

A STUDY OF SHREW CHARACTERS IN THE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE WOMEN ' S UNRULINESS AND ITS DRAMATIC EFFECT

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A STUDY OF SHREW CHARACTERS IN THE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

—WOMEN'S UNRULINESS AND ITS DRAMATIC EFFECT—

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Introduction

Nowhere in literature is the term *shrew*—broadly, and in particular in early modern contexts, meaning a bad-tempered, scolding, unruly woman—defined in detail. Nor is there a consensus on what a shrew is exactly. Notions of shrews, shrewishness, and the causes of the shrew's anger have changed over time; the understood meaning of the term in Shakespeare's time is perhaps no longer reflected by the literary criticism of our time. We know neither when nor where precisely in the long history of European literature the shrew first appeared or came to be recognized as such, and it is a question that has not yet been analyzed in detail. The presence of these mysterious shrew-figures in Shakespeare's drama is fascinating. However, in addition to the word "shrew," terms such as "scold," "wanton," "witch," and "devil" had also been used to represent unruly women, along with verbs such as "to scold" or, indeed, "to beshrew" (broadly indicating a nagging or cursing act). As shrews go, we are no doubt most familiar with Shakespeare's Katherina (henceforth "Kate"), in *The Taming of the Shrew*, whose story and actions helped the word "shrew" become and remain synonymous with an unruly woman, susceptible to the male action of "taming." But surely, being tamed is not the only dramatic role open to a shrew character. Are there any other shrewish characters in Shakespeare's plays? How does Shakespeare portray his individual shrew character and how are they similar to or different from each other? What dramatic effect does the playwright aim to achieve by including such characters in his plays?

Since the shrews in Shakespeare's plays have hardly been the actual centre of scholarly attention, their similarities and differences, as well as their dramatic roles and effects in the various Shakespearean plays and genres, have not been seriously discussed. Thus, it seems necessary to examine the potential shrewishness that the characters may possess in a variety of Shakespeare's plays and analyze their relationships with the social, cultural, and political backgrounds of that time. For this purpose, this paper challenges the

monolithic task of locating the shrews in Shakespearean literature and attempts to illustrate the playwright's portrayal of their active/passive roles in challenging patriarchy and destroying the social order. Through examinations of Shakespeare's representations of unruly female characters in various works, I will highlight some of their characteristics, similarities, and differences, and elucidate their contributions to the plays' dramatic effects. In doing so, I will also identify their relationships with the social, cultural, and political settings in the plays and explain how such connections may reflect Shakespeare's society in general.

As I shall explain below, I most frequently use Kate's epithet, "shrew," or "unruly," as well as some other adjectives to describe the character type in question, since these terms seem best for describing the women of my interest: those possessed of caustic verbal wit, disobedient to patriarchy, owners of angry and transgressive words, deeds, minds, and bodies, who nevertheless seem, in the end, to remain under patriarchal control. I shall argue that these women are presented as inherently ambivalent characters whose complex nature makes them actively violate the sociocultural boundaries between male and female, private and public, domestic and political, as well as high and low classes. I will explain how these transgressions serve to actively manifest real social and political tensions within the plays and that these strains can be illuminated via reference to more recent writing on gender and theatre.

It is best to start my examination with Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew* as an obvious "shrew" and identify her in relation to the other characters, society, and culture in the play's world. Then, the next chapter will highlight *All's Well That Ends Well's* Helena whose virtuous character juxtaposes with her shrewish actions. The similarities of the "shrew" elements and the differences in the extent to which the "shrewish" context is applied (to both words and deeds of the characters) in the plays are closely examined. Subsequently, the paper shifts to focus on the examination of a very different type of "shrew" represented by Queen

Margaret in the *Henry VI* plays whose violence especially against the male characters exceeds and destroys various boundaries. Finally, the paper examines Paulina in *The Winter's Tale* whose ungovernable nature to authority is shown to be just as relentless as that of Margaret's but her motivation and the powerful dramatic consequences are represented differently. All the characters reviewed in this paper may possess the so-called general "shrewish" elements but with different characteristics and dramatic effects, thus, requiring different approaches in their respective characterization.

In order to examine Shakespeare's representation of shrews, it is necessary to understand how the term and notion were understood in the dramatist's contemporary England, but the fact that there is no detailed consensual definition of a shrew suggests that the notion could have a wide range of interpretations: just as the boundaries between a shrewish woman and a virtuous woman are invisible, a shrew may be functionally invisible in her workings; she is undefinable, ambiguous, and ambivalent, depending greatly on how the playwright imagines her motivation and identity in the drama. This uncertainty represented by the shrew puzzles us, but at the same time, it encourages us to examine Shakespeare's various representations of unruly women in his plays, though my focus of study must be limited to mainly four characters and interpretation of shrewishness must be restricted to certain common characteristics (such as unruliness in speech and behaviour deriving from/leading to anger and revenge). In exploring the shrew's transgression of private-public and male-female binaries, I will show how these movements in imagined space serve to actively manifest social and political tensions within the plays.

0.1. What is a shrew?

In Shakespeare's time, being chaste, silent, and obedient were the conditions of being a good woman. For example, Suzanne Hull claims that silence was one of "wife's virtues," a

“great ornament of the whole feminine sex;” when she speaks, it should be kept to the minimum because how or how much she speaks “declareth the vanity of the mind” (130). Yet, deviations from a virtue, widely ranging from a loose tongue to sexual misconduct, would discredit the woman’s other virtues; therefore, her venting of dissatisfaction or anger would risk her reputation of being weak in speech and emotion. While early modern women were bound by a strict cultural idealization of femininity, it does not mean, however, European literature always represented women with complete virtues; rather, female characters with “flaws” would provide much theatrical fun. A shrew or a scold has long been a popular stock character in European literature, with the essential basic feature of being angry or aggressive. Some examples include Geoffrey Chaucer’s Wife of Bath, Uxor Noe, Noah’s wife in the theatrical Chester adaptation of Noah’s flood, the “wicked” Hag Occasion in Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, violent female characters in the Tudor plays such as John Heywood’s *Merry Play between John the Husband, Tyb his Wife and Sir John the Priest* and the anonymous *Tom Tyler and his Wife*, the later anonymous work *The Taming of a Shrew*, and John Fletcher’s *The Woman’s Prize; or, The Tamer Tamed*, and later, Mary Frith in Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl*.¹ Such women characters may also be known to include characteristics of being perverse, gossipy, obstinate, and unruly, and are ultimately ruled by men through force or punishment. Given the common historical use of a shrew as a comical dramatic character, we are aware that Shakespeare is not the first or the only playwright to create a shrew and that he had predecessors, and we can suspect that such dramatic representations of shrews might have reflected the society’s trouble with women of such a nature and ability to cause disorder in the patriarchal society. It is not possible to fully explain the importance of Shakespeare’s shrewish characters without understanding their nature as somehow inscribed and confirmed by pre-existing social relations, and I will seek to develop a nuanced account of how and why these characters function in the way they do. In

order to understand Shakespeare's representation of shrews in his plays, it seems necessary to study the characters from various aspects. First, by examining them historically, we can verify the understanding of the term *shrew* in Shakespeare's time and its mirrored concept possibly evidenced in his characters by focusing especially on two conspicuous aspects of her nature: first, anger; and second, unruly speech and behaviour, which can often create disorder, cause anxiety within the society, and threaten patriarchy.

Previous scholars, who have examined scolds in early modern England, differ in their findings regarding shrewish women's chronological and demographic profile, notably in terms of their characteristics, marital status, and class. For example, Natalie Zemon Davis' characterization of unruly women in the medieval and early modern period is introduced by three types: (1) women who have "happily given over to the sway of their bodily senses or who are using every ruse they can to prevail over men;" (2) women who have "license to be a social critic;" and (3) women who have "a temporary period of dominion, which is ended only after she has said or done something to undermine authority" (134-36). Martin Ingram suggests that women accused of scolding were distinctive in their socially marginalized status (252), while some critics including Sandy Bardsley, Karen Jones and Michael Zell² agree that scolds were mainly married women of all social classes, although they focus on a different period (11-15). David Underdown classifies scolding women as the poor, widows or outcasts in society without any family protection. He states in his *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion*, in England between 1560 and 1640 the number of interpersonal disputes, around, for example, sexual misconduct and marital problems, increased, and an "epidemic of scolding" (116) emerged. Underdown cites a 1675 legal document: "[a] Scold in a legal sense is a troublesome and angry woman, who by her brawling and wrangling amongst her Neighbours, doth break the publick Peace, and beget, cherish and increase publick Discord" (qtd. in Underdown: 122). He maintains that such women used scolding to vent their frustration on

authority. Likewise, Lucy de Bruyn has discussed “shrew,” “wanton,” and “witch,” all of which share an element of unruliness and disobedience: “[T]he wanton by a self-centred love which lacks all nobility; the witch by embodying malice instead of love; the shrew personifies self-assertion, thus forming a direct antithesis to the good woman” (71). De Bruyn’s focus on the inner nature of a shrew as witch-like and evil indicates a shrew’s maliciousness is understood to be deep-rooted. Bardsley, in her study of the relationship between gender and speech in *Venomous Tongue*, actually argues that scolds, recognized as such, began to appear in local English court records as early as the mid-fourteenth century, while cataloguing the “sins of the tongue” as “blasphemy, hypocrisy, rumor, lying, flattery, mocking of good people, and sowing of discord” (27). Bardsley’s examination is inclined to see a shrew as a woman who offends people and society with her spiteful tongue, indicating her frustration with her surroundings. The above scholars’ illuminating examinations of scolds/shrews in early modern England show us that they did not suddenly appear in a particular time or place but had always been in existence (often unwelcome) alongside the changing times in English society.

What the above studies inform us is the fact that whether a scold, a wanton, a witch, or a shrew, this figure seems to be alienated from her contemporary society, and her acts of defiance are often characterized by dissatisfied and disobedient words and deeds towards men and society: gossip, violence, sexual misconduct, witchery, and so forth. Further, women’s (putative) excessive talkativeness, associated with complaints and unruliness, and often signified by imagery of a tongue or a mouth, was often associated with the creation of a sexually (and verbally) “open” space, that is, one of sexual availability, which would bring disorder to patriarchal society. It was thus a verbal rebellion against patriarchy, and both woman and tongue had to be controlled and enclosed within their proper place, to keep silent and mind their own business indoors.

Thus, it seems to me that despite any disparities, what these perspectives on shrewishness share is the idea that an unruly person was labelled as a shrew or a scold in literature if she does not obey the social rules of patriarchy, and that this woman violates the boundaries between male and female, private and public, political and non-political, and dominant and dominated that structure the Renaissance imagination. But to what extent of unruliness would a woman have to go to be termed a shrew? Though it is impossible to identify boundaries, I can at least examine how the early modern society understood the domestic-political boundary that an unruly woman was thought to violate.

In early modern England, patriarchal control was based on a precarious gendering, spacing, and demarcation: women were often identified with the domestic space, including the household or family, rather than the public space, such as the state or city, a model emerged wherein peace within the household, the spheres of politics, and the stability of the state were concentric and drawn along indistinct lines of demarcation. In Sir John Harington's treatise *The Prayse of Private Life*, he notes the dichotomy between the private and the public and idealizes private life as non-political. According to Jürgen Habermas, this kind of comparison of different spaces is an often-used metaphor for differences between the household and the state (176). Evidence like that from Harington shows that there was an invisible line applied to divide male and female genders and assign the former to public and political and the latter to private and domestic life. A woman was then often regarded as "unruly" if she violated her own sphere, and it became imperative that she be controlled or restricted to prevent her from overcoming her own space and intruding into that of the male. In early modern England, social control of unruly women took various forms, including the restriction of women's physical, psychological, and verbal freedom within and without the household, as well as the threat of more explicit punishment. In *A History of Private Life*, Jacques Revel argues that "the sixteenth century was a time of intense effort to control social

intercourse through rules of civility Behavior was judged by the group. The rules of civility were in one sense a technique for limiting or even negating private life” (167). In other words, the domestic problem of an unruly female was judged and handled according to public rules of civility (and civil society), often through punishment. Thus, if the power of ideology affects the private sphere, then social rules may politicize the private. It is an ancient, equivocal topos in literature that a woman who effaces the distinction between public and private life, whether physically or verbally, is accused of unruliness or shrewishness and becomes an object of punishment. But what causes a shrew to violate the boundaries in the first place? As mentioned above, the contemporary society understood a shrew as someone who would often scold, complain, gossip, or cause violence or sexual misconduct. Though the range of shrewish features may be extensive, we may understand that there is a common presence of emotional complication in the so-called “shrew,” such as anger, dissatisfaction, or frustration, especially against patriarchy underlying the woman that moves to unruly behaviour, resistance, rebellion, and even revenge. In order to examine a shrew in Shakespeare’s drama, it seems necessary primarily to observe how her inner turmoil may be represented in relation to her surroundings, including people, culture, society, and politics. As I shall explain below, in Shakespeare’s time, uncontrollable female anger was considered just as dreadful as unruly female action, and it may be said that the complex combination of anger and transgressive act would label her a shrew. Thus, it seems appropriate to provide a brief account of female anger that provoked social antipathy in contemporary England.

0.2. Female anger and revenge

In early modern England, a shrewish woman or scold was connected with the emotion of anger, which was feared to threaten the social order. This anger might have been targeted by the shrew at herself, her family, other people, society, and so forth, depending on the

woman's situation, and was closely entangled with the desire for revenge. The patriarchal society feared the emotion of female anger and the vengeful wish it embodied, and regarded it as an illness that had to be cured or controlled. In the many contemporary works that include shrewish characters, they almost always embody anger, whether represented as a comical or a tragical element. It seems necessary then to examine briefly how female anger is connected with female shrewishness in these literary works.

The early modern discourse on the danger of anger and revenge is reflected in texts of various types, including contemporary scientific texts, books of biblical wisdom, treatises, sermons, marital conduct books, pamphlets, plays, poems, and so forth; as examination of these works will show, it seems this emotion was deeply gendered in early modern literary writings. That is, these early modern texts, which draw on various discourses on anger—classical, theological, and physiological—commonly regarded anger as female gendered, and as a kind of an illness that required treatment and control. Many early modern writings on the passions referred to the Galenic theory of the four humours,³ which explained the nature of each passion in terms of the balance of opposite elements circulating within the body, namely blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile, representing respectively the “sanguine,” “phlegmatic,” “choleric,” and “melancholic” temperaments; abnormalities of the humoural balance were thought to lead to pathological conditions (Babb 22; Anderson 85).

Humours were thought to cause the general motions of the heart or emotions. The choleric (indicating hot blood) humour, specifically, was thought to generate combative passions—boldness and anger—as similarly articulated by many early modern writers, such as Pierre de la Primaudaye (466-68, 471) and Thomas Wright (60-68, 82-84, 101-06).⁴ Historically speaking, a choleric state was a sign of illness and denounced anger as a disease. Further, various accounts of anger tell us that it was actually gendered as female (“she”)⁵ and was seen as most likely to be abused by women, who were, compared to men, believed to

have been too weak to use reason to control their emotions. The early modern moralists, in particular, emphasized that such a lack of reason implied weakness of mind, body, and spirit, and that it was experienced especially by women, children, and weak men; this was claimed for example by Helkiah Crooke, a physician who wrote a book on anatomy, *Mikrokosmographia*: it is “a disease of a weake mind which cannot moderate it selfe but is easily inflamed” (276). The early modern moralists advocate classical ethical principles when they claim that virtuous action is driven and regulated by reason, and emphasize the significance of possessing reason, self-mastery over passions, and self-knowledge. Juan Luis Vives, a popular contemporary humanist, writes of women, “Of mind they are not so strong as man, their judgement, their erudition, and their experience is far under man’s” (*A Very Frutefull* 124); such weakness is understood as a sign of illness, which makes them sick and weak in both mind and body, and also more prone to anger and revenge (126). Thus, women needed to be strictly controlled and their anger suppressed before they damaged men: “This sexe is fraile, spitefull, and given to revenge: and therefore men are to use the greater prudence in the governing and managing of them” (de la Primaudaye 503-4). Both Vives (125) and Thomas Wright (180) also saw women’s anger as a sign of sickness and weakness, and the harbinger of a vengeful wish to attack men. These influential contemporary humanists thus seem to agree that physiologically, anger is characteristic of the female and that it needs to be controlled. There is a clear, corresponding vision of power politics in the early modern interpretations of female anger mentioned above, in that it is caused by a female lack of reason and weakness of mind and body; it has destructive qualities that must be restrained.

This oppression of anger was conducted in various ways. As Gwynne Kennedy indicates in her study of the relationship between anger and literature, the violent image of breaking a horse was frequently used; just as a wild, angry horse can be broken, a wild, angry

women can be made to submit (1). In each case, an unruly being must be silenced, controlled or tamed. Thus, it seems there is a clear manifestation of power politics in the discourse on anger and gender. Such power politics may also embody various binaries, and as a reasonable man controls an angry woman, who is without reason, patriarchy as tamer rules the rebellious shrew. This control often took the form of confinement and punishment of a shrewish woman, as I will show in the section below.

0.3. Punishment of shrews in early modern society

As I have shown above, since the scope of “unruliness” was far too wide and ambiguous and no concrete definition proved her status in Shakespeare’s England, the shrew might have ranged from a woman who complained of petty things within the household to a woman who showed defiance against patriarchal politics more publicly. All such women were often considered nuisances in patriarchal society and punished to maintain social order.

However, as research into parliamentary records, ecclesiastical court records, witchcraft trials, and other accounts verifies, the early modern English public remained more than a little anxious about dominant and unruly women—scolds, wantons, and witches—all of whom troubled society with their inappropriate behaviour; and despite the expansiveness and vagueness of the “shrew” concept, “shrewish” women were concretely controlled in various forms, including restriction of their physical, psychological, and verbal freedom within and without the household. I regard it that the act of punishing certain women removed them from this “incipiently shrewish” state and clearly marked them as shrews, allowing their ambiguous position to become apparent. In order to maintain a patriarchal system in an ordered society, it was probably a necessary patriarchal process to keep the unruly under control, physically and psychologically, especially in the eyes of the public.

Since a woman was figuratively seen as a domestic resource, unruly behaviour was a crime against the social order that required domestic treatment: the mastery of a good husband and punishment of error by ritual humiliation. For example, the sermons in *The Book of Homilies* allowed for punishments of scolds, punishment that often aimed to publicly control women's speech: "because this vice [of contention] is so much hurtful to the society of a commonwealth, in all well ordered cities these common brawlers and scolders be punished, with a notable kind of pain, as to be set on the cucking stool, pillory, or such like If we have forsaken the devil, let us use no more devilish tongues" (154). It does not seem proportional that "devilish tongues" were considered to deserve such painful physical punishment, but the doctrines were widely influential in contemporary England. With regards to the types and tools of punishment meted on shrews, Lynda Boose provides adequate examples (213), and David Underdown also quotes the contemporary record:

And for this she is to be presented and punished in a Leet, by being put in the Cucking or Ducking-stole, or Tumbrel, an Engine appointed for that purpose, which is in the fashion of a Chair; and herein she is to sit, and to be let down in the water over head and ears three or four times, so that no part of her be above the water, diving or ducking down, though against her will, as Ducks do under the water. (122)

Words such as "Leet," "Cucking or Ducking-stole," and "Tumbrel" evoke the act of binding a scold and depriving her of freedom of movement. It is interesting to note that sexually unruly women, who were called names such as "wantons" or "the tempter," also received similar mob-punishments, including cases of parading an accused scold through town in a cart or dunking her in water, traditional "charivari" or "skimmety" (a custom of making a racket to ridicule or humiliate the badly-behaved people), wife-beating, and the use of shaming devices such as the cucking stool, as above, and the scold's bridle, with which a

woman was publicly displayed, shamed, and tamed. The punishment also reflects the patriarchal society's anxiety towards people expressing dissatisfaction and rebellious tendencies, indicating the possibility of social disorder and chaos. Having observed the historical accounts, it seems to me that the powers of the state (law, Church, and society, and so forth) took it for granted that scolds were punishable, though the concept of the scold remained ill defined and in some way covered all women.

From such evidence, we may suspect that whether a woman showed unruliness by speaking too much, behaving aggressively, or even through sexual misconduct, similar punishments could potentially be applied, and the use of punishing instruments as well as the parading of women placed punishment and hence shrewdom on the field of the visible, as a spectacle for onlookers: for the punisher, it was a warning to society, as well as a matter of flaunting power and releasing pent-up violence but for the punished, it was shameful and painful to be an object of the disciplining act. Thus, the basic obscurity of the bounds of the classification of a woman as a scold or a shrew, and the invisible boundaries that she is said to transgress while still being bound and punished by, are given form by the punishing process and materialize the shrew's "real" presence. However, is it as simple as that? Is the punisher more successful than the punished?

In the punishing process, the relationship between the punisher and the punished where the gazer is understood to be a winner and the gazed is a sinner shows us a clear hierarchy of social power between the two sides, but if we can find a meaning in this relationship which may be applied to literary understanding, perhaps a shrew's dramatic significance may come to light. Michel Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, refers to Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon*, a structure that allows guards to observe inmates, and explains that its effect is "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (201) and that the inmates are in the power situation

where they themselves become the “bearers” (201) of power. In a way, the punishment of shrews confuses the positions of the punisher and the punished, or the gazer and the gazed. Nevertheless, in the special space of the theatre, via Shakespeare’s plays, the shrewish characters carry out the singular and fascinating act of bringing confusion to the plays’ world, enlivening and subverting the drama. Taking into consideration relationship between the shrew/tamer and confusion in the play’s world, Shakespeare’s representation of various ambivalent shrewish characters may come into more light.

0.4. Feminist, psychoanalytical, and carnivalesque approaches to shrews

Considering how the early modern understanding of shrews included women with behaviours ranging from angry, perverse, gossipy, obstinate, violent or sexually loose who were also accused of being shrews, scolds, witches and so forth, it seems that the choice of female characters in this thesis would be wide ranging, thus, requiring various and differing perspectives to examine them individually.

Several theoretical perspectives may inform readings of Shakespeare’s shrews. M. M. Bakhtin’s views on the “carnavalesque,” for instance, provide insights into the representation of Shakespeare’s unruly women as a socially disruptive influence. In *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin analyzes the Renaissance social system and explores the fine balance between dominant and dominated discourses within; he finds underlying this dichotomy a quality he calls the “carnavalesque” (2), which he describes as a Renaissance social institution. He also observes the presence of what he calls “grotesque realism” (3), which he views as a literary mode or genre related to the interaction between the bodily, the social, and the literary. Bakhtin reminds us that the carnival or festival is associated with the mass or the collective: people who participate in the festival constitute a crowd (a multiplicity) but should also be seen as a whole, unified in opposition to the prevailing socioeconomic organization of

society. In this collectivity, Bakhtin argues, “all were considered equal during carnival. Here, in the town square, a special form of free and familiar contact reigned among people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age” (10). On this basis, Bakhtin examines different modes of dialogue between popular culture and its manifestation in literature, wherein social and class hierarchies are destroyed; festivals create a unique space, opportunity, and mode of communication in this regard. Moreover, in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin gives examples of early writers, such as Boccaccio, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Grimmelshausen (157), whose works, carnivalized, serve as basic sources for modern literature, and explains how the carnivalesque is enacted in the literary:

Carnival was, as it were, reincarnated in literature, and precisely into one specific and vigorous line of its development. Carnival forms, transposed into the language of literature, became a powerful means for comprehending life in art, they became a special language whose words and forms possess an extraordinary capacity for symbolic generalization, that is, for generalization in depth (157).

The carnival allows individuals to interact with each other, despite differences in sex or class, and feel themselves part of the collective, with the attendant loss of individual identity and control. In this carnivalesque world, individuals exchange bodies by donning costumes and masks. One obtains a sense of being renewed, but also becomes aware of one's sensual and material unity with a community. Bakhtin argues that in “Rabelais' world,” the notion of carnival is related to that of the grotesque; that is, the collective, by participating in the carnival, is conscious of the association between transgressive or immoral conduct, death, and regeneration. Even in this carnivalesque state, the individual is aware of the grotesqueness of the bodily changes that they perform, witness, or undergo, such as eating, excretion, and sexual conduct. In Bakhtin's view of literature, grotesque characters usually

embody empathetic qualities alongside their repulsive ones. The carnivalesque entails the decoronation of authority and various changes of roles and status, accompanied by cynical, rude, or ambivalent speech. Bakhtin's concepts of carnival and dialogue are apt and significant for my study of shrews in this paper, since they allow me to theorize the different types of female characters who serve as shrews in Shakespeare's plays and their various modes of shrewishness (for instance, grotesque, empathetic, destructive, and regenerative) in dialogue with other characters. The patriarchal taming of the shrew is not her end; it is part of any woman's story, which is not thereby ended, but continues and develops, and may or may not prove to have a life-giving power. Bakhtin's views on the carnivalesque thus provide an important reading about the dramatic consequences created by Shakespeare's shrews, especially Kate in Chapter 1 and partly Helena and Paulina in Chapters 2 and 4.

In fact, there are many critics who found interest in the ritualistic origins of Shakespearean drama after C. L. Barber and Northrop Frye,⁶ who explored the relationship between the rituals and folk traditions in drama. Phebe Jensen restores the religious and political contexts in Shakespeare's *As You like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and in *The Winter's Tale*. Especially focusing on Falstaff, Jensen brings festive mirth and Catholic ritual together. Michael Bristol studies how carnivalesque motives of inversion, such as misrule, burlesque, and grotesquerie, are closely related to contemporary marketplaces and fairs, and analyzes the manner these practices are employed in Shakespeare's and Ben Jonson's plays. Some part of Jean-Christophe Agnew's work is also important in the way he studies the relationship between the themes of commercialism and theatricality in early modern period. He refers to Bakhtin's reference to the marketplace grotesquerie and indicates that the marketplace significance lies in its nature of display. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White observe fairs and popular traditions. They apply Bakhtin's insight to: (1) explore the symbolic polarities of the exotic, the familiar, the noble, and the humble, and compare the high and low discourses, and

(2) discover the significance of their interactions that cause political changes.⁷ These critics' allusions to the carnivalesque in reading Shakespeare's plays offer me various insights and means to analyze the world that his plays create with the shrews' intervention in relation to the rituals and customs of their society and culture in each play.

In addition to such critics who have successfully read Shakespeare's plays through Bakhtin's theory, *Shakespeare and Carnival: After Bakhtin* includes a collection of interesting essays. For example, Ronald Knowles (focusing on carnival and death in *Romeo and Juliet*), Stephen Longstaffe (studying Jack Cade in *2 Henry VI*), Phyllis Gorfain (analyzing the carnivalesque in *Hamlet*), Francois Laroque (examining carnival and Lent in *1 & 2 Henry VI*), and Anthony Gash (discussing carnival and the sacred in *The Winter's Tale* and *Measure for Measure*). Gash examines, from Bakhtin's interests, *The Winter's Tale* and *Measure for Measure* from theological and Platonic aspects by reading carnivalesque parodies of church rituals and argues that in *The Winter's Tale*, Leontes' last speech of an invitation to the audience is in fact, inviting them to a "communion with the actor-characters on stage" (33). Moreover, Jeffrey Johnson also reads *The Winter's Tale* with the churching ceremony in view. He relates the play to the contemporary churching of women, and focuses on the roles of Paulina as a leader and Hermione as the centre of rituals as well as the association of women as a community. Although theological perspectives are not this paper's focus, these critics have presented critical and multi-dimensional perspectives on the plays, and the diverse views are worth considering.

At the same time, Stephen Greenblatt warns us not to equate Rabelais' novel with the Renaissance popular culture by emphasizing that *Gargantua and Pantagruel* does not represent carnival, communal laughter, or festivity in the streets but it is a representation of the carnival motif, literate individualism, and words on a page ("Learning to Curse" 68). Nevertheless, considering the audience's theatrical experience of the drama, the

carnavalesque point of view offers us many opportunities to understand the situation of an upturned world. Furthermore, several of Shakespeare's "shrews," in fact, manifest classic or unexpected elements of transgression through their grotesque, empathetic, or destructive and regenerative dialogues with other characters. By violating categorical boundaries, shrews threaten social order and upturn their situations; at the same time, they may or may not carry a sense of regeneration and renewal of life. Therefore, in that way, they function ambiguously and ambivalently. By using them to create confusion in his plays, Shakespeare also has his shrewish characters bring out the varying voices and perspectives of those to whom the characters speak or are related; as such, these characters with unruly qualities can be perceived as facilitating a social critique method that is inherent in the plays in which they appear.

Although I will begin by referring to Bakhtin's carnival views as useful means to explain the dramatic consequences that Shakespeare's shrews may create, this paper also avoids strict gender dichotomies and monolithic readings, with the intention to confront the play sceptically and flexibly, rather than to present a strict Bakhtinian interpretation. Thus, my arguments will not always follow his lines of thought: specifically, some of my views on the representations of women are rather associated with a dark or gloomy tone, and their disruptions may not bring the festive mode to the drama. In such cases, Bakhtin's optimistic world, which Robert Barrie calls "the festival of spring, of sunrise of morning" (41), will not be validated in my paper. Thus, alternative and mixed readings may provide useful insights to the principle suggestion that shrews are socially disruptive and unruly. Therefore, I will consider referring to various aspects, wherever possible, including feminist and psychoanalytical perspectives to regard Shakespeare's representation of shrews.

A feminist reading of female unruliness, for instance, provides one of the means to consider the way in which shrewishness challenges conventional gender roles and questions

the treatment of women. Anna Kamaralli argues that shrewish women in Jacobean literature, including Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and John Webster's *The White Devil*, specifically challenge "the misogynistic classifications of the female" and use shrewish women to "highlight their nature as artificially constructed and imposed, and inadequate to define the possibilities of womanhood" (1122). In other words, she suggests that the classification of women as shrewish in plays—such as *The Winter's Tale* and even *The Taming of the Shrew* is fundamentally misleading. Indeed, reading the representation of transgressive women that challenges the stereotypical representation of women on the stage in the plays of that period implies an important alternative perspective to that offered by Bakhtin.

Another perspective that I must consider is the relationship between shrews, witches, and the supernatural world. As I shall illustrate in Chapter 3, Margaret in the *Henry VI* plays is portrayed alongside Joan la Pucelle in *1 Henry VI* and Eleanor Cobham in *2 Henry VI*, and these women are represented as witch-like characters who transgress into the supernatural world. In the feminist studies on witches, such as those in *Macbeth*, Caliban in *The Tempest*, and Joan la Pucelle in *1 Henry VI*, although the characters are very differently represented, the studies mainly focus on gender and cultural/political issues surrounding women in early modern England. For example, in *Caliban and the Witch*, Silvia Federici provides us some historical research on witches in the 15th- to 17th-century Europe and Colonial America. Noting that witch-hunts occurred "simultaneously" with the New World colonization or at the beginning of the slave trade (164), Federici examines the persecution of witches in the context of capitalist development. She believes that the witches represented women who resisted social order, thus, the patriarchal society was anxious to destroy them. On the other hand, the creation of witches in *Macbeth* had different motives, according to Stephen Greenblatt. It is generally thought that *Macbeth* was written in 1606 to celebrate King James I's accession to the throne of England in 1603. King James is known as a writer of

Daemonologie (1597) which includes debates on witches. King James defines a witch as follows: “Curiositie in great ingines: thirst of revenge, for some tortes deeply apprehended: or greedie appetite of geare, caused through great pouerty. As to the first of these, Curiosity, it is onelie the inticement of *Magiciens*, or *Necromanciers*: and the other 2 are the allureres of the *Sorcerers*, or *Witches*” (qtd. in “Shakespeare Bewitched” 2). In other words, witches are poor, greedy, and vengeful women, who commune with Satan to achieve their purpose. According to Greenblatt, Shakespeare’s witches are poised between two constructions: either they are “disgusting old women with a taste for malice” (as King James presents all witches); or they are “evil incarnate, multiple Satans in drag”—Macbeth is disturbed to see that they have beards (1.3.46, “Shakespeare Bewitched” 118). Moreover, in Michael Hattaway’s comments on early modern witchery and Joan la Pucelle in *1 Henry VI*, he claims that women with little political power need to resort to witchcraft as a “method of bettering one’s condition when all else had failed” (37). Hattaway then comments that early critics saw Joan la Pucelle in *1 Henry VI* as a figure in a historical allegory: a witch who had cast a spell on England. These critics see Shakespeare’s witches as society’s outcasts, who rebel against their leaders. In other words, the witch-like characters may be seen as those with little political powers whose association with the supernatural powers allows them to resist the society that alienates them. The reading of certain Shakespeare’s unruly women as witches applies less readily to Margaret in the *Henry VI* plays since there is no textual evidence that she has supernatural powers per se. Nevertheless, the textual depiction of Margaret’s subversive power over the male characters may be taken as her defiance to the society. Thus, by decentring the plays and by focusing on the female characters who transgress their social and gender boundaries to challenge the authority, I intend to bring the readers’ attention to the significance of subversive powers and disorder that Shakespeare’s shrews create in the plays.

However, another potential approach to considering shrewish characters, emerges through the psychoanalytical theory of abjection developed by Julia Kristeva, one of the early introducers of Bakhtin's work to Western readers.⁸ Kristeva defines abjection as violent reaction to the breakdown of meaning that occurs when there is a loss of distinction between the subject and object. The idea of abjection "preserves what exists in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be" (10). In my analysis, this theory particularly applies to a reading of Margaret in the *Henry VI* plays, considering her power on her son, husband, lover, and enemies. A. D. Busse notably applies a theory of abjection to early modern drama conventions and specifically the use of space in *Hamlet* to relate to some performative quality that abjection functions in the relationship between Hamlet and Gertrude. In *Hamlet*, Busse suggests that abjection "unites [the] experiences of birth, sex, and death" (73) that culminate in Hamlet's relationship with his mother: "the maternal function comes to stand not only for the subject's pre-symbolic existence in its imagined wholeness but also for all that which must be cast aside continually in order for the subject to exist...any reminder of one's material origins or morality" (73). Although there is no textual evidence to convince me to read Gertrude as a shrew character, Busse's insight about the significance of the strong bond (physical and psychological) between the mother and child in relation to the mother's selfish motivation is useful for my examination of the psychoanalytical ties between Margaret and the male characters in the *Henry VI* plays. Hence, psychoanalytical readings of mother-son relationship may provide a new perspective to the textual necessity of transgressive mothers.

In the following four chapters, I intend to examine Shakespeare's representation of various types of shrews in his works. I have chosen characters from various categories of plays in order to demonstrate the comprehensive variety of unruliness represented by Shakespeare's female characters. The chapters in this paper are not placed chronologically

because it does not serve my purpose to identify any chronological or categorical connections in the plays. As explained below, I have placed them in the present order to serve my purpose of presenting each of the dramatic meaning and effect of the shrew characters with ease. Moreover, among many of the possible Shakespearean shrews, I have chosen the characters whom I consider exemplify the similarities and differences in Shakespeare's representation of them: the characters are selected from different genres of plays written at different times of Shakespeare's time, and the representations of their cultures and backgrounds are diverse. These characters may share no commonalities, and they may not have been evinced as shrews in previous studies. It is a great opportunity to study the characters to investigate the fundamental nature of a shrew character and identify her in relation to the other characters, society, and culture in the Shakespearean plays.

With reference to *The Taming of the Shrew*, it is most appropriate to begin with Kate as the title alludes to the word "shrew;" therefore, it could present Shakespeare's idea of shrewishness is portrayed by Kate. I will investigate the fundamental nature of a shrew character and identify her in relation to the other characters, society, and culture in the play. The chapter examines the essential elements of the shrew and tamer figures and how the play uses them to create disorder. Thus, in Chapter 1, I will focus on the dramatic representation of Kate and Petruchio as (conspicuous, conventional, archetypal) shrew and tamer in the play. I will show how the text represents Kate and Petruchio as conventionally comical tamer and tamed characters, and how the pairs are connected with other active or passive contrasting elements, such as relations between male and female, punisher and punished, gazer and gazed-upon, and so forth. I will explain how the play constructs their interactive roles in relation to each other, to other characters, to the society, and to the audience, and how their comic "upturning" effect is produced in the play. The chapter reveals how Shakespeare

allows his shrew characters to challenge the social norms and roles in the Shakespearean world as well as in the present times.

In contrast to Kate's direct demonstrations of shrewishness, the character in the next chapter, Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well*, presents the portrayal of an inconspicuous shrew. Continuing with the shrew concept and supported by textual evidence, I will examine Shakespeare's portrayal of Helena's contrasting characteristics: silent and virtuous versus calculating and shrewish. The play repeatedly emphasizes Helena's love for Bertram in the face of Bertram's rejection of her, and demonstrates her transgressive actions in pursuit of his love. I will discuss her audacious disobedience by challenging the gender and class norms to fulfill her quest to win his love. Additionally, I will also emphasize that though her persistent pursuit disregards Bertram's unwillingness, other female characters are coerced into cooperating with her schemes, which include challenging patriarchy at the risk of self-dishonour. The chapter concludes with the possibility of a happy and gloomy end to the play despite the indication of a new life, which is markedly different from *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Chapter 3 presents a significantly different portrayal of a shrew through Queen Margaret (whom I shall refer to as "mother-shrew") in the *Henry VI* plays. My analysis of Margaret will consider her relationships with her son, her husband, and her lover. The chapter will illustrate how Shakespeare creates a character who exploits her maternal/feminine role for her own political/personal advantage. I shall outline the extreme unruliness she exhibits in her private and public lives including her interactions. Furthermore, I will elucidate how her excessive ambition eventually causes an upturning of power relations and the destruction of the men around her. This chapter claims that the playwright emphasizes the responsibility of the mother-shrew in the oppression and restriction of the male characters: infantilizing them, hindering their reintegration with her as a mother, and making them redundant. I shall argue

that Shakespeare reveals the anguish and pain suffered by the male characters in the presence of an insidious feminine power. By examining the mother-shrew through feminist and psychoanalytical means, the chapter will illustrate a very different type of a Shakespearean shrew.

The final chapter will yet again focus on a different type of a shrew: Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*, whom I shall call a "maid-shrew" on the basis that although she is a mother and wife, her most important role is as the queen's maid-of-honour. Shakespeare presents Paulina as more a woman with public duties rather than a domestic one. She is seen in social settings, performing her duties for her mistress, Hermione. I will discuss how the play emphasizes her ungovernable nature as she transcends gender and class to rule and exert power over patriarchy and avenges her mistress, and how Shakespeare allows Paulina to manipulate authority and be the master of the play's world for a limited period of time. However, I shall emphasize, the play also ironically displays the maid-shrew controlling her own mistress in the end as well. Nevertheless, the playwright creates another twist at the end of the play where the power of the threatening maid-shrew is reduced, turning her into a comical (and perhaps even pitiful) character. The chapter concludes that finally, the upturned world in Sicily, once emptied of the dead and the fled, will be invigorated with the return of friends and family, bringing spring, love, and comedy, which may include the regenerative mode as well as some gloomy tone in the play's world.

The paper demonstrates similarities and differences in the representation of shrew characteristics and their dramatic effects in Shakespeare's various plays. I will develop on these observations based on my understanding of the general themes and ideas of the plays, and will consider the point at which these distinctions become blurred through the shrew characters' interference. The boundaries, their fracturing, and their possible reestablishment can be seen as manifesting a vital tension between the preservation of the current order of the

world as represented onstage and the potential for its revolutionary overthrow. Inherent to this analysis is the conflict between the sexes, classes, and individual women and the patriarchal ideology that constructs and, at the same time, oppresses them.

Chapter 1: Motivated Scolding—A Study of Kate’s Shrewishness in

The Taming of the Shrew

1.1. Introduction

Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew* has long been regarded as the iconic model of a shrewish character, and she is likely one of the most popular (as well as most recognized) shrews in Shakespeare, or indeed in early modern drama as a whole. Furthermore, as with many of Shakespeare’s characters, Kate’s shrewishness seems mostly a repetition or a parody of the characteristics of stock characters represented in previous works. The representation of Kate as a shrew greatly depends on classical and authoritative antecedents that characterize shrews as unruly—a trait women could display through denial of domesticity and/or through participation in the public sphere. Kate’s transformation, punishment, and domestication by Petruchio, and thence by the patriarchal community, should be viewed as signifying patriarchal success. However, to consider the dramatic shrew as having been created merely to be “tamed and shamed” in public is a mere repetition of the traditional view: how, then, can we understand the nature of the play’s originality in employing and redeploying this old dramatic convention? Since this paper denies the legitimacy of the monologic representation of the dramatic shrew, it seems necessary to place it in a wider context, and examine how Shakespeare attempts to make his drama unique through his use of the shrew–tamer pair.

The notion of the literary shrew is slippery, and can encompass various types of personalities, backgrounds, classes, and even sexes, depending on the authors using it and their time period; there exist innumerable literary examples of unruly women who are designated shrewish in various literary texts, and of female characters who transcend social rules being regarded as having committed a crime that requires punishment. At the same time, the concept of Shakespeare’s shrew, which embodies complexity and implies rich

social, cultural, political, and literary backgrounds, has never been properly defined; yet literary history has always associated it with punishment. Indeed, despite the fact that the shrew was one of the era's popular stock characters, dramatic shrewishness remained a broad but inchoate idea. It may not be too much to say that the uncertainty of shrews' position in drama is precisely what prompts theatrical productions to attempt various representations, resulting in more diverse and interesting interpretations.

I shall take this theatrical potential into account in order to show how the text's emphasis on the designing of Kate as what superficially seems like a conventional shrew is materialized by Petruchio's act of punishment. Kate remains, in a way, a "natural" shrew until Petruchio appears in the play to take the rein to tame her, and this taming process is acted out and creates some unique consequences, to be enjoyed by the audience, when the dramatic positions of Kate as a shrew and Petruchio as a tamer become clear and concrete. I shall show how Shakespeare creates what seems like a conventionally angry shrew through his careful characterization, and how Kate as conspicuous shrew is materialized through well-calculated dialogues with her tamer and other punishing characters in Padua, who seem to reflect the contemporary cultural tendency to use the punishing opportunity to experience power over the punished. I will show how the playwright uses this rather "safe" literary convention as a basis to create a unique, topsy-turvy confusion within the play's world, making the play more enjoyable and perhaps more puzzling for the audience.

1.2. The player shrew and the culturally produced shrew

The whole play is framed by an "induction," where the Lord and the players trick Christopher Sly and make him believe he is a lord himself, seeing a shrew-taming play. Act 1, Scene 1 opens with Gremio and Hortensio talking about their desire to marry beautiful and virtuous Bianca, one of the daughters of Baptista, whose sister Kate is feared by the people of

Padua due to her scolding nature. Baptista tells the men that Bianca can marry only after her sister Kate is also married off. Petruchio arrives in Padua and hears about Kate's dowry, and decides to woo her. Finally, they get married and go back to Petruchio's home in Verona, where his taming of Kate is carried out. Initially, he softens her up by refusing to allow her food, sleep, or new clothes. The taming enters a new phase when they go back to Padua to attend Bianca and Lucentio's wedding: Petruchio coerces Kate into agreeing with every silly thing he says and obeying him. In the final scene, the men, Petruchio, Lucentio, and Hortensio (now married to a rich Widow), bet on whose wife is most obedient, and order their wives to come to their husbands. Both Bianca and the Widow refuse, and only Kate comes to Petruchio, where she makes a long speech on the significance of the wife's obedience to her husband. The play ends with a completely tamed Kate, though the text leaves quite ambiguous the degree of irony with which we are meant to read this result.

According to Emily Detmer's examination of the play's historical context, the husband's domination of his wife was natural and her transgression of boundaries had to be watched carefully in Shakespeare's time (Detmer 276). Moreover, Susan Amussen states that the patriarchal culture allowed violence and the community would have intervened when woman's life was in danger (Amussen 70-89). Household violence was acknowledged as necessary discipline and master's responsibility, and restricting and monitoring appropriate spousal aggression was a community responsibility. It seems violence was one of the common ways to discipline a wife in Shakespeare's time and the audience would have taken the play's rough scenes comically. Nevertheless, the playwright's emphasis on the conventional power politics that gradually alters throughout the play needs special attention. The play emphasizes the dramatic role of Kate as a common or conventional shrew (one that scolds and acts violently), whose shrewishness is materialized when Petruchio plays the role of tamer and punishes her on stage. For example, just as many conventional scold figures are

associated with the metaphorical image of an excessive tongue, so does Kate's lively rhetoric work as an abstract sign of the threatening power of fertile femininity to generate more language; it is a textual garrulity that is controlled. Kate's discourse is dialogically related to the play's cultural realm, which is controlled by the ideology that engulfs the entire taming process. For example, Kate revolts against and violates regulatory norms with her extreme scolding, expressed both in the tempestuousness of her rhetoric and in her actions, and many of her words are constructed as reactions to attacks or uninterested attitude of others. The play reveals, in Kate's violent discourse, her own styles of speech and performance with which to express, displace, and reshape her anger and grief, as well as to subvert and trap others. Let me now trace in detail how Shakespeare constructs Kate's rhetorical boldness and how that affects the play's world.

As mentioned above, *The Taming of the Shrew* begins with male characters discussing their wish to marry an ideal woman, Bianca, and comparing her with her scolding sister Kate. As if to confirm their description of her as a shrew, Kate first appears on stage, physically and verbally attacking Bianca and abusing the other Paduans. Here, the audience may witness the traditionally common standard shrew in her element in a slapstick-like comedy world. Kate's aggressiveness cannot be controlled by the Paduans, who dare not approach her and she is quite a handful even for her father Baptista.

From the beginning of the play, Shakespeare presents Kate as an angry shrew (though the target or reason for her anger are unclear), and her words and acts express her shrewishness in no uncertain terms. For example, her first lines embody her dissatisfaction with her father and the Paduans' treatment of her: "I pray you sir, is it your will / To make a stale of me amongst these mates?" (1.1.57-58);⁹ she also shows clear signs of bitterness when her father appears to favour Bianca: "Why, and I trust I may go too, may I not? / What, shall I be appointed hours as though, belike, / I knew not what to take and what to leave?"

Ha!” (102-04), and displays frustration with Bianca’s silence, placed in obvious opposition to her shrewishness: “Her silence flouts me, and I’ll be revenged” (2.1.29). It seems clear that Kate’s anger is directed towards both her father and sister, at least on the surface; but there is an amalgam of genres and voices in Kate’s acts of revenge, tricks, deceptions, and wordplays. While the amalgam is ludic, her rhetoric is a reaction to the surrounding characters’ words and attitudes. Her language even reflects that she engages in physical violence—“It is best put finger in the eye, and she knew why” (1.1.58, 78)—actually restraining Bianca and striking Hortensio (the same physical punishments that she, too, will later undergo). Kate’s language and action make her unruliness plain: her shrewish words and behaviour are so *outré* that the Paduan public cannot help but notice and recoil from them. Moreover, these rhetorical practices not only relate to the potentially threatening excess of language but also *are* that excess, and the necessity of social control in Padua. Then, after her marriage, when Petruchio becomes an object of interest to her, she comes face-to-face with a new type of tyrannical master, whose strong dialogical power stimulates and amplifies her shrewish reactions. When Petruchio decides to return home immediately after the wedding, Kate’s response changes from simple reactivity to obstinacy: “The door is open, sir, there lies your way” (3.3.82). This obstinacy emerges from her strong emotional confusion: “My tongue will tell the anger of my heart” (4.3.77); if Kate’s tongue is an instrument for expressing her emotional reactions to people and situations, then her body politic and body of rhetoric may be associated metaphors, whereby her dilatory rhetoric expresses her increasing frustration with the world around her. Thus, it seems the fluidity of dialogue reflects the fluidity of the play as a whole.

Through this emphatic representation of Kate’s shrewishness, at the same time the tamer Petruchio sets a conventional stage for her unruly role-playing. There is an underlying ambivalence in their overt reasons for behaving this way, but it is worth looking closely into

Kate's transgressive qualities and their dramatic consequence in the context of her and Petruchio's actual language, actions, multiplicity of abuses of one another and of "outsiders," and unrefined and confrontational speech. In so doing, I develop a new perspective on the shrew-figure through the characters of Kate and Petruchio: the textual representation of their "shrewish collaboration" helps to overturn the play's world, into which various dramatic characters or roles are dragged and whose voices can be heard in Kate's and Petruchio's open-ended dialogues.

The play's design of Kate, though it complicates her shrew role, still renders her liable to public defamation and punishment and in this sense conforms her to the Renaissance image of the scold, which the audience would have been aware of and enjoyed. For example, she says, "I must dance barefoot on [Bianca's] wedding day" (2.1.33), publicly degrading herself to a grotesque display that will certainly spectacularize her and draw a visceral audience response. Moreover, she explains how Petruchio's public absence shames her on their wedding day: "No shame but mine . . . / . . . / Now must the world point at poor Katherine / And say, 'Lo, there is mad Petruchio's wife / If it would please him come and marry her!'" (3.2.8-20). The play's emphatic representation of Kate's liability to public shame is a conspicuous sign of the shrew-making process at work in the play's world. It seems that Shakespeare perpetuates the conventional shrew-taming stories and the Renaissance sociocultural constructs that they reflect. The playwright seems to take advantage of the shrew's voluminous character and dramatic capital to elicit in his audience the Renaissance cultural fear of women's unruliness and divergence from their proper place.

While Kate is being constructed as a stereotypical comical shrew, Petruchio is similarly represented as a conventional comical tamer: he deprives Kate of food and sleep ("Am starved for meat, giddy for lack of sleep" [4.3.9]); establishes his authority ("I will be master of what is mine own. She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house, My

household-stuff, my field, my barn, My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything” [3.3.102-104]); and confirms his power (“Thus have I politicly begun my reign” [4.1.174]). Even when Kate and Petruchio are not in the scene, we learn from Curtis, the servant, that Kate’s scolding and Petruchio’s taming continue; he is “Making a sermon of continency to her,” “And rails, and swears, and rates, that she, poor soul, / Knows not which way to stand, to look, to speak, / And sits as one new risen from a dream” (4.1.169-72). Thus, in the play, punishment takes various forms, and enough opportunities are provided for the punishers to oppress a shrew and show off power in the Paduan society. The interactions staged within the play have a vicarious power as we watch a poor shrew being tamed.

1.3. Game and power

The play dramatizes the changes in the shrew-taming process as Petruchio punishes Kate harshly and Kate reacts first violently but later obediently. Such changes may bring confusion and upturn the comedic world that has existed to this point, bringing the relationships between shrew and tamer, real and fake into a state of uncertainty. The upturned world has indeed caused confusion among various critics: some have questioned the sincerity and the real purpose of Petruchio’s words and behaviours (Thompson 38-9); the consensus is that Petruchio’s speech in general cannot be taken seriously, but only as ironical. More specifically, Coppélia Kahn, in *Man’s Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare*, argues that the import of Petruchio’s is too blatant to be taken seriously: “Both utterances unashamedly present the status of woman in marriage as degrading in the extreme, plainly declaring her a subhuman being who exists solely for the purposes of her husband” (112). In this reading, the text suggests that the shrew-taming process is not to be taken seriously, and the audience indeed is reminded at times that the action is merely a game that the playwright has created for the characters to take part in—as the Lord’s speech in the additional passages reminds

Sly, “this is but the play, they’re but in jest” (5.1.104). Petruchio and Hortensio suggest several times that they are merely playing roles in order to provoke Kate into participating; when Kate and Petruchio meet Vincentio, Hortensio reminds Kate to play the role imposed on her by Petruchio, “Say as he [Petruchio] says or we shall never go” (4.6.11, 24). At the same time, the text shows that there is a winner and loser in this game, at least on the surface, as Petruchio says, “’Twas I won the wager . . . And being a winner . . .” (5.2.191-92). Thus, the text seems to suggest that the whole shrew-taming process is a game whose fun includes the delineation of a distinction between winner and loser, implying the winner’s superiority on some level. The punisher can enjoy his power to punish the shrew and confirm it thereby. Winner and loser, tamer and tamed, or punisher and punished remain current concepts throughout the upturning that characterizes this play, and Shakespeare gradually makes this (game-)playing element stronger within and through the confusion he creates.

In that the play allows Petruchio always to win the “game” against Kate, it emphasizes the tamer’s power, expressed in the punishing act. It is indeed this element of punishment that expresses the core of the confusing relationship between the binary relations to have a dramatic meaning. The relationship between the idea of shrewishness and the taming of the shrew is a dynamic consequence of this binary opposition.

The figure of the shrew, by nature, becomes part of the comedy to the audience. By theatricalizing her punishment, the crime of the accused may be reflected on her body, through which she and other potential shrews, as well as the overall object of patriarchal control (including the socially weak ones), may feel threatened. It also seems pertinent to emphasize the playwright’s intention to make Kate and Petruchio an object of the audience’s gaze by using their bodies as a medium that reflects not only power politics at work but also social anxiety towards the unruly for the instability its transgressiveness causes, and a medium also that reveals the significance of Shakespeare’s chosen means of demonstrating

the power dynamic between the gazer and the gazed-upon. In other words, the theatre becomes a locus of social control that uses Kate and Petruchio as mediators of a complex relationship between the subject and object. Through Kate's and Petruchio's shrew-taming process, it seems Shakespeare reveals the Paduan cultural surroundings that must create and punish unruly women as well as the Renaissance power politics in his society.

In a way, the shrew represents and satirizes the voices of all the people involved: both those who are called shrews and those who are watching them (either in the role of punishers or potential punishers onstage or as the audience). At the same time, while punishment of shrews often included either or both physical or verbal oppression, it also commonly had the objective of making a show of their situation and embarrassing them—as well as any onlookers, as explained below. Public punishment of the shrew blurs the borderline previously distinguished between political and domestic. Moreover, punishing the shrew, who is embodied only ambiguously, requires forcing her woman's body into a political field, and this act, while in one sense explicitizing the shrew, itself also makes the female more female than ever in this scheme. Let me next explain below how the playwright incorporates this confusion within his well-thought-out game-making process.

1.4. Confusion in the shrew-taming play

Though *The Taming of the Shrew* may seem like a slapstick comedy and though Shakespeare represents Kate and Petruchio as embodying the traditional roles of tamed and tamer, there are also dialogic constructions that display the process of production of confusion. The dialogues between the characters demonstrate careful planning of verse and prose. For example, the playwright employs a hemistichomythia in Kate and Petruchio's dispute just after their first meeting in Act 2, Scene 1. The blank verse and repetitions in the following dialogue are efficiently used by the pair for textual advantage (both vis-à-vis each

other and in relation to the audience): where Kate leaves lines open, they are filled out by Petruchio to elicit further replies and make the dialogue lively. Kate is induced into reacting to his use of the word “move” and, for an instant, breaks from iambic pentameter, but then continues to play on the word:

KATHERINA: ‘Moved’—in good time! Let him that moved you hither

Remove you hence. I knew you at the first

You were a movable.

PETRUCHIO: Why, what’s a movable?

KATHERINA: A joint stool.

PETRUCHIO: Thou hast hit it. Come sit on me. (2.1.195-198)

Both “move” and “stool” may insinuate a prevalent early modern punishment of the shrew, referencing the known narrative of an ancient scold who was moved out of her house for a public punishment, and carried around town on a cucking stool. Moreover, Kate’s further word-play on “joint stool” and Petruchio’s offer to her to sit on him rather than a stool reveal the play’s clear intention of utilizing the cultural punishment of a scold to reflect a more positive dramatic narrowing of the characters’ distance and the establishment of a certain bantering intimacy between them. The shrew-tamer scenes show us that there is a well-calculated structure of dialogue-making at work that gradually leads the audience into the play’s confused world.

Furthermore, despite the play’s overt assertion of Kate’s unruliness, her dialogue is logical and shows no signs of lack of reason, and she quickly learns to align herself with Petruchio. Their dialogue takes the form of well-considered, tight verse; the principals’ puns and wordplay on “buzz” (2.1.206), “buzzard” (206-8), “wasp” (209, 210), “sting” (210), and

“tongue” (213, 216), bringing in multifarious meanings, continue until Kate slaps Petruchio. This is relevant to their power dynamic as well since she who resorts to violence just shows that she has lost the argument. Using their conventional shrew–tamer relationship as a base, Shakespeare expands their awareness of each other and carries off many sophisticated rhetorical structures and effects.

While the play reveals Kate’s skillful control of rhetoric within her superficially unruly words, this is also obviously balanced with Petruchio’s own ripostes, which are well constructed, edited, and reasoned. For example, quickly noticing Kate’s anger towards her father, Petruchio compares her with a “dove” (2.1.288), “Grissel” (290), and “Lucrece” (291); this makes us laugh, since “Grissel” indicating Griselda in Giovanni Boccaccio’s *The Decameron* (the name also appears in Petrarch, Geoffrey Chaucer, Thomas Dekker, and so forth) is symbolic for female patience and obedience, and “Lucrece” or “Lucretia” is a symbolical name for a virtuous and chaste woman, and none of them are suitable names to describe Kate. However, the lines “yourself and all the world / That talked of her have talked amiss of her” (285-26) also indicate the socially shared nature of the responsibility for making her a shrew. The play shows us how Shakespeare evinces his characters as players of shrew and tamer roles that are traditionally and culturally made. While the characters in the play frequently imply how the couple may be unruly, the text, in fact, reveals how reasonable and carefully constructed their dialogues may be.

Further, as the play proceeds the text shows how Kate’s rhetorical changes begin to reflect the progression of her taming. These changes are counterpoised against her physical journey between the two households, one in Padua and one in Verona, and her emotional journey between roles and into the world of the carnivalesque, where binaries are mingled intricately and blurred. This carnivalesque moment is especially evident in the final act, in which Kate appears definitively tamed in word and action by Petruchio. Kate’s obedient

speech and actions at the end, neatly placed as contingent responses to Petruchio's commands, are not only too dubious to be taken literally but also, further, ironically materialize evidence of an already overturned world, where such differences and roles no longer bear much meaning.

Let us consider Petruchio's transgression of norms in Act 4, where he calls the sun the moon and invites Kate to join in on this characterization. "And be it moon or sun or what you please" (4.6.13), she responds, showing that she is gradually learning to cooperate with Petruchio, falling into shrewish harmony with him in both (the form and content of) their words and their actions.

PETRUCHIO: I say it is the moon.

KATHERINA: I know it is the moon.

PETRUCHIO: Nay then you lie, it is the blessed sun.

KATHERINA: Then God be blessed, it is the blessed sun.

But sun it is not, when you say it is not,

And the moon changes even as your mind.

What you will have it named, even that it is,

And so it shall be so for Katherine. (4.6.16-23)

This dialogue may sound like nonsense but it shows Petruchio's aggressive move into unreality as opposed to Kate's seemingly self-defensive move. The textual aim in showing Kate as condescending to agree with Petruchio, even though his mind changes as quickly as the moon, indicates her flexibility (willingness and ability) to join his game-playing and her good comprehension of the changing situation. The play insinuates frequently in this way that

the upturning of the roles of characters and gender and power relations is slowly but surely permeating the play's world.

One of the amusements of the comedy comes when the upturned world of Kate and Petruchio encounters and entangles the other characters, to their confusion, as in their meeting with Vincentio. The pair deploys the overturned world they have been perfecting, in which subjects and names are mixed and confused:

PETRUCHIO: Good morrow, gentle mistress, where away?

Tell me, sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty's sake.

HORTENSIO: A will make the man mad to make the woman of him.

KATHERINA: Young budding virgin, fair, and fresh, and sweet,

Whither away, or where is thy abode?

Happy the parents of so fair a child,

Happier the man whom favourable stars

Allots thee for his lovely bedfellow.

PETRUCHIO: Why, how now, Kate, I hope thou art not mad.

This is a man, old, wrinkled, faded, withered,

And not a maiden, as thou sayst he is.

KATHERINA: Pardon, old father, my mistaking eyes

That have been so bedazzled with the sun

That everything I look on seemeth green. (4.6.28-48)

The dialogue includes many subjects and, just as Vincentio is lost, the audience can hardly follow the conversation: people may be arbitrarily old or young, father or son, man or woman, wife or maid, mad or not mad, public or private, responsible or not responsible for making a mistake. To make the situation more confusing, Petruchio speaks to Vincentio in a complex manner: “my loving father. / The sister to my wife, this gentlewoman, / Thy son by this hath married” (626-4), complicating the subject and the object, and Vincentio’s lines show that he is completely lost, “But is this true, or is it else your pleasure / Like pleasant travellers to break a jest / Upon the company you overtake?” (72-74). The more confused Vincentio appears to become with the carnivalesque world created by the pair, the more puzzling and amusing the comedy becomes.

The final scene more than any other has often caused controversy among readers, audience, and critics, and some theatrical productions exploit to the hilt the freedom to utilize this confusion to interpret the scene in their own way. In that the play has been centred around the gradual taming of a shrew, Kate’s completely unshrewish speech here makes an impression: “A woman moved is like a fountain troubled, / Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty / . . . / Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, / Thy head, thy sovereign: one that cares for thee” (5.2.147-52). Her contradictory and disquieting subordination at the play’s end exacerbates the strangeness of its conclusion:

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

. . .

Come, come, you froward and unable worms!

My mind hath been as big as one of yours,

My heart as great, my reason haply more,

To bandy word for word and frown for frown.

But now I see our lances are but straws,

Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare,

That seeming to be most which we indeed least are. (5.2.166-80)

The words do not match the Kate we know; and the audience may obviously wonder if she really means it. Kate's carefully ordered rhetoric here invites a historicist reading of her situation, in that it clearly echoes a collection of prayers such as the *Book of Common Prayer*, *Homily on the State of Matrimony*, and *An Homily Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion*, which are compilations of patriarchal voices (and matrimony was among the favourite sermon subjects in this era). What looks at first glance here like harmony of man and woman, tamer and the tamed, thus, patriarchal victory, may in fact be a sign of yet another upturned world, which now entwines new members: Lucentio, Bianca, Hortensio, and the Widow.

This waxing carnivalesque continues within the play, where the shrew's role is now taken over by Bianca and the Widow, who express their satisfaction in their security as a result of having married their husbands but whose reactions to their husbands indicate both the desire to be freed from restrictions and mixed feelings regarding their own shrewishness. Their voices may indeed distill those of contemporary people of different sexes, classes, statuses, backgrounds, and so forth. Depending on the scene and situation, for example, Bianca is represented as playing the roles of sister, daughter, lover, and later, unruly wife.

The Widow, although she appears only in the final scene, seems well aware of her position in comparison with Kate:

WIDOW: Your husband, being troubled with a shrew,

Measures my husband's sorrow by his woe.

And now you know my meaning.

KATHERINA: A very mean meaning.

WIDOW: Right, I mean you.

(5.2.30-34)

The comedy thus comes around to reintroduce the shrew-play, with new shrew characters joining in the game: much like Kate and Petruchio did previously, it is now the turn of the Widow and Kate to play on the word “mean” (32-34), and the Widow, by calling Kate a “shrew” (30) and comparing Petruchio with her own husband, indirectly acknowledges her position as a shrew. The Widow tells Petruchio that “He that is giddy thinks the world turns round” (20), but it turns out sure enough that she and Bianca are now playing the role of shrew and specifically disobedient wife that Kate used to assume—refusing to take part in the men’s play, calling it a “silly pass” and a “foolish duty” (5.2.129, 130); their introduction of disorder into the patriarchal society is a case of the shrew’s history repeating; just as the Widow and Bianca now speak like Kate once did, Hortensio’s wish to tame his wife reflects Petruchio’s former programme. The present echoes the past; but the uniqueness of this play is that this seemingly conventional ending itself is also an upturned ending. Shakespeare brings out the voices of other women, who were previously unheard before, and also those of the men who are required to control female unruliness both in their home and society, unwittingly and perhaps unwillingly entangled in the carnivalesque of the shrew-play, as we

witness Kate and Petruchio watch the game. The confusion created in the play is thus both conventional and unique, and the representation of the shrew-and-tamer game is fascinating and amusing.

As this chapter has tried to make clear, the playwright in the finale deliberately reveals the characters as players, of transgressive shrew and tamer roles. Shakespeare constructs Kate's ambivalent, shrewish nature through her dialogic relationship with Petruchio, the other characters, her society and culture, and the audience, the dramatic topsy-turvy world of *The Taming of the Shrew*. The overturning effect, which brings down all power relations, may certainly clear the field for new power relations: the play insinuates that shrewishness will be inherited by the Widow and Bianca, and female subversiveness will continue to underlie the play's world. An interesting dramatic consequence is that the play's world, that began as a play-within-a-play, by the time it reaches the finale, removes such a framework and the difference between the watcher and the watched no longer seems important. Perhaps the audience may recognize even themselves as implicated in their role as witnesses of the moment, and understand their responsibility for (or participation in) the shrew-making process.

1.5. Conclusion

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Shakespeare represents the extremity of shrewish unruliness and the exploitation of the unruly as volatile enough to cause the play's world to turn upside-down, overthrowing comedic convention and making the various characters' roles and power relations ambivalent. At the same time, the reiteration of comedic (that is, dramatic) as well as social convention reinforces the theatricalized nature of the play's comical world and thus, the safe enjoyment of the audience. Kate's ambivalently shrewish nature is dialogically constructed through her relationships with the other characters and with

her society and culture. The consequences of her own and eventually the other women's shrewishness include multiplying complexities of plot, straining and/or easing the characters' relations, and the creation of a carnivalesque space within the play's world, allowing the voices of various characters (male and female, old and young, masters and servants, players and audience, and so forth) to be heard.

The complexity of these role reversals and power relations, expressed through the inclusion of verbal and physical violence, laughter, and wonders, allows shrews some opportunity for free utterances of dialogic discourse. Within the carefully represented carnivalesque in the play's world, the characters are urged to betray the boundaries enforced by the play's cultural world. Under Bakhtin's notion of festive misrule, abusive language has the power to overturn hierarchy; Kate's abundant discursive use of epithets, puns, and hyperbole signifies such a carnivalesque misrule, and her unruly behaviour, as well as Petruchio's violent taming, may also overturn hierarchical, gender, tamer/tamed, punisher/punished relations in and through their very extremity, as discussed. At the same time, what may seem like the couple's harmony at the end of the play is in fact a confirmation of the concreteness of the upturned world in the play, which now embraces the other dramatic characters, who were themselves previously "watching" and enjoying the shrew-taming process in the play, allies in this sense of the audience. However, all this "seeming" is itself a carefully crafted carnivalesque intrinsic to Shakespeare's comedy, the complexity of which functions as a measure of the depth of the play. When the play comes to a close, the public order seems restored and the private sphere re-established, entailing an end to unruliness; the female protagonist must accept cultural norms and behave as a virtuous wife according to the Christian doctrine of marriage, while a male character has, as he must, successfully tamed the shrew, at least in public.

Chapter 2: Does All End Well?—A Study of Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well*

2.1. Introduction

All's Well That Ends Well features another complex shrew, distinct from Kate and from the women who will be observed in later chapters. Shakespeare represents Helena as having an unsettling, enigmatic quality, showing an ambivalent contrast between her silence and passivity, on the one hand, and her extreme passion for Bertram, which moves her to pursue him persistently, on the other. Her pursuit is explored in various ways and stages that highlight, certainly, her strong love for Bertram; but an issue to be considered is that the text also repeatedly emphasizes that Bertram is unwilling to play the role of her lover; he refuses to marry her and continues to reject her until he is cornered; that is to say, the more he resists her, the more she needs to react transgressively in order to “get” him. Both characters may thus be represented as diptych: the selfish pursuer of love and the pursued.

As opposed to the unwilling Bertram, the play shows Helena’s persistent pursuit, which transgresses the conventional behaviour of the virtuous woman; the more the play shows Bertram rejecting her, the more her transgression is enhanced and her pursuit made to seem more unruly in nature. Nevertheless, at the same time, the play also displays how Helena becomes stronger through her shrewish—unruly and selfish—pursuit. As I explore Helena’s progress, I will also observe how the play presents various other female characters and events that help Helena overcome difficulties in pursuing her love. The text paves the way for the shrew’s path, and shows that while the shrewish pursuit of passion involves, to some extent, freedom and less responsibility of transgressive action, but the transgression surely causes a dramatic disturbance. Thus, as the title suggests, the drama seems to end well superficially, but as I will examine, the dramatic effect of the shrew character with regards to the play’s world cannot be reduced to this pat ending.

2.2. Helena's transgressive love pursuit

In *All's Well That Ends Well*, we can see that much time and space is devoted to representing Helena's fluctuation between her passion for Bertram and withdrawal from him, while Bertram is represented as consistently escaping or trying to escape from her throughout the play. Helena, the play's protagonist, is a physician's daughter, now an orphan, who attends on the Countess of Roussillon. Helena has long loved Bertram, but does not dare to reveal her feeling until Bertram takes over his deceased father's position and goes to Paris to work as the King of France's ward. Helena follows him to the French court, where she heals the King's illness, for the reward of which she demands Bertram as her husband. Bertram rejects her, saying that he would only accept her if she were to become pregnant with his child, and goes to war in Florence, where he makes advances to Diana. Helena, in broken heart, goes on a pilgrimage to Florence, where she hears rumours of Bertram seducing Diana and so persuades Diana to help her with a "bed-trick" plan, as the result of which Helena becomes pregnant and obtains Bertram's family ring. At the French court, Bertram is about to marry Lafew's daughter, but is thwarted by the appearance first of Diana and then of pregnant Helena. They together reveal his shameful secrets. The King's anger, which was initially primarily targeted at Diana, is now transferred to Bertram's misdeeds, as he orders him to accept Helena. Bertram asks Helena for forgiveness, and Helena, having met Bertram's condition and becomes pregnant by him, is now able to become Bertram's legitimate wife.

Helena's quest to obtain her love's object begins when she decides to pursue Bertram to the court in Paris, and thence to Florence, Marseille, and back again to Roussillon. In depicting her following Bertram around and overcoming various obstacles to push her way through and triumph, the text reveals Helena's deep fervour for Bertram, which strengthens as the play proceeds. For example, at the beginning of the play, after Bertram bids farewell to

his mother before leaving for Paris, Helena's opening speech expresses her strong adoration for Bertram: she describes her love as pious, saying that she is "Religious," and adores "The sun" (1.3.201, 202); that she cannot live without Bertram ("I am undone. There is no loving, none, / If Bertram be away" [83-84]); but that she is inhibited by her lack of confidence due to her low status, which, she thinks, makes her no fit match for Bertram: "he is so above me" (1.1.86); "I am from humble, he from honoured name" (1.3.152). In fact, Shakespeare indicates that this issue of class difference is a reason for Helena's low self-esteem generally as well as for Bertram's retreat from her throughout the play. To the degree that power politics permeate the play, it is all too obvious that Helena is disadvantaged as a single female—a doctor's daughter, now an orphan, working for the Roussillon household; her present state is repeatedly referred to within the play, and her utterance, "I know I love in vain, strive against hope" (1.3.197), emphasizes her position and makes her appear pitiful.

At the same time, the play underlines the protagonist's strong passion, which moves her to shrewish pursuit ("Th'ambition in my love thus plagues itself" [1.1.89]), supported by other female characters and various lucky twists of fate that occur in the play. Her first helper is the Countess Roussillon who as Helena's sympathetic friend always supports her. Helena can speak to the Countess about her love for Bertram and her plan to go to Paris, and the Countess shows understanding of her love, viewing it as a youthful passion—"her eye is sick on't" (1.3.131, 132)—of a kind that the Countess also has experienced in her youth:

Even so it was with me when I was young.

If ever we are nature's, these are ours: this thorn

Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong.

Our blood to us, this to our blood is born;

It is the show and seal of nature's truth,

Where love's strong passion is impressed in youth. (1.3.124-29)

Thus, the Countess is Helena's first female ally, and Helena is encouraged to strengthen her love, which will in a sense convert into her power to pursue the unwilling Bertram. Nevertheless, at this stage, it is a one-way love, and we do not yet know how Bertram will react.

In Act 2, Scene 1, Helena's love seems to take a big leap into active pursuit, as she is presented as a bold desirer. In fact, Act 2 shows the pair playing a kind of tag, with Bertram desperately running away and Helena obstinately following him around no matter how much she is rejected. The King, when he meets Helena for the first time, notices her forwardness: he asks her twice why she is so confident, and the second time she answers, "Tax of impudence, / A strumpet's boldness, a divulged shame" (2.1.170-71). Once Helena comes to the French court, her daring acts and deeds are especially obvious, and she carries them out despite her consciousness of her low status. Helena's boldness is significantly shown in her acts and words, which transcend class and gender barriers—even more so when we consider her in contrast to her analogues in Shakespeare's apparent source materials, such as Epitia in Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Cassandra in Giovanni Battista Giraldi's *Gli Hecatommithi*. It must be noted in this regard that this emphasis on Helena's audacity and the strong will she evinces in pursuit of Bertram is Shakespeare's invention. As opposed to her self-blame, which is not original to Shakespeare, the boldness of her passion is not present in the supposed source materials (see above), in which the female protagonists, Epitia and Cassandra, each partly analogous to Helena, neither possess Helena's strong passion nor achieve their ends by persistent pursuit.

For instance, the first phase in Helena's active campaign to obtain Bertram involves a bold approach to the King of France. Helena brings up the subject herself: "But if I help,

what do you promise me?” (2.2.190), showing us her recklessness. In contrast, in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, it is the King who first offers to bestow Helena’s analogue Giletta with a husband: “You are a maiden, it appears,...we will dispose of you in marriage to a person of great account” (IX.180). In fact, in Shakespeare’s play, although the King tries once to refuse Helena’s offer to help heal the King’s illness (2.2.145-47), Helena “sells herself” by emphasizing she has inherited her father’s skills (2.1.111-12, 157-58). Moreover, while Boccaccio’s Giletta says to the King, “I beseech your grace, let me have such a husband as I myself shall demand” (IX.181), Helena’s speech rather sounds like an order: “Then shalt thou give me with thy kingly hand / What husband in thy power I will command” (2.1.193-94). That is, she demands for her healing service to the King a favour (191) of equal quality, in a sense placing herself on the same level as him. In this context, her previously represented humble speech to the King changes its tone as forceful terms like “power” and “command” (111, 158, 194) are used; she addresses the King with the familiar “thou” and “thy,” finally demanding Bertram in return for her healing of the King: “This is the man” (2.3.105). Thus, Helena’s bold pursuit of love makes her speak and behave audaciously even in front of the King; she seems very different from the unconfident maid whom the audience witnessed in the previous scenes. The audience may notice that the text emphasizes not only Helena’s audacity but also challenging spirit to patriarchy; a daredevil who risks her honour or perhaps even life to obtain what she desires.

Moreover, *All’s Well That Ends Well* shows clear differences from related plots in Shakespeare’s other plays in terms of the way it constructs the passion that moves the focal character to act. Helena’s passion, which motivates her will to act transgressively, is distinguishable especially from that of Mariana in *Measure for Measure*—another bed-trick performer (or one who is compelled to act so), but one who is represented as waiting (that is, without taking action) for many years, sitting in the grange day after day (4.1.19-20),

listening in “brawling discontent” (4.1.9) to the boy she covets sing a woeful song, which has left her spiritless. Moreover, since the play does not present Mariana as expressing her own will (for example, even though she has been left abandoned for a long time, she immediately agrees to listen to the Duke’s bed-trick plan, saying “I am always bound to you” [4.1.24]); she is displayed rather in the mode of a puppet whose strings are pulled by all of the other characters, especially when she agrees to carry out the bed-trick. While this simpleness highlights her patience in the name of love, she is certainly not forward in love’s pursuit. Compared to Mariana, Helena’s willingness to pursue her desire’s object is clearly meant to be more aggressive, as she is shown to overcome her class-consciousness to obtain her love through transgressive pursuit. But at the same time, this daringly unruly pursuit of an unwavering goal is what makes Helena strong and unique.

The way the text complicates Helena’s path of love is interesting and wryly comical; however much she loves Bertram, he is not even remotely interested in her, since it is out of the question for him to marry her: “She had her breeding at my father’s charge. / A poor physician’s daughter, my wife? Disdain / Rather corrupt me ever” (2.3.115-17); “I cannot love her, nor will strive to do’t” (2.3.147). Bertram indicates that the class difference is his reason for not being able to love Helena, but his views are criticized by the King, who exhorts him too see Helena’s real virtue:

’Tis only title thou disdain’st in her, the which
 I can build up. Strange is it that our bloods,
 Of colour, weight, and heat, pour’d all together,
 Would quite confound distinction, yet stands off
 In differences so mighty. If she be

All that is virtuous, save what thou dislik'st—

‘A poor physician’s daughter’—thou dislik'st

Of virtue for the name. But do not so. (2.3.118-25)

The King reminds Bertram that there is also a class divide between himself, as King, and Bertram his ward, and emphasizes his kingly power over the ward (of course, in doing so, he also paradoxically contradicts his own advice to Bertram to look beyond class at Helena). The King, speaking in a harsh tone of voice with snappy and brisk lines with no rhymes, extends his argument by comparing blood with virtue and status with honour; his pronouncement is compelling, and strict with Bertram. When Bertram still does not obey, the King condescends to exercise his power overtly—“I must produce my power” (2.3.151)—and presses Bertram to follow his orders (151, 159, 161-63, 165-66). The King’s strong imposition of power even makes Helena uncomfortable, and she withdraws her proposal, “Let the rest go” (2.3.149), and never utters a word until the end of the scene, where we presume the couple’s marriage is enforced. (In the early modern context, a ward of the King of course had no choice but to conform to the King’s order [Hurstfield 192; 2.3.168].) In the play, Bertram, who is ordered by the King to “Take her by the hand / And tell her she is thine” (2.3.174-75), complies (2.3.177), at least for the time being. Thus, the King’s act of imposing order on Bertram confirms the King’s authority and the presence of strict class differences—one of the factors that both places pressure on Helena and spurs her onward.

However, even after their engagement, Bertram stubbornly continues to reject Helena, ignoring the King’s order, anticipating further complication in the play. The next scene shows Bertram admitting he does not mean what he has promised the King: “Undone and forfeited to cares for ever” (2.3.264), he has no intention of fulfilling Helena’s marriage rights, that is, he will not “bed her” (2.3.267, 270) and still does not like her: “I’ll send her to my house, /

Acquaint my mother with my hate to her” (2.3.283-84). In the early modern context, this marriage is unfulfilled since it must be followed by consummation. Marriage in early modern society was an important ritual for proving the truth of one’s love as well as one’s chastity; it ties man and wife legally, physically, and religiously, and consummation within marriage is legitimized. In other words, marriage bonds a single man and a single woman legally, bringing their untrammelled emotions into conformity with law and thus maintaining social order and stability. In early modern England, a marriage contract, also termed “spousals,” “making sure,” or “handfasting” (Ingram 189), was needed to bind a couple legally. The canon law distinguished two kinds of marriage contracts: “verba de praesenti,” a contract made in the present tense, and “per verba de futuro,” one made in the future tense. The former was indissoluble, while the latter needed to be followed with sexual consummation to ensure its validity (though Henry Swinburne, an early modern English ecclesiast and writer who lived later than Shakespeare, stated the difficulty of theoretically distinguishing the two contracts from each other [12-13]). Regardless, consummation was a sacrament of marriage and the best means of encouraging procreation, following God’s injunction to love and multiply. Without meaning to imply that humanists represented any kind of unified voice of the period (while still bearing in mind that their views on marriage and family were influential at the time), it seems reasonable to understand that consummation was regarded as a natural act only within the context of the marriage ritual, allowing “action, sealed contract and copulation” to come together (Mukherji 126-27). Thus, Bertram’s refusal to fulfill marriage rights in *All’s Well That Ends Well* is inappropriate, and the play shows him in an uncomfortable position, making excuses by lying:

You must not marvel, Helen, at my course,

Which holds not color with the time, nor does

The ministration and required office

On my particular. Prepared I was not

For such a business, therefore I am found

So much unsettled... (2.5.58-63)

Bertram's lines are filled with deceptions, merely patching things up for the moment without consideration of the consequences. At the same time, what his lines tell us is that his dislike of Helena is so strong (calling her a "clog" [2.5.53]) that he even prefers to go to the wars as opposed to being with her: "Wars is no strife / To the dark house and the detested wife" (2.3.288-89); "I'll to the wars, she to her single sorrow" (2.3.283). The play represents Bertram as not only a spoiled child but also a stubborn rejecter of Helena; he is a tough problem for her to overcome, and her strategy for doing so is to further increase her level of transgression.

The imbalance between the characters' feelings for one another is shown more clearly in the next scene. In contrast to Bertram's cruel treatment of Helena, the play displays her strong dedication to him, which seems excessive, even burdensome: "In everything / I wait upon his will" (2.4.53-54); "Sir, I can nothing say / But that I am your most obedient servant" (2.5.71-72). The text clarifies that this heavy love per se that comes from Helena is far too much for Bertram: "Come, come, no more of that" (2.5.73); nevertheless, she continues, "With true observance seek to eke out that / Wherein toward me my homely stars have failed / To equal my great fortune" (2.5.74-76). Bertram once again shows frustration: "Let that go" (2.5.76); yet Helena continues to demand a kiss in a roundabout way, which Bertram dismisses (86). The dialogue between them in Act 2, Scene 5, portrays Helena trying her best to show her wifely obedience, but also emphasizes that Bertram is fed up with her and is not likely to love her; the woman's overflowing love becomes a burden to the man, as their

contrasting feelings never seem to come together. They are both stubborn about their feelings and such a couple playing tag is comical but has rather a pessimistic tone. The stage is set for the play to grapple with and overcome this dramatic tension.

The next act shows Bertram's rejection of Helena becoming more obstinate, which finally moves Helena to challenge him by revealing her emotional turmoil. He writes his mother a letter informing her that he has married Helena unwillingly and never plans to fulfill her marriage rights (3.1.19-27), immediately upon which Helena enters the scene with a letter in hand: "When thou canst get the ring upon my finger, which never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body that I am father to, then call me husband; but in such a 'then' I write a 'never'" (3.2.57-60). The fulfillment of her love is thus an impossible future for Helena unless the present situation changes its course. She shows shock and humiliation at this turn of events, calling his words "dreadful" (3.2.61) and "bitter" (75), and reveals her anger, shame, and disappointment in a long monologue (100-31) and a letter to the Countess (3.4.4-17), in which the Countess notices the "sharp stings" (18), which may indicate both Helena's words in her letter as well as Bertram's cruel rejection of Helena. The audience may feel sympathy with the maltreated Helena, but at the same time also with Bertram, for whom Helena's passion appears to be a heavy burden. It makes us wonder what it is about Helena that Bertram rejects so strongly and obstinately, but the text does not provide any definite reasons. Thus, the dramatization of Helena's anger is necessary to sponsor her move into action later in the play; at the same time, the repeated textual stress on Bertram's refusal of her love must also be noted equally. At this stage, Shakespeare's intention of characterizing Bertram as obstinately refusing Helena is becoming gradually clearer: the drama needs a hurdle to emphasize Helena's shrewishness as her defiance against Bertram and patriarchy. The text introduces the play's full complexity and spurs the plot's changes in direction, as it shows how a seemingly virtuous woman character can turn into an aggressive shrew out to

get what she wants and perhaps to confound and avenge herself and women against the patriarchy, creating a unique space in the play's world where the usual rules are overturned.

2.3. Cooperation among women

After Bertram's betrayal, Helena initially withdraws from the stage. When she reappears in Act 3, Scene 5, she at first appears as a pilgrim but as soon as she hears about Bertram's seduction of Diana (3.5.58-102), the text reveals her determination to pursue Bertram, but this time with a cunning plan of revenge. Her craftiness stands out when the text reveals her secret plans (including the bed-trick and her pregnancy). Helena's combination of strong desire and calculating nature, supplanting her humility and silence, may be both exciting and uncomfortable for the audience. In fact, the play shows her unruly pursuit becoming more extreme as she gains support from other female characters and in this way emphasizes the shrew's threatening aspects for the patriarchy that holds her in contempt. At the same time, in showing her overcome her shame and pursue her target, becoming a force to be reckoned with, this development strengthens the image of Helena as an example of powerful love and determination.

Helena's unruliness begins to make its presence more strongly felt in the play the moment she abandons her pilgrimage to renew her pursuit of Bertram. The play no longer represents her fluctuating between action and withdrawal; instead, her focus on her target makes her appear strong with resolve. It should be noted, however, that the stimulus for this renewal of her defiant pursuit is her association with a group of women, namely, Diana, the Widow, and Mariana. Helena learns that Bertram is flirting with Diana and placing her chastity at risk: since Bertram's sexual drive offends Diana and her family, Helena offers to help them while also fulfilling her own aim. Her actions, though ostensibly helpful, may also require them to face pain and difficulty of undergoing humiliation; yet their generosity as

Helena's advocates does not flag. The play stresses here that Helena's upturning of power to be defiantly aggressive and, at the same time, obtaining him as husband requires not only strength on her own part but also generous female cooperation.

At first, Helena's conversation with Diana and her family appears business-like, as she exchanges money for their help. For example, when Helena's plan is not received well by the Widow at their first meeting, since the latter is not willing to jeopardize her own and Diana's reputation "[i]n any staining act" (3.7.7), Helena not only has to assure her that she is truly Bertram's wife but even offers her a "purse of gold / [to] let me buy your friendly help thus far / Which I will over-pay, and pay again" (14-15); indeed, she later adds "three thousand crowns" (35). Helena asks Diana to pretend to have slept with Bertram; and although Diana never performs a sexual act, Helena has nevertheless bought her favour with money, which indicates that the female association is not entirely unconditional. There is a sense of Helena being on some level buying Diana's compliance. However, the text also shows that Helena's concern for the family is sincere: she is represented as worrying about Diana's chastity at risk: "The Count he woes your daughter, / Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty, / Resolved to carry her" (3.7.17-19). She is also concerned about the family's future safety: "That you may well perceive I have not wronged you, / One of the greatest in the Christian world / Shall be my surety" (4.4.1-3). She thanks them repeatedly for their favour, saying she is "Ever a friend whose thoughts more truly labour / To recompense your love" (4.4.17-18). Though the play shows female association involving some give-and-take aspects, it also presents Helena's consideration for the women. It is interesting that this concern is not represented as a one-sided compassion like Helena's love of Bertram; it is a sympathy shared among the female characters in the play, as explained below.

Diana and her family help Helena wholeheartedly, even self-sacrificially. Despite the fact that they have no obligation to do so, they show trust and sympathy towards her, and join

Helena with the defiance. Helena's gentleness as well as her courage in her challenge against authority may perhaps attract Diana and her family. The female characters' trust of Helena is made evident throughout the play: the Widow trusts her (3.7.11-13), and Diana shows her respect and loyalty, "You never had a servant to whose trust / Your business was more welcome" (4.4.28-29), as well as self-sacrifice, "Let death and honesty / Go with your impositions, I am yours, / Upon your will to suffer" (4.4.28-30). Indeed, Diana helps Helena boldly even at the endangerment of her honour and life, placing herself at risk when she lies to Bertram (4.2), and in Act 5, Scene 3, disgracing herself by saying things like "Ask him upon his oath if he does think / He had not my virginity" (5.3.187-88), a statement for which she has to put up with Bertram's humiliation, "She's impudent, my lord, / And was a common gamester to the camp" (190-91), and his false accusations, "She knew her distance and did angle for me, / Madding my eagerness with her restraint /.../ She got the ring" (215-16, 220). Yet Diana remains committed (222-24). Furthermore, in order to keep her promise to Helena, Diana even speaks boldly to the King himself: "It [the ring] might be yours or hers for aught I know" (5.3.282); she angers the King, yet remains stubborn about where the ring came from: "I'll never tell you" (286) and even risks her life (283-84, 296). As if to confirm Diana's sincerity, the play hounds her until the very last minute. However, the text also indicates that Diana's impudence to the King is rooted in her absolute trust of Helena as her "bail" (5.3.287, 297) as well as her determination to challenge and avenge patriarchy with/for Helena. It seems that Helena's waxing shrewish strength feeds Diana's bravery and defiance. Moreover, the female characters' cooperative dialogues show that their association is more than just simple self-interested cooperation; there is a sense of female sympathy, generosity, solidarity, and resistance against patriarchy, especially against the male characters seen at war, where mistrust, deceptions, and death are common. Compared to

Bertram and Parolles, who cooperate, betray, or even abandon each other, depending on the situation, the female association, that shares a common motive, is represented as firm.

In order to move Helena's shrewish pursuit forward and show the female "plot" pursuing its ends, the text utilizes various old dramatic devices and conventions, such as the bed-trick (to achieve the consummation) and pregnancy, which are, at the same time, necessary dramatic tools for Helena to fulfill Bertram's own demands. The bed-trick was a stock plot device but the play presents it in a fresh and striking way, as an aggressive means for Helena to fulfill her desire for and demands of Bertram. Shakespeare's dramatization is interesting here in that while he presents a character whose pursuit of her love is transgressive and persistent, the framing of the plot is legal and conventional, holding Helena's shrewishness under his authorial control. In contrast, looking at another use of the bed-trick by Shakespeare in *Measure for Measure* (though one with a different dramatic motive), Mariana is supposed to be bound to Angelo through a prearranged contract, but thanks to the bed-trick, which confirms her contract, Mariana is able to announce her not only contractual but also physical attachment to Angelo, saying "I had him in mine arms" (5.1.195) and "this is the body / That took away the match from Isabel" (206-07); in this way, she indicates that their physical bond is just as significant as any verbal contract: "I am affianc'd this man's wife, as strongly / As words could make up vows" (225-26). As if to doubly vouchsafe Mariana's speech, the Duke confirms that the consummation is legally based on a "pre-contract," further justifying his plan to bring Angelo and Mariana into an act of consummation: "He is your husband on a pre-contract: / To bring you thus together 'tis no sin, / Sith that the justice of your title to him / Doth flourish the deceit" (4.1.70-73). This old custom allows the playwright to protect his characters from any accusation of immorality, serving as a safe means to allow female characters like Helena to adventure outside their traditional roles.

Shakespeare's use of stock plot moves and ritualized routines (Helena's sleeping with Bertram, becoming pregnant, announcing the news to the other characters, and their marriage) evokes a continuum of genres that license the unfolding of the drama as well as securing the development of Helena's unruliness. Within this repeated use of folk-traditions, the text can present Helena with the power to take the sexual initiative, whose repercussions will help to turn the plot's direction. Thus, however imbalanced the pair may be in their feelings, convention allows Helena to win: Bertram is her legal husband when the contract is formally ratified by the marriage ceremony and solemnization. The dramatic conventions are in this sense emphasized as legitimate by the playwright's use of ideological apparatuses.

The play gradually reveals that Helena and by extension, the women gain power when it exhibits Helena showing composure and strength: having fulfilled her duty as wife, Helena has now obtained "Th' ambition in my love" (1.1.89), at least on the surface, and her comment after this act is relaxed and rather comic:

...But O, strange men,

That can such sweet use make use of what they hate,

When saucy trusting of the coziness thoughts

Defies the pitchy night; so lust doth play

With what it loathes, for that which is away. (4.4.21-25)

The lines show that Helena has enough bravery in her heart to laugh off Bertram's unfaithfulness, through which we can sense the further changes of situation that are gradually playing out throughout the play.

2.4. The power reversal in court

As we have seen above, Helena's pursuit of her love receives various kinds of support in the play, and Shakespeare chooses the right moment and place to effect the women's overturning of patriarchal power politics. In order to make this dramatic moment more exciting, the playwright creates confusion and tension in the play by placing the women characters' honour and lives at risk.

In the final scene, all the characters of their various ages, nationalities, classes, and so forth are gathered in the French court, onstage. The text at first shows Diana being exposed in public, in a display of patriarchal power. The representation of Diana's disgrace throughout Act 5, Scene 3 is rather brutal (see above), though she is also exhibited as exerting some power of her own: exploiting class differences, reversing female inferiority, and compelling the male beholders to watch her as she is exposed in the patriarchal court. Her boldness and confidence even in front of the King seem to indicate her loyalty to Helena and her defiance of patriarchy. Through this representation of Diana's misery and strength, the play powerfully stages the unfairness of the play's patriarchal world, and, by showing the court's attention to her display, emphasizes that it is now Diana who is outwitting the patriarchy against the odds.

The next stage in this overturning is effected by Helena, whose self-exposure involves sacrificing not only herself but also Bertram, whom she loves but must degrade by bringing him down to the common ground in order to definitively win him. The play shows that it is now the female turn to take the reins, and depicts the overturning of the situation (as well as rider/horse analogy) showily through Bertram's downfall and the King's hasty and mistaken judgement. A scene that supports this view is where Bertram's shame is publicized more severely and persistently: in Act 5, Scene 3, he not only becomes the centre of upheaval but is torn apart by persistent female attacks in front of the whole court. First, the King reads out Diana's letter in front of the court (5.3.141-48), brutally exposing Bertram's shameful

behaviour towards Diana: the letter accuses him of lying, infidelity, and perhaps even bigamy. In contrast, it defines Diana as a passive victim (5.3.148) who was all but forced into her relationship with Bertram (5.3.141-42)—a plaint addressed directly to the King (“Grant it me, O King! In you it best lies” [5.3.146-47]) that places him under pressure to do justice. Bertram is branded as a sinner, and Lafew rejects him (5.3.145). The King then imagines the dark nature of Bertram’s crime (155-56), revoking his favour and future plans for Bertram and his household. The punishment continues to unfold when Diana and the Widow appear in person: Diana demands that Bertram marry her and makes charges against him in a public trial. Then, Bertram’s ring is produced, to physically display “a thousand proofs” (5.3.202) against him; the “proof” indicates both his marriage and his immoral deeds against Helena and Diana. The ring has been passed down Bertram’s family line, and is a kind of seed symbolizing the imperative to love and multiply, but is now used against him as a dramatic tool to confirm his downfall and the reversal of the situation. Through this revelation, Helena will be able to assert her rights, including the conjugality required to produce an heir who will fulfill the conditions of marriage, which have been made material. Finally, when the women have paved the way for Helena, she appears in court pregnant and reminds Bertram of his responsibility, and he is once again punished for his misdeeds. The text chooses the right time and place to announce Helena’s pregnancy to the King and his court: “And at that time he got his wife with child. / Dead though she be, she feels her young one kick” (5.3.303-04). According to Julia Epstein, an early modern English law stated that “a pregnancy did not exist until there was a quickening,¹⁰ as announced by the pregnant woman” (112). By the power of the female association, Bertram is now undone, and can hardly speak: he has descended from a noble “great Count” (3.5.50, 60) to a “wanton” and “sinful” (3.7.18, 45-47) man. The play thus shows that the female characters can be just as brutal as Bertram, who shamed Helena and Diana. Helena’s body is symbolically used as visual evidence of

Bertram's misdeeds towards women, and serves as the warrant of her right to speak out and as her means of overturning the situation. Helena sums up both Bertram's misdeeds and the finally fulfilled promise (5.3.312-15); she has shown herself stronger and more persistent than him, but her passion for him is strong as ever, "Will you be mine now you are doubly won?" (316). Bertram finally gives in (or seems to do so): "I'll love her dearly, ever ever dearly" (318); and the King is also brought to condescend to admit his mistake and accept Helena and Diana (326-29), and as if to smooth over his faults and save appearances, brings the story to a close: "The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet" (335).

Thus, the play makes it possible for the audience to hear a variety of female characters' voices (loving, angry, oppressed, humiliated, resistant, defiant, and so forth). As is desired by patriarchy, they do not always want to remain silent, and their need to cooperate with each other to challenge patriarchy creates complexity in the plot. Interestingly, Helena's bold campaign to overcome differences between her and Bertram reveals that the stability assumed to hold all the characters' differences in place is easily disrupted and begins to crumble rather readily. The political and cultural barriers that the characters repeatedly emphasize are, in fact, so frail that, once exposed, this counterfeit sphere never recovers itself, but undergoes remarkable transformations to maintain its cohesion.

Nevertheless, the play ends partly with an air of the carnivalesque, and an open question with regards to the regenerative mode involved. The upturned world leaves a mysterious feeling at the end of the play. While in the supposed source materials, such as the *Decameron* and William Painter's *The Palace of Pleasure*, the female protagonists give birth to male babies, Shakespeare's play places a veil of unknowing over the new life in Helena's womb, rendering it invisible, as yet unborn and its sex unknown. At the same time, along with her victory or gain, the play also insinuates a frightening sense of loss on Helena's part: even new life does not seem to offer a completely happy ending. That is, the pregnancy does

not exactly suggest a feeling of happiness or celebration: nobody in the play congratulates Helena or even refers to the baby. Rather, it fosters an even darker atmosphere. Political and ethical instabilities continue to underlie the text as a result of the conflict between male- and female-directed ideological regimes. In short, Shakespeare's means of representing Helena suggests that the carnivalesque does not always instill a feeling of happy regeneration: the overturning of classes and the degradation of the female body, and also of the prevailing power relations, are accompanied by the entry of something new to replace the old; but the play shows that new life is not always reassuring.

2.5. Conclusion

One mysterious aspect of Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well* lies in the difference between her silent virtue and her aggressive pursuit of the object of her desire, Bertram. This intersects with the dramatic power of her pursuit in light of Bertram's unwillingness to comply, both of which are heavily determined by the norms of the society in which the play is set. The more Bertram retreats from Helena, the more aggressive her pursuit becomes, and the more the dramatic excitement increases. The play shows how Helena encounters and challenges patriarchy, as she becomes bold and pushy. Nevertheless, Helena cannot achieve her aim without the help of other women, and not until she obtains her female and cultural "rights," an assumption that may be selfish in nature but that gives her license to be ambivalent to sociocultural boundaries and overturn the prevailing power politics. Female association is built up on compassion and challenging spirit against patriarchy, and the bond stays strong until they achieve their purpose. The tie helps to increase the intensity and potency of female shrewishness in pursuit of Helena's female passion, and overturns the world of the play in so doing. Through Helena and the other female characters in *All's Well That Ends Well*, Shakespeare shows that the bond of female voices can be as strong as male

association, and also that shrewish behaviour functions not only to subvert the limits and nature of the female body—including Helena's own—but also to eventually invert the patriarchal virtues of discipline and hierarchy. As is evident in Helena's exploitation of Diana and her family, the King, and Bertram, what is distinctive about the overturned world of *All's Well That Ends Well* is that such an overturning of power and gender may further selfish needs and involve unpleasant actions. Ultimately, it also demonstrates the omnipotence of the ideology of power politics: while a shrew may appear to have the upper hand, her scope of action is, in fact, pre-determined by the playwright and by theatrical and social conventions.

Chapter 3: Mother or Shrew?—A Study of Margaret in the *Henry VI* Plays

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have examined the shrew-figure as embodied by Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew* and Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well*, both of whom transgress gender, class, and sexual barriers in order to achieve their purposes, causing power reversals and evoking a comical-carnavalesque tone to end the former work and a comical-gloomy one in the latter. In this chapter, I intend to explore a very different female character from a very different perspective and focus on Margaret of Anjou, in the *Henry VI* plays, or the first “Henriad,” and examine the shrewish nature and its dramatic effect, especially in her transgressive maternal (or pseudo-maternal) role of nurturing or exploiting a child (or pseudo-child). There are many other mother characters in Shakespeare’s plays, but Margaret is complex and fascinating in the way that Shakespeare richly represents her life story throughout *1, 2, and 3 Henry VI* and *Richard III* as a woman, mother, wife, lover, and queen. Moreover, Margaret has a variety of important links not only with the male characters in the plays but also the female characters: in *1 Henry VI* and *2 Henry VI*, Margaret is portrayed alongside the witch- or devil-like characters such as Joan la Pucelle and Eleanor Cobham. While these women are interchangeably represented as saintly and enigmatically witch-/devil-like characters (depending on whom they deal with) to whom men are attracted but also try to reject, it would appear that they exert a degree of influence in moulding Margaret into the mother-shrew that she is. The complexities of Margaret’s shrewishness and the dramatic consequences distinguish her from Kate (Chapter 1) and Helena (Chapter 2). Her existence in the play demonstrates Shakespeare’s effort in placing a non-conforming female and her unorthodox role in a heightened context of masculine war and deprivation.

For my purposes, that is, exploring the integration, interaction, and tension between the maternal and shrewish natures in Margaret, I shall refer to her as a “mother-shrew,” and

observe her dramatic influence on various maternal–filial relationships, both literal and figurative: with her son, Prince Edward, and with other closely related male characters, including her husband (King Henry) and lover (the Duke of Suffolk), the latter two of whom I shall sometimes refer to as “pseudo-sons,” as well as her enemies. How is her feminine and maternal shrewishness represented in the *Henry VI* plays? How does it affect the plots and the drama? Considering the differences between Shakespeare’s representations of Margaret and the other female shrews I have examined in the previous chapters, it seems there is a limit to the carnivalesque reading of Margaret. Therefore, it is necessary to centre Margaret and her relationship with her (pseudo-)sons by referring to the feminist and psychoanalytical perspectives to examine how the plays demonstrate Margaret’s acts of subversion. This chapter will consider these issues and expand our concept of the Shakespearean shrew by examining the effects of Margaret’s maternity and shrewishness on the dramatic development of the plays that differ from that of the shrewish characters observed in the previous chapters.

3.2. Creation of witch-like fear, and male attraction and rejection

The *Henry VI* plays take place against a historical background of continual war, riots, and unrest within and without England, and we can see in the plays how the characters’ relationships with each other and their society are affected by such political affairs. Placed within this setting, Margaret is represented as a character whose interactions with the other characters and the plays’ world continue to evolve throughout the plays, as she changes gradually from a poor French maid into a powerful wife, mother, lover, and enemy. But even before Margaret’s appearance, the plays already include shrewish characters who transgress not only social rules but people’s imagination and nature. Shakespeare intersects Margaret’s development in to a “shrew” with Joan La Pucelle in *1 Henry VI* and Eleanor Cobham in *2 Henry VI*. Both women are viewed as evil- or witch-like characters who evoke fear. It

appears that the playwright ensures the development of a certain atmosphere surrounding a shrew in the main male world.

Concerning early modern witchery, Michael Hattaway contends that early critics saw Joan La Pucelle as a figure in an historical allegory, a witch who had cast a spell on England. On the other hand, a pattern of intervention can also be noticed in Joan. As E. A. M. Colman argues that Joan's second name, "Puzel" or "Pucelle" could indicate "whore or virgin" (49-53), she can be seen as an angelic or evil character. Compared to Joan, Eleanor's motives demonstrate personal and aristocratic ambition. Their prophecies evoke a fearful atmosphere. Some critics argue that prophesizing is an act that embodies the female intention to transgress. For example, following Kristeva's theorization of the semiotics, Christine Berg and Philippa Berry state that the female prophet's voice and body transgress the boundaries, including those between private and public, male and female, explaining it as "the irruption of female speech into the once tabooed domain of public activity" (19). Gary Waller, extending the Kristevan analysis, argues that the female prophet "resists or undermines closure and seems to combine or confuse traditional forms" (20). His argument is that compared to writers who were bound by the social structures, female prophets were more able to give voice to the women whose voice was repressed and silenced (253). It seems the dramatic representations of Joan and Eleanor indicate that prophecies are means of deliberately showing their resistance against the oppressors. More specifically within this context, these prophecies also serve to prepare for Margaret's entrance into the play. Although Margaret is not involved with witchery, her threatening female/maternal power over the men around her may be taken as a sign of defiance to the authority.

Despite the fact that the plays show terrifying aspects of Joan and Eleanor, they also provide them with strange attractiveness that charms the male characters. Howard and Rackin notice Englishness is opposed to Frenchness, indicating goodness against badness (54), but in

Joan and Eleanor, the contrasts juxtapose between social rejection and male attraction. For example, in *2 Henry VI*, though Eleanor is not depicted as possessing supernatural powers per se, her jealousy leads her towards an extreme act of conjuring by exploiting the other characters. Shakespeare portrays in detail the witchery scene in Act 1, Scene 4. Margery Jordan (a witch) and Roger Bolingbroke (a conjuror) appear, and Eleanor is made to partake by watching the ceremonies. Eleanor's desperate attempt to achieve her purpose finally takes an extreme form of conjuring, what Bolingbroke calls "exorcisms" (1.4.4), and her shrewishness is apt to be punished according to the social rules. Her husband, Humphrey Gloucester, fears Eleanor's excessive ambition (1.2.7-16, 36-40) may affect his social and mental status negatively (1.2.18, 22, 25-26, 47-49). However, despite her sin of participating in the conjuring act, he continues to show concern (at least on the surface). When Gloucester watches the banishment of his punished wife, he continues to advise Eleanor to be patient and forget the grief (2.4.27, 69), and asks the servants to treat her better (2.4.19, 80, 82). While some audience may see either sadness or falsehood in this parting scene, the representation of Eleanor also creates a theatrical spectacle where the power politics between the banisher and the banished (or the watcher and the watched) is evident. Moreover, in the case of Joan la Pucelle, male attraction and rejection towards the witch-like Joan is clearly indicated. When Charles, the Dauphin of France, fights Joan la Pucelle in their first meeting, he praises her bravery, calling her "an Amazon" who fights with the "sword of Deborah" (1.3.83-84), and when Orleans is released, Charles calls her "France's saint" (29). At the same time, Charles shows dependence on her help, "'tis thou that must help me" (1.3.86), and confirms that he had been helped by her, "We have been guided by thee hitherto" (3.7.9), yet he admits her words have an enchanting effect on Burgundy, "Speak, Pucelle, and enchant him with thy words" (3.7.40). Burgundy admits her charm, "Either she hath bewitched me with her words. / Or nature makes me suddenly relent" (3.7.58-59). Joan also attracts and rejects stubborn

Talbot. In Act 1, Scene 7, when Joan and Talbot fight, Talbot calls her “Devil or devil’s dam, I’ll conjure thee, / Blood will I draw on thee-thou are a witch- (5-6), a “high-minded strumpet” (12), but after their second fight with Talbot, Talbot’s brave tone of voice changes, showing his perplexity:

My thoughts are whirled like a potter’s wheel.

I know not here I am nor what I do.

A witch by fear, not force, like Hanibal

Drives back our troops and conquers as she lists. (1.7.19-22)

Nevertheless, in Act 5, Scene 6, Joan’s acts of cursing the men including her father, Richard the Duke of York confirm her position as a social outcast in the play, and are meritable for the men to burn her as a punishment. Thus, in the cases of Joan and Eleanor, while they are represented as transgressive women who need to be alienated from the society, the female threat in the form of excessive jealousy or anger, supernatural witchery or conjuring act is also shown to strangely attract and reject men, and this is one of Shakespeare’s ways of introducing the theme of female control over men through love and fear.

These women characters are seen as terrible due to their non-conformity to the feminine roles. However, a case such as Joan is accused of devilry by men, the people who envy or detest her qualities, and is immediately replaced by Margaret: in *1 Henry VI*, the scene changes smoothly from Scene 4 (where Joan is a literal prisoner) to Scene 5 (where Margaret is both a literal and a metaphorical prisoner to Suffolk [5.5.1]). However, in *2 Henry VI*, while the scenes progress from Eleanor’s arrest to banishment, Gloucester is gradually driven out so as not to interfere with Margaret’s shrewish plans. The plays show both shrews loved and punished; however, the strangely fearful female atmosphere still

permeates throughout the plays. This alludes to Margaret's alienation from the society, while it also enhances her presence and magnifies the threatening effect of her shrewish power. In other words, the female challenge against patriarchy is passed on to Margaret, a character who can deal with men using her female/maternal power, embodying love and rejection. I shall examine in detail below how Shakespeare develops Margaret's shrewish character and its effects on the whole drama.

3.3. Mother's control versus male fear

As opposed to the male-dominated world in Shakespeare's *Henry VI* history plays, it seems evident that the plays also emphasize an engulfing power of the mother to generate, end, or control life, specifically her son's life. In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva discusses a child's fear when he makes his distress heard but cannot make himself (that is, the reason for his distress) understood (33), and must "abject" (1) his mother in order to construct a mature identity. The idea of abjection "preserves what exists in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be" (10). It seems in Kristeva's notion of abjection, an abrupt separation between mother and child does not prepare a child to be ready for proper independence. Alluding to Kristeva's theory in reading the relationship between Shakespeare's Margaret and his son/pseudo-sons, a mother's power to create, end, or control life, specifically her son's life, seems in particular to cause the son's fear in Shakespeare's plays. Furthermore, Howard and Rackin stress that in the *Henry VI* plays, where the world is organized around the monarch (30), the pure-blooded lines are essential, empowering the sexual, maternal figure. Dynastic kingly power is vulnerable to "subversion by female sexual transgression" (26) since patrilineal authority can only be ensured through the female bodies. Using such readings, it is possible to assume Shakespeare's intention of indicating the female challenge

against patriarchy. The female characters including Joan, Eleanor, and Margaret undermine the basis of the monarchy by their military, sexual or devious powers. In a way, the women allow the audience's attention to the contrasting fragility of patriarchal kingship. The male characters in the history plays are mostly represented to fight for power to continue their dynasties, and Margaret's control of her men, disabling their independence, separating from them when necessary, and destroying them and ending their patriarchal lines are what the male characters fear and reject. Margaret's destructive power can realize the male fear; therefore, she controls them through their fear of separation, and even the end of the patriarchal family line.

The texts of *2 Henry VI* and *3 Henry VI* dramatize political turmoil within and without the English court and state, and the characters are also shown to be affected at a personal level: continually under the threat of violence, which affects their relationships and lives. In these plays, Margaret and the male characters with whom she is associated (Prince Edward, King Henry, and Suffolk) are represented not only in their overt roles of mother and son, husband and wife, king and queen, man and woman, but also in grotesque or monstrous parallel roles of pseudo-mother and pseudo-son, in the way that, while they mutually love and depend on each other, her sway over them and her power are at the same time shown to gradually increase, at the expense of their own. Though the texts are ambiguous regarding Margaret's public and private ambitions, they nevertheless show Margaret's deep love for the men in her life—but such love and ambition may be sometimes represented as so intense that they exceed the boundaries of the maternal roles of nurturing and protection of the child or male character. Her shrewishness becomes distinct as her control of her men becomes so transgressive that it makes them excessively attached to and dependent on her, which eventually weakens and depowers them; and such an inability to establish themselves and

succeed as independent leaders is fatal for many of the male characters in the history plays, who are constantly fighting for power.

Among many ambitious male characters, the representation of Henry VI's lack of confidence is especially noticeable. In *2 Henry VI*, Shakespeare reveals King Henry's fear of the maternal body from which he was forced to be separated early in his life. The text shows King Henry frequently expressing his fear and distrust of his real mother, and repeats that his crown had been forced on him at nine months old: "No sooner was I crept out of my cradle / But I was made a king at nine months old" (4.8.3-4). In *3 Henry VI*, he repeats it again, in almost the same words (1.1.112). The "nine months"¹¹ he persistently mentions of course coincides with the length of time that a baby remains in the mother's womb, after which mother and son must be separated, and the child's independent growth begins. This repeated allusion seems to reflect his anger at his mother for forcing him to act in the political realm against his will as well as his continuing anxiety about being separated from her—an accumulation of psychological deprivation that makes him ripe to give himself over to another mother-figure when she appears, even though Margaret also demands that he take up his male and authorial responsibility and makes him shoulder a burden which is too much for him. The texts insinuate that King Henry is not ready to be independent himself, let alone become the leader of a family or a state. That King Henry has disinherited his own son without much thought perhaps shows his inability to be aware of his own situation and of the world around him without his mother's/female help.

This male anxiety of separation resembles that of Richard in *Richard III*, where both Richard's and the Duchess of York's doubt about and love for each other are revealed. First, Shakespeare underlines the Duchess of York's fierce anger against his son, Richard, using the maternal womb as metaphor for mother-son connection. In the play, the Duchess says Richard is her shame (2.2.29), and she refers to her own maternal womb as an "accurséd

womb, the bed of death” (4.1.53), which has created monstrous Richard, who is responsible for causing the deaths of the sons of Queen Margaret and Queen Elizabeth, for which he must be punished, “let’s smother / My damned son, that thy two sweet sons smothered” (4.4.133-34). The text further depicts her transgressive anger when she wishes she had strangled him in her womb, “she that might have intercepted thee, / By strangling thee in her accurséd womb” (138-39). Her repeated regret for not having killed her son before his birth indicates her maternal concern for him and society, as well as her threat to the child.

The maternal body that overpowers and destroys the child is often visualized with images of suffocation and swallowing in some of Shakespeare’s plays, such as the image of an earth that is “thirsty” (*3 Henry VI* 2.3.15), analogous to a mouth that can “gape open wide and eat [the son] quick” (*Richard III* 1.2.65). Such images are fearful for the child. In Janet Adelman’s psychological reading of the mother-son relationship between Richard and his mother, she sees the maternal body as the cause of Richard’s deformity and aggression: Richard was “[m]isshapen in the womb by a triply maternal figure—Mother, Love, and Nature combined—and considers his deformed body and its consequences her fault” (2). Moreover, Adelman sees the root of his ambition in his lack of confidence as a son and man, “Already withered in her womb, he cannot make his heaven in another lady—and so he will remake himself in the image of a commanding and overbearing political ambition, finding his masculine potency through the substitute heaven of the crown” (2). In fact, when Richard refers to “smother”-ing (154) and his own “defects” (3.7.150), the words are often balanced with positive terms such as “mighty” and “glory” (“So mighty and so many my defects / . . . / And in the vapour of my glory smothered” [150-154]). Such examples of Richard trying to overcome his personal fear by proving his social success indicate his attempt to prove his own independence, emphasized especially at the end of the play when he questions and answers himself in a monologue, “What do I fear? Myself? There’s none else by. / Richard

loves Richard; that is, I am I' (5.5.136-137). Unlike Richard, King Henry does not seek social success but retreats from the world, and the *Henry VI* plays show us that he was also attached to and overpowered by his mother when he was a child and later by Margaret who burdens him with expectations and threat. The textual indication that both King Henry and Richard cannot become mature psychologically seems obvious. In other words, the cause of male anxiety is not only maternal body per se, but also the trauma of birth and separation from the maternal body. Either way, the mother is in control of her son's life. Fear of the archaic mother turns out to be fear of her generative and destructive power; it is this power that patriarchy fears and must subdue in the plays. This male anxiety of separation also resembles that of other male characters related to Margaret, whose ambivalent maternal nature is metaphorically displayed as a mix of nurturing and threatening, which men fear but are also attracted to. In the next section, I shall show how the texts display the mother-shrew who interferes with the men's (Prince Edward's, King Henry's, and Suffolk's) attempts to be independent from their biological- or pseudo-mother, Margaret.

3.4. Infantilization

It seems Act 1, Scene 1 of *3 Henry VI* shows Margaret's foremost interest is the inheritance of King Henry VI's crown to her son Prince Henry; the continuation of the Lancaster line through her blood son, perhaps because it is the best way to protect herself (and her son) from the powerful enemies. Nonetheless, the scene shows that King Henry has done the opposite and disinherited his own son. Consequently, Margaret blames King Henry while she compares her love and care towards her son with King Henry's callous treatments. The first three lines reveal her maternal love that she easily enlists the audience's sympathy, and the subsequent verse lines describe Margaret as a nurturing mother and the blood bond between mother-son that sustains him.

Hath he deserved to lose his birthright thus?
 Hadst thou but loved him half so well as I,
 Or felt that pain which I did for him once,
 Or nourished him as I did with my blood,
 Thou wouldst have left thy dearest heart-blood there
 Rather than have made that savage Duke thine heir
 And disinherited thine only son. (*3 Henry VI* 1.1.220-26)

The image of the mother and child connected through blood and milk embodies a strong physical and psychological tie between them while it also indicates her concern to ensure King Henry's legacy. Margaret's rhetoric, filled with harsh criticism of her husband, displays the strength she possesses to raise the future heir of England. However, she delivers a fierce attack on King Henry for not protecting their child's inheritance. Moreover, the prevalence of first- and third-person singular pronouns makes it confusing for the audience to decide where her real interest lies: does her ambition lie only in the continuation of King Henry's royal bloodline through her son? Is she angry because her part in raising a prince is cut off through disinheritance? Is she furious with her husband's negligence of their son and not sharing parenthood with her? While the passage indicates the imbalances of her maternal world, both of a nurturing and an attacking nature, it also illustrates the ambiguity of her ambition and interest concerning her family and herself. This ambivalence will continue to fluctuate and shape her effect on the male characters throughout the plays.

The play also emphasizes Margaret's excessive control of the men around her that extends to acting and speaking on behalf of her son/pseudo-sons, sometimes making

decisions for them, and in this way usurping their masculine public or political role and in some sense attenuating their maleness, as they become dependent on and afraid of her. The text stresses that Margaret's interference goes beyond the proper maternal role, which ends up undermining the men's independence and courage, and is an element in their deaths. This complex situation is revealed in her nurturing of her son, for example, both in action and in rhetoric. In *3 Henry VI* where mother and son often appear together, it is mostly Margaret speaking; Prince Edward, though no longer a baby, simply tags along after her or sometimes leaves the scene without uttering a word (*3 Henry VI* 1.4). For example, the following dialogue is especially important for all the characters in the plays since it decides Prince Edward's marriage, thus, the future queen of England who will or will not continue the Lancaster dynasty. It is Margaret who controls the dialogue that indicates how her influence dominates her son not only psychologically but ultimately physically, and her interference will eventually destroy him. Prince Edward's lines in several places seem like an echo of Margaret's words and requests (1.1.227-28, 262-63) or a token of acceptance of and obedience to his mother (2.2.60):

QUEEN MARGARET: . . .

[To Prince Edward] Son Edward, she is fair and virtuous,

Therefore delay not. Give thy hand to Warwick,

And with thy hand thy faith irrevocable

That only Warwick's daughter shall be thine.

PRINCE EDWARD: Yes, I accept her, for she well deserves it,

And here to pledge my vow I give my hand. (3.3.245-50)

As we can see, Margaret and King Louis quickly settle Prince Edward's marriage arrangements; Margaret decides instantly that they will be adequate and urges Prince Edward to accept the offer, and his acceptance is immediate and without hesitation, as emphasized in the two short lines: he "accept(s)" (249), gives "pledge," and gives his "hand" (250). His contingent status in relation to his mother is thus succinctly established. Whether or not the playwright intends to deliver Prince Edward's oppressed or suffocated voice, the scene nevertheless displays how Prince Edward's own voice is overwhelmed by that of his mother (who thus to a degree controls both his life and the future of the state) and how he is manipulated by her. Prince Edward's quick acquiescence to his mother's will above is like his metaphorical acceptance of his position under her control. It reveals how he is kept psychologically distant from his mother while still physically proximal to and contingent upon her, allowing her to (however consciously or unconsciously) defer his independence.

Indeed, *1* and *2 Henry VI* plays do not allow Prince Edward to develop a mature identity, and he remains an ambivalent character throughout: he is both a "mama's boy" and a male in a warrior class, trying to grow up and escape from the maternal influence. Yet, the plays provide a few scenes wherein Prince Edward tries to be independent by acting on his mother's words, consequently "acting" a bigger part than he actually has in the eyes of the audience. For example, the following scene shows Prince Edward taking a bold stand against the York faction by taking up King Edward's playful use of the term "right" (to the throne).

KING EDWARD: Say, Henry shall I have my right or no?

A thousand men have broke their fasts today

That ne'er shall dine unless thou yield the crown.

WARWICK (*to King Henry*)

If thou deny, their blood upon thy head;

For York in justice puts his armour on.

PRINCE EDWARD: If that be right which Warwick says is right,

There is no wrong, but everything is right.

RICHARD: Whoever got thee, there thy mother stands—

For well I wot, thou hast thy mother's tongue.

QUEEN MARGARET: But thou art neither like thy sire nor dam,

But like a foul misshapen stigmatic,

Marked by the destinies to be avoided,

As venom toads or lizards' dreadful stings. (*3 Henry VI* 2.2.126-38)

King Edward's usage of "right" (indicating the political privilege that the Yorks and the Lancasters are fighting for) challenges and derides Prince Edward. But Prince Edward blunders in accepting a dare where he can only play on the simple meaning of correctness or legitimacy, which he repeats in vain. That Prince Edward is no match for King Edward is immediately noted by Richard, who says Prince Edward needs his mother's help and sarcastically remarks on the resemblance of "tongue" between mother and son, while also insinuating the opposite (that is, unlike Margaret, Prince Edward's "tongue" is beyond the boy's compass); Margaret is acting a ventriloquist's role for her boy Edward. Prince Edward's limited role in the play demonstrates that despite his effort to assert himself, he still needs his mother as his spokesperson and must remain subordinate to his mother. However, this only reveals his immaturity, which in turn caused his derision by his enemies. As a result, he requires his mother to come to his aid, support him, and relieve him of his political role.

The plays portray poor Prince Edward's slow fall into a quagmire as he acts out a part that is too big for him.

Furthermore, *3 Henry VI*, Act 5, Scene 5 displays Prince Edward still trying to live up to his mother's expectations, as Margaret's influence extends and his rhetoric gradually puts on airs. He stands up to King Edward and his men, speaking bravely and with reference to his father and their filial relationship: "Suppose that I am now my father's mouth— / Resign thy chair, and where I stand, kneel thou" (5.5.18-19); this time, it is he who will be his father's ventriloquist. He then emulates his mother, acting a bigger player than he is by slandering his enemies with contemptuous adjectives in her vein ("Nay, take away this scolding crookback rather" [5.5.30], "Lascivious Edward, and thou, perjured George, / And thou, misshapen Dick" [34-36]). By the time he finally uses the term "right" in the way to indicate what the Yorks and the Lancasters are contending for, it is too late. When he goes as far as to assert his (and his father's) right to the throne, "And thou usurp'st my father's right and mine" (37), he is stabbed by his enemies. The representation of young Prince Edward, who innocently follows and craves the mother-shrew's love and guidance, while trying to be independent and become a brave warrior, is rather heart-breaking. The play demonstrates Prince Edward meeting his death violently in the end.

The text portrays the misery of Prince Edward both pitifully and heartlessly, and his dilemma as a boy who tries to grow up by following as well as separating from his shrewish mother, but who, the more he struggles to do so, becomes more entangled in fortune's wheel, which will finally take him to his destruction; he remains an appendage of Margaret's, and never achieves independence or even the chance to grow to adulthood. While the audience may feel sympathy with Prince Edward, we are bound to notice, with Margaret's presence in our field of vision, that the task of being a leader in his own right was yet too much for him, as he had not even achieved independence from his mother. Going beyond her maternal

nurturing role, Margaret corners her son (intentionally or unintentionally) with her transgressive expectations, demands, and controlling nature, which the son cannot cope with. In this mother–son drama, Shakespeare presents the special threat of maternal subversiveness, which can exploit ties of blood and break down gender and status barriers, undermine them, and eviscerate male characters.

3.5. Degradation

As shown below, Shakespeare’s representations of Margaret’s controlling tendencies are not only limited to her son; Margaret’s similar infantilization of King Henry VI can be noticed in the plays. As King Henry loses interest in political affairs and becomes absorbed in religion, the text reveals the enhancement of Margaret’s domination and the power transfer from husband to wife that takes place: Margaret takes over and prosecutes her husband’s political responsibilities and, just as she does for Prince Edward, speaks out on behalf of the King. In *2 Henry VI*, Act 1, Scene 3, where Peter, the armourer’s man, and the other Petitioners are discussing whether Somerset or York should be the next Protector (1.3.106-17), Margaret intervenes with what may sound like a good wifely or pseudo-motherly answer on behalf of her husband but in fact challenging the powerful men and interfering in political concerns, “Because the King, forsooth, will have it so” (118), though King Henry himself still shows no concern: “I care not which: / Or Somerset or York, all’s one to me” (104-05). Margaret’s obvious intervention in King Henry’s political affairs is noted by Gloucester, who cautions her not to overstep her female role: “Madam, the king is old enough himself / To give his censure. These are no women’s matters” (119-20). Gloucester, sensing Margaret’s influence over the king, attempts to exclude her on the reason that she is a woman and neutralizes her influence. However, the time will soon come for Margaret to remove those in her way of wresting the control of power. In the meantime, King

Henry remains (or pretends to be) indifferent to and uncomprehending of what goes on around him, and avoids seeing the power-hungry people hustling and bustling around him.

Nevertheless, King Henry cannot keep silent forever when Margaret's intervention in political/private affairs transgresses further. When King Henry disinherits Prince Edward in *3 Henry VI*, an issue of which not only Margaret and Prince Edward but also the other male characters dread in the plays, even in such a critical moment, Margaret attacks King Henry's indecision and bombards him with angry words: "I here divorce myself / Both from thy table, Henry, and thy bed" (1.1.248-49). Margaret's fierce anger now appears as a threat, and interestingly, this is the first time (after their falling-in-love scene) that the text shows King Henry's reaction to Margaret's desertion of him by apologizing and pleading with her to stay: "Pardon me," "Stay," "thou wilt stay with me?" (229, 258, 260). Though he may just be putting on an appearance to evade his scolding wife, this infantilized image temporarily releases tension in the play and makes the king look pathetic and comical. At the same time, Margaret's nagging tongue also invites laughter. For example, when King Henry tries to escape from Margaret, she stops him, "Nay, go not from me; I will follow thee" (*3 Henry VI* 1.1.215), but after complaining for 27 long lines (1.1.232-259), she tells her husband, "Thou hast spoke too much already: get thee gone" (260). The comical tone in an obvious power reversal now makes Margaret look like a conventional scold figure.

Nevertheless, as King Henry retreats from the world, Margaret, at first disappointed by him but now increasingly ambitious on her own account, takes advantage of his anxiety and acts out her pseudo-mother role in order to maintain control over him. Margaret is no longer represented as a loving wife desperate to keep her husband's attention who is not reliable enough to make proper decisions for the sake of their son, but as a shrewish pseudo-mother who advances his infantilization and hampers his independence. King Henry's pitiful degradation highlights the mother-shrew's empowerment, which is further

emphasized by the action of Prince Edward, who, seeing his infantilized father, now aligns himself with his mother whom, it seems, is more of a force and more advantageous for him to follow (263). However, this will not prove true, as he will also follow his father's steps in being unable to separate from his mother, finally becoming re-infantilized and destroyed himself.

3.6. Grotesque mother figure

In the *Henry VI* plays, Margaret's shrewish (pseudo-)maternal control is not only exercised on her son but also on her lover, whom she is shown to love as much as she does her family. The difference is that Margaret's attachment to Suffolk is based strongly on erotic love, yet the confusion (or tragedy) she invites turns out ultimately to be similar. The *Henry VI* plays show clearly how Margaret's power relationship with Suffolk overturns itself as she changes from a weak and disadvantaged maid to an aggressive shrew.

When Suffolk is ordered to leave England, he seems reluctant to split from Margaret (2 *Henry VI* 3.2.361), but Margaret is shown to gradually accept the separation. The play represents the growing intensity of Suffolk's distress as this division increases: "I can no more. Live thou to joy thy life; / Myself no joy in naught but that thou live'st" (369-70). However, when Suffolk also begins to speak in a manner similar to Margaret's curses (313-32), it is now she who stops him (333-36). Her tone of voice gradually fluctuates due to her emotional turmoil, in which she sometimes realistically accepts their parting ("Yet now farewell, and farewell life with thee" [360]) but is sometimes reduced to confusion, demanding Suffolk leave but also denying his separation from her ("So get thee gone," "go, speak not to me; even now be gone! / O, go not yet" (350, 356-57)). Then, her interest is abruptly transferred to Vaux: "Whether goes Vaux so fast? What news, I prithee?" (371). Suffolk notices Margaret's changes and asks, "You bade me ban, and will you bid me leave?"

(337), but he finally agrees to go, saying “This way fall I to death”—and is echoed by Margaret, “this [other] way for me” (416). Margaret’s comment sounds like she is acknowledging that he will die and asserting that she will not, indicating her acceptance of losing her lover and pseudo-son. Suffolk’s expression of dismay at the prospect of leaving her is an evident case of the (pseudo-)son’s terror of separation from the (pseudo-)mother, similar to that which I have shown in the cases of Prince Edward, King Henry VI, and Richard III. As Suffolk’s emotion further increases in intensity, his words clearly indicate his uneasiness of speaking to a pseudo-mother figure:

If I depart from thee, I cannot live.

And in thy sight to die, what were it else

But like a pleasant slumber in thy lap?

Here could I breathe my soul into the air,

As mild and gentle as the cradle babe

Dying with mother’s dug between his lips;

Where, from thy sight, I should be raging mad,

And cry out for thee to close up mine eyes,

To have thee with thy lips to stop my mouth. . . . (3.2.392-400)

Suffolk’s use of the terms like “cradle babe” (396) and “mother” (397) make him sound very similar to the childish Prince Edward, who always requires his mother’s presence and protection, as well as King Henry, who blames his (real) mother for making him king. Even more, the infantilized Suffolk expresses the wish to be physically reintegrated with Margaret,

and his life and death mean little to him without her: “Or I should breathe it, so, into thy body, / And then it lived in sweet Elysium. / To die by thee were but to die in jest: / From thee to die were torture more than death” (*2 Henry VI* 3.2.402-05). The textual emphasis on Suffolk’s changes is similar to that of Prince Edward’s: the changes retain infantilization images but very different where he is reduced not only to a child, but to an undifferentiated figure, almost a non-person, stripped of his former bold and scheming nature and made desperately in need of a mother-figure. Margaret’s previous words ironically remind us of the men’s similarity or lack of uniqueness: “I thought King Henry had resembled thee / In courage, courtship, and proportion” (*2 Henry VI* 1.3.56-57). Brave Suffolk, who used to steal French ladies’ hearts (*2 Henry VI* 1.3.55), has disappeared without a trace; he has lost his distinctness as he has lost his independence, just as the king and the prince did, a devolution represented in Prince Edward’s failure to grow up, King Henry’s retreat from the world, and Suffolk’s regression to an infantile state. These dramatic representations reduce these elite men to a much lower status than the female shrew.

Indeed, as the men are controlled and infantilized by Margaret, they are also undermined in patriarchal society in the plays, overturned not only in relation to Margaret but also to others. For example, as Suffolk nears his end in *2 Henry VI*, Act 4, Scene 1, he is captured by Walter Whitmore and the soldiers. The conversations around him include words and phrases that indicate his invalid status, a useless failure as an English soldier and no longer a necessary pseudo-son or lover to Margaret. Suffolk is humiliated by Whitmore (4.1.26-27), scoffed by the Lieutenant (71-72), and killed by unnamed pirates (138) and transformed into a lifeless body (144), an entirely worthless thing, all of which is presumably especially humiliating for a man of high rank and big talk. The passages and the language used in the scenes represent Suffolk as an example of a completely degraded man, brought

down to the level of a commoner and beyond, required to speak with them with whom he would never have mixed in his high life at court as a lover of the queen.

The texts also imply that unfortunate deaths of poor men may be partly due to Margaret's excessive interference with their private/political lives. For example, Margaret's decision to raise an army against York's faction in *3 Henry VI*, Act 1, Scene 1, eventually destroys her own beloved son, bearing out the fear and foreboding he expresses in several of his few lines in the play. When Prince Edward is killed, Margaret's pitifully hysterical reaction to her son's murder, "O, kill me too!" (*3 Henry VI* 5.5.41), is a pathetic scene, and her refusal to accept his death is grotesquely portrayed when she speaks to the lifeless body of her son: "O Ned . . . / Canst thou not speak?" (50-51). Despite the fact that the male characters fear "abjection" of mother and Margaret is supposed to wish the continuation of the Lancaster line, the playwright here chooses words to remind us that it is indeed she who is responsible for "crop"-ping the "plant," and that her use of the term "cannibal" befits her:

Butchers and villains! Bloody cannibals!

How sweet a plant have you untimely cropped!

You have no children, butchers; if you had,

The thought of them would have stirred up remorse.

But if you ever chance to have a child,

Look in his youth to have him so cut off

As, deathmen, you have rid this sweet young Prince! (5.5.60-66)

The use of words like "youth," "child," "cut off," and "cropped" indicate Margaret's maternal pain at losing her still young son, while her epithets, like "butchers," "villains," and

“cannibals,” targeted at her enemies, ironically reflect on herself, as her subversive actions cause many deaths in the plays. One of the most grotesque parts in this regard is where the mother’s grieving over her son’s death in *3 Henry VI*, Act 5, Scene 5, overlaps with another scene where she grieves over the death of her lover and pseudo-son, Suffolk in *2 Henry VI*, Act 4, Scene 4, where we witness the grotesque image of Margaret embracing Suffolk’s head (“Here may his head lie on my throbbing breast; But where’s the body that I should embrace?” [4.4.5-6]) and voicing her need for revenge (3), foreshadowing her role as a cursing and eerie figure in *Richard III*, and perhaps even reflecting the cursing images of Joan and Eleanor. Margaret as a distraught mother, wife, and lover, her grieving and cursing over her loved ones’ deaths and speaking to lifeless bodies emphasizes the grotesqueness of the scenes as well as her monstrosity; the dead son and lover are now degraded as merely lifeless bodies, without a trace of their former identities.

It seems that the above-discussed textual similarities between the descriptions of Margaret’s various relationships with men, namely their infantilization, destruction, and degradation, show us that (pseudo-)maternal love and political interference affect men greatly. Whether they are king, prince, or lover, when the male characters in the plays are unmade by their association with Margaret, irrespective of what love or hatred she bears them, they are finally represented as resembling each other, looking and sounding very similar to one another. Across the *Henry VI* plays, as Margaret’s excessive love, interference, involvement, leadership, and control strengthen, we observe a contemptuous side to her relationships emerging as the men, degraded from honourable to childish beings, weak and infantile, lose themselves, as shown by the way their words come to sound uniqueless.

3.7. Destruction of the family and enemy males

What is interesting is that the frightened male voices in the *Henry VI* plays are not only heard from the mother-shrew's loved ones but also her enemies, who are represented as also uniqueless and degraded: both the Lancasters and the Yorks are terrified with the ending of their dynasty, which shrewish mother Margaret intimidates. In this section, I will take the example of King Edward, Margaret's great enemy, whose end is represented very similarly to those of the Lancasters; I will show how the mother-shrew's transgressive interference plays a role in his downfall as well.

Shakespeare emphasizes male terror taking its form when Margaret makes a petty show of their loss in their last moments. The shrewishness of Margaret's maternal love and ambition is not the only element that makes the final status of the men around her "uniqueless" or undifferentiated and base but also her excessive hatred for her enemies and their family successions will also invite similar consequences, once again overturning the situation and proving just as destructive. For example, Act 1, Scene 4 in *3 Henry VI*, shows Margaret placing men on the edge of destruction and making them the objects of a trivial show. One symbolic site where this takes place is the molehill, repeatedly used in the *Henry VI* plays as a convenient prop-stage to sacrifice the men surrounding Margaret. The decrowning and destruction of York are theatricalized by Margaret, who turns his misery into petty entertainment by making him stand on the molehill, putting a paper crown on his head, and watching him react to the blood-soaked handkerchief of his son Rutland: "Look, York, I stained this napkin with the blood / That valiant Clifford with his rapier's point / Made issue from the bosom of thy boy" (*3 Henry VI* 1.4.80-83). The bloody napkin is a symbol of death for the York dynasty. In addition to the cruelty of the speech, Margaret's lively tone of voice and enjoyment make this grotesque theatricality terrifying.

Margaret's degradation of York is especially vicious and deprives him of power, pride, and hope, and Rutland's blood and York's tears make Margaret's shrewishness appear barbarous. Her actions, accompanied by glib and brutal insults, inflict York with extreme agony, and her enjoyment in participating in this performance, as both a performer and a spectator, is evident. However, the cruel treatment of her enemies rebounds on her when her own son too is turned into a performer in this tragic drama, stabbed to death by his enemies, who heap further insults and abuse upon Margaret. There is of course an ironic reversal of roles in the above cases, in that Margaret is again involved but it is now her enemies cursing and damaging her. Moreover, the word "molehill" is repeated in reference to Margaret, symbolizing her quasi-directorial role in and responsibility for the proceedings, when her own husband is decrowned in *3 Henry VI*: on the battlefield, he utters the line "Here on this molehill will I sit me down" (2.5.14), immediately followed by a reference to Margaret: "For Margaret my queen, and Clifford, too, / Have chid me from the battle, swearing both / They prosper best of all when I am thence" (16-18). We are not sure if King Henry is on the same molehill as the one where his son, Prince Edward, is killed, or where King Edward is tortured; but he nevertheless speaks as if he, like Prince Edward and King Edward, is participating in a show orchestrated by Margaret, eventually to be degraded to the common earth and stripped of himself. Thus, the molehill setting is shared among the mother-shrew's allies or family members and her enemies on the stage: it is a site where all of them are similarly represented as degrading themselves by crying and pleading for self-preservation, but remain weakened and disempowered, their individuality trivialized and removed. So the plays show King Henry's lonely death, Prince Edward's violent death, Suffolk's disgraced death, and the similarly miserable endings of the Yorks, as the result of which Henry's dynasty is cut off while the other one continues. All the powerful men's situations—both

Margaret's loved ones and her enemies—are similarly subverted by the mother-shrew's involvement in politics and brought down to the abject level as they end life miserably.

The *Henry VI* plays are riven with conflict; the chaotic situations destroy and overturn the world again and again, and the plays' representation of men becoming infantilized, "uniqueless," degraded and destroyed by Margaret seems to indicate the playwright's intention to reject a regenerative mode or meaning in the play. Unlike the shrews in the other works considered in this dissertation, who in one way or another create regenerative carnivalesque endings, Margaret's shrewish-maternal nature brings in an unfestive and deeply grim mode to her subverted world. The male fear of separation from maternal bodies brings out a pessimistic mode of his blood succession. The ambivalence with which her maternal nature is portrayed in the plays resolves, in these chaotic endings, into sameness: the threat of her maternal love and hate really amounts to two sides of the same coin within a world in turmoil.

3.8. Conclusion

The mysterious female threat, created and enhanced by Joan la Pucelle (*1 Henry VI*) and Eleanor Cobham (*2 Henry VI*), mixed with the male fear of and attraction to maternal beings/bodies, underlie the world of the *Henry VI* plays. Throughout the plays, Margaret is represented as an aggressive and ambitious shrew, defying and exercising her powerful influence on the men, rejecting and attracting them, weakening them, separating from them against their will, and finally destroying them, until they become degraded, uniqueless, voiceless, and sometimes lifeless bodies. This reducing of highborn subjects into a low sphere, overturning various hierarchies in the plays' world, indicates the uncanny aspects of the subverted order, for both her beloved ones and her enemies, the debasement of the body that we see again and again as a result involves unsettling images. It is a momentary

challenge that Shakespeare allows women to have on patriarchal authority, especially when we know that underlying the texts is a real history of wars and deprivation that was not so distant for Shakespeare's audience.

However, the confusion created in these plays is thus sharply different from that in the upturned worlds we saw in Chapter 1 and 2; infantilized, dependent, and destroyed men, and the end of their blood line, all under shrew's control, lack any optimistic or regenerative element, and the audience may not be able to feel a similar carnivalesque sense that we experience in many of Shakespeare's plays. The *Henry VI* plays show us that a shrewish character can be figured not only as a comical or otherwise positive figure with an ability to create a festive carnivalesque effect and as a figure with power to avenge patriarchy but also as responsible for a dark ending, a pessimistic subverted world in which the effect of the mother-shrew is undifferentiated death.

Chapter 4: Shrew as Maid or Ruler?— A Study of Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*

4.1. Introduction

Shakespeare's "late romance," *The Winter's Tale*, includes charming characters who are easy to love both in their strengths and in their weaknesses, and offers us a beautiful moment of experience in a world with both natural and supernatural elements. However, the play is filled with ambiguities in its narrative and plot as well as in the representation of people's roles and relationships, many of which are unexplained, unfinished, or equivocal. Among such obscurities, one of the most ambivalent but fascinating characters is Paulina, Hermione's maid-of-honour, whom I shall call a "maid-shrew" in this chapter, since her social status and her unruliness are equally significant in the play. Paulina bears some similarities to the previously discussed shrews—namely, that she is a wife and a mother and, in these roles closely related to the familial basis of society, collapses social, cultural, and political boundaries with her transgressive acts and speech. At the same time, she is unique among Shakespeare's shrewish women in that she has her own social role as a maid-of-honour, whose aggressive yet self-sacrificial protection of her dishonoured mistress can be both amazing and threatening to patriarchy. The play displays Paulina's peculiarity as a rebel in her selfless duty to protect her mistress's honour by challenging patriarchy and risking her own reputation and even life, which turns out to be both maternally protective and monstrously oriented towards domination, in relation to both male and female.

How is the representation of the maid-shrew in *The Winter's Tale* different from the representation of other shrewish characters in Shakespeare's plays? Can we examine her unruliness from similar or different perspectives as we did for Kate, Helena, or Margaret? What does the playwright intend to show through Paulina's altruistic imperative and her ambivalent ungovernable character? This chapter examines the nature of and motives behind

Paulina's involvement in the events of the play, using carnivalesque and feminist perspectives that inform the reading of a different shrew like Paulina. The chapter shows how Shakespeare represents Paulina as a potent force who replaces and acts in the place of her mistress and whose ambivalent transgressiveness is a significant element that contributes to the unique upturning of the world of the play.

4.2. The slandered mistress and the necessity of the shrew

The Winter's Tale begins with a scene in the Sicilian court, ruled by an authoritarian king, Leontes, who is blessed with a dignified queen, a sweet son, and a baby soon to arrive. With an ideal family, friends, and servants, Sicily seems like a pleasant state, but the play will soon show turmoil both domestically and politically.

In Act 1, Scene 2, Leontes' suspicion is suddenly raised against Hermione and Polixenes, who he suspects to have committed adultery. Leontes' delusion begins to swell even without clear evidence, and his court is plunged into confusion. Nobody in the play can accept his accusation of Hermione without evidence, and even though many characters seem to recognize Leontes' delusion and quixotic sickness (Hermione [2.1.60, 100-02, 107], Polixenes [1.2.398, 451, 460], Camillo [298-299, 356, 384], Antigonus [2.1.144, 200-01], Paulina [(2.2.33), (2.3.54, 55, 72, 119, 121)], and other gentlemen in the court [2.1.160-64]), nobody can bring him to his senses. Moreover, men at court including a Lord (2.2.128, 131-34, 160-63), Camillo (1.2.281-86, 301, 323-25), and Antigonus (2.2.129-30, 135-41, 142-52, 172-74, 200-01) oppose Leontes but Leontes neither trusts nor listens to them. As opposed to the trusting relationship between Hermione and her attendants, it seems Leontes has not established a relationship of mutual trust with the men of his court. There are various critical views on Leontes' reaction. For example, John Pitcher questions whether Leontes' sudden rage is a mere fever "clogged with passion" or "a deliberate regression" (37). The

former seems more appropriate since the latter indicates Leontes' evil design of tricking his wife and friend; the text may indicate Leontes' harmful passion but not his evil nature.¹²

Nevertheless, I must also stress that the text persistently brings out further undesirable consequences for the characters who are victimized by Leontes' suspicion that consequently leads to the dramatic requirement of the shrew-maid: since her birth, Perdita's life has been unfairly controlled by her fate; the deaths of Antigonus and innocent Mamillius are too sudden; Polixenes loses his friends and trust; Camillo loses his master and home; and Hermione suffers from the loss of family, friends, status, and honour. The drama is wrapped up in an air of injustice and uncertainty that permeate in Leontes' court, wherein people can only watch Leontes, their king, who acts in a rage of madness. It is during this confusion that Hermione's misfortune occurs and overtakes her life.

Regardless of these dramatic uncertainties, the play repeatedly emphasizes the pitiful condition that Hermione is placed in and her dependence of Paulina as a powerful maid-shrew to protect her mistress from patriarchal cruelty increases. Her tragedy begins within the realm of textual ambiguities when she is unjustly slandered by Leontes, who suddenly becomes suspicious of her relationship with Polixenes (1.2.110-20) and questions whether he is actually related to Mamillius (121-22). In his delusional state, Leontes accuses Hermione of adultery: "let her sport herself / With that she's big with, [To Hermione] for 'tis Polixenes / Has made thee swell thus" (2.1.62-64); "The justice of your [gentlemen's] hearts will thereto add / 'Tis pity she's not honest, honourable" (69-70); "adulteress" (79, 90); "traitor" (91); and "bed-swarver" (95). Hermione attempts every possible means of countering him: she denies his accusation, "You, my lord, / Do but mistake" (82-83); indicates his mistake, "How will this grieve you / When you shall come to clearer knowledge, that / You thus have published me? Gentle my lord, / You scarce can right me thoroughly then to say / You did mistake" (98-102); tries to be "patient" (108); attacks him by repeating

the word “villain” (80, 81, 82); appeals to his “conscience” (3.2.45); and shows her disgust with him: “You speak a language that I understand not / My life stands in the level of your dreams” (79-80). The playwright allows her to challenge authority: firstly, she refutes Leontes and highlights his mistake; secondly, she appeals to him to show more common sense but ends up disgusted with his irrationality.

Critics suggest various ways of reading the trial scene and dialogue between Leontes and Hermione. For example, Jeffrey Johnson provides an interesting reading of the play in relation to the contemporary churching of women. He focuses on the trial scene and argues that Leontes denies Hermione her month of privilege after childbirth and humiliates her in court. He does not give her a proper churching ceremony and also disregards the divine oracle. Thus, Leontes’ words and actions do not coincide with the Renaissance understanding of proper churching ceremony, that would support Hermione’s complaint that she has had “the child-bed privilege denied, which ’longs / To women of all fashion” (3.2.103-04). Johnson contends that Leontes’ personal and legalistic action “usurps the obligations of religious discipline and the authority of the church that, as Hermione notes, is not simply a wrong she suffers individually, but one that affects the community at large” (76). Johnson comments that Shakespeare’s audience would have understood the wrong done in divine order (76). Anna Kamaralli argues that Hermione speaks out to make “nonsense of the idea” of silence as a desirable state for a woman (1128). Hermione cannot sustain the position of a good wife and must challenge her husband to defend herself. In doing so, she must transcend the boundaries of the stereotype to gain her rights. The alternative is that she submits to Leontes’ judgement, which would later destroy her honour and life. Furthermore, Phyllis Mack states that, “if it made sense to describe the state as a family and the king as a father or patriarch, it also made sense to express the challenge to authority in feminine terms” (216). Indeed, Hermione is placed in a horrific situation for a woman of her position and virtue,

accused of adultery and surrounded by men. The resistance she demonstrates is perhaps the best Shakespeare can allow for a virtuous queen to protect herself. However, textual evidence suggests that the more she fights against the restrictive dogma, the more entrenched she is in the stereotype, saying “but for mine honour, / Which I would free” (3.2.109-10) and clutching at straws by appealing to the oracle (3.2.114). The playwright provides another twist in the story here in the arrival of the oracle who favours her. Hermione unexpectedly faints and does not reappear until briefly at the end of the play; therefore, she is deprived of her chance to defend herself. As a result, regrettably, she no longer has a chance to speak for herself adequately for the rest of the play. Placed within such complications, Shakespeare allows Paulina to aid her and continue the feminine struggles against patriarchy.

When Paulina reports Hermione’s apparent death, this creates a sense of shock to the other characters (the audience as well) and highlights the impact of Leontes’ slander. In Shakespeare’s source materials and other literary precedents, slander over sexual promiscuity is a repeated theme, and the playwright’s choice of this longstanding theme of alleged adultery may indicate his intention of stressing its gravity. At the same time, the textual indication of Hermione leaving the play midway through her defense indicates the imposed silence upon her, a conventional image of virtuous women (which I have already referred to in the Introduction). In fact, Kamaralli states that the nature of Hermione and Paulina is represented as artificially constructed and imposed by the society (1122). Indeed, the representation of court life, where Hermione and Paulina are made to reveal their anger, aggressiveness, passivity, or even resignation, is surrounded by the ruling class, patriarchal rules, and customs. Thus, the manner that the gravity of slander and the heroine’s forced silence is handled in the play clarifies Shakespeare’s intention to present the reasons and necessity for the female challenge to authority.

Indeed, both a repeated emphasis on this old theme in Shakespeare's presumed source materials and the necessity of the shrew's intervention must be noted. In Robert Greene's *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time*, one of the assumed sources of *The Winter's Tale*, Bellaria (Hermione's analogue) claims that dishonour cannot be cancelled out: "what is once spotted with infamy can hardly be worn out with time" (18). She is aware that public knowledge of even a small dishonour would be fatal for her as a woman: "thy suspected adultery shall fly in the air, and thy known virtues shall lie hid in the earth; one mole staineth a whole face" (10). She concludes that death is the only way to regain her honour: "Die then" (18). Her lines have a heavy effect on the prose romance, because Bellaria *does* die dishonoured. Just as Hermione's literary precedent took dishonour seriously, so does Shakespeare's play indicate the gravity of slander, though in his text the heroine does not die but disappears only to be "resurrected."

This conviction of the severity of slander plays an important role in many of Shakespeare's plays, including also *Othello* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. As Juliet Dusinberre explains, a loss of chastity was "a matter of the utmost gravity" (54) in Shakespeare's society in general. Hermione, Desdemona, and Hero are all abused in public and accused of a serious crime of being unchaste. For example, in *The Winter's Tale*, Hermione is not only repeatedly called an "adulteress" (2.1.79, 80, 90) but is also accused of being a "traitor" (2.1.91) and a "bed-swerver" (2.1.95). In *Othello*, Othello dishonours innocent Desdemona repeatedly by calling her a "whore" (4.2.74, 89, 3; 5.2.141) and a "strumpet" (4.1.84, 88; 5.2.84, 86). In *Much Ado About Nothing*, Claudio accuses Hero of falseness (3.5. 33, 36, 40, 56, 103-4), calling her a "rotten orange" (32) and a "wanton" (44). The plays show the dramatic heroines with virtuous image being dishonoured viciously. The archetype of female virtue, that had long been enforced on women throughout history, is now damaged by men, but women are restricted to even defend this stereotypical value. Then,

Shakespeare seems to suggest various types of available challenge to authority that he allows his characters to undertake, including silence, scolding, revenge, and “doubling.”

It seems that Shakespeare repeatedly makes use of the grave nature of adultery and the hopelessness of reversing the destruction that follows in its wake as an incentive to create “doubles” who can act as champions for the female characters under siege. That is, he introduces female characters who are less restricted from acting or speaking out (women who are of lower social rank and are licensed to be bold) to support or act on behalf of the accused characters, who are under strict social restriction. In the case of dishonoured heroines, such as Hermione, Hero, or Desdemona, there is an urgent need for succour from the volatile accusation of adultery, and the disadvantage at which they find themselves engenders their need for association with and protection by other women (Paulina, Beatrice, Emilia). In this way, *The Winter's Tale* necessitates that the virtuous character Hermione resort to a maid-shrew's aid to protect her reputation and safety: the logic of the drama requires the heroine to transfer her role and her justified anger to the maid-shrew. *The Winter's Tale* thus withdraws Hermione early from the scene to be enclosed for her own protection of honour and that of her reputation, and Shakespeare's choice of severe slander against the mistress's chastity functions via this withdrawal as a dramatic trigger for his introduction of a shrewish character.

4.3. Maid-shrew versus king

In his illuminating study of the carnival and the sacred in *The Winter's Tale* and *Measure for Measure*, Anthony Gash identifies carnivalesque parodies of church rituals, describing Paulina as “priestess-like” (189). Jeffrey Johnson views Paulina in the last scene also as a “priest” in church ceremonies (80). Since Shakespeare introduces the maid-shrew

amidst the complications surrounding her mistress, it is Paulina's duty as a "priestess" to enable the carnivalesque parodies to take place.

The text's introduction of Paulina occurs amidst disorder in the court, and her arrogance brings both comfort and discomfort, order and disorder, to the anxious characters, who are waiting to see what will happen. Since Paulina's dramatic role begins only after Hermione has been cruelly slandered and imprisoned by Leontes, her presence becomes especially urgent for Hermione, but a nuisance for the men at court. In fact, when Paulina is presented for the first time in Act 2, Scene 2, the play makes it evident that she is already endowed with some charismatic power domestically and socially. It seems her social status and character allow her to be very close to the queen physically and emotionally, and to be respected by many other characters (this, of course, means Hermione is loved and respected by people since Paulina's authority derives from her). For example, when Paulina goes to see the imprisoned Hermione, she asks the gentleman to let the keeper know who she is (2.2.2); the keeper recognizes her as a "worthy lady" (5) and trusts her words (67), for which she will take full responsibility (68-69); Hermione's attendant, Emilia, also respects and trusts Paulina entirely (45-49). Paulina's charisma is such that it brings comfort to those who are troubled by the arrogant rules under Leontes, and she seems to be well aware of his nature and knows how to handle him: "These dangerous, unsafe lunes i'th'King, beshrew them! / He must be told on't, and he shall" (32-34). Indeed, only Paulina is audacious enough to speak to Leontes' face. It is interesting to note that the play represents Paulina as blessed with charismatic and trustworthy qualities that already in the beginning definitively surpass those of Leontes; at the same time, her ungovernable nature is already a comprehensive issue, though it seems very different compared to the other scolds in the other chapters due to the differences of her role and motive, and we do not know yet how far the playwright will lead her to transgress in the play.

At the same time, the text makes clear that patriarchy is on its guard against Paulina's aggression. For example, when she dashes into the court with a baby (Gash calls her act here as "midwifery" [190] to show its comicality), the gentlemen try to stop her (2.3.27, 30-32); Leontes' line, "I knew she would" (44), indicates that he is already aware of her boldness. Moreover, although her husband Antigonus tells her not to visit the king, he is also well aware of her fiery nature (44), and says "When she will take the rein I let her run" (51), telling us that a husband of many years knows it is useless to stop her and best to give a horse rein. This is obviously humorous since a hen-pecked husband Antigonus would probably not have any control of her even if he tried. In this scene, we notice that the play's shrew-horse analogy is different from the horse-breaking imagery in *The Taming of the Shrew* since a male tamer and a female shrew role is already reversed. Nevertheless, the text forecasts the presence of a shrew-horse analogy that exists in the play even before Paulina's ungovernable nature is revealed clearly.

There is a complex sense of freedom of speech and arrogance within this shrew-horse analogy. In this respect, Gash contends that this scene of Paulina's clamouring against Leontes is related to a tradition of "unruly theatrical women, acted by men, like Lysistrata, Noah's wife and Maid Marion, and to folk-customs which allowed women temporary rule, such as those of Hock-tide when women tied up their husbands" (190). Indeed, a boy actor, holding a baby in his arms and dashing onto a group of men, yelling at and criticizing them, creates a comical touch to the play. However, at the same time, a boy actor playing a female role of attacking men also underlines the female fearlessness in the face of patriarchy. Thus, the play clarifies that Paulina's rebellion against patriarchy is targeted to protect her mistress whom she must serve as an attendant; therefore, her defiance against Leontes is an indication of her protection of her mistress, one that requires both self-sacrifice and insolence.

Concerning Leontes' outrage, Gash also indicates that there is Leontes' fear of a festive crowd deriding him as a cuckold. As in the charivari ritual that identifies a scapegoat, the play makes Leontes divert his rage and mockery towards Paulina (the "scold" or "witch"), Antigonus (the impotent "unroosted" husband), Hermione (the "adulteress"), and Perdita (the "bastard") (191). This is indeed an exciting reading of a tumultuous scene, but Gash does not mention Mamillius, whom Shakespeare does not allow Leontes to make a scapegoat of and whose innocent death can hardly be an object of laughter. It seems Leontes' scapegoating is not reasonable enough to convince the female characters to understand or forgive him, and the play requires a rebellious character to teach him a lesson. Nevertheless, Shakespeare ensures the shrew also needs self-sacrificial devotion to challenge authority.

4.4. The self-sacrificial maid-shrew

As the play emphasizes Paulina's especial protectiveness of her mistress, Hermione, the play also shows her taking over more power to take control of the situation, and over the male counterparts when the mistress is slandered. It means undertaking the harm originally directed at her mistress, revealing the strength of patriarchy.

It is such self-sacrificial devotion that makes her bond with her mistress especially strong, and perhaps more serious than that seen in any of Shakespeare's other female characters. Considering the level of degradation she is made to suffer in the play, she is clearly something more than a simple dutiful maid. The maid and mistress's confidence in and intimacy with each other, constructed on the basis of shared history and embodying a maternal metaphor, are engraved in the maid's urge to perform both public and private duties on behalf of her mistress. In order to show her public role as a devoted maid, the play endows the maid-shrew with power and exhibits her exerting that power, a manipulator of angelic and monstrous effect. Both these elements are of course female stereotypes, but through them

Paulina achieves the power needed to protect Hermione, her reputation, and her family. As well as serving, or in order to serve, as a defender or protector, she must also go on the offensive, exercising her power in order to interfere with male control and speak out against male authority. The play repeatedly reminds us that for Paulina, performing her maid's duties as an intermediary between Hermione and the rest of the characters also requires her to sacrifice much of herself in order to gain the strength to guard Hermione's privileged position.

The play shows how Paulina's empowerment trades on her own life and happiness as a family woman, and how her self-sacrificial nature is devotionally offered to Hermione and remains committed to her mistress's service despite the loss to herself and her family. For example, when Leontes orders Antigonus to take the child from Paulina, she threatens her own husband: "For ever / Unvenerable be thy hands if thou / Tak'st up the princess" (2.3.77-79); she indicates in no uncertain terms her mistress's priority over her own husband. Paulina has already decided that her obedience lies with her mistress, the "sweet'st, dear'st creature" (3.2.199), and not, if it comes to it, her husband: "He shall not rule me" (2.3.50). Paulina's disobedience to the king and to her husband excites Leontes to cruel calumny against her: he calls her names such as "audacious lady" (2.3.42), "A mankind witch" (68), "A most intelligencing bawd" (69), "Dame Partlet" (76), "crone" (77), "A callat / Of boundless tongue" (92-93), and "A gross hag" (108), all of whose words reflect the contemporary understanding of the nature of a female scold. The confrontation between Paulina and Leontes may also highlight patriarchal conventions and casts the behaviour of Leontes rather than Paulina as problematic. Leontes' use of language as above is filled with examples of gendered stereotypes but the audience in Shakespeare's time (and even now) would recognize the injustice done on Paulina, as they do the Queen's. To Leontes' threat "I'll ha' thee burnt" (which was one of the common ways of punishing witches in early

modern England), Paulina replies, “I care not” (114); she is ready to endanger not only her honour but also her life. As a maid-shrew, she can risk and withstand the kind of punishment that Hermione as a virtuous heroine queen cannot afford to suffer. The abundant repetitions of Leontes’ brutal accusations of Hermione and Paulina reveals the damaging effect of patriarchy and highlights Shakespeare’s use of the maid-shrew as a challenge to patriarchy.

Despite the humiliation Paulina suffers, however, her words repeatedly remind us that it is her duty to speak out in order to show her “best obedience to the Queen” (2.2.55, 56, 39), and to attack Leontes’ treatment of Hermione, for which purpose she is prepared to be a stereotype scold by being bold and use her “tongue” to accuse Leontes of “betray[ing] to slander” (2.3.86). Here, we see an image of a conventional scold figure juxtaposed with a similarly typical slandering male misogynist. Yet, Paulina helps Leontes’ family to come together, even though her own family is lost and her mistress, Hermione, will no longer be active in court, meaning that Paulina may also lose her post. The play shows one of its unique elements in an ironical contradiction: Paulina, in barricading her mistress indoors and sheltering her from fatal male slander, comes to suffer from these attacks herself.

In fact, others of Shakespeare’s maid-shrews also remind us repeatedly that it is their duty to speak out and act aggressively and self-sacrificially, while also participating in relationships with their mistresses that, like Paulina’s with Hermione, have a shared quality of trust and intimacy. Shakespeare’s representation of self-sacrificial characters is especially interesting to show how Paulina’s undeviating loyalty is consistent. In *Othello*, Emilia courageously stands against patriarchy and reveals a fierce anger on behalf of her mistress, Desdemona—who especially needs Emilia’s voice after her actual death, at which point Emilia is “bound to speak” (5.2.191) and gains the courage to denounce Iago’s unjust slander: “Some cogg[ing], cozen[ing] slave . . . / . . . devised this slander” (4.2.20, 137). Emilia, who once helped Iago by giving him Desdemona’s handkerchief, is finally determined to do her

duty by rejecting him, choosing her mistress over her husband (5.2.203-04, 225-26, 230, 239): “Let heaven, and men, and devils, let ’em all, / All, all cry shame against me, yet I’ll speak” (5.2.227-28). Emilia’s repugnance at Othello’s slander of Desdemona is apparent in the way she reiterates the word “wrong:” “Why, the wrong is but a wrong i’ the world; and having the world for your labour, ’tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right” (4.3.79-82). She does not “care for [his] sword,” and is prepared to die, “Though I lost twenty lives” (5.2.172, 173). Emilia shouts, cries, accuses Othello and Iago of lying, and betrays Iago, which will indeed eventually cost her life. However, while Emilia’s hesitation to protect her mistress becomes one of the causes of Desdemona’s tragedy, Paulina’s loyalty to Hermione does not waver even for a moment, and her faithfulness is consistent.

Shakespeare’s invention of Paulina and the total nature of her devotion, affection, sympathy, and duty, distinguishes *The Winter’s Tale* from its source material. Through her violent acts and words, Paulina enhances Hermione’s image as a submissive angel of the house at the expense of her own image, which metastasizes into that of a “monster against patriarchy”—taking on both the advantages and disadvantages of a rebel against the prevailing order so that Hermione does not have to. Paulina’s pursuit of this duty is fueled by her self-sacrificial devotion, unconditional love, expressed in her self-sacrifice.

However, it is interesting to note that the monstrosity Paulina’s assumption of the power to defend her mistress also means taking on the authoritarian strength to enclose and in a sense oppress her mistress, thus, depriving Hermione of her own strength both in terms of the play’s action and of the dramaturgy, where Hermione’s character remains in a sense stunted.

4.5. The maid or the ruler?

The text of *The Winter's Tale* shows how Paulina's loyal duty as maid embodies her self-sacrificial nature; but at the same time, it shows the paradoxical nature of the power she gains: the power to attack external structures of oppression that disturb and threaten Hermione is predicated on the power to protect and enclose her within safe boundaries and controls people's access to the mistress's space, but the length of time of this enclosure is so long (16 years) that Hermione is essentially imprisoned, both physically and psychologically, and her energy and interest are attenuated. Thus, the maid-shrew's power when exercised allows her to strike back against the patriarchy, but only in some sense at the expense of her mistress.

In this section, I intend to read Paulina as a possessor of a power that is equivalent to a king yet paradoxically, she remains as well a comical maid-shrew, whose status underpins and complicates her love, aggression, and humour. The role that Paulina in some sense appropriates from Hermione is especially significant for her own complex identity, suggesting the importance in this regard of the concepts of the double, the alter ego, and the projected self. Paulina as maid-shrew and pseudo-ruler is displayed as experiencing acceptance and instigating subversion and rebellion—she fights against oppression while enacting her duty to uphold her special power of authorship in controlling various theatrical voices around her.

The play shows Paulina's power as she extends her domination over Hermione and Leontes, acting with dual (pseudo-)authorial agency, within and without Hermione's chamber. For example, the play shows Paulina as controller of information pertaining to her mistress, which affects Leontes' (and perhaps other characters') way of living. It is Paulina who announces Hermione's death: "I say she's dead. I'll swear't if word nor oath / Prevail not, go and see" (3.2.202-03); but she admits at the end of the play that this death has been

only a “mocked death” (5.3.20), and that Hermione is still alive (5.3.118). Paulina’s false information and lies let her wrap the surrounding characters around her little finger. Furthermore, she physically hides Hermione in her house for sixteen long years, describing it as follows: “I keep it / Lonely, apart” (5.3.17-18); the number of years shows the extremity of her determination. In any case, we are unable to find out if Shakespeare’s representation of Hermione’s enclosure is meant to be enforced or of her own accord, since the play includes very little of Hermione’s speech when she reappears in the final scene. Paulina now appears to be in complete control of Hermione’s life and future. As materialization of the maid-shrew’s power over her mistress (and as ironic materialization of Paulina’s previous usage of “it” to describe Hermione), the play portrays Hermione as a statue, over which Paulina claims guardianship, “for the stone is mine” (58) as a kind of carver: “So much the more our carver’s excellence, / Which lets go by some sixteen years” (30-31). Finally, Paulina directs Hermione to act out her part as a statue:

’Tis time. Descend. Be stone no more.

Approach.

Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come,

I’ll fill your grave up. Stir. Nay, come away.

Bequeath to death your numbness, for from him

Dear life redeems you. (98-103)

Paulina’s crisp commands to her mistress evokes the image of a puppet and puppeteer or at least, a role reversal of mistress and maid. Interestingly and ironically, the image of the statue or puppet evokes the lack of agency in the face of authorial power that many of the Shakespeare’s shrews discussed in the previous chapters resist; specifically, many rebellious

female characters deny being ruled or commanded by power. Even though for the sake of Hermione that Paulina rebels against Leontes and his court, the play paradoxically shows her enclosing Hermione within a conventional female space. It is ironic that the maid-shrew helping her mistress is now turning the mistress into a controlled character, the state from which the maid-shrew is trying to rescue her mistress.

In fact, the final scene stresses Paulina's dominance within Leontes' household as well: it is she who decides when to show Hermione to the other characters ("draw the curtain" [5.3.68]), and when to allow the other characters to learn about Hermione's survival and let the reunification of the family to take place. Explicitly, Paulina is the central authority to decide on the Hermione's restoration into the play. She orchestrates this whole process carefully, telling the others what to do: "But yet speak; first you, my liege" (22), "No longer shall you gaze on't" (60), "Either forbear, / Quit presently the chapel, or resolve you / For more amazement" (85-87), and "It is required / You do awake your faith" (94-95). The text here shows Paulina as both angel and monster, in any case, implacable. At any rate, the magnitude of her effect on the other characters and the plot is undeniable.

However, it does not look likely that Shakespeare intends to allow Paulina hold power forever as I shall show below. Like Hermione, Paulina's roles also change from a loyal maid-shrew, powerful shrew, controlling shrew, comical shrew, and perhaps even a degraded and weak shrew. In fact, such a development of her character shows us the playwright's intention to emphasize the presence of her challenge against categorization of women and female roles; in a way, she challenges the very system in Shakespeare's time that characterizes her and confines her in her role.

4.6. The power reversal

The Winter's Tale shows Paulina diverting the male attacks from her mistress and holding a degree of authorial power over the play's other characters, acting like a ruler in the play's world. This accretion and exertion of power may reveal the maid's angelic maternity and efforts for the sake of her mistress, but it also exposes the dark side of the unruly woman as a monstrous maid-shrew who avenges those who hurt her mistress.

In Act 5, Scene 1, the scene changes from the cozy atmosphere of Bohemia, filled with youth, family love, and community warmth, to Sicily, which has now changed to a stone-cold, isolated state. The audience will witness Leontes's court, once ruled by an authoritarian king and his loyal men who detested female intrusion. It has now become feminized and anarchic, despite the expulsion of women and children (Hermione, Perdita, and Mamillius), with Paulina acting like a leader. The ending of *The Winter's Tale* introduces a mysterious wrinkle in this regard, however, in that Paulina suddenly appears to gain power that she practices in Leontes' court. Paulina's interference with the patriarchal court highlights the relation between the public and domestic in the play. State affairs, which have degenerated into the mere exertion of tyranny, are juxtaposed with the affairs of the private household. The microcosm and macrocosm have been dissociated by men, but this line of separation is transgressed through the interference of the maid-shrew. The court seems deserted and the patriarchal power is overturned; the state itself no longer seems to function fully. This dark spell descends on the kingdom, intensifying the mysteriousness of Paulina's power relation to the narrative and of the playwright's intention.

In fact, the ending scene appears to portray Paulina differently from the previous scenes in the way that she appears to be confidently self-possessed over Leontes and the other characters. One cannot help but notice the rigidity in the atmosphere surrounding Paulina and a harsh tone of voice in her speeches to Leontes. For example, unfolding her revenge over

many years, she continues to remind Leontes of his past mistake, as if casting a spell on him, functioning as a keeper of his memories and guilt and as a transmitter of Hermione's words and regret. In some of his plays, Shakespeare emphatically stresses the maid-shrews' determination to take revenge for their mistresses: they want more suffering even after the men's death. For example, in *The Winter's Tale*, Paulina demands "vengeance for't / Not dropped down yet" (3.2.200-01). Similarly, in *Othello*, Desdemona's mortification passes to Emilia when she invokes "the serpent's curse" (4.2.17), and says, "A halter pardon him, and hell gnaw his bones!" (140). In contrast, in Robert Greene's work, it is Pandosto himself who looks back on his sins, whereas Shakespeare emphasizes Paulina's act of revenge as she publicly summarizes his offences, implying that they make him unfit to rule; we hear Paulina audaciously repeating the word "tyranny" (2.3.28, 120), indicating Leontes' weakness and unreasonableness (2.3.119), calling him "mad" (72), and doubting his suitability as a ruler, "most unworthy and unnatural lord" (112). Her words humiliate Leontes and draw his anger (122-23), which brings him down, in fact, to the level of unreason of the putative shrew. Moreover, Paulina also places herself in a sense in a higher position than Leontes by calling herself his "physician" (54) and a "counselor" (55), and claiming that his scandal needs to be expiated (38). The playwright allows her to voice the warning words of Hermione, which state that the danger of slander is that it would make him a traitor:

The sacred honour of himself, his queen's,

His hopeful son's, his babe's, betrays to slander,

Whose sting is sharper than the sword's; and will not—

For as the case now stands, it is a curse

He cannot be compelled to't—once remove

The root of his opinion, which is rotten

As ever oak or stone was sound. (2.3.85-91)

Paulina lists each of Leontes' crimes and confirms his sins: he "betrayed" Polixenes; "poisoned" Camillo's honour; took away the baby; is responsible for Mamillius' death; and now also for Hermione's death, for which demands "vengeance" (3.2.184-99, 199). The use of the term "curse" (88) gives us a shudder when we imagine that it will continue to torment Leontes; Paulina does not want him to "repent" or reform but to "despair" (3.2.207, 208), and it seems rather a persistent revenge if the maid-shrew intends to reunite the husband and wife.

The text reveals Paulina using her power to control Leontes and Hermione, and as the malevolent king becomes grotesque, he is lowered to the level warranted by the general social oppression of women and deconstructed within that hierarchical system. At the same time, Paulina's keeping of Hermione also means that she is responsible for deciding the time and place at which people are brought together on the same ground, determining the moment when the carnivalesque is to be generated in the theatrical milieu. Hence, Paulina takes on responsibility for transgressing even the boundaries of time and space. The maid-shrew's interference with her mistress and master destroys the patriarchal system that determines and fills those roles.

Nevertheless, Shakespeare does not maintain the reversed roles between Leontes and Paulina forever. As her power over Leontes and the court gradually weakens, the ending of the play is mixed with a serious and comical ambience as it prepares to welcome various characters into the play's world.

4.7. The regeneration of Sicily and the lowering of Paulina

In the final act, the playwright shows changes in Paulina from a threatening maid-shrew into a comical (or a pitiful) role. As the following long conversation reveals, Paulina's tone of voice suddenly changes as her persistent blaming of Leontes transforms itself into grumbling when she repeatedly requests Leontes not to remarry.

PAULINA: Will you swear

Never to marry but by my free leave?

LEONTES: Never, Paulina, so be blest, my spirit.

PAULINA: Then, good my lords, bear witness to his oath.

CLEOMENES: You tempt him over-much.

PAULINA: Yet if my lord will marry-if you will, sir;

No remedy but you will-give me the office

To choose your queen. She shall not be so young

As was your former, but she shall be such

As, walked your first queen's ghost, it should take joy

To see her in your arms.

LEONTES: My true Paulina,

We shall not marry til thou bidd'st us'

PAULINA: That

Shall be when your first queen's again in breath.

Never till then. (5.1.69-84)

With her repeated insistence even though Leontes continues to affirm her demands, Paulina reminds us of the traditional nagging scolds. Even the audience may sense her overbearingness when Cleomenes deliberately interrupts her. Therefore, when a servant arrives to inform Leontes of Prince Florizel's arrival, Leontes jumps at the news (perhaps to escape from the maid-shrew). Yet, Paulina says, "How? Not women!," "Had our prince, / Jewel of children, seen this hour,..." (5.1.109, 115-118). Leontes has to finally ask her to stop. Here, Paulina's vengeful attack on Leontes is now degraded into a low grumbling complaint, and the way the play shows her repeating the same question is comically weary. The audience might find Leontes' stopping her incessant talking a relief. The play lowers Paulina's image to that of a conventional scold and her ruling power also seems to be weakening. Then, the tension in the play reduces and prepares itself for the comic/romantic moment.

In the last part of the play, Shakespeare finally presents Perdita, young and in love, ready to come to Sicily, bringing with her various new connections, signs of new life and even an exciting future. With regards to the ending of the play, Anthony Gash examines Bakhtin's study of poetics and reads Leontes' closing speech (5.3.153-54) as his way of inviting other dramatic characters for communal healing (196). Also, Johnson claims that a community of women (Paulina, Hermione, and Perdita) gathers as a "public ritual of thanksgiving that celebrates Hermione's surviving the dangers and perils not only of childbirth, but also of the jealous, murderous rage of her husband, the king" (80). In fact, the play shows all the characters are now in the community: a relationship that had once been destroyed is rebuilt through reassociations of Leontes and Hermione, Leontes and Polixenes and Camillo, and Hermione and Perdita.

The text makes clear that patriarchy is resumed after the confusion. The play makes it evident that when Leontes is degraded low enough, he can finally converse frankly with Paulina, and indeed now appears ready to hold a dialogue not only with Hermione but also with Perdita, Polixenes, Florizel, Camillo, and perhaps the Old Shepherd and the Clown, who are now part of his family. With the inclusion of new people in the family circle, his lost family is in a sense reborn, the common space is enlarged, and a kind of rebirth is effected, though the pathetic memory of the deceased remains. For example, Perdita brings with her a sense of new life but also a touch of pathos for her brother, Mamillius. Camillo and Paulina may start a new life together, but with the death of Antigonus underlying their marriage.

Although Paulina's roles as angelic or monstrous maid and her control over the events of the play intensify as it goes on, however, the maid-shrew's stewardship cannot last forever; crucially, the text stops showing her empowerment. Rather, the text urges her no longer to interfere with the action in order to dramatize the recovery of the original gender and social balance. As her power and her usefulness weaken, the maid-shrew is reduced to a comical or a pitiful figure. In fact, the text also silences Paulina in a conventional way: through marriage, which leaves behind an enriched status quo. It seems, at first, that Paulina's dramatic roles have been created wholly to foster the rebirth or new relationship of the couple and the creation of a new and larger family, built upon her own sacrifice. Although the text shows maid-shrew succeeding in protecting her mistress's virtuous image ("makes her [Hermione] / As she lived now" [30, 32]), her own life story is forgotten; after her task is complete, she calls herself "an old turtle" (5.3.133) and "some withered bough" (134), and her thoughts turn to the end of her life, "till I am lost" (136). Her negative speech indicates the end of the life she has led as a champion of her mistress. But the fact that the above scene is the only moment in the whole play where Paulina comments on herself may be a textual indication that her life as an authorial agent and a shrewish proxy for her mistress may now be over, and

with the appearance of Camillo, the audience's imagination is gratified to see that Paulina will have a new life to ensure the continuation of her own narrative. With revived characters, new characters, and a new world, Paulina's incompleteness includes much capacity for further development, and in this way the text of *The Winter's Tale* has dramatic potential to further engage the audience's imagination even after the play is over, activated by the playwright's lively writing.

4.8. Conclusion

Shakespeare's combination of convention and invention in *The Winter's Tale* helps him concoct an ambivalent shrew-figure who wields power in angelic and monstrous ways. The playwright manipulates the maid-shrew's power, which is especially strong in relation to other ungovernable characters, to manifest her simultaneous maid role and vicious offensiveness. Both these qualities are embodied in her duty to serve and protect her mistress from unjust patriarchal attacks, for which purpose she is prepared to assume and exercise over others some degree of power. This power is strong enough to overturn the power politics that had prevailed between the maid and her mistress and master, where the maid-shrew's monstrosity as well as the king's and queen's weaknesses are revealed. The text shows that the maid-shrew's intention to help her mistress paradoxically turns out to oppress and enclose Hermione within the traditional female image, while the transgressive desire for harsh revenge on Leontes that she is a vehicle for leads her to this assumption of pseudo-authorial control. However, as the maid-shrew's nagging becomes overbearing, she turns into a comical stereotyped scold and the tension in the play reduces.

As the maid-shrew turns into a comic character in the end, the text finally shows her submitting in a sense to patriarchy. However, it is insufficient to surmise that her multiple complex roles are intended to be shifted to accommodate her back into the fold of society to

restore the old order. Nevertheless, she has held many roles that challenge conventions. Furthermore, she is the voice that questions the treatment and classification of women. It would appear that Shakespeare employs the voice of the maid-shrew as the representative for the voices of those who are prejudiced and segregated. Within the carnivalesque world of the play, the audience can witness and experience the enjoyment of the upturning of gender roles and power relations, as well as female challenge and control.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I examined various types of unruly women in Shakespeare's plays—married and unmarried, mothers and maids, of low and high status—focusing on the relation between gender and performance. I observed different types of shrews with various natures and motives, including overt ones like Kate (and Petruchio) in *The Taming of the Shrew* (Chapter 1), an inconspicuous shrew, Helena, in *All's Well That Ends Well* (Chapter 2), a "mother-shrew," Margaret, in the *Henry VI* plays (Chapter 3), and a "maid-shrew," Paulina, in *The Winter's Tale* (Chapter 4). The plays reveal the characters' ambivalences in their respective shrewishnesses, as evident in the various contrasts, such as angel/monster, feminine/masculine, maternal/paternal, constructive/destructive, strong/weak, confident/unconfident, and active/passive. By looking at the shrew characters from various perspectives, the similarities and differences in their representations and dramatic effects became unmistakable.

The dramatic roles of these shrews as disruptive of patriarchy in their respective fictional worlds and as transgressive characters in the onstage drama were sought. Sometimes referring to M. M. Bakhtin's theoretical works on performance, sometimes to feminist, or psychoanalytical works on gender, the tumultuous dialogues between the shrews and other characters in the plays are examined, through which their interactions with the other dramatic characters and plots in various ways become evident, where interference with patriarchal rules and active violation of sociocultural boundaries, especially between male and female, private and public, and domestic and political are revealed.

In the first chapter, stereotypical shrew and tamer characters are studied, and in this convention, the playwright's indication of the power politics at work is evident in the tamer and the tamed, gazer and gazed upon, and the punisher and the punished relations. In the

second chapter, a shrew character, pursuing her love transgressively, is viewed against an unwilling male character, revealing the playwright's intention to instigate the appearance of female impudence that excites the dramatic plot. A mother-shrew character is encountered in the following chapter, represented as infantilizing and destroying the men she loves, and the chapter depicts that the shrew has just as much shrewish power as destruction of her enemies. The final chapter focuses on the representation of a maid-shrew who self-sacrificially protects her mistress and attacks patriarchy, but paradoxically ends up exercising power on her mistress; her power to reverse patriarchal order overturns the power relation with her own mistress. By the end of the play, she is turned into a comical/pitiful shrew and trapped within the patriarchal system, leaving the possibility of power reversal in the minds of the audience. The research shows that as microcosmic and macrocosmic boundaries are violated by the shrew characters in the plays, chaos is brought into the plays' worlds that causes upheaval in, or disturbs the order of, the physical world in patriarchy, sometimes indicating a festive or gloomy regenerative mode, and sometimes the harshly dead-end world. The shrews in this study embody different purposes in Shakespeare's plays: firstly, they mirror the values and norms (biases and prejudices) of the society at that time and personify the feelings and reactions of the society towards women of their kind; secondly, these shrews reflect the women who are recalcitrant and challenges the patriarchal society; thirdly, they demonstrate that even with their shrewishness, there is/is not the possibility of a regenerative ending.

Shakespeare's shrews are represented as intricately grotesque, empathetic, and destructive, and sometimes as regenerative, in their dialogue with other characters, overturning the plays' world. From within such an upturned world, the playwright ensures that the audience may or may not hear voices of the dramatic characters: sometimes different, sometimes strongly emphatic, and sometimes dead silence. Therefore, the ambivalent nature of the female characters allows them to be interpreted as angelic or aggressive, depending on

how the audience may read/see/interpret the character in relation to the whole drama. The shrew character may, therefore, represent two sides of the same coin according to the players and the audience.

This study shows that Shakespeare's shrewish women cannot be interpreted according to a single line of thought or confined within a particular sphere or category. Hence, this study has shown that the literary term "shrew" cannot be defined in simplistic terms but that each shrew in each play is different and unique against different political, social, and cultural backgrounds. The interpretation of the shrews has, of course, never been limited, and it has not remained the same since Shakespeare's time. Further, it will undoubtedly continue to change. I hope that this study will inspire young scholars to examine various potentially fruitful areas of study related to unruly women (not only in Shakespeare's or other early modern plays but also in all drama) from various perspectives. It also crystallizes the issue of the onstage representation of unruly women and the potential for their dramatization afforded by the theatre, seen as a fluctuating, unstable, and ever-changing space. As Jacques in *As You Like It* comments, while "[a]ll the world [may be] a stage," the audience is well aware that the stage is not the whole world; what theatre offers is a festive moment, and the wilder the shrews act onstage, the more fascinating is the festivity that early modern theatre provides. Shakespeare's shrewish characters may not always be the centre of the audience's attention, but they certainly spur his drama, and cause complex and powerful reactions both within and outside his plays' world(s).

Notes

1 For more information on conventional shrews or scolds, see Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Tales of the Clerk and the Wife of Bath* (1386), Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene* (1590-96), John Heywood's *Merry Play between John the Husband, Tyb his Wife and Sir John the Priest* (1533), the anonymous *Tom Tyler and his Wife* (1551), the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594), John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize; or, The Tamer Tamed* (1611), Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* (1611).

2 See Jones, Karen, and Michael Zell. "Bad Conversation? Gender and Social Control in the Kentish Borough, c. 1450-c.1570." *Continuity and Change* 13 (1998): 11-31.

3 In Thomas Walkington's *Optick Glasse of Humors* (1607), there is an illustration of the four elements and four humours: it gives a physiological explanation of anger in terms of the humoral balance.

4 See Pierre de la Primaudaye, *The French Academie* (1586) and Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1604).

5 See, for example, Lucius Seneca, *De Ira. The Workes of Lucius Seneca, Both Morall and Naturall*. Trans. Thomas Lodge. London, 1614.

6 See C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom* (1959); Northrop Frye, *A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance* (1965).

7 For more information, see Naomi Conn Lieber. "The Mockery King of Snow: *Richard II* and the Sacrifice of Ritual," in *True Rites and Maimed Rites* (1992), Phebe Jensen, *Religion and Revelry in Shakespeare's Festive World* (2008), Michael D. Bristol, "'Funeral baked Meats': Carnival and the Carnavalesque in *Hamlet*," in *William Shakespeare: Hamlet Case Studies* (1994), Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in*

Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750 (1986), Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (1986).

8 See Toril Moi, *The Kristeva Reader* (1986), pp. 35-61.

9 For my convenience, all the Shakespearean quotations in this paper are cited from *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*. Ed. Stanley Wells, et al. Oxford; New York: Oxford UP, 1988. Print.

10 “Of a female: To reach the stage of pregnancy at which a child shows signs of life” (Def. 6b. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989).

11 See Stephen Guazzo’s account in *Civile Conversation* (1581) of a child speaking to his mother: “You bore me but nine months in your belly, but my nurse kept me with her teats the space of two years . . . So soon as I was born, you deprived me of your company, and banished me your presence” (24). In a similar vein, Jacques Guillemeau’s *Child-birth or, The Happy Delivery of Women* (1635) is also written from the perspective of the children: “I know (Mother) that you bore me nine months in your wombe, yet that was out of necessitie, because you could do no other wise; but when I was borne, then you forsook me, and my Nurse-mother willingly entertained me, carried me three yeares in her armes, and nourished mee with her owne blood” (1.1.2). The quotes indicate that maternal power can be found both in the mother’s womb and in her act of giving milk. A mother’s womb seems to symbolize the beginning and also the ending of a child’s life, which can be both a pleasure and a threat to the child; furthermore, maternal power, deriving from the unique relationship between the mother’s body and her fetus, can exert control over the child’s life. What seems common to the above writings is that while the mother offers motherly love, she is also believed to betray her child before and after birth, increasing its sense of being abandoned. The child fears

becoming unneeded or useless and being abandoned by its mother. It considers its mother to be egotistical, and fears and blames her for the power she holds over its life.

12 In *Shakespeare's Binding Language* (2016), John Kerrigan shows how binding languages such as oaths and vows were significant in Shakespeare's time, and argues that Hermione and Polixenes are partly responsible for inviting misconstruction. Their "quibbling relationship with oaths" (446), physical contact, and ambiguous usage of "friend" (which implies "a lover or paramour" [563]), clearly show that they lack vigilance.

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