by their father is a significant factor in the play and invites comparison both with other plays (including the many father-dominated tragedies of the Shakespeare corpus) and with other texts. One illuminatingly contrasting account of learning Latin at a father's behest is given by Martha Moulsworth, reflecting on her education at the age of fifty five:

> By him I was brought vpp in godlie pietie
> In modest chearefullnes, & sad sobrietie
> Nor onlie so, Beyond my sex & kind

> he did wth learning Lattin decke mind
> And whie nott so? the muses femalls are
> and therefore of Vs ffemales take some care
> Two Vniversities we haue of men
> o thatt we had but one of women then [...].

10 Moulsworth was taught Latin not because a man wanted to seduce her, but because her father was a tutor. She considers its value with a "balanced combination of idealism and practicality", reflecting that:

> Lattin is not the most marketable mariadge mettal
> Had I no other portion to my dowre
> I might have stood a virgin to this houre[12]

11 Latin was an ornament but hardly a draw for suitors. The careful education she received from her father was founded in piety and 'modest chearefullnes', and this supplemented a dowry; Latin was a forgotten ornament. The father presented in *Shrew* is very different from Moulsworth's. Essentially, Bianca and Kate are stranded in the play without maternal care. In terms of Shakespeare's work they lack even the chocolate teapot assistance of Juliet's craven nurse. Women were very deeply involved in education up and down the social scale. The audience must have known that sometimes even poorer women might get educated. As Eleanor Hubbard points out, teaching as part of a work portfolio spread quite far down the social ladder – women like Mary Swainie, married to a City cooper, might earn a living '"by her husbands trade & by teaching of children"'.[13] Given Bianca and Kate's management of their chastity and modesty, the context of young women's education in the household is significant.

12 The mixing of the schoolroom and erotic pedagogy found in *Taming of the Shrew* seems to find cognates in many precincts of early modern culture. Famously, it seems that princess Elizabeth's tutor-courtier, Kat Astley, was caught up in the disavowed courtship between Thomas Seymour and princess Elizabeth. One scene, given in a deposition prior to Astley's temporary sojourn in the Tower, suggests the proximity of sexual threat and education found in early modern girls' experience of household education. Coming up late upon a garden scene, Astley found the young Elizabeth with "her Gown in a hundred pieces". Astley testifies that, like any teacher, she "chid with her; and her Grace answered, She could not do with all, for the Quene held her, while my lord did so dress it."[14] The high status of the participants make the stakes of chastity and what is learned high, the record is long. These factors have made it durable and visible. However, the many roles women might play in moral and educational pedagogy that it evokes are also resonant with records of households of far lower status. This scene does show in practice some of the associations between women and education in that it involves female teachers of compromised authority; it shows girls' education extends well beyond any classroom to be integrated into daily life in complex ways, and that it is sexualised. These characteristics are gendered, and remind us, also, of the pressure inherent in the fact that girls' education and sexual coming of age happen at broadly the same time. By token of being mixed up with general happenings in the household and environment, the whole package is a schooling in womanhood. The repeated scene of the tutor-interloper is found down the social scale and often, as in the case of Kat Astley, women play key roles in the practice of twinned moral and educational tutelage.

13 The female figure of the guardian educator appears in idealised forms as the imagined agents and dedicatees of conduct books. For example, *The Necessarie, Fit and Convenient Education of a Young Gentlewoman* (translated 1598) includes translation of its original dedication to the "wise and vertuous Gentlewoman, Mistres Marrietta Catanea".[15] This text reminds the guarding figure for the girl to patrol status boundaries amongst women. The female guardian-educator, if a substitute for the mother, must be "full of gravitie and wisdom" who, "supplying your place, neither for want of love nor wisdom", can keep a daughter safe and loved.[16] William Dell is concerned that village women educating little children should themselves be "sober and grave".[17] The apparently cheaper printed, female-authored *The Mothers Counsell or, Live within Compasse* (1631) examining life in and out of "compasse", contrasting chastity and "wantonnesse", temperance and madness, its frontispiece casts conduct as concentric circles with, at its core, an image of a woman pointing at a girl and holding a book that is probably a Bible. The central position of woman and Bible gives visual expression to the central role of the instruction of women by women in many educational and moral-educational texts. As we know, in many households, children and servants experienced family-led piety. One such seems to have been Nathaniel Barnardiston's, described as a perfect household where the wife, guided by his perfected "governance" and "conjugall love [...] and delight", shaped a household space "wherein were offered up the spiritual sacrifices of reading the word, and prayer every morning and evening". Sung psalms at table ensured the nine household offspring learned sung psalms, prayers and reading.[18] In *The Monument for Matrons* (1582), Dorcas Martin's catechism and prefatory poem shapes the reader as one catechised and catechising, and in the 1640s the non-elite Dorothy Burch joined a growing band of women publishing catechisms. Women's household role was acknowledged.

14 The reach of maternally conveyed religious-educational ideology is evident in the writings of older educated girls and women reflecting on their education. Thus, Grace Mildmay's grand-daughter mixes pen practice and moral self-instruction, as she writes out "Thy safest counsell make thine owne / From whores and lust fly and abstaine / For after plasur folloues paine".[19] Mary Rich reflects on being sent first to "my Lady Claytone", a "to me, kind mother" as guardian and later, implicitly, misguided in her father's house.[20]

15 Other non-elite women were involved in purveying education. Thus, in 1506, the widow of a London merchant tailor, Thomasine Percivayle began the founding of a free school in a small village in the deepest west country, establishing a royal chantry with it in 1508. From the description of the school as a place where '"they that list may set their children to board"' and ' "have them taught freely"' it seems just possible that girls attended.[21] Lower down the income-brackets, in the 1670s and 1680s we have schoolbooks indicating that a fiercely interventionist and methodical teacher, Elizabeth Beane, was ramming strategies of word and number into the pupils of the better off middling sort. Quaker teachers delivered education throughout the 1650s; as Adrian Wilson and Jenny Richards trace, apprentice midwives were taught by a mixture of book and voice, and there was a growing stream of vernacular reading for midwives that channelled Latin texts and could, in turn, be read to women apprentices.[22] There is ample evidence of women's involvement in the education.

16 Finally, we even have records from pupils about the women who taught them at dame school. Thus, Richard Norwood, later surveyor of Bermuda, inventor of the diving bell, writes of the collapsing status of his father and of how, before he was twelve:

> and first, most that I can remember of it [early life] is going in long coats to school to my dame Langton, learning my Psalter, which after I was somewhat well entered by her I learned with great facility and delight and was much affected with sundry of the Psalms, especially those wherein God is praised with much emphasis and affection. I had then some general desires to be in the grace and favour of God and my dame (as it seems) was a very religious woman…

17 If *The Mother's Catechism* with which this essay began is a text that repeats the imperative of obedience and servitude to God, then the psalms explore the full emotional range of experience.[23] Women were key in the administration of both aspects and, insofar as they were educating girls, the force of law and the power of love were to be instilled in the female subject in a delicate balance. On her interpretation and continued negotiation of the companionate ideal and the barbed wire safety net of obedience hung the success of her own role. Evidence shows us how greatly a wife's judgements in the maintenance of a companionate versioning of marriage duty affected her life and that of her household.

II

18 How can we put side by side the two bodies of text we have been considering, *The Taming of the Shrew* on the one hand and, on the other, women's roles in education? Clearly, there is a great wealth of evidence of women's involvement in education and my surface-scratching survey of the period 1550-1680 shows that the more we look the more we find. As scholars research this area they find more and more evidence of women's direct involvement in education all the way up and a long, long way down the educational scale, from Kat Astley to Richard Norwood's dame. Turning back to *The Taming of the Shrew* in the light of this, we see that the play is interested in staging women's relationship to education and is doing so, unsurprisingly, on the terrain of marriage formation and undoing. This, the making, destroying and terms of marriage, was certainly the concern of educators of women but is also, distinctly, the terrain on which many, many – possibly most – early modern English comedies and tragedies work themselves out. *Shrew*, then, offers its particular angle on the oft-replayed tense relations between ideologies of marital obedience versus companionate marriage, Robert Bolton's "affectionate dearness" and even "pouring out of hearts".[24] Again and again plays ask – are women to submit sexually or take pleasure? Are they to choose a partner by their own or another's eyes? Are they controlled by their brothers or able to retain a status that allows them to marry without compromising? Can they be duchess of Malfi still if they are married to a commoner?

19 To put it over-schematically, looking at women as educators and at *Shrew* together helps us to see that there is a consistent mediation between obedience and the companionate ideal of married love in the education of girls. In the educational and conduct writing again and again women's education is forcefully organised to manage young women as companionably obedient subjects who will not precipitate a crisis in or between these ideologies. At the same time, theatre audiences clearly wanted to watch this problem of marriage's competing meanings – most often as crisis – played

out again and again and again. It is illuminating to consider together women's care to prepare girls and maids to maintain a companionate households and the theatre's fascination with that delicate balance in formation and in crisis (usually in comedy and tragedy respectively). We can see that *Shrew*, in thinking about the education of a wife, traces a fable in which, through repetition and obedience, the violent wooing produces not a crisis between obedience and love, but the companionate couple itself. As a re-arrangement of the component potentials of the familiar comic plots, this is unusual and is part of why, notwithstanding that the violence "is" comic and the play comedic, readers and audiences experience the play with some unease.[25] The trajectory of suffering, humiliation and breakdown makes – that is results in – resolved companionate alignment. When Hortensio and Lucentio wonder what Kate's obedience bodes, their exemplar, Petruchio, explains "Marry, peace it bodes, and love, and quiet life, / An awful rule, and right supremacy, / And, to be short, what not that's sweet and happy" (5.2. 112-114). And in that Petruchio and Kate alone of the couples are "sped" at the end, the violent path of obedience to companionate joy is given the status of a tested model.

20 To return to the Shrew's scenes of learning, in the way this play plays out the exaction of obedience as a route to happy marriage, we can see that how to do that is, of course, *the* main thing that the men learn, and, at least initially, they are not learning to be gentle. As Hortensio ends Act IV, "Have to my widow, and if she be froward, / Then hast thou [Petruchio] taught Hortensio to be untoward" (4.5.77-79). And if we go to *The Taming of A Shrew* (1594), sure enough, we find that optimal learner, Sly, awaking after the play, "in his Owne apparell againe". The tapster advises him he has been out all night and had best "get you home" for his wife will "course" him for lying out, dreaming, to which he replies:

> SLY. Will she? I know now how to tame a shrew,
> I dreamt upon it all this night till now,
> And thou has wakt me out of the best dreame
> That ever I had in my life, but Ile to my
> Wife presently and tame her too
> And if she anger me. (scene xix)[26]

21 Sly, who isn't in the play, fully articulates its logic in which violence makes a perfect partnership. However, he does so in the play – which is a dream. Is it that shrew taming stories are applicable, even effective – but only in a dream? Perhaps in this moment in *a Shrew* we see more clearly than in Shakespeare's play that the play is both an enforcement of ideology and a self-conscious re-telling.

22 Throughout the play there are signals to notice that things exist in different dimensions and that roles shift; that the play is Sly's dream is part of that and the unsubjecting and speech of Bianca is another. As the opening or induction scene with Sly reminds us, in *Shrew* we meet not only a violent insistence on the meaning of a gendered body but also, and equally pervasive, if differently put, a refusal of identity and stability with instead layered roles, try outs and disguises. The boys playing are like the page Bartholomew who will deceive Sly because he will "well usurp the grace, / Voice, gate, and actions of a gentlewoman" (Lord, Induction scene 1, 127-128). Then there are all the many supposes and changes of status that have led critics to rightly question how finally we should take the supposed final submission of Kate. If, on the one hand, *Taming of the Shrew* insists on violent education in obedience for women, then yes indeed, it also insists that everything might be a role, a scene, a type, a re-recycled

suppose in a drama of quoted moments. The scenes of education in this play, other plays and the other texts of education we have looked at insist on education's goal as both made identity and performed role.

23 In terms of education, *Shrew* is at its heart a retelling – it is a version of the much-retold story of the re-education of the "shrew"; the remaking of the froward shrew as toward marriage. As critics note, the shrew story is very ancient and spread across cultures, and the tale version (known as tale 901 and discussed by Jan Harold Brunvand) is potentially a distant source of *Shrew*. However, for readers, theatregoers and performers the various shrew stories were both repetitions and culturally specific.[27] Much more significant than the ultimate source is the anonymous mid-sixteenth-century third-person ballads, such as *A Merry Jest of a Shrewd and Curst Wife*, which, for all that it heavily foregrounds its several performative aspects, is also very cruel and insistent on the emergence of a new obedient, not companionate, serving identity. *The Merry Jest* gives a version of the tale in which a ballad apparently designed to reassure men that by animalising women's "mischievous pageants" [l. 43] they can control them. As Frances Dolan notes, shrew retellings are a key site of the "tenacious popular tradition of depicting domestic violence as funny" – and in general these invite the audience to "treat pain very lightly". [28]The lightening of the violence by the structure of repetition and comedy facilitates the stability of the shrew ballads in showing that the enforcement of obedience in marriage "works".

24 However, as many years after *Taming of the Shrew* as *Merry Jest* was before, in 1659, another shrew ballad was published. This one starts in the voice of the old husband:

> My old wife hath hang'd her self,
> as you may understand,
> Now I have got a young wife,
> ile bring her to my hand.
> By my old wife, 'tis true,
> a house I did inherit,
> With my young wise I had nothing
> but a devilish spirit.
> Her ile curb, and keep under,
> and lock her out of door,
> Take away her meat and drink,
> and never love her more.

25 The violence, though not the erotics, of lessons in being a wife are replicated in the strange text: *Elizabeth Fools Warning* (1659), a text claiming to be by a woman and setting out a sequence of scenes from a young wife's marriage to an old man. Starting from the husband's assertion that his dowerless new wife "her cloaths she shall not weare," the poem continues to outline what the woman learns from some of the elements of the "original" are here, and, as so often, the shrew is deprived of clothes. The rest of the long ballad, however, is "Her answer" and pours out the woman's rage and hurt. After her husband has turned her out and she has found work as a housekeeper and nurse but, when he refuses to even pay her rent, she takes two kinds of revenge; first, she takes to law. Second, rather than be lapped in a salted horse's skin, as is the poor shrew in the "Merry jest" ballad, she gets the charge of her horseback ride to London paid by a man, ending in defiance of all; "I care not for friend or kin".[29] What this shrew learns is to speak, reply, litigate and survive. If the play was indeed performed in 1591 or 1592, then the two ballads frame it in a potentially Whiggish reformatory-performatory trajectory in which women take over the story. Certainly, it brings to light the

suppressed violence of taming tales; the pain here is intense. It is a retelling of the genre in part in the mode of the *Heroides*, but also found in the ballad: complaint. Whatever else, it is evidence that the culture that made the shrew stories at some level knew them as jokes – and, jokes often are, as more than jokes.

26 Taken from this essay's perspective on gender and the schoolroom, *Shrew* sits between Dorcas Martin's catechism and Martha Moulsworth's gratitude that she had both some money and the tribute of being taught Latin; learning is catechistical and, at moments, humanist-domestic. It also sits between the "Merry Jest" and the Shrew-Grizzell-picaresque ballad that claims female authorship. From an initial placing of *Shrew*'s educational emphasis and scenes alongside a body of texts shaping female education, we can revisit *Shrew*'s educational scenes with a sense of them and the play as replaying the shrew story and offering one, very specific, kind of resolution to a problem experienced as pressing and played out in a range of cultural precincts concerned with the moral and educational shaping of marriageable subjects – plays, letters, apprentice textbooks, life writing, conduct literature, depositions as well as homilies and ballads. These comparator stagings of the educational scene allow us to also take a step back from this, specific, shrew story to situate it in relation to the shrew story's role as a learning tale in wider culture. As we have seen, we can find in texts more closely associated with women's production a perhaps small but illuminating addition to the shrew contexts that offer some alignments between Shakespeare's texts and some others. This text knows itself as a version of a shrew story, and it knows why it is important that women are educated: it is a reworking of the story of how to make a marriage.

27 Where has it taken us to compare the education of women in and beyond *Shrew*? Taking on a range of primary sources, drawing on specific discussions of *Shrew*, and using scholarship on education this essay has situated the play in relation to the pervasive presence of women in the education of girls – and has borne in mind that education for women was always, in part, for marriage. It is possible to summarise some of the issues considered. If, as the play's juxtaposition evidently proposes, we are to consider different forms of education and their resemblance or difference (this includes shrew-taming) then the focus on the household as a place of education, the question of the husband or father as provider of the conditions of education and the absence of the mother from the play are all foregrounded as matters for an audience to consider. The place of education in the play and the question of how a man should rule a household that is debated amongst the men and canvassed in its exploration of violence in comic mode are not resolved by the play, but they are played out in a specific way through the way it brings about its ending through that comic violence. The unusual nature of this working out alone is enough to invite our focus on the elements explored in this essay. The play is a play – it isn't in the game of resolving issues out with dramatic terms, so it can't give us answers on how a household should be run. Rather, in comic mode, it works through a case of twin-plotted masculine rule. And in a quieter way, because of this working out of the marriage plot, the significance of women in the intellectual and moral education of girls can be seen to be part of the play's thought – foregrounded by the fact that we do not see women in the role of the educator in *Shrew*.

28 The essay goes on to argue that in *Shrew's* simultaneous emphasis on fixity of identity and obedience on the one hand and, at the same time, on variation and retelling, we see the story of the resolution of love and obedience in marriage played out in a very

specific way: companionate marriage is achieved through the institution, not so much tempering, of obedience. Thus, in this play we see the components of the companionate marriage plot in a very specific formulation and alignment – on the one hand very stark in terms of violence and obedience and on the other very playful and knowing in terms of being a retelling of identities and stories, a retelling of a shrew tale. Setting the play against the two contexts of male and female educators and shrew stories gives us an additional frame in which to think about the play's troubling mixture of play and violence.

Coda: Another visit to Shakespeare's sister

29 It seems to be the case that, as Paula McQuade argues, the educational and generic contexts for *Shrew* discussed here are not significantly considered in the editions or particularly the critical literature.[30] There may be reasons why there is less on this topic than expected – and maybe some of these lie in canon-formation. If these educational framings are illuminating, where and how did we mislay them? To think about this, we can return to the genesis of criticism on both Shakespeare and the education of women.

30 Famously, when Virginia Woolf traces the disastrous trajectory of Shakespeare's "extraordinarily gifted sister", she sketches out the doomy trajectory of the imagined genius ending with her barefoot and pregnant, then dead, and comments that "[t]hat, more or less, is how the story would run [...] if a woman in Shakespeare's day had had Shakespeare's genius".[31] For Woolf, also "genius like Shakespeare's is not born among labouring, uneducated, servile people. It was not born in England among the Saxons and the Britons. It is not born to-day among the working classes." It could not have been "born among women" coerced by "all the power of law and custom."[32] Addressing the question of women's literary history, Margaret Ezell has traced some of the ways in which Woolf's narrative significantly influenced both which women's writing came to notice and how scholars valued it.[33] I am not sure that Woolf can really be actually held responsible from the absenting of texts more closely associated with female production from the transmission history of the shrew story, but I do think that it must be the transmission history of our field that has done that. Scholars, as opposed to essayists, may not search for genius, but, as Ezell notes, scholars do, of course, privilege literature and rhetorical context. In the case of this shrew, then, we can see the potential of drawing on some neglected understandings of what can constitute a context for a literary text. If we read *The Taming of the Shrew* against the humanist schoolroom that shaped its producers we can also read it against the shrew stories and women's educational scenes familiar to its producers and audiences.

NOTES

1. On performance and pedagogy see Kathryn M. Moncrief & Kathryn R. McPherson ed., *Performing Pedagogy in Early Modern England*, London, Routledge, 2011.

2. John Craig, *The Mother and the Child: a short catechisme*, London, 1611, STC (2nd ed) 5961.5, sig. A3r.

3. Margaret W. Ferguson and Mihoko Suzuki, "Women's Literacies and Social Hierarchy in Early Modern England", *Literature Compass* 12.11, 2015, 575-590; Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England*, London, Routledge, 1999; for an analysis of the difficulty of estimating women's literacy see Eleanor Hubbard's analysis of signing, initialing and embroidery: "Reading, Writing, and Initialing: Female Literacy in Early Modern London" *Journal of British Studies*, 54.3, 2015, 553-577.

4. M. J. Kidnie, "Preface" to William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the* Shrew, ed. M. J. Kidnie, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2006, p. ix. For a longer discussion of the play as tendentious in its time and in criticism see Frances E. Dolan, "Introduction" to William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the* Shrew, ed. Frances E. Dolan, Boston, Bedford/St. Martin's, 1996, p. 1-38.

5. Elizabeth Hutcheon, "From Shrew to Subject: Petruchio's Humanist Education of Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*", *Comparative Drama* 45.4, 2011, 315-337.

6. Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012, p. 118. On love and mastery see Jeff Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2007, p. 216-223 and *passim*.

7. See also Patricia Philippy's illuminating essay "'Loytering in Love': Ovid's *Heroides*, Hospitality and Humanist Education in *Taming of the Shrew*", Criticism 40.1, 1998, 27-53, p. 29.

8. Elizabeth Hutcheon, *op. cit*., p. 333, p. 317.

9. See Elizabeth Ann Mackay, "Good Grammar, Possessive Pronouns, and Preposterous Possessions in *The Taming of the Shrew*", *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 17.1, 2017, 31-67; I am very grateful to Alison Findlay for this reference and for discussion. Jeff Dolven quotes William Cecil on boys running away from Eton because of beating, *op. cit*., p. 209. See also Martin Ingram, "Shame and Pain: Themes and Variations in Tudor Punishments", in Simon Devereaux and Paul Griffiths, eds., *Penal Practice and Culture, 1500-1900*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 36-62; and Kenneth Charlton, '"Not publike onely but also private and domesticall': Mothers and familial education in pre-industrial England", *History of Education* 17.1, 1988, 1-20, p. 11 and n. 58.

10. Lynn Enterline, *op. cit.*, p. 97-8 and passim.

11. Margaret Jane Kidnie, *The Taming of the Shrew*, London, Macmillan, 2006, p. ix.

12. *"My Name Was Martha" a Renaissance Woman's Autobiographical Poem* by Martha Moulsworth, ed. Robert C. Evans and Barbara Wiedemann, West Cornwall, CT, Locust Hill Press, 1993, p. 5; "The text itself", p. 22.

13. Mary Swaine, 1611. DL/C/220, fols. 462-3, London, Metropolitan Archives as cited and discussed in Eleanor Hubbard, *op. cit*., p. 553; Margaret Spufford, "Women teaching reading to poor children in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" in Mary Hilton *et al*. ed., *Opening the Nursery Door*, London, Routledge, 1997, p. 47-62.

14. Elizabeth I, *Elizabeth I Collected Works*, ed Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose, Chicago & London, University of Chicago Press, 2000, p. 28.

15. Giovanni Bruto, *La Institutione di una Faniculla Nata Nobilemente* (1565), trans W. P., *The Necessarie, Fit and Convenient Education of a Young Gentlewoman* (1598, rpt facsimile), Amsterdam and New York, Theatrum Orbis, 1969, sig. A1v-A6v.

16. Giovanni Bruto, *op. cit.*, C4r. On status-relations see Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

17. William Dell, "The Right Reformation of Learning" in *Several Sermons and Discourses*, London, 1709, p. 642-8, p. 643.

18. Samuel Fairclough, *The Saints Worthinesse and the worls worthlessnesse ...sermon at the funerall of Sr N Barnardiston*, London, 1653, p. 17 (sig. D1r) and discussed by Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England*, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

19. MSS notebooks 1623-1636, Centre for Kentish Studies U269 F38/1, transcribed and introduced by Caroline Bowden in Carol Ostovistch and Elizabeth Sauer eds., *Reading Early Modern Women*, New York & London, Routledge, 2004, p. 74-77, p. 75.

20. Mary Rich, "Some Specialties" in T. Croker, ed., *Autobiography*, London, Percy Society, 1848, p. 12-14, p. 2. I am grateful to Emma Bartel for suggesting Rich.

21. Cited in Nicholas Orme, *Education in the West of England 1066-1548* (Exeter; University of Exeter, 1976), p. 178.

22. Jennifer Richards, 'Reading and Hearing The Womans Booke in Early Modern England' *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (2015) 89:3, p. 434-462.

23. I am grateful to Melissa Marsh (Birkbeck College) for sharing her work on the psalms.

24. Robert Bolton, *Some General Directions for a comfortable Walking with God* (1625), p. 239, quoted in Kenneth Charlton, "'Not publike onely but also private and domesticall': Mothers and familial education in pre-industrial England", *History of* Education 17.1, 1988, 1-20, p. 11 and n. 58.

25. On the limits of violence and the coding of shrew violence, see Frances E. Dolan, *op. cit.*, p. 201, 244. See also Sandra Clark, "Shrews, Marriage and Murder", in David Wootton and Graham Holderness ed., *Gender and Power in Shrew-Taming Narratives, 1500-1700*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2010, p. 29-47.

26. William Shakespeare, *The Taming of a Shrew (1594)* ed., Stephen Miller, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998.

27. Jan Harold Brunvand, "The Folktale origin of *The Taming of the Shrew*", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 17.4, 1966, 345-359.

28. Dolan, *op. cit.*, p. 244, 245.

29. Elizabeth With of Woodbridge, *Elizabeth Fools warning: being a true and most perfect relation of all that has happened to her since her marriage. Being a caveat for all young women to marry with old men*, London, 1659, Wing (2nd ed.) / W3139, p. 12 [sig. cropped from image].

30. See Paula McQuade, *Catechisms and Women's Writing in Seventeenth Century England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 182; Compare the account in Hutcheon, *op. cit.*, p. 334, n. 2.

31. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1928, rpt. London, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1963), p. 48, 50.

32. Woolf, *op. cit.* p. 50.

33. Margaret Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 141.

ABSTRACTS

This essay investigates what more we can learn about *The Taming of the Shrew* by understanding the textual context of educational writing as embracing both shrew stories and writing on education. It argues that situating the text in relation to these two contexts illuminates the way the marriage plot in the play is resolved. The findings also suggest the shrew's particular place in seventeenth century discourse on marriage is used by the play to dramatize the tension between companionate and obedient marriage played out again and again in seventeenth century comedy and tragedy. The play's conclusion is considered in terms of its resolution of this tension versus that found in other plays.

Cet article cherche à montrer comment la prise en compte d'un contexte éducatif comprenant à la fois des histoires de mégères et des manuels pédagogiques est susceptible d'enrichir notre compréhension de *La mégère apprivoisée* (*The Taming of the Shrew*). Il avance que la mise en relation du texte avec ces deux éléments contextuels permet de mettre en lumière la façon dont les questions matrimoniales se dénouent dans l'intrigue. Cette étude montre aussi que la pièce s'appuie sur la place particulière qu'occupe la mégère dans les discours sur le mariage au dix-septième siècle, de manière à mettre en scène la tension entre mariage d'obéissance et mariage d'amitié qui revient de façon récurrente dans les comédies et les tragédies du dix-septième siècle. La conclusion de la pièce est envisagée en termes de sa résolution de cette tension, comparée à d'autres pièces de l'époque.

INDEX

Keywords: catechism, companionate marriage, courtship, education, household, moral education, genre, rote learning, shrew stories, Taming of the Shrew, tutors, women as teachers

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