Queer Renaissance Dramaturgy, Shakespeare’s *Shrew,* and the Deconstruction of Marriage

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[(essay date 2013) *In the following essay, Orvis relates the practice of using boy actors to play female parts to the idea of homosexual marriage in* The Taming of the Shrew. *Cross-dressing, Orvis claims, “did not efface the body of the boy underneath the drag,” so that even the most “normal” marriage in Shakespeare is simultaneously also same-sex.*]

Given the wealth of scholarship on the transvestite theater, it might seem cliché to take as my starting point the observation that on the Renaissance stage boy actors played the roles of female characters.1 Indeed, over the past twenty-five years or so, studies of cross-dressing in English Renaissance drama have deliberated at length the cultural significances of compulsory cross-gender casting and of the profusion of cross-gender disguise plots.2 In her landmark essay on the subject, “Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage,” Phyllis Rackin argued that the boy heroine was a contested site of signification, at first representing an androgyne, “a symbol of prelapsarian or mystical perfection,” and then, as the period went on, becoming “a satirical portrait of the hermaphrodite, a medical monstrosity or social misfit, an image of perversion or abnormality.”3 Building upon Rackin’s foundational work, feminist and queer scholars have continued to interrogate the precarious relationship between bodies and clothes. For example, in *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory,* Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass have suggested that Renaissance plays invited audiences to “speculat[e] on the boy actor” beneath the drag, a spectacle producing “contradictory fixations articulated through fetishistic attention to particular items of clothing, particular parts of the body of an imagined woman, particular parts of an actual boy actor.”4 Will Fisher extended this mode of inquiry in *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* to include what he calls “prostheses”—which “can be removed from the body [but which] also shape or materialize the body and self in important ways.”5 Of course, if sex and gender are malleable, then so too is identity. As Laura Levine has shown in *Men in Women’s Clothing,* critics of the theater believed that cross-dressing on the Renaissance stage posed a serious threat to masculine identity in particular, as it showed “men are only men in the performance of their masculinity.”6 From this vantage, plays can be seen waxing philosophical, asking playgoers to ponder, in the words of Catherine Belsey, that vexing ontological question, “Who is speaking?”7 In its original context, this question was asked of characters in Shakespeare’s comedies, but as the robust scholarship on Renaissance theatrical practice has amply demonstrated, it could apply to virtually any character in any play as well as to any playgoer who may have accepted the perhaps irresistible invitation to speculate.8

I begin with this précis of scholarship on the transvestite theater because for all of its insights, it has overlooked what I want to argue is a salient aspect of Renaissance dramaturgy—the institutionalization of queer marriage. Indeed, although marriage scenes pervade the period’s drama, the queerness of these marriages and the dramaturgic practices that enabled them have largely been ignored.9 And yet, with the exception of foreign troupes employing female actors, plays performed in London’s public and private theaters were put on by companies comprising men and boys, and so the vast majority of marriages staged for the theatergoing public excluded women players.10 Oftentimes, of course, these marital arrangements were performed under the guise of mixed-sex marriages, with boy actors cross-dressing to play the roles of wives and wives-to-be. However, this did not efface the body of the boy underneath the drag. Rather, the “play-boy” (to use Lady Mary Wroth’s term) and the character he portrayed sustained, only to exploit, what Michael Shapiro has called the “dual consciousness” of spectators.11 As adduced by Shakespeare’s fondness for female pages—among them, *Two Gentleman*’s Julia; *Merchant*’s Portia, Nerissa, and Jessica; *As You Like It*’s Rosalind; and *Twelfth Night*’s Viola—gender-play on the Renaissance stage was often a confounding experience for playgoers: “At any given moment, a performance of a disguised heroine-play could have emphasized any one of the three elements in the boy/girl/boy configuration without necessarily obliterating awareness of the other two. Because all existed within the spectators’ consciousness, any one could have been played or merely flashed on the stage at a given moment.”12 Hence, even the most seemingly conventional of Shakespearean marriages (if such a thing exists) was ineluctably queer(ed), as playgoers remained keenly aware of both the mixed-sex marriages pursued in the plays and the man-boy marriages onto which they were superimposed.

The queer relationship between these marriages is what I propose to examine in this essay. In performance, they were both bound up in one another, the dramaturgic marriage enabling the plot-driven one, and distinct, as various metatheatrical gestures revealed, if only momentarily, the gender identities of the players. The queerness here, I would argue, is one of both gender and temporality. The prohibition of women from English troupes meant that boys (and occasionally men, as might have been the case with Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra) played the roles of wives, a theatrical convention that encouraged the dual consciousness Shapiro describes.13 However, it is not as simple as saying a mixed-sex marriage is contingent upon a same-sex marriage. According to Fisher, “masculinity was not only constructed in contrast to femininity, but in contrast to boyhood; as a result, we can say that men and boys were quite literally two distinct genders.”14 Following this analysis, we have at least three genders involved in the staging of marriage. Matters are further complicated by audience perception, which, obviously, is never uniform. The distinction Fisher makes between men and boys is a case in point. As with all intellectual histories, it is hard to ascertain how widely known or accepted a concept was during a given historical period.15 And even if we do assume that all or most playgoers recognized the boy as a distinct gender, his development as both a person and an actor, often signaled by his taking adult male roles in theatrical productions, invited conjecture about his gender identity. To put it another way, if boys often became men, and if play-boys often became adult male actors, then spectators may have pondered an actor’s gender identity, which may have fallen anywhere along the gender continuum. In speaking about a queer Renaissance dramaturgy, then, I am aiming to open up, rather than dismiss or cordon off, possibilities for gender-play in the staging of marriage, and my readings of particular passages are intended to be suggestive rather than prescriptive.

The same is true for my approach to the queer temporality of staged marriages. As we shall see, this temporality is manifest in and by the coexistence and interdependency of dramatized or dramatic (that is, plot-related) and dramaturgic nuptials. While critics have rightly noted the many ways in which Shakespeare’s plays undermine the very spousals they propose—one thinks of Isabella’s silence following the Duke’s proposal in *Measure for Measure* or the deferral of marriage the Queen announces in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*—the multivalent temporality of these plays simultaneously allows and forecloses marital futurity.16 In *The Merchant of Venice,* for example, Bassanio and Portia marry. And yet, while the play may posit a marriage that continues beyond play’s end, this future is always-already forestalled, if only because at some point the production must end. All at once, then, the marriage does and does not have a future. This applies to reproductive futurity as well. In *All’s Well That Ends Well,* Helena may or may not be pregnant, and Bertram may or may not be obliged to marry her, but pregnancy never comes to term, no matter how many times the play (as Shakespeare wrote it) is performed.17 In this sense, Shakespeare’s marriages succumb to a kind of death drive, repeating compulsively while having no future, to borrow Lee Edelman’s by-now familiar phrase.18 This queer temporality is accentuated by dramaturgic marriage, also performed to a predetermined end, also restricted to the “two hours’ traffic of the stage.”19 The actors participating in these marital arrangements re-performed them each time the plays were staged, and the repertory system required actors to wed multiple people in the same theatrical season—even in the same day. What is more, none of these unions were capable of producing children, and so dramaturgic nuptials defied the reproductive futurity alluded to in dramatized marriages. Staging marriage, then, both required and performed a queer temporality, as dramatized unions relied upon, at the same time that they were distinguished from and undermined by, non-procreative unions that had no future.

In examining the precarious relationship between the two kinds of marriage, I want to show not only that the English Renaissance stage queered all marriages—indeed, produced only queer marriages—but also that this deconstructive project exposed all marriages, even those performed offstage, as utterly performative in the Butlerian sense. According to Butler, “The replication of heterosexual constructs in non-heterosexual frames brings into relief the utterly constructed status of the so-called heterosexual original. Thus, gay is to straight *not* as copy is to original, but, rather, as copy is to copy. The parodic repetition of ‘the original,’ … reveals the original to be nothing other than a parody of the *idea* of the natural and the original.”20 Though the period I am interested in perhaps antedates the invention of heterosexuality and the rise to dominance of heteronormativity, Butler’s argument about copies belying the authenticity of the original helps explain at least one of the ways in which dramaturgic marriage demystified the mixed-sex marriages permeating Renaissance drama.21 I would add, however, that in this instance the act of deconstruction was also generative: at the same time that mixed-sex marriage was revealed to be a performance, new marriages, specifically those employed in the deconstructive projects, were put forth as viable marital configurations. In other words, the dramaturgic marriage, which critics often assume was invisible or meaningless, that is, not a marriage *as such,* either because it was a convention common to all troupes or because gay marriage as we understand it today was outside the period’s discourse, was no less (but also no more) a marriage than those it facilitated.

This queer Renaissance dramaturgy is perhaps most obvious in plays that deploy metatheatrical conventions such as plays-within-the-plays and in theatrical polemics that debate the vices and virtues of playing and playgoing. John Rainoldes’s *Th’overthrow of stage-playes* … (1599) and Stephen Gosson’s *Playes confuted in fiue actions* … (1582) are particularly illuminating examples of the latter, as both fulminate about the dangers of staging marriage.22 Rainoldes laments the theater’s instructing boys how to woo men in marriage; Gosson warns about the mimetic power of staged marriage. As for Shakespeare’s contribution to the discourse, one might look at the players in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Hamlet* or the boy brides in *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* but I have chosen to focus primarily on *The Taming of the Shrew,* in part because it represents one of the playwright’s earliest reflections on the staging of queer marriage, but also because it both deliberates and enacts the deconstructive project I have been describing.23 *Shrew* opens with an Induction that explains and then exemplifies queer marriage as a dramaturgic commonplace. As the play’s framing narrative, the Induction casts the action proper as the play-within-the-play: having been tricked into believing not only that he is a lord but also that he is married to a lady, Christopher Sly beckons his wife (a cross-dressed page named Bartholomew) to join him as they watch “a pleasant comedy” (Ind.2.125).24 That comedy, performed by a troupe of men and boys, is the aptly titled *Taming of the Shrew.* Though Sly’s marriage to the boy bride is intended as a practical joke, one orchestrated by a lord hoping to make light of the tinker’s credulity and shore up class distinctions, its planning and execution attune spectators to the queer dramaturgy that enables the supposedly mixed-sex nuptials of Katherine and Petruccio, Bianca and Lucentio, and the widow and Hortensio. This, I believe, is managed in two ways. First, the Sly plot imports into the play’s imagined world the dramaturgic practice of cross-dressing, where it is then used to perform a marriage that is, like all staged marriages, multivalent in its genderplay and temporality. And second, the plot reframes *Shrew* as the play-within-the-play that employs the same practices used to deceive Sly, the ostensible audience of the production. In these ways, the Induction fashions a metatheatrical framework that queers all of the play’s marriages.

I want to argue, moreover, that the play’s Induction raises the stakes by implicating all marriages in its deconstructive program. This is registered in the Induction’s conspicuous setting: scene one takes place in a tavern, scene two in a bedroom. In transforming these spaces into makeshift theaters wherein marital plots are played out—creating, in effect, a theater-within-the-theater—the play collapses distinctions between reality and performance, intimating that even those marriages that happen offstage, in the so-called real world, are performative. That the Induction moves from the tavern to the bedroom is itself notable in that it mirrors anti-theatrical polemicists’ concerns about the mimetic power of theater. The relationship is triangulated: the taverns lubricate audiences, making them susceptible to sinful acts, while the playhouses simulate abominations that are then performed in taverns and bedrooms. In dramatizing this relationship for playgoers, the Induction stages its own effects, folding reality into performance. Thus, at the same time that *Shrew*’s Induction deconstructs its own marriages, it revels in its exposing all marriages as utterly performative. In the process, distinctions between dramatic and dramaturgic marriage become increasingly troubled, and new possibilities for marital performance are put into discourse.

Although the primary focus of this essay is the Induction’s deconstruction of marriage as a union and a cultural institution, I shall turn, finally, to the play-within-the-play’s complicity in this project, evinced through a series of jokes that invoke, to adapt Foucault’s phrase, the anus and its pleasures.25 Abrupt though this might seem, anality in *Shrew* comes to signify the queerness not only of the eroticized bodies of characters and the actors who play them, but also of cultural institutions such as marriage that aim to organize and discipline those bodies. In particular, the jokes I examine conflate the vagina and the anus as undifferentiated sites of pleasure, a conflation that displaces penile-vaginal sex, a potentially procreative kind of sex, as the aim and/or end of courtship and marital consummation. The anus, then, embodies the reconstitution of courtship and marriage through non-procreative forms of intimacy. In exploring anality as simultaneously generative and degenerative, pleasurable and horrific, I am following the germinal work of Jonathan Goldberg, Jeffrey Masten, and Will Stockton, all of whom have shown that in Renaissance discourse, the anus was not, necessarily, a grave.26 On the contrary, as *Shrew* shows, anal eroticism deconstructs marriage, but it also reimagines marital-erotic configurations as potentially sodomitical.27

My approach to *Shrew* is in part a response to a critical tradition that has taken for granted the gender dynamics of marital arrangements and focused instead on the perennial question of whether or not Katherine’s submission to Petruccio is genuine or a ruse.28 This question remains central for readers, audiences, scholars, and directors, but it assumes that the marriages represented in the play conform unequivocally and unproblematically to a husband/wife dichotomy. Interestingly, many of the same critics who identify the Induction as a deconstructive force that destabilizes gender norms and marital roles stop short of suggesting that the gendering and temporality of the institution itself might be under scrutiny. Karen Newman, for instance, has argued that “in the induction … relationships of power and gender, which in Elizabethan treatises, sermons, homilies, and behavioral handbooks were figured as natural and divinely ordained, are subverted by the metatheatrical foregrounding of such roles and relations as socially constructed.”29 This “metatheatrical foregrounding” does no less than “subver[t] the play’s patriarchal master narrative by exposing it as neither natural nor divinely ordained.”30 For Newman, the Induction’s role-play brings to the fore the constructedness of the roles and obligations prescribed to husbands and wives, but it leaves intact the husband/wife dichotomy of marriage. That Sly’s union with a cross-dressed page might also call into question the gendering or temporal scope of marriage is never considered. Similar arguments have been made by Michael Shapiro, who argues that the Induction “underscore[s] the use of male actors in female roles,” which served to delegitimize common stereotypes about women, and Amy L. Smith, who claims that the play’s couching Katherine and Petruccio’s marriage in a play-within-the-play “enacts a series of negotiations for power” that permit us to “read Kate’s agency through her reiteration of the role of wife—a reiteration that stresses her reshaping of Petruccio and their marriage.”31 Like Newman, Shapiro and Smith see Bartholomew and the play’s other female impersonators as undercutting the dominant culture’s belief about what it means to be a wife, but not about what it means to use cross-dressed actors to stage wifehood. In a sense, these critics exercise oscillating thresholds of visibility: when it comes to uncovering gender constructs, the boy actor is visible in tandem with the female character he is playing; when it comes to marriage, the boy actor disappears beneath the drag, and discussions of roles and power differentials between men and women, husbands and wives, can resume.32

Critics may not see queer marriage as a possibility for Renaissance drama, but antitheatrical polemicists of the period were in fact quite distressed by its pervasiveness. In *Th’overthrow of stage-playes* … (1599), John Rainoldes bemoans the deleterious effects simulated vows have had on boy actors: “I haue thought it a thing vnbeseeming a youth of tender years to be inured, and taught, how hee may by amorous speeches, lookes, and gestures, wooe for a husband, or a wife.”33 There are at least two ways to interpret Rainoldes’s concerns. On the one hand, “wooe for a husband, or a wife” could mean “wooe *as* a husband, or a wife,” in which case Rainoldes is inveighing against the dramaturgic practice that teaches boy players how to impersonate women and men in courtship. On the other hand, he could be saying that boys are learning how to procure husbands and wives for themselves. Although Fisher’s analysis of boys as a third gender would suggest that none of these configurations necessarily would have been perceived as same-sex, at least not in the same way that affective bonds between men or between women were, I submit that Rainoldes’s use of the masculine pronoun “hee” to refer to the “youth of tender years” indicates that the polemicist saw in the dramaturgic coupling of men and boys a homoerotic and/or pederastic threat to the conventional mixed-sex gendering of marriage. In other words, for Rainoldes, Renaissance dramaturgy proved unsettling because it taught, and in so doing promoted, the staging of marriages that were *not* between men and women.

Implicit in Rainoldes’s complaints is the belief that staged marriage is a transgressive enterprise that has the power to metamorphose those who participate in it. In his *Playes confuted in fiue actions* … (1582), Stephen Gosson articulates a similar concern for spectators who witness staged marriage, warning them that the mimetic power of Renaissance plays could induce them to commit acts against their will. Retelling the Xenophon story of the play *Bacchus and Ariadne,* Gosson explains that among these acts, it turns out, is marriage:

When *Bacchus* rose vp, tenderly listing *Ariadne* from her seat, no small store of curtesie passing betwene them, the beholders rose vp, euery man stoode on tippe toe, and seemed to houer ouer the praye, when they sware, the company sware, when they departed to bedde; the company presently was set on fire, they that were married posted home to theire wiues; they that were single, vowed very solemly, to be wedded.34

While critics have tended to concentrate on Philip Stubbes’s more salacious claim that “goodly pageants being done, euery mate sorts to his mate, euery one bringes another homeward of their way verye fréendly, and in their secret conclaues (couertly) they play the *Sodomits,* or worse,” Gosson’s anecdote suggests that plays also have the power to compel single people to enter into binding social contracts.35 Thus while sodomy, “that utterly confused category,” remains the privileged trope for signifying a wide range of transgressions, Gosson’s comments demonstrate that beyond provoking playgoers to engage in abhorrent behaviors, the theater can have a longer-term and larger-scale impact on early modern social structures.36 In fact, if one wants to follow Gosson’s logic, the offstage marriage is, to adapt Butler’s term, a “copy” of the onstage marriage. And if this is the case, then what kind of union does the transvestite theater inspire? If observing a man and a cross-dressed boy marry enflames playgoers, then what might this say about the foundation and constitution of the ensuing marriages? In conferring this kind of agency upon dramatic performance, Gosson insinuates, perhaps unwittingly, that staged marriage and so-called real marriage possess the same ontological status. Moreover, staged marriage is, or at least is always threatening to become, the formative marriage. Or to return to the idea of “copies,” real-life marriages are copies of staged marriages, which are in turn copies of earlier performances, which are in turn copies of still earlier performances, and so on. This endless chain shows that marriage is not essentially one thing—or anything, for that matter. Widespread acknowledgment of this is precisely what worried moralizers such as Rainoldes and Gosson.

If antitheatrical treatises of the period betray cultural anxieties about marriage’s performativity, Shakespeare’s *Shrew* plays upon these anxieties, often to comedic effect, in what I have described as a deconstructive project that aims to expose the queerness of all marriages. Though Sly’s marriage to the cross-dressed page Bartholomew does not take place until the second scene of *Shrew*’s Induction, the play’s investment in unveiling and foregrounding the dramaturgic apparatus that makes its queer marriages visible is evident from the outset. The play begins in a tavern, a drunken Sly arguing with the Hostess. Refusing either to pay for damages he has caused or to leave the tavern, Sly says to the Hostess, “I’ll not budge an inch, boy” (Ind.1.10-11). While editors tend to gloss “boy” as “a contemptuous form of address to a servant or inferior” or “a term of abuse applicable to either sex,” these uses were exceedingly rare.37 Hence, Juliet Dusinberre has argued that the term “boy” obscures already tenuous distinctions between characters and actors:

The Hostess must, in Shakespeare’s theatre, have been played by a boy actor. But if Sly addresses her as a boy, then a new dimension is added to the interchange. In his drunkenness he seems momentarily to refuse to enter the play: to be, not a drunken beggar, but a drunken actor, who forgets that his dialogue is with a Hostess, and thinks that the boy actor is getting above himself. In other words, the theatrical illusion seems to be tested before it is even under way.38

From the play’s beginning, then, Sly’s identity is undermined, and playgoers are encouraged to ask, in Dusinberre’s words, “Is Sly a beggar, or is he an actor who must play a beggar?”39 This confusion was likely amplified by the fact that there was an actor named William Sly in Shakespeare’s troupe, and so here, at the start of *Shrew,* the actor and/or character identified as Sly signals, in his refusing to play his part, that he is, in fact, playing a part—or supposed to be anyway.40 The crucial point is that Sly and the Hostess are revealed to be boy actors playing roles: the former, an actor named Sly playing a character named Sly who is an actor refusing to perform the role he has been assigned; the latter, a boy actor playing the Hostess to Sly’s tavern dweller. Shapiro is right, then, to claim that Sly’s term of address for the Hostess “may also, like Cleopatra’s ‘boy my greatness,’ have reminded some if not all spectators what they ‘always knew’—that the female character was in fact played by a boy.”41 What remains unclear, however, is where, exactly, the role-playing ends, if indeed it ever does. As the Induction progresses, one never really knows which gender is being performed or how long the performance will last; differences in gender and temporality, especially as they pertain to the actors and the characters they portray, become increasingly indecipherable.

If we add the Hostess to the list of female roles played by boy actors, we see that there are no female characters in *Shrew,* only, to use Shapiro’s phrase, “female impersonators.”42 In Renaissance productions, this would have been the case both in the play’s imagined world, where Sly’s wife and the Hostess are revealed to be cross-dressed boys and the play proper (also the play-within-the-play) is performed by a troupe that excludes women, and in the extratextual world, where the entire production was staged by Shakespeare’s company of male and boy actors. The play’s insistence upon confounding the worlds, erasing the boundaries between them, is borne out in the Induction’s incorporating different kinds of performances, professional as well as amateur, in spaces that are simultaneously theatrical and non-theatrical: theatrical, in the sense that all scenes, regardless of setting, are performed on the stage; non-theatrical in the sense that scenes one and two of the Induction take place in a tavern and a bedroom, respectively. As a framing narrative, then, the Induction highlights the pervasiveness of female impersonation to deconstruct the very conceptualizations of gender and marital temporality upon which the play’s main plots, not least the shrew-taming plot, hinge.

The remainder of the tavern scene centers on the Lord’s coordinating two kinds of theatrical contrivances: the ploy to have Sly “forget himself” (Ind.1.37) and the play-within-the-play. Both contrivances feature staged marriages, and both use boys to impersonate wives who in effect call into question the naturalization of female brides. As the Lord details his designs, distinctions between role-play and so-called reality begin to break down, and it becomes abundantly clear that marriage is merely another form of dramatic entertainment. In developing this comparison, the Induction demonstrates that spousal roles are themselves performative, bereft of any essential or natural genders or timelines, and a boy is as apt a wife, for however the union might last, as any woman. This perspective on marital performance is advanced as the Induction distinguishes among, at the same time that it renders indistinguishable, at least four concomitant marriages: the dramaturgic marriage between the actors in Shakespeare’s company; the dramaturgic marriages between the actors who inhabit the play-world of the Induction; the dramatic marriages between the characters of Sly’s fantasies; and the dramatic marriages between the characters of Shakespeare’s *Shrew.* While each of these marriages involves different gender dynamics and temporalities that are further vexed by the very different perspectives afforded certain characters over others, not to mention spectators surrounding the stage, the seemingly distinct marital arrangements are mutually dependent.

The setting for Sly’s marriage, which also serves as the impromptu theater for the play-within-the-play, is a richly furnished bedroom, an accommodation that defies the consigning of performance, whether marital or otherwise, to any culturally sanctioned theatrical space. The Lord’s choice is significant: on the one hand, the bed and the room that contains it function as metonyms for marital relations; on the other, their use in the manipulation of Sly undermines the naturalized institution for which they often stand.43 To his fellow huntsmen, the Lord commands, “Take [Sly] up, and manage well the jest. / Carry him gently to my fairest chamber, / And hang it round with all my wanton pictures” (Ind.1.41-43). Unfortunately, the Lord does not specify which kinds of “wanton pictures”—heteroerotic, homoerotic, or pederastic—will be placed around the room, but it is clear that the first step in tricking Sly into believing he is married is to accouter him with finer things. To make sense of these new surroundings to Sly, the Lord needs players:

Persuade him that he hath been a lunatic,

And when he says he is, say that he dreams,

For he is nothing but a mighty lord.

This do, and do it kindly, gentle sirs.

It will be pastime passing excellent,

If it will be husbanded with modesty.

(Ind.1.59-64)

Acting as servants, the huntsmen will convince Sly that what he thought was his reality was merely a dream and what he thinks is a delusion is very real. Not coincidentally, the Lord uses the term “husband” to describe how the staged marriage must be performed. Throughout the Renaissance, this word carried multiple significations, and its use as a verb in this context exploits this polysemy. In one sense, the term referred to methodology, meaning “to manage with thrift and prudence.”44 At the same time, however, the word was used as a verb to mean “to provide or match with a husband” and “to act the part of a husband to; to become the husband of, to marry.”45 Drawing upon these definitions, the Lord declares rather cryptically that a husband shall be provided, and this process of husbanding presupposes role-play: in the latter definition, “to become the husband of” or “to marry” follows “act[ing] the part.” I would suggest, as well, that the ambiguity created by the passive voice—“it will be husbanded”—reinforces the deconstructive project I have been outlining. Although Bartholomew may be playing the role of the wife in the dramatic marriage, it is unclear who plays the husband, that is, the administrator or manager, in the dramaturgic marriage. It could be Bartholomew, the boy bride charged with persuading Sly he is married; it might also be the Lord himself, the man behind the ruse. Either way, the Lord’s diction underscores the multi-facetedness of Sly’s staged marriage: it is both dramatic and dramaturgic, it involves multiple husbands and wives, and these husbands and wives negotiate vastly different settings, temporalities, and audiences that are nonetheless inextricably linked in the staging of marriage.

The entrance of the professional players—in fact the third set of players to take the stage, after Sly and the Hostess and the Lord and his huntsmen—only confuses matters further. Requesting a private production for Sly, the Lord remembers a previous play put on by the troupe:

                         This fellow I remember

Since once he played a farmer’s eldest son.

’Twas where you wooed the gentlewoman so well.

I have forgot your name, but sure that part

Was aptly fitted and naturally performed.

(Ind.1.79-83)

The Lord’s use of the second-person pronoun “you” allows for a slip between character and actor, the kind Rainoldes frets over in *Th’overthrow of stage-plays.* Was it the actor who “wooed the gentlewoman so well,” or the character he was portraying? As for the gentlewoman, the Lord remembers that the “part / Was aptly fitted and naturally performed,” a compliment that attests not only to the boy actor’s proficiency but also to the appropriateness of a boy’s playing a female role. Of course, if the play-boy is equipped to play the “wooed … gentlewoman,” he is also adept at performing the role of the wife.

As it happens, although the marriage of Sly is not a professional theatrical production, and so a play-boy need not be solicited for the part of Sly’s wife, enlisting the help of a woman is never mentioned. Rather, the decision is made, without any deliberation, to dress the Lord’s page in women’s clothes. Beyond providing additional comedic fodder for the Lord and his friends, this choice would have reminded Renaissance audiences that, in accordance with contemporary dramaturgical practices, all the play’s wives were boys in drag. In effect, what begins as a jest at Sly’s expense becomes a running joke throughout *Shrew* and indeed throughout Renaissance drama. Hence, Renaissance spectators who were duped into believing Katherine and Bianca are female brides were not less gullible than the eminently gullible Sly.

The comparison is not subtle, as the Lord takes the time to explain how Sly’s wife, and hence all the play’s wives, should play the role so as to be convincing. This includes “dress[ing] in all suits like a lady”; “bear[ing] himself with honourable action / Such as he hath observed in noble ladies / Unto their lords by them accomplishèd”; speaking with “soft low tongue and lowly courtesy”; giving Sly “kind embracements, tempting kisses”; and “rain[ing] a shower of commanded tears” at his lord’s recovery (Ind.1.101-125). As feminist critics have rightly noted, the scripting of Sly’s wife belies the fixity of gender roles, “teach[ing] that there is no such thing as a discrete sexed or classed identity.”46 But this performative-deconstructive act works at least in part because the boy beneath the women’s clothes remains visible to spectators. For the Lord, the interplay between dramaturgic queerness and dramatic heteroeroticism is the pièce de résistance of the play in which Sly unknowingly participates:

I know the boy will well usurp the grace,

Voice, gait, and action of a gentlewoman.

I long to hear him call the drunkard husband,

And how my men will stay themselves from laughter

When they do homage to this simple peasant.

(Ind.1.127-31)

This passage clarifies what excites the Lord about the performance that will both conclude the Induction and introduce the action proper. While the Lord looks forward to seeing “the boy … usurp the grace, / Voice, gait, and action of a gentlewoman,” he also “long[s] to hear *him*”—that is, the boy *as a boy*—“call the drunkard husband.” For the Lord, the humor arises from Bartholomew’s precarious status as Sly’s boy bride, a role, the Lord has already told us, that can be “aptly fitted and naturally performed” by a competent play-boy. In this instance, then, the hilarity, and also the titillation, derives from the idea that Sly’s wife and the Lord’s page are simultaneously discrete and indistinguishable persons. Apparently, play-boys made good wives—perhaps even better wives than women—but to forget or not know that one had married a play-boy was risible.

The coexistence of the boy and the bride in the Induction and throughout the play challenges the stability of gender identity, as various scholars have argued, but it also disrupts the typical gendering of social structures such as marriage that organize and normalize mixed-sex relationships. I largely concur, therefore, with Smith’s assessment of *Shrew*’s parading its performativity:

Indeed the lord’s trick in the Induction is not simply about the ability of characters to switch gendered or classed identities but rather about their ability to create those identities *through performance.* Thinking of the Induction as an opportunity to watch the creation of new gendered and classed identities emphasizes the instability of those identities—identities dependent upon performance.47

In *Shrew,* the radical potential of performance extends beyond individual gendered and classed identities to include the larger structuring principles that govern them. As Smith points out, Petruccio and Katherine’s courtship does not conform to the patriarchal configuration often imputed to it, and “it is better seen as part of a series of more fluid negotiations of power.”48 I shall return to this negotiation as it transpires within a metadramatic production preoccupied with marital performance. For now, I want to say that at the same time that Petruccio and Katherine’s courtship and marriage undermines patriarchal mixed-sex marriage, the synchronous unions of two sets of players—those of the troupe hired by the Lord and those of Shakespeare’s company—erode the very definition of marriage as between one man and one woman. This cultural work begins in the tavern, with the plotting of Sly’s marriage, and continues in the bedroom, when the union is performed.

Before following Sly and everyone else in the bedroom decorated with “wanton pictures,” however, I want to address the aptness of the location, especially as it pertains to the play’s originary milieu. Shakespeare’s choice in bifurcating the Induction, dividing it into a tavern scene, where the scheming happens, and the bedroom scene, where the action is, mirrors the concerns of Renaissance anti-theatrical polemicists. Though the anecdotes differ, the causal link forged among the three spaces is consistent across the anti-theatrical oeuvre: participating in and/or witnessing nefarious deeds, particularly when alcohol is involved, leads one to engage in those same deeds in more private spaces. Routinely grouped together because of their Dionysian etiology and their location mostly in the Liberties just outside London, the playhouses and taverns are complicit in promoting pagan activities.49 In his germinal study of anti-theatrical prejudice, Jonas Barish notes that correlating drinking and playing, both signal activities of the “cult of Dionysus,” was “one of the most persistent charges against the stage.”50 According to Gosson, “Playes were consecrated vnto *Bacchus* for the first finding out of wine,” which makes players “daunsing Chaplines of *Bacchus.*”51 In his *Refutation for the Apology of actors* … (1615), John Greene describes plays as the “fruits of vintage and drunkennesse, consisting of sundry impieties, comprehending euill and damnable things, wherein is taught how in our liues and manners wee may follow all kind of vice with Art.”52 Though Prynne pinpoints the theater as the evil that leads to other vices, a triangulated relationship among drinking, playing, and fornicating is obvious enough:

In the Play-houses at London, it is the fashion of Youthes to goe first into the Yard, and to carry their eye thorow every Gallery, then like unto Ravens, where they spy the Carrion thither they fly, and presse as neere to the fairest as they can. In stead of Pome-granats they give them Pippins, they dally with their Garments to passe the time, they minister talke upon all occasions, & either bring them home to their houses on small acquaintance, or slip into Tavernes when the Playes are done.53

Prynne’s word choice—“slip[ping]”; “spy[ing]”; “dally[ing]”—bespeaks an easy transition from public to private, from one depraved act to another. For anti-theatrical polemicists, the theaters and the taverns were both the causes and the effects of social disorder and moral decay.

As the closing of the theaters in the 1640s demonstrates, policing public places where drinking and playing happened was not an insurmountable task. Surveilling what people do in private is much more difficult, and the inability ever to know for sure perpetuates tantalizing fantasies that percolate anti-theatrical works. Stubbes’s claim about the “secret conclaues [where] (couertly) they [spectators] play the *Sodomits,* or worse,” is reiterated by Prynne in *Histriomastix,* with some pertinent amplification:

M. *Stubs,* his *Anatomy of Abuses p.* 105. … affirmes, *that Players and Play-haunters in their secret conclaves play the Sodomites*: together with *some moderne examples of such, who have beene desperately enamored with Players Boyes thus clad in womans apparell, so farre as to sollicite them by words, by Letters, even actually to abuse them.* All which give dolefull testimony to this experimental reason, which should make this very putting on of womans apparell on Boyes, to act a Play, for ever execrable to all chast Christian hearts.54

For Prynne, as for Stubbes, the danger inheres in mimetic art, which prompts its viewers to reenact what they have seen. “The growth of desire through the experience of theatre,” writes Stephen Orgel, “is a sinister progression: the play excites the spectator, and sends him home to ‘perform’ himself; the result is sexual abandon with one’s wife, or more often with any available woman (all women at the playhouse being considered available), worst of all, the spectator begins by lusting after a female character, but ends by having sex with the ‘man’ she really is.”55 Orgel’s point about the allure of what Prynne calls “Boyes thus clad in womans apparel” captures the anxieties surrounding the transvestite stage. In addition to being monstrosities that contradict deuteronomic code and sumptuary laws that prohibit cross-dressing, boy brides and female pages enticed if not compelled Renaissance playgoers to commit similar acts in private.56

Thus, when *Shrew*’s Induction moves from the tavern to the bedroom, the play, much to the dismay of the theater’s most vociferous critics, stages its own effects. Audiences watch as Sly follows what Stubbes and his ilk identify as the trajectory of the typical spectator, travelling from the tavern, where he passes out from excessive drinking, to the bedroom, where he dallies with his boy bride. Both locations, of course, are theatrical performances situated on the stage, and so in the space of the Induction Sly manages to visit all three sites typically singled out for censure in anti-theatrical treatises. This might be Shakespeare’s way of burlesquing anti-theatrical hysteria, but in the course of mocking and/or celebrating the theater’s purported mimetic power, the Induction draws a series of rather unmistakable parallels between theatrical performance and lived experience, closing the culturally constructed gap that separates them.

Whereas the tavern scene sets up the deconstructive project, the bedroom enacts the breaking point where theatricality and reality are folded into one another, realizing all social arrangements, regardless of occasion, as performative. When Sly awakens from his drunken stupor, he finds himself in an unfamiliar room, attended upon by men he has never met. Unbeknownst to the tinker, the bedroom is a mise-en-scène, and he, like everyone around him, is both an actor and a spectator of the drama. Having offered Sly expensive wine, candied fruits, and a diverse wardrobe and art collection to choose from, the servingmen succeed, finally, in convincing him that he is a lord married to a stunning lady:

Am I a lord, and have I 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.

Upon my life, I am a lord indeed,

And not a tinker, nor Christopher Sly.

Well, bring our lady hither to our sight,

And once again a pot o’th’ smallest ale.

(Ind.2.66-73)

This passage, Sly’s first in verse, marks a metamorphosis—one, however, contingent upon the duration of the Lord’s performance. Its success, Newman has stated, relies chiefly on Sly’s believing he is married: “Significantly, Sly is only convinced of his lordly identity when he is told of his ‘wife.’”57 In setting off “wife” with quotation marks, Newman means to stress its artificiality: not only is Sly’s wife not really his wife, she is also not really a woman. But who or what she “really is” is a matter of perspective. In the 1594 Quarto adjudged to be an imitation or reconstruction of Shakespeare’s play, the stage directions refer to Sly’s wife as a boy when she enters: “Enter the boy in Womans attire.” Both times the boy appears—first dressed as a page, then as Sly’s wife—the prefix “boy” is attached to his speeches.58 In the 1623 Folio, the cue for her entrance reads, “Enter the Lady with Attendants,” and the prefix for all her lines is “Lady” or the abbreviated “La.”59 Though pulled from different versions, the latter usually presumed more authoritative than the former, both sets of stage directions and prefixes are equally true, as they offer different, but not mutually exclusive, perspectives on the same event. According to Jones and Stallybrass, in the Folio’s version “we are … presented with a wild oscillation between contradictory positions: the plot of the Induction demands that we remain aware of Bartholomew *as* Bartholomew, while the language of the text simply cuts Bartholomew, replacing him with “‘lady.’”60 It bears remembering, however, that early modern spectators would not have had access to the playtext—not unless they had purchased a copy of the 1623 Folio, long after the play’s first performance. But even if they had seen it on the page, the “wild oscillation” Jones and Stallybrass describe has more to do with the complex arrangement of performances and perspectives than with the text’s “simply cut[ting]” anyone. Indeed, playgoers might find themselves laughing at Sly’s perceiving his wife to be a lady, but precisely the same joke is being played with the play-within-the-play that tells the stories of Katherine, Bianca, and the Widow. In the same way that Sly is duped, playgoers who find *Shrew* compelling, even after they have been made privy to the Lord’s machinations, are deceived by exactly the same marital performance.

Sly’s interactions with his wife just before the start of *Shrew* rehearse precisely the kind of queer marriages that will be replayed in the action proper. In particular, Sly’s staged marriage foregrounds the multivalency and performativity of the gender dynamics and temporalities that will structure the play’s various dramaturgic and dramatic marital arrangements. The performance of these arrangements, in turn, exposes all marriages as fundamentally queer, as fundamentally performative. This is evident from the moment Bartholomew, now a boy bride, greets his/her husband:

Bartholomew

How fares my noble lord?

Sly

Marry, I fare well,

For here is cheer enough. Where is my wife?

Bartholomew

Here, noble lord. What is thy will with her?

Sly

Are you my wife, and will not call me husband?

My men should call me lord. I am your goodman.

Bartholomew

My husband and my lord, my lord and husband;

I am your wife in all obedience.

Sly

I know it well.

(Ind.2.98-104)

The gendering of this marriage is confounded in the Lady/Bartholomew’s leading question: “What is thy will with her?” Is the Lady asking this to be coy, or is Bartholomew asking it to mock Sly’s gullibility? Surely it is both. As for the Lord, he gets his wish and more in Bartholomew’s chiastic reply to Sly’s request to call him husband: “My husband and my lord, my lord and husband.” The homoerotics of this exchange are hard to miss, Sly implying he already “know[s] … well” his wife’s “obedience,” even though this is hardly the case. However, the queering of time during this exchange is not Sly’s invention; rather, it is a form of interpellation managed by the servingman who apprises Sly that he has “these fifteen years … been in a dream” (Ind.2.74). When Sly repeats this to his wife just a few lines later (Ind.2.104-5), the implication is that his marriage is at least as old. The very passage of time, then, is itself a performance. Nevertheless, it does not take long for Sly to command his wife to join him in bed:

Bartholomew

Ay, and the time seems thirty unto me,

Being all this time abandoned from your bed.

Sly

’Tis much. Servants, leave me and her alone.

[*Exeunt* Lord *and attendants*]

Madam, undress you and come now to bed.

(Ind.2.110-13)

Though the Lady/Bartholomew is able finally to dissuade Sly from (re)consummating their vows right away, the erotically charged exchange gestures toward the possibility of intimacy onstage. Shapiro argues this may have been averted because of cultural anxieties regarding the staging of intimacy: “In Shakespeare’s day, the enactment of some sexual intimacy in the world of the play and the possibility of still more to come may have raised some mild anxieties about the prospect of homoerotic contact between two male characters and two male actors. If so, then the audience was probably relieved when the page extricated himself from the problem.”61 And yet, while Sly’s wife prevents any private/public displays of affection from happening, the play-within-the-play, employing the same dramaturgical practices used to trick the tinker-turned-noble, is not so modest. A close call, in other words, merely prepares audiences to see Katherine and Petruccio’s courtship, especially their kisses in Act 5, as perhaps fulfilling the Induction’s deflected queer erotics.62

Productions of *Shrew* have handled this fulfillment in two ways: in keeping the Induction onstage for the play’s duration, and in doubling the parts. Because the latter tends to preclude the former, companies often choose one or the other, but in many present-day productions, as in Shakespeare’s playtext, Sly and his wife remain onstage for the entire play. According to the stage directions in the 1623 Folio, the married couple is “aloft” for all of 1.1. In fact, they interrupt the play at the end of the first scene when Sly begins to nod off (1.1.242-46). Although these are the last lines Sly and his wife speak in the Folio, the playtext indicates they do not exit at the end of 1.1; rather, “they sit and mark” (1.1.247). In the 1594 Quarto, characters from the Induction not only interject throughout the play but also return at its end to comment on the action proper, which Sly describes as “the best dreame / That euer [he] had in [his] life.”63 More importantly, Sly informs spectators he plans to apply what he has learned from the dream in his handling of his own wife: “Ile to my / Wife presently and tame her too / And if she anger me.”64 The couple have no more lines after 1.1 in the 1623 Folio, but nothing in the playtext suggests they exit after this dialogue. Further, the absence of the framing narrative at play’s end leaves open the possibility that Sly’s marriage outlasts those depicted in the play-within-the-play, if only by a few moments. In more modern productions, companies often use a conflated text, taking the concluding framing narrative from the Quarto and adding it to the Florio. This trend suggests that for many directors and dramaturgs, the ending of the Quarto makes explicit what the Folio implies.65 This presence of the Induction serves to queer the genders and temporalities of all the play’s marriages. It also makes distinguishing among the different marital performances all but impossible. Sly’s marriage, for instance, is at once mix-sexed, pederastic, and homoerotic, and it occupies diverse spaces and times. At the same time that *Shrew*’s ending annihilates the dramaturgic marriage between actors that has never had any future, the dramaturgic marriage between the tinker and the page, which is simultaneously a marriage between a noble and his bride, persist in their own fictive times and spaces and in the cultural imaginary that persists, though only to be obliterated in each production, through performance and, yes, literary and performance criticism.

Unsurprisingly, the most common form of doubling is that of Sly/Petruccio and Sly’s wife/Katherine. While this convention may in some respects normalize what in Renaissance productions was a more complex layering of genders and temporalities, as the actor who plays Sly’s wife and Katherine is typically neither a play-boy nor a Lord’s page but rather a female actor playing the Hostess, the frequency with which Sly and Sly’s wife take up the roles of Petruccio and Katherine speaks to the play’s insistence upon parading its marital performativity. Anticipating Sly’s comments in the concluding framing narrative of the 1594 Quarto, these productions often literalize the play-within-a-play as the tinker’s dream. Writing about a 1988 production of *Shrew* in Stratford, Ontario, Elizabeth Shafer recounts of the Sly plot:

Richard Monette [the director] had a Sly who was young, good-looking, and out on the town. Sly was so drunk he couldn’t light a cigarette on his own, and his dream began as he collapsed, mouthing some lines from the Induction, without any prompting from a Lord or travelling players. Colm Feore as Sly became Petruchio, while Goldie Semple, the Hostess, became Katharina; at the end, an outbreak of romantic waltzing and music on the crowded stage covered Feore’s quick change back to Sly, still unsteady with drink, speechless, dazed, confused and suddenly revealed as the crowd parted.66

This particular production dispensed with Sly’s queer marriage, but it retained the metadramatic frame and incorporated doubling so as to couch the play’s marital performances as the stuff of fantasy. As in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream,* however, the dream motif is not so easily dismissed as a containment mechanism.67 Rather, it has become yet another way in which directors have reimagined the queer work the play performs. In a 1995 Royal Shakespeare Company production, for example, Sly’s awakening from the dream-within-the-play was both literal and symbolic, as the tinker began to realize how poorly he had been treating Mrs. Sly.68 Hence, as in productions that deploy a full framing narrative, seeming differences in gender dynamics, spatiality, and temporality are erected only to be traversed, confounded, and ultimately collapsed.

In myriad ways, therefore, the Induction works to make itself omnipresent in *Shrew,* but the play-within-the-play is at least complicit, if not fully engaged, in this deconstructive program. In the play’s first few scenes (one of which Sly will interrupt), in conversations that recall the “husbanding” of Sly’s marriage, various characters obsess over the prospect of procuring husbands and wives. Upon his arrival in Padua, Petruccio explains to Hortensio, “I have thrust myself into this maze, / Happily to wive and thrive as best I may” (1.2.52-53). A few lines later, Petruccio reiterates his plan “to wive it wealthily in Padua” (1.2.72). On its face, Petruccio’s turn of phrase looks back—or askance, if Sly and his wife are still on stage—to the Lord’s scheme, establishing a parallel between them. But it also points to the interdependence of dramatic and dramaturgic husbanding and wiving. In a sense, Petruccio’s success depends upon the Lord’s, as the play-within-the-play continues only if Sly, the onstage audience, remains convinced that he is watching a play with his wife. Both marriages involve characters being husbanded and wived, and both the wives are, even in the play’s imagined realm, cross-dressed boy players. It is ironic, but also to the point, that what Sly knows about *Shrew*’s marriages is precisely what he does not know about his own marriage: he recognizes the play-within-the-play’s unions as performances while remaining totally oblivious to his own marriage’s performativity.

The play also flaunts its marital queerness through a series of bawdy jokes that invoke the anus and its manifold pleasures. In addition to troubling perceived corporeal differences between characters and the actors who play them, the anal erotics articulated through *Shrew*’s bawdy jokes queers conjugal sexuality, associating it with, and reconstituting it through, non-procreative sex acts. Anality, then, pertains not just to eroticized bodies but to the cultural imperatives and social structures that mediate those bodies. In 1.1, for instance, Hortensio and Gremio discuss the need for Katherine to be wed:

Hortensio

[W]e may yet again have access to our fair mistress and be happy rivals in Bianca’s love, to labor and effect one thing specially.

Gremio

What’s that, I pray?

Hortensio

Marry, sir, to get a husband for her sister.

Gremio

A husband? A devil.

Hortensio

I say a husband.

Gremio

I say a devil. Think’st thou, Hortensio, though her father be very rich, any man is so very a fool to be married to hell?

(1.1.114-23)

The critical tendency has been to see “hell” as referring to female genitalia, as it does, supposedly, in Shakespeare’s Sonnet 144, where the speaker “guess[es] one angel in another’s hell” (ln. 12).69 And yet, while the misogynistic slur may point to Katherine’s vagina as the source and sign of her “forwardness,” her dual identity as a boy player begs the question of where one might find “hell” on *his* body.70 One possibility that the play entertains is the anus. Of course, anuses are not endemic to boys, and so here, in the invective against Katherine, the anality of “hell” accommodates the eroticized bodies of both the female character and the boy actors impersonating her. As Stockton writes, this anality “conflates and confuses the anus and the vagina, female and male bodies, and threatens sexual difference.” It also “queer[s] opposite-sex relations predicated on genital and orificial clarity, thereby exacerbating a crisis in contemporary understandings of heterosexuality that were not yet formed in the early modern period.”71 “To be married to hell,” then, bespeaks an anal eroticism that contributes to, at the same time that it is symptomatic of, the marital queerness *Shrew* is staging, a queerness that is not unique to *Shrew,* but rather common to all marriages.

Petruccio and Katherine are no less aware of the anal erotics that percolate their courtship and eventual marriage. During their very first interaction, they trade a series of barbs that slip between penile-vaginal and penile-anal erotics. The stichomythic banter, which culminates in Katherine striking Petruccio, begins with Katherine’s proclaiming Petruccio’s indecisiveness:

Katherine

I knew you at the first

You were a movable.

Petruccio

Why, what’s a movable?

Katherine

A joint-stool.

Petruccio

Thou has hit it. Come, sit on me.

Katherine

Asses are made to bear, and so are you.

Petruccio

Women are made to bear, and so are you.

Katherine

No such jade as you, if me you mean.

Petruccio

Alas, good Kate, I will not burden thee,

For knowing thee to be but young and light.

Katherine

Too light for such a swain as you to catch,

And yet as heavy as my weight should be.

(2.1.194-203)

Editors often gloss Petruccio’s assertion that “women are made to bear” as referring to penile-vaginal intercourse and the capacity for reproduction typically associated with it.72 However, this is not the only way in which Petruccio might “burden” Katherine sexually, and the exact position and genital configuration he has in mind when he commands her to sit on him is open to interpretation—or preference. For the actors playing Petruccio and Katherine, as for the actors playing those actors, anal sex, not vaginal sex, is the more obvious form of intimacy. More to the point, while the acts themselves are functionally, logistically different, and while the cultural significances of these acts differ considerably, the positioning, at least in this instance, is identical. Petruccio’s command thus lays bare a propinquity of orifices and acts that undercuts the primacy of procreative sex. The anality of the scene becomes explicit as Katherine declares her “waspish[ness]”:

Katherine

If I be waspish, best beware my sting.

Petruccio

My remedy is then to pluck it out.

Katherine

Ay, if the fool could find it where it lies.

Petruccio

Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting?

In his tail.

Katherine

In his tongue.

Petruccio

Whose tongue?

Katherine

Yours, if you talk of tales, and so farewell.

Petruccio

What, with my tongue in your tail? Nay, come again,

Good Kate, I am a gentleman.

Katherine

That I’ll try.

(*Strikes him*)

(2.1.208-16)

When Petruccio imagines sticking his “tongue in [Katherine’s] tail,” which “tail” is it? As Gordon Williams points out, “tail” could refer to male as well as female genitalia.73 According to Williams, in this instance “tongue in [the] tail” means cunnilingus, but, following Eric Partridge’s more capacious exposition of the term in question, I would argue that anilingus is just as likely the referent.74 For one thing, at the risk of stating the obvious, both acts involve tongues in tails, depending on how one perceives the bottom or back of the body. It is notable, too, that Petruccio genders male Katherine’s hypothetical wasp, making anilingus—and also, it turns out, fellatio—a more plausible signification: “Who knows not where a wasp does wear *his* sting? / In *his* tail.” In this construction, the wasp’s sting is constituted both phallically (in the stinger) and anally (“*in* the tail”). The point here is not that Petruccio’s bawdy pun refers to one act or another, but rather that the spectrum of acts is available to all characters and players—and hence to all betrothed and married couples—across the dramatic and dramaturgic configurations *Shrew* parades.

This playfulness characterizes Bianca’s courtships as well, even if the character who hopes to seduce her through what we might call assplay winds up with someone else. When Baptista learns that the recently wed Katherine and Petruccio have left in the middle of the nuptial festivities, he recommends that Lucentio and Bianca take their “places at the table” (3.3.119?). In yet another gesture toward the Lord’s machinations, Tranio responds, “Shall sweet Bianca practice how to bride it?” (3.3.122). Here again, the diction points to a multiplicity of performances, as Bianca and Lucentio’s marriage is “bride[d]” at least twice each time *Shrew* is staged, and each staging requires boy players and female characters to learn the bride’s part. “To bride it” obtains on multiple levels. Also like Petruccio and Katherine, Bianca and one of her suitors participate in dialogue that uses anal erotics to queer the process of courtship. In order to gain access to Bianca, Hortensio assumes the identity of a music tutor named Litio. On more than one occasion, Litio uses lewd language to explain his lessons. About Katherine’s progress, he says,

I did but tell her she mistook her frets,

And bowed her hand to teach her fingering,

When, with a most impatient devilish spirit,

‘Frets, call you these?’ quoth she, ‘I’ll fume with them.’

(2.1.147-50)

As one might expect, the lesson did not end well, Katherine smashing the lute on her tutor’s head, but Litio insists on his trying his hand at teaching Bianca, the woman, after all, he is trying to woo:

Madam, before you touch the instrument,

To learn the order of my fingering,

I must begin with rudiments of art,

To teach you gamut in a briefer sort,

More pleasant, pithy, and effectual

Than hath been taught by any of my trade.

(3.1.62-67)

This not-so-subtle attempt at seduction employs music lessons as a euphemism for sexual stimulation.75 Much like Katherine’s tail, however, the site of pleasure here is ambiguous at best. Litio does not specify whether the lute is his or Bianca’s, and presumably this affects the kind of “fingering” being taught. Critics tend to view stringed instruments as early modern slang for female genitalia, but as I have been arguing, the play resists this kind of rigid distinction among bodies and pleasures. In fact, the interplay between the dramatic and the dramaturgic privileges what Bianca and boy actors have in common—anality—rather than conventional understandings of the euphemism. And even if one insists that the lute must mean the vagina, Litio takes as his students characters who are also cross-dressed actors in the troupe solicited by the Lord, and so tutorials on how to pleasure oneself, whether vaginally or anally, betray the anatomical difference the bawdy language would have been meant to conceal. Still another possibility is that Litio wants to train Baptista’s children how to finger *his* instrument (which one, he does not say), in a lesson that would have resonated in more personal ways for play-boys growing up in the theatrical world.

In the banquet scene—the play-within-the-play’s last scene—spectators are confronted not just with queer marriage but with queer domesticity, a domesticity that marks the play’s return to its dramatic and dramaturgic beginning. As in the Induction, where Bartholomew is solicited to play the bride and Sly (unwittingly) is compelled to play the husband, spousality in the banquet scene is performed through and against the queer Renaissance dramaturgy I have been examining. In part, this is registered through the play’s destabilizing anal erotics, which does not abate after the couples are wed. When Katherine and the Widow commence their battle of wits, Petruccio and Hortensio offer the following remarks:

Petruccio

To her, Kate!

Hortensio

To her, widow!

Petruccio

A hundred marks my Kate does put her down.

Hortensio

That’s my office.

(5.2.34-37)

Interpreting “put her down” to mean “have sex with,” Hortensio acknowledges the possibility of sex between women, which is also, in keeping with the play’s dramaturgy, sex between the Lord’s, not to mention Shakespeare’s, play-boys. And when Hortensio claims “that’s [his] office,” he juxtaposes two non-procreative kinds of sex with mixed-sex relations that are, in the context of dramaturgy, also pederastic relations between adult male and boy actor. Like Sly and his wife’s erotic banter, this exchange reveals a marital conjugality that is inescapably queer. As it happens, precisely this kind of sexuality is anticipated in Bartholomew and Sly’s puns on “stand” in the Induction:

Bartholomew

[Y]our physicians have expressly charged,

In peril to incur your former malady,

That I should yet absent me from your bed.

I hope this reason stands for my excuse.

Sly

Ay, it stands so that I may hardly tarry along.

(Ind 2.117-21)

As Smith notes, Sly may think he has come up with a clever pun when in fact his boy bride has already delivered it to an audience her/his husband has no idea exists.76 In light of this performance, the bawdy puns traded at the banquet merely continue what might be best understood as the irreducible performative anality of staged marriage.

A similar moment occurs when the couples bandy about reproductive metaphors. The troping of “conceive” begins seemingly innocently enough, with a request for a clarification:

Widow

He that is giddy thinks the world turns round.

Petruccio

Roundly replied.

Katherine

Mistress, how mean you that?

Widow

Thus I conceive by him.

Petruccio

Conceives by me! How likes Hortensio that?

Hortensio

My widow says thus she conceives her tale.

(5.2.20-25)

In the same way that Hortensio imagines Kate “putt[ing] down” the Widow, Petruccio posits the Widow’s engaging in reproductive acts with someone who is not her husband. In the fictive realm of the play-within-the-play, the Widow’s extramarital affair with Petruccio may be mixed-sex and potentially procreative, but it is also, in the world of the Lord and his players, homoerotic and/or pederastic, an encounter between a man and a boy. In performance, then, the reproductive body is also a sodomitical body, one that is able to “conceive” (or generate) a “tale” (or tail). Perhaps inevitably so, the Widow’s capacity for conception and parturition is limited to the excess of her/his queer desires.

And then, of course, there is Katherine’s concluding speech, which Shakespeare scholars have pored over for centuries. While this speech continues to engender lively debate about wifely obedience and subjection, it also confuses spousal bodies. Correlating outer and inner, Katherine states,

I am ashamed that women are so simple

To offer war where they should kneel for peace,

Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway

When they are bound to serve, love, and obey.

Why are our bodies soft, and weak, and smooth,

Unapt to toil and trouble in the world,

But that our soft conditions and our hearts

Should well agree with our external parts?

(5.2.165-72)

Enjoining everyone in the theater to gaze upon her body, Katherine offers an ambiguous self-examination that confuses her “external parts” and the “soft condition” it signifies with that of the boy actor portraying her. Indeed, “soft[ness],” “weak[ness],” and “smooth[ness]” pertain as much to Bartholomew as they do to Katherine, and here, at play’s end, at exactly the moment the former shrew is supposedly lecturing her fellow wives, spectators are looking not at a reformed woman but rather a “master-mistress” not unlike the beloved of Shakespeare’s Sonnet 20.

The banquet scene, moreover, is the place where the play’s dramatized marriages meet their temporal limits, as the marital futurity imagined for Katherine and Petruccio, Bianca and Lucentio, and the Widow and Hortensio is demolished by Renaissance dramaturgy. In many productions, this return is signaled by the play’s ending not with the banquet, which, according to Sly, was merely a dream, but with Sly and his wife. But a full framework is not essential, since Hortensio’s and Lucentio’s final lines, forming a heroic couplet, mark the end of the action proper (5.2.192-93). At this point, the dramatic and dramaturgic marriages are obliterated, only to be reconstituted in different productions back at the play’s beginning. This is not to say that the marriages only signify teleologically, as comedic endpoints toward which the plot moves unswervingly. Rather, it is to acknowledge that the dramatic marriages exist only in the present and only to the extent that they are performed. Like dramaturgic marriage, then, the unions of Katherine and Petruccio, Bianca and Lucentio, the Widow and Hortensio, and even Bartholomew and Sly have no existence apart from or beyond their performative enactment.

The implications for the marriages I have been interrogating extend well beyond the bounds of the stage, as Renaissance dramatists, polemicists, and audiences certainly knew. In exposing all marriages as performances, *Shrew,* like all Renaissance plays, points up the insistence on, as well as the futility of, continually performing marriage and spousality, which exist only to the extent that they are performed. Following Butler, one could say that Renaissance drama problematized relations between “copies,” laying open the possibility that offstage marriages might be parodies of onstage marriages, but one might also think of dramaturgic and dramatic marital arrangements as what Jean Baudrillard has called “simulacra”—more specifically, “simulations of the third order” where representation has replaced any semblance of the original.77 Though Baudrillard associates these simulacra with “postmodernity,” this essay has argued that queer Renaissance dramaturgy and the deconstructive project it engendered and sustained punctured the fantasy of reality that both structured and was structured by social arrangements such as marriage. As simulacra, staged marriage served a strikingly postmodern function, annihilating fantasies of the real that govern the lives of spectators who tried so desperately not to acknowledge that the marital performances they observed in the theaters were in fact the queer grounds for their own Renaissance productions. Or to riff on a well-known Shakespeare passage, all the world’s marriages are stages, and all the husbands and wives merely players.78

**Notes**

1. Throughout this essay I use a cluster of terms to describe actors who cross-dressed on the Renaissance stage and characters who cross-dress in their respective plays. Like Jennifer Drouin, I use cross-dressing to refer to “the practice of employing boy actors to play the woman’s part.” Jennifer Drouin, “Cross-Dressing, Drag, and Passing: Slippages in Shakespearean Comedy,” in *Shakespeare Re-Dressed: Cross-Gender Casting in Contemporary Performance,* ed. James C. Bulman (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 2008), 23. Drouin further distinguishes cross-dressing from drag and passing. Drag, which Drouin suggests slips between parodic and nonparodic, signifies a self-referential performance that exposes the constructedness of gender; passing is distinctive in its trying to conceal performance, a subversive act that has potentially deadly consequences. While I find these distinctions useful if we follow Drouin in “focusing on the fictional world of the play and setting aside temporarily the question of the audience’s reception of the early modern boy actor” (39), part of my argument in this essay is that Shakespeare’s plays refuse this kind of bifurcation. Thus, I use cross-dressing and drag interchangeably, not to dismiss Drouin’s analysis, but to insist that the instances of cross-dressing I examine are always also forms of drag.

2. On the popularity and diversity of disguise plots in early modern drama, see Victor Oscar Freeburg, *Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama: A Study in Stage Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1915, repr. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965).

3. Phyllis Rackin, “Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage,” PMLA 102, no. 1 (1987): 29.

4. Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 207.

5. Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31.

6. Laura Levine, *Men in Women’s Clothing: Antitheatricality and Effeminization 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 7. See also Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Breitenberg’s argument is that “masculine anxiety is a necessary and inevitable condition that operates on at least two levels: it reveals the fissures and contradictions of patriarchal systems and, at the same time, it paradoxically enables and drives patriarchy’s reproduction and continuation of itself” (2).

7. Catherine Belsey, “Disrupting Sexual Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies,” in *Alternative Shakespeares,* ed. John Drakakis, 2nd ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 184.

8. Studies of cross-dressing on the early modern stage are numerous and wide-ranging. Those that pertain most immediately to my argument in this essay are quoted and discussed in text or cited in notes, but there are many others that have shaped my thinking. See, for example, the following: Dympna Callaghan, *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000); Marjorie B. Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992); Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Jean Howard, “Power and Eros: Crossdressing in Dramatic Representation and Theatrical Performance,” in *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 93-128; Laurence Senelick, *The Changing Room: Sex, Drag and Theatre* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), esp. 127-56; Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare’s England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991); and Susan Zimmerman, ed., “Disruptive Desire: Artifice and Indeterminacy in Jacobean Comedy,” in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 39-61.

9. For a few Shakespearean examples, see Loreen L. Giese, *Courtships, Marriage Customs, and Shakespeare’s Comedies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Lisa Hopkins, *The Shakespearean Marriage: Merry Wives and Heavy Husbands* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998); and B. J. Sokol and Mary Sokol, *Shakespeare, Law, and Marriage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

10. On the appearance of foreign actresses on the English stage, see Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare’s England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5-8, as well as essays in Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin, eds., *Women Players in England, 1500-1660: Beyond the All-Male Stage* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), and Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson, eds., *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theater* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008). On the inclusion of women in English Renaissance masques, see Suzanne Gossett, “‘Man-Maid, Begone!’: Women in Masques,” ELR 18, no. 1 (1988): 96-113; and Clare McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage: Anne of Denmark and Female Masquing in the Stuart Court 1590-1619* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002; and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

11. Lady Mary Wroth, *The Countesse of Mountgomeries Urania.* … (London: John Marriott and John Grismand, 1621).

12. Michael Shapiro, *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage: Boy Heroines and Female Pages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 6-7.

13. On the possibility that an adult male actor, rather than a play-boy, assumed the role of Lady Macbeth, see A. R. Braunmuller, ed., *Macbeth, The New Cambridge Shakespeare,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 264. On Cleopatra, see Carol Chillington Rutter, ed., *Documents of the Rose Playhouse,* rev. ed. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), 224-25n59.

14. Fisher, *Materializing Gender,* 87.

15. A pertinent example of this is Thomas Walter Laqueur’s *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1990). Although Laqueur’s arguments about the predominance of Galen and the one-sex model in Renaissance discourse remain influential, Katharine Park and Robert A. Nye have critiqued the progress narrative charted by such arguments. See Katharine Park and Robert A. Nye, “Destiny Is Anatomy,” *New Republic,* February 18, 1991, 53-57.

16. See, for example, Carol Thomas Neely, *Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare’s Plays* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1985).

17. Though critics often take Helena at her word, Kathryn M. Moncrief claims in “‘Show me a child begotten of thy body that I am father to’: Pregnancy, Paternity, and the Problem of Evidence in *All’s Well That Ends Well,*” *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England,* eds. Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007) that the character’s “‘claim on Bertram’ and her ‘triumph’ may not be as certain as they first appear” (30).

18. Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2004). I am also drawing upon Edelman’s formulation of “reproductive futurism,” which “perpetuates as reality a fantasy frame intended to secure the survival of the social in the Imaginary form of the Child” (14).

19. William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet,* in *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition,* eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus, 2nd ed. (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2008), 12. All citations from Shakespeare’s works refer to the Norton Shakespeare and appear hereafter in text. References are to act, scene, and line.

20. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 31. Cf. Butler’s more recent claims in “Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?” *Differences* 13, no 1 (2002): 14-44.

21. On this point, I agree with Rebecca Ann Bach, who argues in *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature Before Heterosexuality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) that “we must separate out the ideology of ‘heterosexuality’ (a word not coined until the nineteenth century) from phenomena such as marriage and sexual activity between men and women” (2). For a discussion of, and rejoinder to, the critical tendency to impose heterosexuality on Renaissance texts, see Bach, *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature Before Heterosexuality,* 1-24. On the recent invention of statistical norms and heteronormativity, see Karma Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn’t* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), esp. xi-xxviii and 1-25.

22. Stephen Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions prouing that they are not to be suffred in a Christian common weale* … (London: Thomas Gosson, 1582). John Rainoldes, *Th’overthrow of stage-playes, by the way of controversie betwixt D. Gager and D. Rainoldes* … (Middelburg: Richard Schilders, 1599).

23. Arthur L. Little Jr. has published two important essays that locate queer marriages in Shakespeare’s comedic plots. See Arthur L. Little Jr., “‘A Local Habitation and a Name’: Presence, Witnessing, and Queer Marriage in Shakespeare’s Romantic Comedies,” in *Presentism, Gender, and Sexuality in Shakespeare,* ed. Evelyn Gajowski (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 207-36; and idem, “The Rites of Queer Marriage in *The Merchant of Venice,*” in *Shakesqueer: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare,* ed. Madhavi Menon (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2011), 216-24.

24. William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew,* in *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition,* eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus, 2nd ed. (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2008).

25. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley, vol. 1 (New York: Vintage, 1990), 159.

26. See Jonathan Goldberg, “The Anus in Coriolanus,” in *Historicism, Psychoanalysis, and Early Modern Culture,* eds. Carla Mazzio and Douglas Trevor (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 260-71; Jeffrey Masten, “Is the Fundament a Grave?” in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe,* eds. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 129-45; and Will Stockton, *Playing Dirty: Sexuality and Waste in Early Modern Comedy* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). Though these studies differ in their application and extension of psychoanalytic theory, they all respond, at least in part, to the governing question of Leo Bersani’s “Is the Rectum a Grave?” in Leo Bersani, *Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). See also David Hillman, *Shakespeare’s Entrails: Belief, Scepticism, and the Interior of the Body* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 113-62; and Patricia Parker, “Preposterous Reversals: *Love’s Labor’s Lost,*” *Modern Language Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (1993): 435-82.

27. My use of the term “sodomitical” is indebted to scholars who have sought to mediate debates about sodomy as a discursive formation registering, on the one hand, sexual acts deemed deviant or non-procreative, and, on the other, political, cultural, and religious transgressiveness. In addition to the specific studies I cite throughout this essay, see Kenneth Borris and George Rousseau, eds., *The Sciences of Homosexuality in Early Modern Europe* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008); Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men’s Press, 1982); Gregory Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1991); Mario DiGangi, *The Homoeroticism of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Nicholas F. Radel, “Can the Sodomite Speak? Sodomy, Satire, and the Castlehaven Case,” in *Love, Sex, Intimacy and Friendship between Men, 1500-1800,* eds. Katherine O’Donnell and Michael O’Rourke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 148-67.

28. For a survey of this trend in Shrew scholarship, see Dana E. Aspinall, ed., “The Play and the Critics,” in *The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays,* 3-38 (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 3-38.

29. Karen Newman, *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 38.

30. Ibid., 50.

31. Michael Shapiro, “Framing the Taming: Metatheatrical Awareness of Female Impersonation in *The Taming of the Shrew,*” *Yearbook of English Studies* 23 (1993): 144; Amy L. Smith, “Performing Marriage with a Difference: Wooing, Wedding, and Bedding in *The Taming of the Shrew,*” *Comparative Drama* 36, no. 3 (2002): 290.

32. See also Frances E. Dolan, *Marriage and Violence: The Early Modern Legacy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008). While she does not take up the metatheatrics of the Induction, and while she maintains the husband-wife dynamic between Katherine and Petruccio, Dolan encourages us to expand our notion of domesticity and the household and consider the crucial function of, among others, servants. As Dolan writes, “Rather than condemning Katharina’s violence or self-assertion entirely, Petruchio redirects her claims to mastery away from him. The two remain equals with regard to their desire to domineer over their own servants and the outside world” (127).

33. John Rainoldes, *Th’overthrow of stage-playes, by the way of controversie betwixt D. Gager and D. Rainoldes.*… (Middelburg: Richard Schilders, 1599), 107.

34. Stephen Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions prouing that they are not to be suffred in a Christian common weale.*… (London: Thomas Gosson, 1582), G4v.

35. Philip Stubbes, *The anatomie of abuses.* … (London: John Kingston, 1583), M1v.

36. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 1, 101.

37. The first gloss is from Ann Thompson, eds., *The Taming of the Shrew. By William Shakespeare,* The New Cambridge Shakespeare Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 47n11; the second, from William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shew,* in Greenblatt, et al., *The Norton Shakespeare,* 170n7. As Shapiro points out, Thompson undermines her own interpretation of the term in admitting it was rarely applied to women (“Framing the Taming,” 150-51).

38. Juliet Dusinberre, “*The Taming of the Shrew*: Women, Acting, and Power,” *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 26, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 67.

39. Ibid.

40. According to Dusinberre, “Shakespeare’s Sly may in fact have been played by William Sly, a member of both the Pembroke’s men in the early 1590s … and subsequently of Shakespeare’s company, the Chamberlain’s Men, later the King’s men” (ibid., 69).

41. Shapiro, “Framing the Taming,” 151.

42. Ibid., 146 and passim.

43. On the importance and various significations of the marital bed in medieval and Renaissance art and iconography, see Diane Wolfthal, *In and Out of the Marital Bed: Seeing Sex in Renaissance Europe* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2010), esp. 13-41.

44. *Oxford English Dictionary,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), “husband, *v.*” 1, definition 2.

45. Ibid., “husband, *v.*” 2, definitions 4 and 5. Shakespeare will use the verb “to husband” in a similar sense in *King Lear* and *All’s Well That Ends Well*; in fact, the *Oxford English Dictionary* provides the pertinent quotations from these plays to exemplify the term’s use in the context I am describing.

46. Barbara Hodgdon, *The Shakespeare Trade: Performances and Appropriations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 4.

47. A. Smith, “Performing Marriage with a Difference,” 296.

48. Ibid.

49. On the geographical liminality of the playhouses, see Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

50. Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1981), 118.

51. Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions,* C1r, C3r.

52. John Greene, *A Refutation of the Apology for actors. Diuided into three briefe treatises.* … (London: W. White, 1615), 39.

53. William Prynne, *Histrio-mastix. The players scourge, or, actors tragaedie.* … (London: Edward Allde, Augustine Mathewes, Thomas Cotes, and William Jones, 1633), 363.

54. Prynne, *Histrio-mastix,* 211-12.

55. Orgel, *Impersonations,* 29. See also Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice,* 82-96.

56. According to Deuteronomy 22:5, “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abominations unto the Lord thy God,” *King James Bible,* London: Robert Barker, 1611). This passage was a favorite among those who objected to the theater’s institutionalized cross-dressing. Indeed, it appears prominently in all of the anti-theatrical texts I examine in this essay: Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions,* C3v; I. G. Greene, *A refutation of the Apology for actors,* 54-55; Prynne, *Histrio-mastix,* 179; Rainoldes, *Th’overthrow of stage-playes,* 32; Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses,* F6v.

On Elizabethan sumptuary laws, especially in the context of Renaissance theater, see Amanda Bailey, *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2007). See also Frances Elizabeth Baldwin, *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1926); N. B. Harte, “State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England,” in *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England: Essays Presented to F. J. Fisher,* eds. D. C. Coleman and A. H. John (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), 132-65; Wilfrid Hooper, “The Tudor Sumptuary Laws,” *English Historical Review* 30, no. 119 (1915): 433-49; and Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1996).

57. Newman, *Fashioning Femininity,* 38.

58. Anonymous, *A pleasant conceited historie, called The taming of a shrew As it was sundry times acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Pembrook his seruants* (London: Peter Short, 1594), A4r.

On the relationship between the 1594 Quarto and 1623 Folio, see Leah S. Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996); Stanley W. Wells and Gary Taylor, “No Shrew, A Shrew, and The Shrew: Internal Revision in *The Taming of the Shrew,*” in *Shakespeare: Text, Language, Criticism: Essays in Honor of Marvin Spevack,* eds. Bernhard Fabian and Kurt Tetzeli von Rosador (Hildesheim, Zurich, and New York: Olms-Weidman, 1987), 351-70.

59. Shakespeare, *Mr. VVilliam Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies* (London: Isaac Iaggard and Ed Blount, 1623), 210.

60. Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory,* 215.

61. Shapiro, “Framing the Taming,” 155.

62. To be fair, the stage directions for these kisses, which occur in *Taming of the Shrew* 5.1 and 5.2, do not appear in the 1623 Folio and have been added by modern editors who have taken Petruccio and Katherine’s dialogue as their cue. It is certainly possible, especially in *Taming of the Shrew* 5.1, that Katherine rebuffs Petruccio, but this, too, would point spectators back to the play’s Induction, where Sly’s wife had done the same.

63. Anonymous, *A pleasant conceited historie, called The taming of a shrew,* G2v.

64. Ibid.

65. On uses of the Induction in more modern productions of Shrew, see Elizabeth Schafer, “Introduction,” in *The Taming of the Shrew, Shakespeare in Production* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 30-76, especially 52-56. Schafer notes Ellen Dowling’s study of sixty-five productions of Shrew from 1844 to 1978. Of the productions surveyed, “75 per cent … used Sly, many using the full framework from A Shrew, rather than just the three scenes supplied by the Folio” (52).

66. Schafer, *Shrew,* 58.

67. In *Dream in Shakespeare: From Metaphor to Metamorphosis* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974), Marjorie Garber says of Midsummer’s epilogue, “Puck’s purposeful ambiguity dwells yet again on a lesson learned by character after character within the play: that reason is impoverished without imagination, and that we must accept the dimension of dream in our lives. Without this acknowledgment, there can be no real self-knowledge” (60).

68. Schafer, *Shrew,* 59.

69. Gordon Williams, *A Glossary of Shakespeare’s Sexual Language* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Athlone Press, 1997), s.v., “hell.” See also Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare’s Bawdy,* 3rd ed. (New And London: Routledge, 1968), s.v. “hell.”

70. The word “forward” appears eight times in *Taming of the Shrew* (1.1.69, 1.2.90, 2.1.293, 4.5.78, 5.2.119, 5.2.157, 5.2.169, 5.2.183), in each instance modifying “wife” or “woman.” Cf. Joseph Swetnam, who in *The araignment of leuud, idle, froward, and vnconstant women.* … (London: George Purslowe, 1615), explains that a woman’s “forwardness” is not the result of her having a vagina but of her being born of Adam’s rib:

Moses describeth a Woman thus: At the first beginning (saith hee) a woman was made to be a helper vnto man, & so they are indeed: for she helpeth to spend and consume that which man painefully getteth. Hee also saith that they were made of the ribbe of a man, and that their froward nature sheweth; for a ribbe is a crooked thing, good for nothing else, and women are crooked by nature: for small occasion will cause them to be angry (Bir).

71. Stockton, *Playing Dirty,* xix.

72. In addition to the gloss found in the Norton Shakespeare, see the following: Frances E. Dolan, ed., *“The Taming of the Shrew”: Texts and Contexts* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1996); Brian Morris, ed., *The Taming of the Shrew, by William Shakespeare, The Arden Shakespeare,* 3rd series (Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1981); and H. J. Oliver, ed., *The Taming of the Shrew, Oxford World’s Classics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

73. Williams, *A Glossary of Shakespeare’s Sexual Language,* s.v. “tail.”

74. Partridge, *Shakespeare’s Bawdy,* s.v. “tail.”

75. In Partridge, *Shakespeare’s Bawdy,* see the entries on “finger,” “instrument,” and “play.” In Williams, *A Glossary of Shakespeare’s Sexual Language,* see “finger” and “viol.”

76. B. R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare’s England,* 150-51.

77. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation,* trans. Sheila Faria Glasser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 12-14.

78. *As You Like It,* in Greenblatt, et al., *The Norton Shakespeare,* 2.7.138-39.

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