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‘A Mad-Cap Ruffian and a Swearing Jack’: Braggart Courtship from *Miles Gloriosus* to *The Taming of the Shrew*

There is a generic skeleton in Petruchio’s closet. By comparing his outlandish behaviour in Shakespeare’s The Taming of the Shrew (ca 1592–94) to that of Pyrgopolinices in Plautus’s Miles Gloriosus (ca 200 BC), as well to that of English variants of the type found in Udall, Lyly, and Peele, I re-situate Petruchio as a braggart soldier. I also reconstruct a largely forgotten comic subgenre, braggart courtship, with distinctive poetic styles, subsidiary characters, narrative events, and thematic functions. Katherina’s marriage to a stranger who boasts of his abilities and bullies social inferiors raises key questions: What were the comic contexts and cultural valences of a match between a braggart and a shrew?

Is there a generic skeleton in Petruchio’s closet? When he arrives in Padua in *The Taming of the Shrew* (ca 1592–94), he introduces himself to locals as old Antonio’s heir — and those who remember the father instantly embrace the son. ‘I know him well’, declares Baptista, ‘You are welcome for his sake’ (2.1.67–9).¹ But when Petruchio begins beating his servant and boasting of his abilities, he may also have struck playgoers as a character type they knew well: the braggart soldier. By comparing Petruchio to the type’s most storied ancestor, Pyrgopolinices in Plautus’s *Miles Gloriosus* [*The Braggard Captain*] (ca 200 BC), as well as to sixteenth-century exemplars like Ralph in Nicholas Udall’s *Ralph Roister Doister* (ca 1545–52), Sir Tophas in John Lyly’s *Endymion: The Man in the Moon* (1588), and Huanebango in George Peele’s *The Old Wives Tale* (ca 1588–94), I will propose a different protagonist from the one to which modern playgoers and readers may be accustomed.² Viewed alongside these generic forbears, Petruchio emerges as a type whose bark is worse than his bite; and his eccentric behaviour recalls conventions of a lost comic subgenre, *braggart courtship*, with distinctive poetic styles, subsidiary characters, narrative events, and thematic functions. If

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Petruchio represents a variant of the braggart, then the type appears earlier in Shakespeare's corpus than is currently acknowledged.³ Braggart elements in the folio version also complicate this play's relationship with the quarto *Taming of a Shrew* (1594) in which Ferando's courtship of Kate proves more businesslike than boastful. The folio's Christopher Sly boasts that his family 'came in with Richard [the] Conqueror' (Ind. 1.4), but Petruchio's generic ancestry goes back to Pyrgopolinices the 'vain-glorious',⁴ comic butt of ancient Rome.

Because the folio does not identify him as a specific type (as in '*Gremio a Pantelowne*'), editors often adopt Nicholas Rowe's 1709 description of Petruchio as 'a gentleman of Verona' in their *dramatis personae*⁵ — fostering preconceptions at odds with a protagonist who claims indomitable courage, martial prowess, and widespread travel. 'Think you a little din can daunt mine ears?' Petruchio demands, in response to doubts he can woo the local 'wildcat':

Have I not in my time heard lions roar?
Have I not heard the sea, puffed up with winds,
Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat?
Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,
And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies?
Have I not in pitched battle heard
Loud 'larums, neighing steeds and trumpets' clang?

(The Shrew 1.2.190–200)

While the descriptors 'gentleman' and 'adventurer' are not mutually exclusive, 'gentleman' and 'boaster' are. In *The French Academie* (1586), Pierre de la Primaudaye notes the ignobleness of bragging, 'Let vs not ... brag of our earthly race, but let vs glory in the integritie of maners'; in *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622), Henry Peacham counsels, 'learne [we] not to begge to our selues admirations from other'; and in *Advice to Young Gentlemen* (1698), Jacques Goussault asserts that 'Always to be boasting what a Man is, and how worthy he is, is to affront those he converses with ... [an] Advocate has not always his Pen in his Hand, nor a Soldier his sword'.⁶

Ann Thompson proposes that Petruchio's speech 'helps to define him as a "romantic" hero' (1.2.194–200 n). I will qualify this definition. By having his protagonist evoke a soldier-adventurer in this speech, Shakespeare conjures up their most inglorious captain: Pyrgopolinices. The play further alerts us to the type when Grumio undercuts his master's claims with a pun that he 'fears' (ie, 'frightens'/'is afraid of') no 'bugs' (204) — a common device whereby a braggart's tales are deflated by a subordinate who knows the truth. 'Look at the block-head',

notes one Plautine servant in a typical aside, 'how he puffs and swells' (4.2.89).⁷ Pyrgopolinices's stories are overinflated, and so may be Petruchio's. The latter confides to Hortensio that he has been blown into town by 'Such wind as scatters young men through the world / To seek their fortunes' (*The Shrew* 1.2.47–8). Shakespeare does not specify the durations or locations of Petruchio's adventures in the worldly 'maze' (52). Rather than speculate on when or where he fought in pitched battles, sailed stormy seas, or heard lions roar, I will explore the significance of claims that he did, and his intimation that as a result of these experiences, he is uniquely suited to wed Katherina: What were the comic contexts and cultural valences of a match between a braggart and a shrew?

If the braggart is lurking in Petruchio's closet, then this character type and elements of his comic subgenre should combine — according to theories proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin, E.D. Hirsch, Jr, and Alastair Fowler — to facilitate audience comprehension and critical interpretation.⁸ Fowler likens genres to 'armatures' that ensure core stability yet allow for creative variation in each new incarnation.⁹ Bakhtin's account is more visceral. To him, genre provides a 'flexible skeleton' on which to hang the flesh and blood of innovation; each work has distinctive features, but a generic outline remains visible — like the skull beneath the skin. If genres fail to incorporate new elements, Bakhtin warns, they become inflexible, stylized, even moribund.¹⁰ Fowler agrees: 'to have any artistic significance ... a work must modulate or vary or depart from its generic conventions, and consequently alter them for the future'.¹¹ Familiar elements like comically oversized weapons and improbable stories function as initial 'generic signals' that help playgoers detect an array of other generic codes — like the braggart's reliance on parasitic advisors or his brusque courtship techniques.¹² Hirsch notes that an initial 'generic conception' constitutes and colours 'everything that [the reader] subsequently understands' in the text. In a variant of the 'hermeneutic circle', first impressions activate generic preconceptions, which are then revised during the course of reading the work at hand. '[H]aving experienced that [signal] trait', Hirsch explains, 'we come to expect others belonging to the same type, and this system of expectations ... is the idea of the whole that governs our understanding'.¹³ Thus genre performs both a 'heuristic and a constitutive function', and every subsequent reading (or play-going) experience increases what Fowler calls our 'competence in genre' or 'familiarity with such types'.¹⁴ This evolving 'system of expectations' is reminiscent of M.C. Bradbrook's earlier proposal that an 'internal society' of typical roles — eg, 'clowns, young lovers, pantaloons, boastful cowards' — populated the minds of early modern playgoers. These types assisted

with the apprehension of character functions, the anticipation of narrative outcomes, and the recognition of dramatic forms.¹⁵

Wolfgang Iser has called Plautus ‘the father of European comedy’ and the latter’s character Pyrgopolinices certainly begat a long generic line of stage braggarts.¹⁶ Literary historians often enlist the analogy of genres as families — with ancestors, descendants, and traits passed down through the generations — to account for variations in individual members. Fowler recommends this approach to ascertaining form: ‘individual members are related in various ways, without necessarily having any single feature shared in common by all.’¹⁷ Fowler goes on to liken the introduction of new elements to ‘exogamy’, a practice that strengthens the generic/genetic pool. A genre remains most vital when it ‘marries out’, so to speak, blending traits and begetting hybrids as seen in the proliferation of English comic modes (eg, humoural comedy, city comedy). Paradoxically, a genre’s durability depends upon this capacity for assimilation and change. ‘No pantheon of immutable forms’, Fowler notes, rises above ‘the course of literary history’.¹⁸

The Taming of the Shrew includes many variant braggart conventions, but these innovations have obscured Petruchio’s resemblances to the Plautine exemplar now that interim figures like Sir Tophas and Huanebango no longer populate our ‘internal societies’. But in the sixteenth century, such figures did contribute to what David Fishelov refers to as the ‘horizon of expectations’ or ‘generic world view’ of playgoers; and he further notes that critics attentive to textual and extra-textual ‘clues’ can recover the hermeneutic parameters of distant periods.¹⁹ Taken individually, the generic signals outlined below may seem faint; but they gain both clarity and significance when grouped in a formal context and read against a work’s comic ‘congeners’.²⁰ My designation of Petruchio as ‘braggart’ is therefore not meant to function as a constrictive or pejorative label, but as a heuristic point of departure — an invitation to re-examine *The Taming of the Shrew* using recovered dramatic contexts and expanded generic competencies.

Braggarts and Shrew-Tamers

Petruchio and Sly, the inebriated tinker transformed into a married lord in the play’s Induction, share many similarities and are sometimes played by the same actor. Dana E. Aspinall surveys one critical camp in which the tinker is viewed as a ‘prototype Petruchio’ on the grounds that Sly ‘never realizes the extent to which he becomes a joke’ to the Lord and to others both on and off stage. This joke prefigures Petruchio’s own ‘delusion’ in thinking he has tamed Katherina. The latter’s deferential closing speech completes the ‘mock elevation’ of a fortune-hunting

bully who boasts and barks orders, unaware of the elaborate joke at his expense.²¹ The present study provides generic evidence supporting this view. 'I long to hear him call the drunkard "husband"', snickers the Lord, as he coaches his page on how to play Sly's wife, 'And how my men will stay themselves from laughter / When they do homage to this simple peasant' (Ind. 1.129–31). Sly's transformation into a 'mighty man' of 'high esteem' fools no one but Sly (Ind. 2.12–13), just as Petruchio's meteoric rise from home-keeping youth to fearless shrew-tamer only impresses those willing to humour the eccentric outsider (indeed, any outsider!) who might wed Katherina. Padua cynically props up his intrepid persona as he presents himself as if he were a man of singular importance, settling down to wed after a storied career of war, travel, and adventure.

Daniel C. Boughner identifies the braggart type by his essential 'folly in triplicate' — 'boastfulness, lust, and vanity' — vices that make him instantly recognizable as comic cannon fodder.²² Much of this generic DNA can be detected in Shakespeare's bold suitor. Petruchio exhibits boastfulness, claiming he will 'board' Katherina 'though she chide as loud / As thunder' (1.2.91–2). He also displays indifference in his choice, vowing to woo any woman 'Be she as foul as was Florentius' love, / ... as curst and shrewd / As Socrates' Xanthippe' (65–9). His lusty refrain 'kiss me, Kate' has become a familiar catch phrase (2.1.313). He is also vain, in spite of achievements that seem overstated — such as travelling 'abroad to see the world' (1.2.55) when Padua is merely forty miles overland from Verona. Katherina identifies the type in her protest to Baptista quoted in my title. 'You have showed a tender fatherly regard', she complains, 'To wish me wed to one half lunatic, / A mad-cap ruffian and a swearing Jack / That thinks with oaths to face the matter out' (2.1.275–8). Defined as 'a general term of contempt for saucy or paltry fellows', 'Jack' also evokes Latinate terms like *jactator* ('a cracker or boaster') and *jactancy* ('a vain boasting').²³ Katherina's observations echo the cadence of Plautus's *Palaestrio*, who introduces the braggart captain to playgoers thus: 'An impudent, vain-glorious, dung-hill fellow / As full of lies as of debauchery. / He makes his brag forsooth, that he is follow'd / By all the women; though he is the jest / Of all, wher'er he goes' (*Brag* 2.1.13–16). In like manner, Katherina accuses her tardy bridegroom of being 'a mad-brain rudesby, full of spleen', and a serial seducer to boot: 'I told you, I, he was a frantic fool, / Hiding his bitter jests in blunt behaviour. / And to be noted for a merry man, / He'll woo a thousand' (*The Shrew* 3.2.10, 12–15). Ever since Plautus's *Acroteleutium* exclaimed, 'What! must I not know / The scorn of every one? an empty Braggard, / A Wenching, perfum'd, frizzle-pated fellow' (*Brag* 3.6.69–71), beleaguered female characters have complained about impertinent braggart suitors — to little or no avail. Baptista certainly does

not heed his daughter's assessment, and neither have many critics. For instance, H.J. Oliver accepts Petruchio's 'wide range of dangerous experience', noting that 'there is no reason to doubt [his] claim[s]'.²⁴ The contexts outlined below suggest there may be many.

Of course Petruchio has been called a braggart before, but the type is usually mentioned in passing (eg, '[he] is certainly something of a braggart soldier') and then passed over.²⁵ Others ignore the type but note the traits (eg, 'Petruchio's verbal behavior is both extravagant and consistently aggressive as he blusters, brags about his roughness, ... and threatens at various times to beat others').²⁶ Harriet A. Deer proposes that Shakespeare's couple adopts the stereotypical poses of shrew and braggart — she to protest her father's willingness to sell her off to 'mercenary suitors', and he to tame her shrewishness by 'mirroring' its 'destructiveness'.²⁷ I submit that resemblance to these types stems, not from ad-hoc posturing, but from the core of their characterization and pairing. Petruchio exhibits braggart traits before his courtship begins, and his partner's shrewishness follows a trajectory established by sixteenth-century 'generic models' as documented below.²⁸ Scholars have extensively documented Katherina's links to dramatic and folkloric shrews,²⁹ but Petruchio's blustering ancestry has fallen through the cracks. We have studies of him as a schoolmaster, a model wife, a failed orator, a falconer, a horse-tamer — even as an exorcist,³⁰ but it is now time to examine him as an amorous braggart.

Early audiences may not have been so circumspect, as references suggest that Petruchio was seen as a blustering fool, and his shrew-taming as a fool's errand. One Elizabethan proverb maintained that *Every man can rule a shrew but he that has one* — that shrew-taming was a contradiction in terms, like squaring a circle.³¹ Sir John Harington refers to the folly of shrew-taming in *The Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596): 'For the shrewd wife, read the booke of taming a shrew ... now euery one can rule a shrew in our countrey, saue he that hath hir'.³² Antony Chute's *Beawtie Dishonoured* (1593) confirms that Shakespeare's pair had become a touchstone for unhappy couples like Jane Shore and her elderly husband:

He calls his Kate, and she must come and kisse him,
 Doting his madded loue vpon her face:
 Hee thinckes her smile hath where withall to blisse him,
 Thus franticques his loue to the fayres disgrace
 Which not withstood she dares not say him no
 Ô ist not pittie bewtie's vsed so.³³

The stanza echoes Petruchio's catch phrase 'kiss me, Kate', as well as Katherina's complaint about her 'frantic fool' suitor (3.2.12). Calling Jane a 'Kate' also suggests a name newly synonymous with a wife 'disgrace[d]' by her 'madd[ed]' husband. Exchanges in Samuel Rowlands's *A Crew of Kind Gossips* (1613) also attest to the impact of Shakespeare's couple. 'The chiefest Art I haue', threatens one husband, 'I wil bestow, / About a worke cald taming of the Shrow'. One gossip's retort suggests that such boasts were not taken seriously:

I finde my Husband but a bragger,
 His humour is, he will a little swagger,
 And seemes as if he were Knight of the Sunne.
 But let me stand to him, and he hath done.³⁴

Brian Morris confirms all three allusions, but dismisses them as 'unimpressive' and indicative of a 'lack of extensive contemporary enthusiasm for the play'.³⁵ I disagree. They reveal a growing fascination with Shakespeare's character types and plot conventions. They also suggest that each time a stage Petruchio boasted he would tame his bride, a number of playgoers may have anticipated the opposite outcome.

Subsequent adaptations and criticism also suggest that Petruchio was seen as a braggart. In John Lacy's *Sauny the Scot* (1667), Margaret (ie, Katherina) describes Petruchio as a 'mad Hectoring Fellow' possessed by the 'Devil'.³⁶ In David Garrick's *Catharine and Petruchio* (1767), Bianca is horrified by her brother-in-law's behaviour at the wedding: 'This Swaggerer should repent his Insolence'.³⁷ And in his 'Preface to Shakespeare' (1765), Samuel Johnson argued that, unlike 'familiar comedy', 'imperial tragedy' was too lofty for performance, a point he illustrated with the following juxtaposition: 'The humour of Petruchio may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of *Cato*[?]'³⁸ If comic performances 'agitated' playgoers to laughter by depicting excesses, who better to illustrate grimacing 'insolence' than Shakespeare's vain protagonist?³⁹ In later productions, actors like John Philip Kemble portrayed Petruchio as a whip-wielding bully — Thompson calls this trend an 'ominous addition'.⁴⁰ But glimpses of violence resurface in modern Petruchios as well — in the whip-cracking 'bravado' of Douglas Fairbanks in the 1929 film, the tipsy roughhousing of Richard Burton in Franco Zeffirelli's 1966 update, or the 'swashbuckling' of Ben Carlson who brought a gigantic lance to his wedding in the 2015 Stratford Ontario production.⁴¹ In this last instance, audiences enjoyed the subplot's 'Looney Tunes' slapstick and 'casual violence', but when these bled into the taming plot one reviewer called the results 'misogynistic',

‘deeply problematic’, and a ‘brutal, twisted parody of romance’: ‘I was revolted by the end of the play’.⁴² A detailed performance history is beyond the scope of this study, but I submit that a recovered ‘generic competence’ in braggart comedy may serve to reassure modern playgoers and readers that such excesses once proved more conventional than controversial, and that Petruccio was originally more laughing stock than menace.

The Braggard Captain

Plautus’s Ephesian recruiting officer remains the first major amorous braggart to appear in European comedy.⁴³ Notoriously boastful of his military prowess, Pyrgopolinices claims to have slaughtered 7000 warriors ‘in one day’ (*Brag*, 1.1.53). Most of his boasts are unverifiable — such as smashing an Indian elephant with his fist (30–2), or fathering children who live ‘a thousand years’ (4.2.138). Nor is anyone fooled by his claims. As servant Artotrogus notes in an aside, ‘you ne’er perform’d [them]. / Shew me whoever can a greater lyar’ (1.1.22–4). Pyrgopolinices swears compulsively (eg, ‘By *Hercules*’ [4.1.44]), claims divine ancestry (eg, ‘I am *Venus*’ grand-son’ [4.6.76–7]), and takes inordinate pride in his personal appearance and in oversized weapons such as a shield that ‘outshine[s] / The sun’s bright radiance’ (1.1.1–2).

Pyrgopolinices’s misogyny and brusque wooing techniques represent important skeletal traits germane to Petruccio. Insatiable lust prompts Plautus’s officer to abduct one concubine, then later to discard her in order to seduce a woman he mistakes for his neighbour’s wife. Regarding his first concubine, Palæstrio explains how in Athens the braggart initially plied Philocomasium’s mother with wine and gifts, and then simply abducted the daughter by force: ‘[He] clap’d her on board a ship / And carried her against her will to *Ephesus*’ (2.1.26–35). The braggart proves utterly incapable of delaying gratification: ‘What? — shall I stand here, I who am renown’d / For my exploits and beauty, but a moment’, he bellows, ‘I’m tortur’d with impatience’ (4.2.51). Petruccio’s dealings with Baptista betray a similar trait — ‘my business asketh haste, / And every day I cannot come to woo’ (*The Shrew* 2.1.110–11). Indeed, hurried courtships would become a hallmark of the amorous braggart, as seen in the refrain of the ballad, *The Ingenious Braggadocia* — ‘I cannot come every day to wooe’ — as well as in Miles Gloriosus’s song in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*: ‘My bride! My bride! / I’ve come to claim my bride Let haste be made, / I cannot be delayed!’⁴⁴ When Pyrgopolinices is tempted by the wife next door, he elects to discard his first captive; and should she refuse to leave, he twice threatens ‘to turn / The baggage’ out

‘by force’ (*Brag* 4.1.46, 4.3.31). Locals have long endured his empty boasts and idle threats, but his opportunistic attempt to seduce his neighbour’s wife (actually courtesan Acroteleutium in disguise) represents the final straw — occasioning harsh punishments of the ‘letcher[ous]’ (4.9.15), ‘rake-hell’ (3.2.286) ‘wenching captain’ (4.3.38) in the play’s final scene.

Other braggart traits include a lack of social awareness, an essential strangeness, general pomposity, and a tendency to abuse household servants. Pyrgopolinices claims universal admiration, but Palæstrio counters that his master ‘is the jest / Of all, where’er he goes’ (2.1.15–6). To underscore this discrepancy, Plautus inserts asides by Artotrogus — ‘vain boasting’ (1.1.25) — Palæstrio — ‘senseless ... lack-wit’ (4.2.53) — and Milphidippa — ‘monstrous fibber!’ (118). A related trait involves Pyrgopolinices’s reliance on parasitical servants who enable their master’s delusions for personal gain. Artotrogus studies the braggart’s ‘inclinations’ and anticipates his ‘wishes’ — prompting Pyrgopolinices to declare, ‘How rarely thou dost suit / Thy mind to mine!’ (1.1.45–9). He also boasts of being a recruiting officer for King Seleucus of Syria (1.1.89–93, cf. 4.1.1–6). Thus, even though he owns a home in Ephesus, his bizarre appearance, foreign employer, purportedly divine lineage, and exotic travels all render him conspicuously other — a ‘caricature of a foreign type’.⁴⁵ Pyrgopolinices also prides himself in being something of an educator, having trained his first concubine into a ‘woman all accomplish’d’. ‘If she had not been with me’, he boasts, ‘She to this day had liv’d in ignorance’ (4.6.16–20). Finally, Pyrgopolinices bullies household servants, who dread being ‘put to torture’ (2.2.40), having their legs broken (16), or their backs whipped (97). Yet in the final scene, servant Cario cows the braggart into submission with threats of castration: ‘I’ll hang his chitterlings about his neck, / As children carry baubles’ (5.1.7–8). Thus the man who earlier claimed that mighty warriors like ‘*Bombomachides Cluninstaridysarchides*’ (1.1.15) are ‘struck with fear’ (4.6.88–9) when they behold him is now defeated by a knife-wielding chef. ‘Ye have made me tame’, Pyrgopolinices concedes (5.1.43).

By Boughner’s count, more than a half-dozen braggart soldiers appear in extant Latin comedies, though Pyrgopolinices is the only one who functions as titular hero.⁴⁶ Robert S. Miola notes that Plautus’s emphasis on romantic intrigues sets his braggart comedy apart from others like Terence’s *The Eunuch*, making *Miles Gloriosus* celebrated by playgoers and ‘widely imitated’ by playwrights.⁴⁷ In particular, starting in the mid-sixteenth century, Pyrgopolinices’s English descendants began to engender a host of comic variants that would pave the way for the creation (and reception) of Shakespeare’s ‘mad-cap ruffian’ in the 1590s.

Ralph Roister Doister

Setting aside non-romantic incarnations of the type — the Herods of medieval pageants, various morality vices, and the ‘noisy quarrelers’ found in Tudor academic plays⁴⁸ — the first major amorous braggart in English comedy is the eponymous hero of *Ralph Roister Doister*. Edmund Creeth surveys Udall’s debt to *Miles Gloriosus*, but the editor also notes the addition of new plot elements, English social types, and an updated sense of social propriety.⁴⁹ Regarding this last point, Udall’s prologue justifies the play’s impending frivolity on the grounds that

wyse Poets long time heretofore,
Under merrie Comedies secretes did declare,
Wherein was contained very vertuous lore,
With mysteries and forewarnings very rare. (15–18)⁵⁰

Ralph embodies the vice playgoers love to hate (or at least, that Udall thinks they should hate), and thus Udall’s moralizing prologue promises ‘against the vayne glorious [to] invey’ (24).

Ralph is introduced by his servant Merrygreek in lines that alert playgoers to the braggart’s signal traits of bullying and cowardice:

All the day long is he facing and craking
Of his great actes in fighting and fraymaking:
But when Royster Doyster is put to his prooffe,
To keepe the Queenes peace is more for his behooffe. (1.1.35–8)

Beneath his rough exterior, Ralph is a hopeless romantic, brimming with overconfidence. ‘I am sorie God made me so comely’, he sighs, ‘all women on me [are] so enamoured’ (1.2.106–8). They are not, but like Pyrgopolinices Ralph seems incapable of reading social cues correctly. As the play opens, he has become infatuated with a rich local widow, Dame Christian Custance. Although she is engaged to a merchant away on business, Ralph will not take ‘no’ for an answer: ‘Shall [a merchant] speede afore me?’ he demands to know; ‘I wyll have hir myne owne selfe I make God a vow’ (1.2.96–8). He plies her maids with gifts, composes poems for their mistress, and dispatches noisy minstrels to her house — all in the hopes of winning her love. He also sends her a dictated love letter that is read aloud with punctuation so garbled that it reverses the intended meaning. Infuriated, Ralph threatens the scrivener in language that anticipates Petruccio’s abuse of the tailor. ‘[A]lthough he had as many lives’, Ralph fumes, ‘As a thousande lyons, and a thousande rattes, He shall never scape death on my swordes point’

(3.4.133–9). Neither carry out their terrible threats; in fact, it is the scrivener who strikes Ralph in the next scene, and during the siege of the widow's house, the only serious blows land on Ralph's head.

One key trait emphasized by Udall is the braggart's use of courtship to assert his masculinity. Despite his bluster, Ralph is routinely beaten by servants and he cries when he is thwarted. 'What weepe? fye for shame, and blubber? for manhods sake', counsels Merrygreek, 'Rather play the mans part' (3.4.87–9). When Dame Christian questions his 'prowesse greate' (3.3.23), Ralph redoubles his efforts to win her so that 'she may knowe she hath to answere to a man' (109). He refashions himself as a warrior by taking lessons from Merrygreek in how to stand ('handes under your side man' [118]), speak ('a lustie bragge it is ye must make' [123]), and walk ('must ye stately goe, jetting up and downe' [121]). This transformation introduces a related variant whereby the braggart alters his dress and demeanour in order to impress his love.

Like an anarchic puppet master, Merrygreek encourages the belligerent courtship and stage-manages the siege of the widow's house. Preparations for this assault look backwards to Pyrgopolinices (whose Greek name means 'Tower-town-taker'⁵¹) and forwards to Petruchio (who attends his wedding armed with a rusty sword), as Ralph takes up sword and 'harnesse ... tergat, and ... shield' — all polished to 'dimme [his] enimies sight' (4.3.14–21). The widow is not impressed by the ensuing 'braggyng up and downe' (4.3.105), and she musters her defenders with considerable aplomb. In stark contrast to Ralph, she rules her household with a sure hand — berating her 'naughty girls' for failing to heed instructions (2.4.17), and scolding Merrygreek for the affronts of his master. 'I coulede not stoppe hir mouth', the latter admits (3.3.41).

In spite of these stern reprimands, Dame Christian is widely admired in her community. Only Ralph perceives her as needing correction:

RAFE ROYSTER Yes in faith Kitte, I shall thee and thine so charme,
That all women incarnate by thee may beware.

CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE Nay, as for charming me, come hither if thou dare,
I shall clout thee tyll thou stynke, both thee and thy train.

(4.3.117–20)

Ralph's use of the word 'charm' particularly rankles the widow. Defined as 'to overcome or subdue, as if by magic power; to calm, to soothe, to influence or to control',⁵² the verb reveals the presumption of a man who, despite the fact that 'all folke mocke hym when he goth abrode' (4.4.12), seeks to control Dame Christian and make an example of her for all women. The word 'shrew' appears several

times in this play — not as a noun to describe a woman in need of taming, but as a verb to convey women's indignation at the excesses of men. Dame Christian complains: 'My mynde [is] vexed, I shrew his head, sottish dolt' (3.2.87; cf. 4.2.14, 5.4.28). Thus in Udall's play, true strength and resolve are found in women. As the second inserted song recommends, 'A good husbände ever styll, ... Must lette [his wife] have hir owne will' (ll 6–8).

Susan E. James has made a convincing case for Udall's comedy as a source for *The Taming of the Shrew*, and I need not repeat the many verbal echoes she identifies.⁵³ But James is more concerned with documenting topical references to the Bassano family and to Katharine Parr, than with exploring the two comedies' generic affinities. James does identify Ralph and Petruchio as 'roisterer[s]' who woo scornful partners, harry local artisans, and insist on kissing in public. But she also gives them too much credit, stating that both 'have been soldiers and are of mature age'. Terming Ralph and Petruchio 'courtier-soldier[s]' makes their dubious achievements and hollow threats seem more credible than risible.⁵⁴ Moreover, James detects in Katherina's final speech echoes of the 'hagiographic overtones of religious martyrdom' found in John Foxe's account of the 1546 plot against Henry's last queen.⁵⁵ But contexts provided by subsequent braggart courtships point to a lighter conclusion than the shrew's abject surrender.

Endymion

In *Endymion*, Lyly elaborates the stock situation in which the braggart selects a woman who is unattainable, by making her unpleasant too. Lyly's witch Dispas is old, hideous, immoral, and married to boot; as one observer notes, 'she is ... a scold, fat, without fashion, and quite without favour' (3.3.96–7).⁵⁶ Yet the 'amorous ass' Sir Tophas undertakes to woo this social outcast (120), in large part — like Ralph before him — to prove his courage. 'Without doubt all the world will now account him valiant', says his sidekick Epiton, 'that ventureth on her whom none durst undertake' (73–5). Sir Tophas ignores warnings about Dispas's age, stating that 'I love the smoke of an old fire' (5.2.26–7). That she also rails, pouts, crabs, and frets does not deter him (3.3.106–10). She is truly shrewish, yet instead of seeking to tame her he celebrates her faults; for instance, when she turns Bagoa into a tree, he marvels, 'I honour her for her cunning' (5.2.89).

Sir Tophas initially scorns love, boasting that Mars may 'pierce' his heart but 'Venus shall not paint on it' (2.2.127–8). But when he falls for Dispas, the knight grandly disarms to become a lover: 'Take my sword and shield, and give me beard-brush and scissors' (3.3.29–33). Epiton helps 'unrig' his master (3), though most

of the latter's weapons are used to shoot birds and catch fish. Sir Tophas also composes a blazon: 'O, what a fine thin hair hath Dispas! ... What little hollow eyes! ... How harmless she is, being toothless!' (55–8). This inversion of faults anticipates Petruchio's distorted praise of Katherina as mild-mannered, well-reputed, etc. When asked how the 'amorous knight' now looks, Epiton simply replies: 'Lovely' (92–4). Repeating a variant introduced by Udall, Sir Tophas dabbles in poetry — trading his 'pike' for a 'pen' (37) and writing love sonnets. He is also pedantic, citing Ovid to justify his change from martial to marital: '*Militat omnis amans, et habet sua castra Cupido*' ('every lover goes to war, and Cupid has a camp of his own' [46–7 and n]). Boughner terms this last trait 'the braggart conceived as pedagogue', and (mistakenly) traces it back to Terence's Thraso.⁵⁷ Sir Tophas revels in pseudo-erudition, telling Dares, 'Learned? I am all Mars and Ars' (1.3.96), before quizzing local children on their Latin.⁵⁸

Like his comic progenitors, Sir Tophas transforms the mundane into the extraordinary, such as when he calls a fish-hook his 'scimitar' (1.3.92), or vows to slay a dismal 'monster' which Epiton clarifies is merely a black sheep (2.2.95–100). Sir Tophas also claims divine favor, saying 'Mars himself [gave] me for my arms a whole armoury' (1.3.53). The braggart's trademark bullying appears when Sir Tophas threatens to shoot pages Samias and Dares: 'their brains must as it were, embroider my bolts' (24–5). His reliance on a parasitic advisor is underscored each time he bellows for his laggard attendant: 'Epi!'⁵⁹ And his imperceptiveness is revealed when the pages join with Favilla and Scintilla to flatter Sir Tophas: 'make as though you love him, and wonder at him', instructs Dares (2.2.60–1). 'I could stay all day with him', laughs Favilla, 'if I feared not to be shent' (152–3).

Sir Tophas ultimately undergoes the braggart's requisite exposure — not for cowardice, but for an eleventh-hour bout of incivility towards women. Following his discovery that Dispas has an estranged husband, the knight agrees to marry, sight unseen, the tree that Cynthia returns to her human form. 'Turn her to a true love or false', he grumbles, 'so she be a wench I care not' (5.4.293–4). David Bevington sees in this plot twist simply more of the same: 'Tophas remains an absurd caricature to the very end' (287–8 n). In contrast to the praise lavished on the main plot's Cynthia, the braggart's last words are a curse on his bride: 'Bagoa? A bots upon thee!' (298). Lyly's comedy presents an allegorical hierarchy contrasting the lofty idolatry of Endymion with the lowly infatuation of Sir Tophas.⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, the braggart shows the 'wrong way' in courtship, such as through the parodic imitation of his social betters; and Leo Salinger notes that Pyrgopolinices provoked similar disapproval among Roman playgoers.⁶¹ By critical consensus, Sir Tophas is an amorous bottom feeder, an incompetent scholar, and an

ineffectual soldier — a pompous butt who tries to wed the local witch. As one page scoffs, ‘We will ... dig an old wife out of the grave that shall be answerable to his gravity’ (5.2.114–16). But I would qualify the scorn heaped on Sir Tophas. His agreement to wed Bagoa actually seems rushed and *out* of character. Before this last scene, instead of abducting his first love (like Pyrgopolinices) or besieging her house (like Ralph), Sir Tophas sings Dispas’s praises, writes her love poems, and dispatches go-betweens to ‘angle’ for his cause (112). He weighs her good and bad qualities, and decides, ‘I love no Grissels ... if they be touched they are straight of the fashion of wax’ (98–100). Sir Tophas does not seek a bride made of ‘wax’ to shape and manipulate. He wants to wed a curst woman, and to cherish her — warts and all.

The Old Wives Tale

Peele’s braggart Huanebango proves a crucial missing link between Pyrgopolinices and Petruchio because of his successful courtship of a woman considered utterly unmarriageable by locals. Initially dispatched to rescue Delia from the sorcerer Sacrapant, Huanebango presumes that, on finding the princess, she will instantly fall for him: ‘she is mine, she is mine. *Meus, mea, meum, in contemptum omnium grammaticorum*’ (293–4).⁶² Corebus’s aside, ‘*O falsum Latinum!*’ (295) underscores both his master’s incivility and his rusty Latin. Always accompanied by this sidekick, Huanebango is vain about his appearance and his enormous two-handed sword (264 sd, 351, 566–8). He also swears elaborate oaths: ‘by Mars and Mercury ... and by the honour of my house Polimackeroplacidus’ (268–71). This exotic genealogy makes him sound conspicuously foreign among the Madges and Wiggins of the forest.⁶³ His poor soldiership is exposed when, after claiming that he ‘commandeth ingress and egress with his weapon’ (580–1), he is easily disarmed by Sacrapant. Thus the man who boasts he can ‘monsters tame ... riddles absolve ... and kill conjuring’ (280–3) achieves not one of these feats.

As in the variant introduced by Ralph and Sir Tophas, Huanebango is anxious to display his masculine prowess, and he basks in one of the braggart’s signature rhetorical gestures, the hyperbolic introduction (cf. Ralph’s ‘This is hee, understand, / That killed the blewe Spider in Blanchepouder lande’ [*Ralph* 1.4.63–4], or Petruchio’s ‘I am he am born to tame you’ [*The Shrew* 2.1.265]). In a similar vein, Huanebango thunders:

Fee, fa, fum,
Here is the Englishman—

Conquer him that can—
 Came for his lady bright,
 To prove himself a knight. (*Old* 571–5)

But his churlish refusal of charity to elderly Erestus (326–33) unleashes a whirlwind braggart courtship instead. Tempting a beggar with food and then snatching it away (330) exemplifies the braggart's bullying of social inferiors. Erestus's riddling response to the affront — 'He shall be deaf when thou shalt not see' (347) — sets in motion two love plots. In one, deafened Huanebango falls for the beautiful but shrewish daughter of Lampriscus (Zantippa), and in the other, blinded Corebus falls for her ugly but sweet-natured sister (Celanta). Huanebango initially rails against lovers — 'silly fellows ... in the wane of their wits' (271–3). But his transformation into a lover who weds the local shrew consolidates this final key variant for the braggart line.

Peele's Lampriscus despairs of finding a husband for his notorious daughter who is proud as a peacock, 'curst as a wasp', and 'hangs on [him] like a bur' (231–9). Sent to the well to find her fortune, Zantippa smashes her pot once against her sister's (652 sd), and then against the magic head itself (675 sd). She is without doubt 'the curstest quean in the world' (653), but her future seems linked to Huanebango's in that she too flouts social conventions: 'my father says I must rule my tongue. Why, alas, what am I then? A woman without a tongue is as a soldier without his weapon' (660–2). To her surprise, when the wellhead thunders at her, deaf Huanebango rises up and proceeds to court her: 'pretty peat, pretty love ... / Just by thy side shall sit surnamed great Huanebango; / Safe in my arms will I keep thee, threat Mars or thunder Olympus' (677–9). By sweeping her off her feet, demanding to 'kiss that I clasp' (684), and vowing to defend her against all foes, Huanebango's actions prefigure Petruchio's bluster as he protects Katherina from 'thieves' after their wedding. Huanebango's blazon of Zantippa's 'coral lips, / her crimson chin, / Her silver teeth so white within, / Her golden locks' (700–5) recalls how Ralph and Sir Tophas used music and poetry to woo their loves. And in light of what playgoers know about Zantippa's foul temper, this praise also reprises the braggart's inverted perception. She underscores the discrepancy in an aside: "'Her coral lips, her crimson chin!" Ka, wilshaw!' (706–7).

Huanebango's final action in *The Old Wives Tale* is to assure Zantippa of a generous marriage portion, and despite her ominous threat to cuckold the 'prating ass' (713, 699) the two exit to seal their love. This plot omits the climactic humiliation of the braggart, but the mad couple may receive fitting punishments for their excesses: each other. John D. Cox calls their hasty marriage the 'wrong

way' in love, contrasting it with Eumenides's hard-fought rescue of Delia: braggart and shrew marry in haste, and may repent in leisure.⁶⁴ Huanebango's inversion of Eumenides's qualities, Cox stresses, 'is designed to reveal the braggart's deficiency in every respect'.⁶⁵ Yet thanks to the success of recent English variants, by the 1590s the amorous braggart was firmly established as one of the most popular 'deficient' types in English comedy.

The Taming of the Shrew

When Shakespeare came to characterize his own mad couple, he enlisted a comic subgenre that comprised original Plautine traits and significant English variants. Playgoers familiar with these likely responded to the man who boasted that he would wed Katherina 'were she as rough / As are the swelling Adriatic seas' (1.2.70–1) with a host of anticipations: that this wooer should be threatening and vain, yet harmless and endearing; that he should present bravado and eccentricity that belie cowardice and reliance on parasitic assistants; that he should select a social cast-off for his bride, and undertake to school her in a discipline over which he has little mastery; that he should undergo a transformation for love, and view his beloved through a distorted lens; that his courtship should prove hurried and uncivil; and that his folly should be exposed by play's end. Above all, as Ralph lost Dame Christian, Sir Tophas was denied Dispas, and Huanebango failed to rescue Princess Delia, Petruchio must fall short in his brash titular endeavour.

John W. Draper proposes that, in the fast-paced comedies of Elizabethan England, playwrights introduced characters according to a kind of law of first impressions: 'an important figure at his first entrance should show his social caste and relation to the others by dress or word or action'.⁶⁶ Fowler confirms the importance of initial presentation: 'The generic markers that cluster at the beginning of a work have a strategic role in guiding the reader. They help to establish ... an appropriate mental "set" that allows the work's generic codes to be read'.⁶⁷ As already noted, Petruchio's arrival in 1.2 quickly establishes his generic ancestry: he is a stranger blown by adventure to Padua, he makes grand martial claims, and he bullies his servant. And while he does not boast to be of 'famous stock' greater than 'the meanest gods' like Huanebango (*Old* 300–1), Petruchio tells Baptista his late father was 'A man well known throughout all Italy' (*The Shrew* 2.1.68). To Robert Heilman, in these early exchanges Petruchio 'creates an image of utter invincibility'.⁶⁸ But if he is coded as braggart, his quarrel with Grumio generates the opposite effect, as Petruchio's threats seem about as credible as the fee-fi-fo thumping of Peele's braggart. Petruchio complains to Hortensio, 'I bade the rascal

knock upon your gate / And *could not get him for my heart to do it*' (1.2.35–6, emphasis added). Why would a servant provoke a master who poses a genuine threat? Audiences quickly perceive that Petruchio is neither feared by his servants nor admired by his peers onstage.

Shakespeare's comedy enlists both old traits and recent English variants, especially the braggart's willingness to wed the local shrew. From the play's first scene, Katherina is described as a 'devil' (1.1.66), 'stark mad', (69), and a 'fiend of hell' (88). 'You may go to the devil's dam!' scolds Gremio, 'here's none will hold you' (105–6). As with Lampriscus's curst daughter, Baptista's eldest is the 'rotten apple' in the basket of Padua's maids (128). Petruchio's backroom negotiations with Baptista recall Pyrgopolinices's attempt to win Philocomasium by plying her mother with gifts, and Ralph's bid to win Dame Christian by bribing her maids. Petruchio's uncivil methods become apparent when he vows to be 'rough and woo not like a babe' (2.1.133). During his first encounter with Katherina he prematurely claims to have secured her father's consent: 'your dowry [is] 'greed on, / And will you, nill you, I will marry you' (258–60). Petruchio also praises Katherina in lines that contradict the local consensus regarding her demeanour: '[I heard] thy mildness praised in every town, / Thy virtues spoke of and thy beauty sounded' (187–8). His admission in a soliloquy (166–76) that such distortions represent a deliberate strategy makes this a complex variant of the braggart's inverted perception of reality.

Gremio's incredulous joy that Hortensio should find an out-of-town stooge to 'woo this wildcat' (1.2.190) sets up Petruchio's proud declamation of past achievements (cited above), an important signal to playgoers that, in his protagonist, Shakespeare is fleshing out a familiar generic skeleton. The fact that the playwright presents Petruchio's achievements as rhetorical questions — eg, 'Have I not in a pitched battle heard / Loud 'larums, neighing steeds and trumpets' clang?' (1.2.199–200) — raises doubts about their veracity. Did he actually *fight* in a pitched battle, or did he merely *hear* its terrible sounds (ie, from a safe distance)? Petruchio cagily uses erotesis, defined by Richard A. Lanham as a "rhetorical question" ... which implies an answer but does not give or lead us to expect one'.⁶⁹ Yet playgoers may infer different answers from those so assertively implied by the questions themselves. The speech also recalls a related device, epiplexis, defined as 'asking questions in order to reproach or upbraid'.⁷⁰ The overall effect is of an oration which avers abilities in the speaker, but also reprimands (even bullies) anyone who would doubt his claims.

Petruchio's behaviour on his wedding day furtheres his resemblance to the amorous braggart. As Biondello reports, his master has furnished himself with

mismatched boots, a filthy jerkin, a broken-down horse, and ‘an old rusty sword tane out of the town armoury, with a broken hilt and chapeless’ (3.2.41–4). As with Pyrgopolinices’s giant shield, Petruchio and his blade cut a ridiculous figure: ‘wherefore gaze this goodly company’, he wonders, ‘As if they saw ... / Some comet or unusual prodigy’ (84–6). Gremio then relates how, during the offstage ceremony, Petruchio swears ‘by gogs-wouns!’ and strikes the priest, gulps the wine, throws sops in the sexton’s face, and behaves like ‘a devil, a devil, a very fiend!’ (145–67). This generic cluster of drunkenness, strange weapons, outlandish clothes, blaspheming, and demonic behaviour can be found in contemporary accounts of the non-dramatic braggart as well. In *Wits Miserie and the Worlds Madnesse* (1596) Thomas Lodge recounts how the spawn of arch-devil Baalberith takes the form of ‘A Ruffian, a Swashbuckler, and a Bragart’ — one who wears a doublet of grease spattered taffeta with the ‘bumbast ... eaten through it’, who brandishes a ‘basket hilted sword, and a bum dagger’, and who prays each morning: ‘Gogs wounds hostesse one pot more’.⁷¹ Sir Tophas and Huanebango changed from soldiers into lovers to court their idols, and Ralph added ‘a portely bragee ... [to his] estate’ to woo Dame Christian (*Ralph* 3.3.113), but Petruchio becomes an *even more braggart-like* soldier to claim his bride on their wedding day.

As with Ralph’s siege of Dame Christian’s house, Petruchio would use the conquest of a woman to assert his masculinity; and as with Sir Tophas (who perceives sheep as monsters), Petruchio asserts dangers where none exist. Citing safety concerns, the latter refuses to stay for the wedding banquet. ‘Draw forth thy weapon’, he shouts to Grumio, ‘We are beset with thieves! / Rescue thy mistress, if thou be a man. / — Fear not, sweet wench, they shall not touch thee’ (*The Shrew* 3.2.225–7). Petruchio’s antics recall Huanebango sweeping Zantippa off her feet. Incidentally, Zantippa is equally horrified by her suitor’s strange dress: ‘what greasy groom have we here? He looks as though he crept out of the backside of the well’ (*Old* 680–1). Finally, Petruchio’s defiant inventory of his new marital prize — ‘I will be master of what is mine own. / She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house’ (*The Shrew* 3.2.218–19) — echoes Huanebango’s gleeful stock-taking of Zantippa: ‘True, mine own, and my own because mine, and mine because mine — ha, ha!’ (*Old* 708–9). Sir Tophas kills ‘by the dozen’ (*End* 1.3.68–9), for Ralph to kill forty ‘is a matter of laughter’ (*Ralph* 4.7.77), and Pyrgopolinices slays ‘Sev’n thousand’ in a day (*Brag* 1.1.43–7); but Petruchio outbraves them all, vowing to ‘buckler’ Katherina ‘against a million!’ (*The Shrew* 3.2.228). The guests do not try to stop the escape, not because they fear Petruchio’s blade, but because they want to be rid of the mad couple. ‘[L]et them go’, chuckles Baptista, ‘a couple

of quiet ones.’ Despite Petruchio’s brandished sword and martial outbursts, the only actual threat the braggart poses is that Padua’s onlookers ‘should die with laughing’ (229–30).

When he returns home with Katherina, it becomes apparent that Petruchio is not in control of his household, as he expresses outrage that they have ignored his explicit instructions. To his complaint that the ‘rascal knaves’ did not assemble to meet the newlyweds in the park, Grumio merely replies: ‘Nathaniel’s coat, sir, was not fully made, / And Gabriel’s pumps were all unpink’d i’th’heel’ (4.1.102–4). Stage productions generate much slapstick out of these flashes of insubordination, and editors add vivid stage directions not present in the folio — eg, ‘[*He strikes the servant*]’ (118 sd, cf. 127 sd), ‘[*He boxes Curtis’s ear*]’ (46 sd), ‘[*He throws the food and dishes at them*]’ (137 sd) — to convey Petruchio’s fearsome nature. But to early playgoers steeped in the daily grind of domestic hierarchy, details like a servant ducking an order because ‘There was no link to colour [his] hat’ (105) must have suggested incompetence in the household head. Why else would Grumio note that, when they approached on horseback from Padua, ‘my master [was] riding behind my mistress’ (49)? ‘Both of one horse?’ asks Curtis (50), incredulous that Petruchio would not take the reins with his bride riding pillion behind him. After all, proverbially if two ride upon a horse, ‘one must sit behind’.⁷² Petruchio seeks to strike fear into the hearts of women and men, but as William Gouge observes in *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), masters need to instill a more complex form of respect in their household: ‘An awe in regard as his masters place: [and] a dread in regard of his masters power ... This [two-fold] fear will draw seruants on, cheerfully to performe all duty’.⁷³ Petruchio’s error is symptomatic of the braggart type, as he rather seeks to provoke what Gouge terms ‘slavish fear’ — defined as ‘when they feare nothing but the reuenging power of their master: the staffe or the cudgell’. Slavish fear merely generates in subordinates ‘light esteeme and plaine contempt’ for their master, the insistently ‘hard man’ who surrenders all authority and credibility, and wonders ‘If I be a master, where is my fear?’⁷⁴

Flying in the face of contemporary wisdom on the subject, Petruchio sticks to his regimen of seeking to provoke ‘slavish fear’ in subordinates. In her new home, Katherina is deprived of sleep by shrill midnight lectures, of sustenance by servants sworn not to feed her, and of gifts like the hat and gown destroyed before her eyes. Snatching away her food recalls the taunting of the beggar by Peele’s braggart: ‘Huanebango giveth no cakes for alms’ (*Old* 330). As Katherina complains: ‘Beggars that come unto my father’s door / Upon entreaty have a present alms ... [But I am] starved for meat’ (*The Shrew* 4.3.4–9). We have already seen how Pyrgopolinices terrorizes his household to no effect, and how Ralph’s threat

to blast the scrivener 'to the worldes ende' backfires (*Ralph* 3.5.19). Petruchio's abuse is of a piece with this tendency to bully servants and craftsmen. He threatens one servant who 'pluck[s his] foot awry' while taking off his boot: 'Out you rogue!' (*The Shrew* 4.1.118). He berates another as a 'whoreson beetle-headed, flap-eared knave!' for spilling his water (128). He rages at Peter and 'the rascal cook' for burning his supper: 'You heedless joltheads ... I'll be with you straight' (133, 137–8). In the most elaborate passage he berates the tailor for allegedly marring Katherina's dress. 'Thou flea, thou nit, thou winter-cricket, thou!' he begins, 'Away, thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant! / Or I shall so bemetee thee with thy yard / As thou shalt think on prating whilst thou liv'st' (4.3.108–12).

Jacques Gaultier's *Rodomontados. Or, Brauadoes and Bragardismes* (1610) preserves a number of outlandish claims and threats made in a domestic setting.⁷⁵ In one, a Spanish captain orders his cook to prepare a meal of smashed up cannonballs, truncheons, and pikes, with a side salad of pistols, saying 'let whosoever dare, come suppe with mee: for these are [my] Vyands' (VI). In another, this same braggart recounts how 'My shoo-maker one Morning pulling on my shooes, I found one of them somewhat too strait in the insteppe, I gaue him such a kicke with my foote against the ground, that the earth immediately opened, and he fell in as farre as Hell' (XXV). Finally, to anyone who dares 'offend' him, the braggart issues this blanket warning: 'I wil kil this Villain, his Wife, his Children, his Seruants, his Dogs, his Cats, his Pullaine, his very Lice, Nits & Fleas, or any liuing creature belonging to his house, which also I wil ruinyte from the top to the foundation' (XLVII). Petruchio's behaviour anticipates that depicted in Gaultier's compendium of excess: the Veronese householder berates the servant who pinches his foot, but the Spaniard notes, 'Twenty men together dare not touch the string of my Shoo' (XXXVII).

Some critics suggest that, by managing his household in this rough manner, Petruchio is modelling for Katherina how a shrew looks to outside observers.⁷⁶ Such is Gaultier's avowed purpose in publishing the 'Bragardisms'; he explains in the dedication, 'I am verily perswaded, that many men in reading this Book, and falling into laughter: may happen to laugh and smile at themselues, because they may chance to finde their owne follies recorded, vnder the fable alluded to another'.⁷⁷ Paradoxically, Petruchio's educational montage of the excesses of the shrew enlists the most improbable thunderings of the braggart. '[He] rails and swears and rates', summarizes Curtis (4.1.155), in a noisy barrage as tiresome as Ralph's siege of Dame Christian's house. In comedies with contrasting love plots, braggart courtship inverts the 'right way'. As Sir Tophas observes, 'love is a lord of misrule, and keepeth Christmas in my corpse' (*End* 5.2.5). Katherina could once

dismiss her would-be lord of misrule as a 'swearing Jack' (*The Shrew* 2.1.277), but now that she is permanently tied to him, she must learn to manage her master's bluster.

This fact brings us to the so-called 'taming' of Katherina. She has proven herself an astute judge of men's characters such as her negligent father's (1.1.57–8), her manic suitor's (2.1.274–8), and that of his 'false deluding slave' (4.3.31). Her discovery of this last man's survival strategy, however, will save her. Grumio knows what parasitic predecessors have all known before him, that if he humours his master, he can live peaceably with him. Plautus's Artotrogus candidly admits: 'My ears must hear him, or my teeth want work [ie, food]; / And I must swear to every lie he utters' (*Brag* 1.1.39–40). Merrygreek echoes the principle in the early moments of Udall's comedy: 'Then must I sooth it, what ever it is: / For what he sayth or doth can not be amisse' (*Ralph* 1.1.47–8). Katherina begins 'sooth'-ing her master and swearing to his 'lies' in the notorious sun and moon scene, where she reluctantly agrees: 'sun it is not, when you say it is not, / And the moon changes even as your mind' (*The Shrew* 4.5.19–20). This concession no more proves she has been tamed than Artotrogus's agreeing that his master smashed an elephant proves that feat actually occurred. 'It shall be what o'clock I say it is', thunders Petruchio (4.3.189) — thundering is what braggarts do. Hortensio sums up the only sensible response: 'Say as he says, or we shall never go' (4.5.11). When Katherina taunts old Vincentio as a budding virgin, she ingratiates herself as the braggart's new flattering sidekick; and significantly, Grumio does not speak again after this scene. By enabling her husband's folly, 'Kate the curst' finally becomes 'Kate of Kate-Hall' (2.1.182–4), Petruchio's new second in command.

Conclusion: 'False Commendations' in *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*

Like his generic forbears, Petruchio embellishes his life narrative with imaginary feats and hypothetical heroics, and Padua cynically enables his delusion to get rid of its troublesome shrew. Early on, Gremio refers to him as 'great Hercules' (1.2.250), and Tranio also flatters 'the man' come to do the 'feat' that none before him could — 'Achieve the elder, set the younger free' (258–61). This process recalls Merrygreek pumping up Ralph with news that ladies mistake him for Lancelot, Hercules, Hector, and other Worthies (*Ralph* 1.2.115–27). Petruchio's actions are consistently framed as dangerous or momentous. An argument with Katherina becomes 'two raging fires meet[ing] together' (*The Shrew* 2.1.128). He arrives late for his wedding because some 'occasion of import' too 'harsh to hear' detained him (3.2.92–5). During the ceremony he seizes the wine and proposes

“A health” ... *as if*/ He had been aboard, carousing to his mates / After a storm’ (160–2, emphasis added). When Katherina agrees that the sun is the moon, Hortensio marvels ‘The field is won’ — as if Petruchio has won a bold military victory (4.5.23). And Lucentio welcomes the couple to Bianca’s wedding banquet as if it were a post-war celebration: ‘At last, though long, our jarring notes agree, / And time it is when raging war is done / To smile at scapes and perils overblown’ (5.2.1–3). Thompson notes that Lucentio’s lines ‘bring all the nautical and military metaphors to a satisfactory climax’ (2–3 n), though it remains unclear whether the word ‘overblown’ indicates dangers ‘passed’ or ‘grotesquely exaggerated’.

The braggart’s climactic humiliation seems to be in store for Petruchio when, at this second banquet, the assembled guests tease him for still being ‘troubled with a shrew’ (5.2.28). Anticipation mounts when Petruchio proposes a wager over which wife will come to her master’s call, and all are surprised when only Katherina returns. She then gives her controversial speech on wifely duties, one that has been variously interpreted as an orthodox submission to her husband, an ironic send-up of patriarchy, or a mutual game played by the spouses.⁷⁸ I suggest that the speech deftly mixes all three, as it uses the first to conceal the second in a playful exposé of braggart puffery and side-kick flattery. Katherina servilely bends to the will of her new ‘lord’, ‘king’, and ‘governor’ (138), as she praises him for sacrifices he never made and risks he never took. Using the same implicit ‘as if’ formulation that has sustained him throughout, she describes how husbands endure ‘toil and trouble in the world’ (166) as they embark on perilous adventures — ‘painful labour both by sea and land, / To watch the night in storms, the day in cold, / Whilst [their wives lie] warm at home, secure and safe’ (149–51). Such a husband ‘craves no other tribute at [his wife’s] hands / But love, fair looks and true obedience — / Too little payment for so great a debt’ (152–4). Petruchio may project himself into these perilous hypothetical scenarios, but by overstating her indebtedness, Katherina underscores his actual failings. After all, the last time he toiled on a stormy night, he left his wife in the mud, pinned beneath their fallen horse.

Katherina does express genuine gratitude that Petruchio chose her when no one else would, in lines that recall Zantippa’s meeting with Huanebango at the well: ‘A woman moved is like a fountain troubled, ... And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty / Will deign to sip, or touch one drop of it’ (5.2.142–5) — none, that is, except an amorous braggart. But Katherina winds down with more implicit criticism, noting that ‘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' (173–5). By highlighting hollow claims and harmless weapons, she exposes the straw lance and ersatz heroism of the man who purports to have tamed her. 'I am ashamed that women are so simple', she observes, 'To offer war where they should kneel for peace' (161–2). Peele's shrew once noted that 'A woman without a tongue is as a soldier without his weapon' (*Old* 661–2). By flattering Petruchio's war-like accomplishments with her ostensibly bridled tongue, Katherina disarms her braggart captain. She overstates her husband's authority; she says as he says.

Katherina outlines how false deference, obsequious submission, and affectionate manipulation will ensure a superficial peace within their marriage. She exposes the hollowness of the braggart's 'victory', yet he uncomprehendingly roars with approval as she offers to place her hand beneath his foot: 'Come on and kiss me, Kate' (*The Shrew* 5.2.180). Not since Merrygreek led Ralph around by the nose has a subordinate held such sway over a master. Merrygreek explains:

Prayse and rouse him well, and ye have his heart wonne,
For so well liketh he his owne fonde fashions
That he taketh pride of false commendations.
But such sporte have I with him as I would not l[o]se ...
I can set him in hope and eke in dispaire,
I can make him speake rough, and make him speake faire.

(*Ralph* 1.1.50–62)

In fact, this symbiotic flatterer-braggart dynamic extends back to Plautus. Servant Artotrogus notes, 'Tis fit that I should study / Your inclinations, and my care should be / Ev'n to fore-run your wishes' — to which Pyrgopolinices happily accedes. 'Bear thyself / As thou hast hitherto,' he vows, 'and thou shalt eat / Eternally, — for ever shalt thou be / Partaker of my table' (*Brag* 1.1.46–8, 59–61). Hortensio/Litio was earlier asked if he thought Katherina would 'prove a good musician', to which he replied, 'I think she'll sooner prove a soldier!' (*The Shrew* 2.1.140–1). In her gloss, Thompson notes the ambiguity of his pun on 'prove' (ie, will she 'make a good soldier'? or will she 'put a soldier to the test?'). In fact, both scenarios prove true: in her self-serving speech and ostentatious submission, Katherina proves more than a match for the 'soldier' she wed and whom she now exposes as the latest in a long line of shallow boasters.

This persistent military imagery is notably absent from the taming plot of the anonymous *Taming of a Shrew* — a play which has been variously posited as a narrative source, an apprentice draft, a memorial reconstruction, and a 'bad quarto'.⁷⁹ Stephen Miller notes that modern critics have yet to agree 'upon a theory to account for the variation between the two versions', and the present study will

not attempt to resolve the issue.⁸⁰ Reading Petruchio in light of braggart conventions, however, underscores one key difference between *A Shrew* (1594) and *The Shrew* (1623) that has been overlooked in criticism. Simply put, Petruchio's quarto counterpart Ferando is not much of a boaster.⁸¹ Gone is Petruchio's elaborate vow to woo a woman as old as Sibyl, as curst as Xanthippe, or as rough as the Adriatic sea; Ferando merely notes that 'they say thou art a shrew, / And I like thee the better for I would have thee so' (*A Shrew* 3.154–5). Also omitted is Petruchio's grand speech recounting battles and adventures; Ferando is rather more 'blunt in speech' than apt to invent tall tales (75). Petruchio pretends to be an exotic outsider; yet as a local Athenian, Ferando is rather more the boy next door, courted by Alfonso with a promise of 'six thousand crowns' to marry his 'scolding' daughter (117–19). Kate initially seems outraged at the prospective match; but unlike Katherina (who twice calls out her suitor's boasting), the quarto bride merely calls her wooer 'an ass' and a 'brainsick man' (3.150, 167). And while Petruchio's wooing scene is a tour de force of sublimated violence and sexual innuendo, the quarto's Sander mocks Ferando for his milksop approach: 'You spoke like an ass to her ... [I would] have had her before she had gone a foot fuder' (190–2). Sander is correct, for Kate admits in an aside that 'hav[ing] lived too long a maid' she was already predisposed to wed Ferando — if only to test whether 'his manhood's good' (169–71).

The quarto wedding scenes further deflate Petruchio's bluster. Instead of arriving with mismatched boots and a rusty sword from the town armoury, Ferando merely enters '*basely attired and [with] a red cap on his head*' (*A Shrew* 4.107 sd). Reports of Petruchio's bullying during the ceremony have no parallel in the quarto. Ferando does refuse to stay for the banquet, but omitted are the folio couple's stamping, staring, fretting, threatening, as well as any reference to weapons, bucklers, thieves, or rescues. Instead the quarto presents a more conciliatory groom who promises, 'This is my day, tomorrow thou shalt rule' (5.79). At times, even Sander appears more boastful than his master, claiming to be 'stout' in his new livery, to having 'a life like a giant', and vowing 'to slash it out and swash it out amongst the proudest' servants (3.206–13). To be sure, at home Ferando beats these same servants, threatens skilled tradesmen, and deprives Kate of the necessities of life (scenes 6, 8, 10). Thompson calls his taunting of Kate with '*a piece of meat upon his dagger's point*' (8.23 sd) the height of Marlovian 'savagery.'⁸² Yet when the time comes for Kate's speech on wifely duties, gone are all mock serious references to sovereign lords, painful labours by land and sea, war, and straw lances. Instead quarto Kate pays tribute to 'The King of kings, the glorious God of heaven' — attributing her surrender to the eternal order of his

'heavenly work / [That] made all things to stand in perfect course' (14.127–9). If this shrew is tamed, she gives Ferando no credit — hollow or otherwise — for her conversion. 'As Sarah to her husband', she intones, 'so should we, / Obey them, love them' (136–7).

Does the absence of the braggart's excesses suggest that *A Shrew* represents an earlier version of the shrew-taming story — one which Shakespeare spiced up with a boasting hero, heightened conflicts, and verbal excess? Not exactly. Hyperbolic speeches abound in *A Shrew*, but these are dispersed among many characters. For instance, Polidor, Emelia, Aurelius, and Phylena indulge in fantasies of travel and adventure — 'To leave fair Athens and to range the world', 'to scale the seat of Jove', 'to pass the burning vaults of hell', 'to swim the boiling Hellespont', and so forth (*A Shrew* 11.6–36). Emelia even vows to do battle 'Like to the Warlike Amazonian queen' to save her love (51). Duke Jerobel (ie, Vincentio) threatens his son Aurelius (ie, Lucentio) with a terrible Rodomontade: 'O that my furious force could cleave the earth / That I might muster bands of hellish fiends / To rack his heart and tear his impious soul' (13.73–5). To be sure, Ferando prosaically threatens to 'cut [Sander's] nose' (6.23), and later complains about Emelia's 'monstrous, intolerable presumption! / Worse than a blazing star' when she refuses her husband's call (14.68–9). But these outbursts seem tame when compared with Jerobel's Marlovian fury:

This angry sword should rip thy hateful chest
And hew thee smaller than the Libyan sands ...
The ceaseless turning of celestial orbs
Kindles not greater flames in flitting air
Than passionate anguish of my raging breast (13.62–3, 76–8)

Like father like son (but unlike tame Ferando), Aurelius replies with a hollow promise of his own — 'To kill untamed monsters with my sword, / To travel daily in the hottest sun, / And watch in winter when the nights be cold' — to atone for his unfilial behaviour (85–7).⁸³

One point on which commentators do agree is that the missing resolution of the folio's Induction represents a regrettable defect in an otherwise intricately plotted comedy. To remedy this, many editions append the quarto's final scene where Sly awakes from 'the best dream' of his life and vows to return home 'to [his] wife presently, / And tame her too, and if she anger me' (*A Shrew* 15.18–21). Does the Tapster accompany Sly to learn from an adept who 'know[s] now how to tame a shrew' (16), or to protect the gullible tinker from the humiliation (or worse) that may result from failing in the attempt? Lucentio concludes *The*

Taming of the Shrew by saying, 'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tamed so', a line which, Thompson finally notes, raises 'doubts' about whether Petruchio actually achieves his objective (5.2.189 and n). Could his 'taming-school' really 'charm her chattering tongue' (4.2.54–8)? No more than Pyrgopolynices manages to outwit Acroteleutium, or Ralph subdues the spirited Dame Christian. The preponderance of generic evidence points to two simple facts: as of the mid-1590s in English comedy, no woman had yet been tamed in a braggart courtship; and no one had been fooled but the 'frantic fool' himself.

Notes

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- 1 William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Ann Thompson, New Cambridge edn (Cambridge, 1995), hereafter referenced parenthetically as *The Shrew*. For another example of Petruchio mentioning his parentage as 'Old Antonio's son' see 1.2.184. On the date of the play, see Thompson's introduction, 1–3.
- 2 Dates are approximate and are merely included to establish a rough priority sequence for comedies depicting braggart courtship; see G.K. Hunter, 'Chronology', *English Drama 1586–1642: The Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1997), 544–77.
- 3 Stuart Gillespie identifies the conventional company: 'Shakespeare's braggart soldier figures (such as Don Armado, Parolles, Bardolph, Pistol and Falstaff) have their ancestry in Plautus's *miles gloriosus*'; *Shakespeare's Books: A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sources* (London, 2004), 415–7, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472555328>. Daniel C. Boughner adds Toby Belch and Andrew Aguecheek to the group in *The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy: A Study in Comparative Drama from Aristophanes to Shakespeare* (Westport, 1954), 75 and *passim*. Wolfgang Riehle even suggests Malvolio resembles the type; *Shakespeare, Plautus and the Humanist Tradition* (Cambridge, 1990), 232. All three critics overlook Petruchio.

- 4 The phrase is repeated in Plautus, *The Braggard Captain*, in *The Comedies of Plautus*, trans. Bonnell Thornton, vol. 1 (1767), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (ECCO), 126 n and 203 n.
- 5 Eg, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Brian Morris, Arden 2nd edn (London, 1989), 152; *The Norton Shakespeare, Based on the Oxford Edition: Comedies*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al (New York, 1997), 144; *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Thompson, 44. Gremio's generic designation 'Pantelowne' appears in *The Norton Facsimile of the First Folio of Shakespeare*, ed. Charlton Hinman (London, 1968), 228.
- 6 Peter de la Primaudaye, *The French Academie* (1586; facs, New York, 1972), 747; Henry Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622), *Early English Books Online* (EEBO) 186; Jacques Goussault, *Advice to Young Gentlemen, in their Several Conditions of Life* (1698), *EEBO*, 29. Barbara Hodgdon notes that 'Petruccio's account of his military career may (or may not) be fictional' — but whatever the case, 'it sounds like boasting'; *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Hodgdon, Arden 3 edn (London, 2014), 187.
- 7 Plautus, *The Braggard Captain*, in *The Comedies of Plautus*, trans. Bonnell Thornton, vol. 1 (1767), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (ECCO), 125–248, hereafter referenced as *Brag*.
- 8 M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, 1992); E.D. Hirsch, Jr, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, 1967); Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: A Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge, MA, 1982).
- 9 Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 29.
- 10 Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 3.
- 11 Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 23.
- 12 *Ibid*, 88.
- 13 Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 76–7, italics in original.
- 14 *Ibid*, 78; Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 44.
- 15 M.C. Bradbrook, 'Dramatic Rôle as Social Image: A Study of *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 94 (1958), 132–50, 132–3. The phrase 'system of expectations' is from Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 77.
- 16 Riehle, *Shakespeare, Plautus and the Humanist Tradition*, 4.
- 17 Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 41.
- 18 *Ibid*, 156–7, 38, 46.
- 19 David Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre: The Role of Analogies in Genre Theory* (University Park, 1993), 67–8.
- 20 Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 88.
- 21 Dana E. Aspinall, 'The Play and the Critics', in *The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays*, ed. Aspinall (New York, 2002), 3–38, 15 (and sources cited there).

- 22 Boughner, *Braggart in Renaissance Comedy*, 10. Many traits discussed in this paper are gleaned from Boughner, *passim*, though he does not discuss Huanebango or Petruchio.
- 23 See Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755; facs, Tokyo, 1983), sv 'Jack'; Thomas Blount, *Glossographia; or a Dictionary* (1661), *EEBO*, sv 'Jactator'; and Elisha Coles, *An English Dictionary* (1677), *EEBO*, sv 'Jactancy'.
- 24 H.J. Oliver, introduction, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Oxford edn (Oxford, 1998), 53.
- 25 Michael W. Shurgot, 'From Fiction to Reality: Character and Stagecraft in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Theatre Journal* 33 (1981), 327–40, 331, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3207031>. William Babula calls Sly 'a braggart, a role that is not unlike Petruchio's'; '*The Taming of the Shrew* and the New Historicism', *Journal of the Wooden O Symposium* (2004), 1–8, 4. And Andrew Grewar notes that 'Petruchio is a type of braggart suitor, although an unusual one in that he wins his love'; 'The Old Man's Spectacles and Other Traces of the *Commedia dell'Arte* in Early Shakespearean Comedy', *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 11 (1998), 23–37, 30. Those familiar with Huanebango's courtship of Zantippa (discussed below) would not have found Petruchio's 'winning' of Katherina so unusual.
- 26 Wayne A. Rebhorn, 'Petruchio's "Rope Tricks": *The Taming of the Shrew* and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric', *Modern Philology* 92 (1995), 294–327, 305, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/392250>.
- 27 Harriet A. Deer, 'Untyping Stereotypes: *The Taming of the Shrew*', in Sara Munson Deats and Lagretta Tallent Lenker (eds), *The Aching Hearth: Family Violence in Life and Literature* (New York, 1991), 63–78, 71–3.
- 28 Eg, Lyly's Dispas and Peele's Zantippa are each paired with a braggart suitor (see below). The phrase 'generic models' is taken from Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 32. In her introduction, Jean E. Howard infers from Grumio's comments at 1.2.103–10 that pretensions to 'rhetorical prowess' are not 'out of character' for Petruchio, but form an enduring aspect of his identity; see Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Shakespeare*, 135–6.
- 29 See Bradbrook, 'Dramatic Rôle as Social Image', 132–50; Valerie Wayne, 'Refashioning the Shrew', *Shakespeare Studies* 17 (1985), 159–87; Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540–1620* (Urbana, 1986), 184–223; and the introduction and documents in Frances E. Dolan (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew: Texts and Contexts* (Boston, 1996), 1–38, 244–326.
- 30 Elizabeth Hutcheon, 'From Shrew to Subject: Petruchio's Humanist Education of Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Comparative Drama* 45 (2011), 315–37, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/cdr.2011.0029>; Marion D. Perret, 'Petruchio: The Model Wife', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 23 (1983), 223–35, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/cdr.2011.0029>.

- org/10.2307/450090; Rebhorn, 'Petruccio's "Rope Tricks,"' 294–327; Sean Benson, "'If I Do Prove Her Haggard": Shakespeare's Application of Hawking Tropes to Marriage', *Studies in Philology* 103 (2006), 186–207, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sip.2006.0006>; Joan Hartwig, 'Horses and Women in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 45 (1982), 285–94, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3817090>; and Robert M. Schuler, 'Bewitching the Shrew', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 46 (2004), 387–431, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/tsl.2005.0003>.
- 31 Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor, 1950), # M106. Brian Morris likewise notes how 'The play's title ... is, in the literal sense, an absurdity ... Petruccio is a fool for making the attempt'; introduction, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Arden 2nd edn, 64–5.
- 32 Sir John Harington, *A New Discourse of a Stale Subject, Called the Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596), *EEBO* 79–80.
- 33 Antony Chute, *Beawtie Dishonoured, Written vnder the Title of Shores Wife* (1593), *EEBO* 21, italics omitted. The allusion was first identified in William H. Moore, 'An Allusion in 1593 to *The Taming of the Shrew*?' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 15 (1964), 55–60, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2867956>.
- 34 Samuel Rowlands, *A Crew of Kind Gossips, All Met to be Merrie: Complayning of their Husbands, with their Husbands Answeres in their Owne Defence* (1613), *EEBO*, D3v, B2r.
- 35 Morris, Introduction, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Arden 2nd edn, 64–5.
- 36 John Lacy, *Sauny the Scot: Or, The Taming of the Shrew*, in *Shakespeare Made Fit: Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, ed. Sandra Clark (London, 1997), 2.2.252–61.
- 37 David Garrick, *Catharine and Petruccio: A Comedy in Three Acts* (1767), *ECCO*, 22.
- 38 Samuel Johnson, 'Preface, 1765', in Bertrand H. Bronson and Jean M. O'Meara (eds), *Selections from Johnson on Shakespeare* (New Haven, 1986), 8–60, 26.
- 39 Johnson's *Dictionary* defines 'grimace' as 'a distortion of the countenance from habit, affectation, or insolence' (sv).
- 40 See Thompson, Introduction, *The Taming of the Shrew*, New Cambridge edn, 18–20, and 27 plate 5, quotation on 19.
- 41 On the films, see Barbara Hodgdon, 'Katherina Bound; or, Play(K)ating the Strictures of Everyday Life', *PMLA* 107 (1992), 538–53, 543–6, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/462760>. On the stage production, see Richard Ouzounian, review of *The Taming of the Shrew*, dir. Chris Abraham, Stratford ON, *The Toronto Star*, 6 June 2015.
- 42 J. Kelly Nestruck, review of *The Taming of the Shrew*, dir. Chris Abraham, Stratford ON, *The Globe and Mail*, 8 June 2015.

- 43 On Plautus's possible Greek sources and earlier instances of the type, see Boughner, *Braggart in Renaissance Comedy*, 3–10.
- 44 Anon., *The Ingenious Braggadocia* (ca 1678–81), *EEBO; A Funny thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, book by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart, music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim (New York, 1991), 81.
- 45 E.F. Watling (ed.), *Plautus: The Pot of Gold and Other Plays* (London, 1965), 150.
- 46 Boughner, *Braggart in Renaissance Comedy*, 10–14.
- 47 Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Comedy* (Oxford, 1994), 12, 17, 46–7 and sources cited there, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198182696.001.0001>.
- 48 See Boughner, *Braggart in Renaissance Comedy*, 119–78, 154.
- 49 Creeth, Introduction, *Tudor Plays: An Anthology of Early English Drama*, ed. Edmund Creeth (New York, 1966), xxvii–xxxii.
- 50 Nicholas Udall, *Royster Doyster*, in Creeth, ed., *Tudor Plays*, hereafter referenced parenthetically as *Ralph*.
- 51 Boughner, *Braggart in Renaissance Comedy*, 10.
- 52 *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Compact edn, 3 vols (Oxford, 1987), s.v. 'charm' (v4, v1).
- 53 Susan E. James, 'A New Source for Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*', *Bulletin of the John Ryland Library* 81 (1999), 49–62, <http://dx.doi.org/10.7227/bjrl.81.1.3>.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 50. James's assertion that Petruchio is an accomplished thirty-something is based on Grumio's quibble that his master may be, 'for aught I see, two and thirty, a pip out' — which as Thompson notes, does not confirm his master's age but rather alludes to a popular card game and connotes that Petruchio is either drunk or 'not quite right in the head' (1.2.30–1 and n).
- 55 James, 'A New Source for Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*', 56–8.
- 56 John Lyly, *Endymion*, ed. David Bevington, Revels edn (Manchester, 1996). Hereafter referenced parenthetically as *End*.
- 57 Daniel C. Boughner, 'The Background of Lyly's Tophas', *PMLA* 54 (1939), 967–73, 968, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/458713>. Boughner's claim that this innovation stems from Terence ignores Pyrgopolinices's boast of having educated his first concubine (cited above).
- 58 Eg, see the Latin-English exchanges at 1.3.28–32, 39–40, and 5.2.15–6, 26–7, 48–50.
- 59 At 1.3.5, cf. 2.2.65, 2.2.86, 2.2.162, 4.2.1.
- 60 See Bevington, Introduction, *Endymion*, 41; Bernard F. Huppé, 'Allegory of Love in Lyly's Court Comedies', *ELH* 14 (1947), 93–113, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2871648>; and Sara Deats, 'The Disarming of the Knight: Comic Parody in Lyly's *Endymion*', *South Atlantic Bulletin* 40 (1975), 67–75, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3199121>.

- 61 Leo Salinger, *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy* (Cambridge, 1976), 107, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511553189>. For comparisons of the two plays, see Bevington, introduction, *Endymion*, 14, 41–3, and Boughner, 'The Background of Lyly's Tophas', 967–73.
- 62 George Peele, *The Old Wives Tale*, ed. Patricia Binnie, Revels edn (Manchester, 1980), hereafter referenced parenthetically as *Old*.
- 63 His name has been traced to Juan y Bango — 'a type of the egotistic Spanish braggart'; see Binnie (ed.), *The Old Wives Tale*, 36 and sources cited there.
- 64 John D. Cox, 'Homely Matter and Multiple Plots in Peele's *Old Wives Tale*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 20 (1978), 330–46, 338–9. Binnie is more sanguine about their love: 'Zantippa ... is a shrew; yet even with her bad temper she finds an oddly appropriate husband'; Introduction, *The Old Wives Tale*, 22.
- 65 Cox, 'Homely Matter', 339.
- 66 John W. Draper, *The Twelfth Night of Shakespeare's Audience* (Stanford, 1950), 5.
- 67 Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 88.
- 68 Robert B. Heilman, 'The *Taming* Untamed, or, The Return of the Shrew', in Aspinall (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew*, 45–57, 51, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/00267929-27-2-147>.
- 69 Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 2nd edn (Berkeley, 1991), sv 'erotesis'.
- 70 *Ibid*, sv 'epilepsis'.
- 71 Thomas Lodge, *Wits Miserie and the Worlds Madnesse: Discovering the Devils Incarnat of this Age* (1596), *EEBO* 62–3.
- 72 Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England*, #T638. On pillion cushions and female riding positions, see Alexander Mackay-Smith, Jean R. Druessedow, and Thomas Ryder, *Man and Horse: An Illustrated History of Equestrian Apparel* (New York, 1984), 123.
- 73 William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties: Eight Treatises* (1622), *EEBO* 594–5 italics omitted.
- 74 *Ibid*, 595 (citing Mt 1:6).
- 75 Jacques Gaultier, *Rodomontados. Or, Brauadoes and Bragardismes* (1610), *EEBO*, hereafter cited parenthetically by entry number.
- 76 Eg, see Perret, 'Petruccio: The Model Wife', 225–30; and Dennis S. Brooks, "'To Show Scorn her own Image": The Varieties of Education in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 48 (1994), 7–32, 20–4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1347881>.
- 77 Gaultier, dedication, *Rodomontados*, A3v italics omitted.

- 78 On her 'orthodox' submission, see Brooks, "'To Show Scorn her own Image'", 26–7; on her winking signal 'that she does not really believe it', see Howard's introduction in Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Shakespeare*, 138; on the scene as illustrating 'the mutual pleasure and play of the couple', see Corinne S. Abate, 'Neither a Tamer Nor a Shrew Be: A Defense of Petruchio and Katherine', in *Privacy, Domesticity, and Women in Early Modern England*, ed. Corinne S. Abate (Aldershot, 2003), 31–44, 39.
- 79 The complex relationship between the two texts is explored in Stephen Roy Miller, introduction, *The Taming of a Shrew: The 1594 Quarto* (Cambridge, 1998), 1–55, hereafter referenced parenthetically as *A Shrew*.
- 80 Stephen Miller, 'The Taming of a Shrew and the Theories; or, "Though This be Badness, Yet There is Method In't"', in Laurie E. Maguire and Thomas L. Berger (eds), *Textual Formations and Reformations* (Newark NJ, 1998), 251–63, 251. Cf Leah S. Marcus, who agrees that 'Barring the discovery of new evidence, we are unlikely ever to settle the question of which play came first'; *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (London, 1996), 122, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203424445>.
- 81 My list of altered or omitted braggart conventions is meant to supplement Marcus's account of differences in plot, character, setting, language, and ideology between *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*; *ibid.*, 107–14. Miller notes that 'Ferando has less of the menacing tamer of folklore ... [and] appears less dangerous and less spirited than Petruchio' — though he does not explore the significance of these differences; Introduction, *Taming of a Shrew*, 15.
- 82 Thompson, introduction, *The Taming of the Shrew*, New Cambridge edn, 18.
- 83 The quarto's debt to Marlowe in these and other bombastic passages has been extensively documented; see Miller, Introduction, *The Taming of a Shrew*, 20–2, and notes, *passim*; and F.S. Boas (ed.), *The Taming of a Shrew*, Shakespeare Library edn (London, 1908), Appendix I (90–8).