

The Taming of a Shrew: Composition as Induction to Authorship

Roy Eriksen, Agder University College

Who is the author of *A Pleasant conceited Historie, called The Taming of a Shrew* (1594), or what can his craftsmanship reveal about his identity? The fact that Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, published for the first time in 1623, but written somewhere between 1590 and 1594 (Bullough 2002: 1: 57-58; Thomson 1984: 1-9), has a shorter precursor with an approximately identical title has until fairly recently hindered serious consideration of *A Shrew* in its own right.¹ When editors and critics of Shakespeare have compared it to *The Shrew*, the majority has—not surprisingly—found it to be inferior in most respects.² If we add to the deemed inferiority that *A Shrew* is shorter than many Elizabethan plays, it was early relegated to the slippery category of 'bad quartos.'³ The problem is however that the comedy is remarkably 'good' in terms of plot structure, the quality of the dialogue, and—I would argue—even in terms of some aspects of style.⁴ In *A Shrew* there are no blatant loose ends or obvious gaps, whereas in *The Shrew* the metadramatic Sly material does not survive the Induction. In view of its relative shortness, *A Shrew* may have been cut for provincial acting during the plague of 1592-94, but then the cuts were arguably executed with discernment. Still, the play's Italianate integration of plots is advanced even for the year of its publication while its style of speech construction, I propose, strongly suggests that it antedates 1590 and is by a playwright intimate with the compositional techniques of Marlowe.

¹ The great watershed in the attitude to *A Shrew* was brought about by Holderness and Loughery 1992 and 2003: 13-36, and Marcus 1992: 177-200 and 1996: 101-31.

² Marcus summarizes the situation tellingly: "In all modern editions of the authorized text, *A Shrew* is treated not as an artistic structure with its own patterns of meaning and its own dramatic logic, but as a heap of shards thrown together by ignorant actors with no capacity for coherence" (1992: 183).

³ See for instance Werstine 1998; Urkowitz 1988: 204; and Maguire 1996.

⁴ Michael J. B. Allen and Kenneth Muir did not include the play among the 'bad quartos,' because they found it "longer and more coherent than the texts of the other 'bad quartos'" (1981: xv).

Then, too, the play has by many been dubbed ‘Marlovian’ and its style ‘Marlowesque’ in view of its multiple echoes and half-quotes from Marlowe’s work, a fact used to undermine the status of the text further, because it was assumed that only an incompetent hack would have relied so heavily upon the period’s leading playwright. Still we know that Marlowe is notorious for his propensity to quote and echo his own work (Levin 1961, 30, 60, 111-12; Eriksen 1987: 195-99). Moreover, the craftsmanship that went into the composition of *A Shrew* is such as to throw serious doubt on the idea that it is a ‘bad’ version of a now lost ur-version of the play, which in turn would have been the one Shakespeare could have drawn on. Considering this unsettled state of affairs, may not *A Shrew* quite simply be the original play and the heavy Marlovian presence in it be explained as the work of Marlowe himself? The compositional characteristics of the play point in that direction and there is empirical evidence to suggest that this is so.

Critics have however primarily been worried about the anonymous play’s relationship to *The Taming of the Shrew*. Although the two plays share the same action and theme, in actual fact the texts hardly share a single line and only the names of Katherine (Kate) and Sly (Slie) occur in both texts. The male protagonist in Shakespeare’s play, Petruchio (a servant’s name in *Supposes*), is termed Ferando in the quarto. The plays are nevertheless sufficiently similar to invite comparison of in terms of quality. Stephen Miller is typical when he characterises *The Shrew* as “the more verbally brilliant text” (2000: 282). However, when Loughrey and Holderness (1992: 24-26) examine passages which are close in content in *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*, they convincingly argue against what they term the “tradition of comparative condemnation” (15), demonstrating greater richness of metaphor and referentiality in the passages in *A Shrew*. I believe that the same claim is valid for other passages as well. Leah S. Marcus makes a similar point,⁵ but on the other hand she emphasizes that

⁵ Commenting on sig. E2^v, page 74 of *A Shrew*, Marcus argues that “*A Shrew*’s version ... is less explicit, but would hardly be regarded as corrupt if it were allowed to stand on its own: it is editorially suspect only because it does not replicate every nuance of *The Shrew*” (1996: 118).

The Shrew is wittier and would have appeared more refined and up to date than the farcical Marlovian *A Shrew*, which was very old fashioned by the time of *The Shrew*'s publication in 1623. (Marcus 1996: 128)

But does the fact that part of the humour and intertextual games of *A Shrew* would have seemed dated in 1623 really detract from its efficiency as a comedy when it was first written and acted? Contemporaries appear to have reacted differently, because the play was reprinted in 1596 and 1607.⁶ Nor does the outdated humour of *A Shrew* with regard to the 1623 horizon cancel out the fact that the earlier and shorter play is superior in other respects. Leo Salingar has observed that Slie has more 'aristocratic' and 'academic' tastes⁷ than Shakespeare's tinker, and throughout the play "remains attentive and draws a moral at the end from what he has seen," and that "[r]ather than being a dunce,"

he knows what a comedy is and it is the Players who blunder, whereas in Shakespeare (himself an Actor) the point seems precisely that his actors are wasted on spectators like Sly (1972: 272).

The dramatist behind *A Shrew* hence does not sympathize with the actors, but rather distances himself from them, in the way we would expect a university wit to do. For instance, he skilfully uses metadramatic effects to baffle and entertain the audience when Slie comments directly on and interferes with the action.

Still, these dissimilarities apart, why is the structurally more finished *A Shrew* so relatively short? The plague of 1592-94 threw the London stage into a state of disorganization. The theatres were completely closed for long periods, companies were dispersed or had to downsize or regroup to meet the changed situation. The vogue for producing 'large' plays with many actors and spectacular effects that had been dominant since 1588 came abruptly to an end. One strategy of survival during the crisis was to leave London to tour in the provinces with purposely adapted and shortened versions of popular plays to fit a smaller and less expensive company. It goes without saying that only well-established

⁶ For the minimal variants between the three editions see Boas 1908: 1-8.

⁷ This ties in well the basic conflict between a mercantile class and the aristocracy. Slie ironically has more aristocratic and academic tastes than Shakespeare's tinker.

companies with a certain amount of popular success, and with some financial backbone, could have managed to carry out such tours. Paul Werstine's attempt to reduce such travel to a minimum in his attack on W.W. Greg's 'narrative' about bad quartos does not seriously affect the fact that such travel is documented, but it may raise important questions about what constitutes 'badness' (Werstine 1998: 45-66; Urkowitz 1988: 204). Richard Hosley long ago discussed *A Shrew* suggesting that its badness was 'abnormal' and that the play does not really fit into the category (Hosley 1964).

One of the companies that performed outside London was the Earl of Pembroke's Men, probably originally formed in 1590, and which after suffering much hardship during the various outbreaks of the plague, or in the uncertainty that followed, became amalgated with the Lord Admiral's Men in 1597. In the spring and summer of 1593 the company which had been one of the four companies producing 'large' plays (Gurr 2000: 122)—in a downsized version and still under the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke—went on an unsuccessful provincial tour and in 1595-96 they also acted in Oxford (Boas 1923: 20; Greg 1950: 62). Three, if not five plays, which are extant in bad quartos very probably belonged to the Earl of Pembroke's Men (Greg 1950: 61). These are *Edward II* (1593) and *Doctor Faustus* (1593?), 2 and 3 *Henry VI* (1594 and 1595), and the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594). Two of these plays—*Doctor Faustus* (A) and *The Taming of a Shrew*—survive in what could be abridged versions intended for provincial performances.

Let me consider the case of *Doctor Faustus* (A) briefly. In a number of articles Tom Pettitt has brought the methods of folklore studies to bear on Elizabethan drama and Marlowe's plays in particular. In a paper originally read to the Marlowe Society of America, he presents empirical data from *The Massacre at Paris* and *Doctor Faustus* (A and B) which document beyond doubt that the A-text has been subjected to processes of oral transmission.⁸ Pettitt's ground-breaking empirical evidence not

⁸ Thomas Pettitt, "Towards the *Zielform*: Oral Transmission and the Reshaping of Marlowe's Plays" (finally forthcoming in *Comparative Drama*). I am grateful to Dr. Pettitt for letting me see both the original paper and the revised article in manuscript. See also Pettitt 1980 and 1988.

only bears on the status of the A-text and the longer B-text, but applies indirectly in the case of *A Shrew*, as well.⁹ The evidence demonstrates

that [the] A-version of *Doctor Faustus* reflects the impact of oral transmission (memorization and reproduction from memory) on a play whose original text, *where they have material in common*, is better represented by the B-text (Pettitt 2006: 24ms).

Pettitt's findings are interesting also because they present a parallel to the clear departures in the A-text from certain of Marlowe's compositional habits which are better reproduced in the material it shares with the B-text,¹⁰ compositional traits which also abound in *A Shrew*. So in addition to illustrating how "a single reading in one version must, beyond any possibility of alternative explanation, have preceded the reading in the other" (Bradley 1991: 9), these departures in the A-text could be signs of accommodation to new conditions and—possibly—acting in the provinces. W.W. Greg wrote about the shorter version that it

[a]ppears to be a version prepared for the less critical and exigent audiences of provincial towns, and prepared not in an orderly manner by making cuts and alterations in the authorized prompt-book, but by memorial reconstruction. (1950: 60)

Although we are less willing today to accept the view that provincial audiences necessarily were "less critical and exigent," the play-text must have been cut to down to a more manageable size to suit a smaller company.¹¹ Yet, I think Greg's secondary proposal concerning "the

⁹ Had Pettitt's article been printed when originally planned, its conclusions would have seriously undermined the basis of "the current orthodoxy," seen in e.g. Bevington and Rasmussen 1993 and Maguire 2004. Maguire argues that the A-text "has none of the verbal symptoms of memorial construction" (49).

¹⁰ Patterns of rhetorical composition typical of Marlowe's style are better and more completely preserved in the B-text (Eriksen 1987: 220-221).

¹¹ But see Werstine, who thinks the evidence is inconclusive when it comes to deciding the size of companies. "[T]here remains a wide gap between the results and the recorded sizes of touring troupes around 1600. The gap does not prove that the 'bad quartos' cannot be touring texts, but it does prove that the 'bad quartos' cannot be shown to be touring texts." "Touring and the Construction of

dwindling resources of the company” would have played a far greater role in the process than the need to cater to “a vulgar audience.”

In *A Shrew*, therefore, the lack of manifest signs of textual corruption or ‘contamination’ strongly suggests that the extant play never went on tour, or if it did the experience did not rub off on any extant version of the play. Besides, if the need for a longer performance would have arisen, it could easily have been expanded by means of “fond and frivolous jestures” of the kind that Richard Jones, the printer of *Tamburlaine*, decided to omit from that text (1592: sig. A2). Be this as it may, the tight structure of the comedy certainly suggests that the text printed in the 1594, 1596 and the 1607 editions is close to the play as written. Let us therefore turn to the play’s artful over-all structure and its relationship to Marlowe’s compositional style.

Construction at plot level

Editors and critics have tried to explain away the “puzzling relation” (Salinger 1972: 272) of *A Shrew* to *The Shrew* by claiming that the former’s more integrated ending is “mangled” (Blakemore Evans 1997: 140) when compared to that in a hypothetical but lost version of *The Shrew* (Bullough 2000: 57). Richard Hosley who believes that *A Shrew* is an adaptation of Shakespeare’s play thinks, for instance, that

[i]t is doubtful whether by 1594 any English dramatist other than Shakespeare was sufficiently skilled in plot-construction to write a carefully and subtly integrated triple-action play as we should have to suppose a lost original to be if *A Shrew* were derived from it in the manner envisaged by modern textual theory (Hosley 1981: 31).

To accept such inventive explanations would entail forgetting for instance that Marlowe and other university-educated dramatists ever existed and, for example, Ann Thompson rightly observes that “[t]he combination of three plots is a remarkably sophisticated example of dramatic structure for the early 1590s” (1984: 166) For need complexity and structural finesse be attributed to Shakespeare alone? Consider for

Shakespeare Criticism” (1998: 58). See Pettitt’s findings on this topic, however, which strongly indicate that the A-text is a touring text.

instance the carefully crafted loco-temporal structures of *Doctor Faustus* (B) which give ample evidence of how accurately Marlowe organised the scenes and plot material of his generically mixed play (Eriksen 1985: 49-74 and 1987: 103-67). The intricate plot structure of *A Shrew* similarly reveals that its playwright, too, is one who can handle at least three, if not five, plots simultaneously.¹²

The dramatist introduces the main action of the play by a metadramatic device based on the traditional comic motif according to which a drunken man, here named Slie, is duped into believing that he is a lord. The jesting nobleman, who assumes the role of a servant, instructs his servants to wait on Slie and to entertain him with a comedy entitled “The taming of a shrew” (1.63). The main body of the play is thus lodged within a comic framing device based on role reversal, and the author upholds the metadramatic effect throughout by making Slie comment on the action four times from his privileged position on the stage, before he is carried off after falling asleep (15.127-33). By means of these interruptions the dramatist disrupts the illusion of reality and repeatedly brings the audience ‘to its senses’ reminding us that the play itself is doubly distanced from the ‘real’ world. What we get is simply not what we get.

The first plot encountered inside the frame is not the taming plot, but what sets it going: an intricate comic subplot of deception and disguise known from Latin and Italian comedy. Aurelius who is the son of the Duke of Cestus, has come to Athens to visit his friend, Polidor. The two young men fall in love with the two youngest daughters of the rich merchant Alonso, Emelia and Philema. Due to the different social status of duke and merchant, the young nobleman decides to pose as a merchant’s son in order to be accepted by Alonso:

Tell him I am a Marchants sonne of *Cestus*,
That comes to traffike unto Athens heere,
And heere sirha I will change with you for once,
And now be thou the *Duke of Cestus* sonne,

¹² The two comic intermezzi with Boy and Sanders can hardly be said to constitute an independent plot, but prepare us for Sanders’s treatment of Kate in the scenes at the country house. The minor of plot where Phylotus poses as Aurelius’s father really forms a part of the romantic plot.

Revell and spend as if thou wert my selfe,
For I will court my love in this disguise. (4.59-63)

By making Aurelius a prince, the dramatist imports a theme from romance and romantic comedy: love between young people from different social classes. As pointed out by Stephen Miller, social conflict in *A Shrew* is an integral part of the obstacles to young love and threatens the creation of a new and more inclusive society at the end of the comedy. The harsh reaction of the Duke of Cestus on discovering that Aurelius has married a merchant's daughter and persuaded a merchant to pose as his father to secure Alonso's approval (12 and 16) makes the reality of this threat clear enough:

Turne hence thy face: oh cruell impious boy,
Alfonso I did not thinke you would presume,
To match your daughter with my princely house[.] (16.63-65)

Rather than being simpler than the corresponding plot in *The Shrew*, therefore, the dramatist responsible for *A Shrew* introduces greater thematic complexity and conflict into the play. Miller surprisingly interprets this greater complication as an indication that "*A Shrew* is an adaptation of *The Shrew*" (Miller 1998),¹³ but one could argue that the reduction of the number of sisters from three to two in *The Shrew* also may imply complication and concentration of focus, because Bianca is provided with three rivals. This practice would be in keeping with Shakespeare's way of handling sources.

The prime obstacle to young love nevertheless is the unjust requirement imposed upon Emilia and Phylema by their father, who

hath solemnlie sworne,
His eldest daughter first shall be espoused,
Before he grauntes the yoongest leave to love... (4.16-18)

However, the true obstacle in *A Shrew* is the headstrong and independent character of Kate, who is repeatedly referred to as "a skould" and "the

¹³ The passages he compares would not stand the sort of test Pettitt applies to the A- and B-texts of *Doctor Faustus*, and *A Shrew* does not reveal signs of memorial contamination.

divell himselfe” (4.22; 23). The wooing and taming of the intractable eldest sister is the main plot while the champion of the seemingly futile task is the adventurous Ferando, a man of “wealth sufficient” and much mirth. When we first meet him he is already on his way to Kate after having been approached both by his would-be father-in-law with a promise of 6000 crowns if he marries her, and by Polidor’s servant on the same topic. We conceive that the wooing takes the form of a wager between Alonso and Ferando, and this is matched by Kate’s intention in an aside to the spectators that she will agree to the marriage and put Ferando’s manhood to the test (5.40-42). So throughout the taming the audience already knows Kate’s true intentions. Thus *The Taming of a Shrew* has a structure of plot-within-plot-within-plot, the innermost being the most important one and presenting the essential drama, which when seen through the perspective of the Slie framework “enables the audience to acquire a self-conscious, metadramatic awareness of the illusion” offered by the inner play (Holderness and Loughrey 1992: 21).

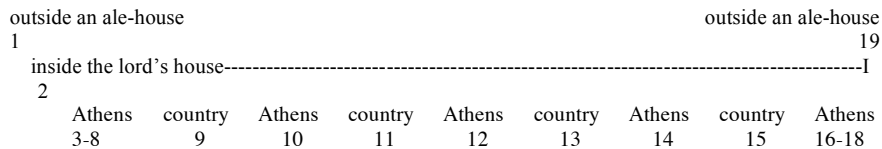
The plot structure of the play suggests a more than common knowledge of literary composition. The beginnings and conclusions of the plots are arranged with neat symmetry. After the Slie material in the beginning of the play (scenes 1-2), the lovers’ plot is initiated when Polidor welcomes Aurelius to Athens (scene 3), the second love plot (i.e. the taming) begins when Ferando enters together with his man Saunders (scene 4). The two comic intermezzi between Polidor’s Boy and Saunders form no real plot and the minor characters speak for the last time in scene 15 (Saunders) and scene 18 (Boy). When the principal characters leave at the end of the play in reverse order, Ferando and Kate exit first (18), to be followed by the other lovers (18), before Slie is carried on in his own clothes for the final scene (19):

1. Slie plot (1-)
2. The lovers’ plot (3-)
3. The taming plot (4-18)
2. The lovers’ plot (18)
1. Slie plot (19)

In view of this controlled structure, it comes as no surprise that the author has constructed the play’s ‘places of action’ in a comparable over-all design.

The first scene is set in the evening outside an alehouse, where Slie is discovered sleeping before the action moves to an unspecified hall in the Lord's manor. Here the performance of the taming of the shrew (3-18) takes place. The setting of that play is Athens and remains so till Ferando and Kate leave for the country house after the wedding in scene 8. From then on the acting space changes eight times between Ferando's country house and Athens, before the action returns to the space outside the alehouse encountered in the first scene. In the following figure we see how these settings are distributed symmetrically:

Fig. 1 *A Shrew*: 'Places of action'



The dramatist expertly places the protagonist's arrival at Ferando's country house, the site of the taming school, exactly halfway through the play (in scene 9), so at the heart of the comedy we enter if not the 'green world' of Shakespearean comedy, at least a site for game and play where Ferando deliberately acts the fool. Saunders's account of his master's dress and behaviour tells it all:

He puts on an olde
Jerkin and a paire of canvas breeches down to the
Small of his legge and a red cap on his head and he
Lookes as though wilt burst thy selfe with laffing
When thou seest him. He's ene as good as a
Foole for me... (9: 11-16)

He is dressed in other words to be "even like a madman" (9: 8) and fool in the upcoming scenes in the taming school. The audience would therefore have expected farce and extravagant behaviour in the country house scenes,¹⁴ and the on-stage spectator Slie correctly identifies Ferando as "the Fool" when he enters in scene 15. His outrageous

¹⁴ It is symptomatic that the transformation of Kate takes place outside the city and in the topsy-turvy mood of a country festival.

behaviour at the country house suggests that he plays the part of the *homo sylvarum*, or wild man (Laroque 1993: 11), typical of summer festivals. That he is deliberately play-acting is clear when he, in a soliloquy addressed to the audience, announces that “This humour must I holde me a while.” The use of a symbolic, if not festive, setting for the taming shows us the dramatist’s thoughtful control of settings and plots as the action shifts between town and country and the action flits between parody of Romantic comedy and plain farce. In the world of the taming school, Ferando is Lord of Misrule and everything is turned upside down. Abuse masks as love, brutality as care, the moon becomes the sun, and an old man becomes a maid. The dramatist’s command is no less than impressive, and to my mind it is matched only by the carefully plotted structure of settings in *Doctor Faustus* (B)¹⁵ or by the simpler five-fold structure of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* where the odd matches and transformations also take place in the central scenes in the dark forest (Rose 1972: 18-19).

The conspicuous artifice in the distribution of plots and settings is foregrounded in the way the dramatist keeps us aware of his metatheatrical device throughout. When in the very last scene he brings the action back to the locale of the opening scene, he again underlines the return and the frame by making the Tapster’s speech upon discovering Slie sound asleep—

¹⁵ The settings in *Doctor Faustus* (B) are distributed as follows, when the misplaced comic scene between Rafe and Robin is restored to its correct position:

Wittenberg	Papal	Wittenberg	Imperial	Wittenberg	Ducal	Wittenberg
	court		court		court	
1-7	8-9	10	11-14	15	16-17	18-20

See Eriksen (1987: 60-65) and for the misplaced comic scene (Eriksen 1981: 249-58). This placing is now universally accepted, e.g. by Bevington and Rasmussen, who arrived at the conclusion “independently” (1993: 288). They do not however address the structure of settings in the B-text.

Now that the darksome night is overpast,
 And dawning day apeares in cristall sky,
 Now must I hast abroad: ... (19: 1-4; my italics)

—repeat images from the Lord’s grandiloquent opening speech:

Lord. Now that the gloomie shaddow of the night,/ ...
 Longing to view Orions drisling lookes,
 Leaps from th’antarticke World unto the skie
 And dims the Welkin with her pitchie breath,
 And darkesome night oreshades the christall heuens[.]
 (1: 10-14; my italics)

Again the dramatist parodies himself, and we are brought back as if by magic, the illusion has been broken. The play’s action, the events of several days, was—as Slie puts it—a mere “dreame” taking place between nightfall and dawn. Albeit on a different level, we are reminded of the double time scheme in *Doctor Faustus*, where in the longer and more complete B-text the protagonist’s twenty-four years of pleasure are circumscribed a symbolic ‘day’ of twenty-four hours running from morning to morning (Eriksen 1985: 55-6).¹⁶ It is perhaps symptomatic of the play’s relationship to Marlowe that the long quote from *Doctor Faustus* in the Lord’s first speech comes from the first part of a similar framing-device in the B-text.¹⁷

¹⁶ The double time frame is as follows:

outer frame (1-2) morning/dinner	inner frame midnight (5)	the 24 years of the compact (5-19)	inner frame supper/midnight (18-19)	outer frame (20) morning
---	-----------------------------------	--	--	-----------------------------------

The outer frame breaks down in the A-text which does not have the final discovery scene the morning following Faustus’s death at midnight.

¹⁷ I refer to Faustus’s incantation at midnight (B 227-) and its echo when on the night the compact expires the devils come to watch his futile final conjurations (B 1895-), The central notions of “the gloomy shadow of the *night*” (B 227) and the ascent from darkness (i.e. the leap “from th’Antarcticke World vnto the skie” “to view *Orions* drisling looke” are echoed in the reference to “This gloomy

The exact repetition of words from the Lord's speech in the Tapster's speech at 19.1-5 constitutes a large-scale example of *epanalepsis*, or circular return, that shows us a dramatist that is highly conscious about his art. In other words he is not lowering his aim to cater to vulgar audiences, but constructing his play according to the book.¹⁸ When this is said, is the same degree of authorial control that can be documented in the loco-temporal structure of *A Shrew* evident in the way the dramatist builds his speeches? This issue is important for the question of authorship, too, because Marlowe developed a new kind of speech composition with well-defined characteristics which are easy to check empirically. By carrying out a simple pattern recognition analysis of *A Shrew* and comparing the results to Marlowe's data, we will get important information about the provenance of the play.

Construction at speech level

In *Tamburlaine the Great* Marlowe established a style of speech composition by means of "a poetics by contrivance and artful combination" (Eriksen 1996: 111), which was to serve as a model for his contemporaries and Shakespeare in particular. This style involved creating strongly jointed speeches by treating them as if they were complete rhetorical periods. In brief, a speech consisting of several periods, or complete sentences, was given holistic rhetorical patternings that emphasized the speech as a finished unit of communication with a well-defined beginning, middle and end.¹⁹ Let me give one example of

night" and the description how "from eternall *Dis*" the devils "ascend to *view*" their subject Faustus (B 1896), who like Orion is a hunter who becomes the hunted.

¹⁸ See the recommendations of the Byzantine rhetorician Hermogenes (1614: 1.2.337), whose works were revived by Torquato Tasso and others.

¹⁹ The repeated lexical items can be presented as follows, where the letters a, b, c refer to the words:

- 1) epanalepsis (/a ... a/)
- 2) epanalepsis with antimetabole/chiasmus (/ab ... ba/); and
- 3) epanados with antimetabole and /or epanalepsis (/ab ... a ... ba/)

The verbal signs repeated are single examples or combinations of these types:

- 1) Identity (grace ... grace; lord ... lord)

the type of speech I am referring to, Tamburlaine's five-line speech to Cosroe in *Tamburlaine*:

Hold thee, Cosroe; wear two *imperial crowns*.
 Think thee invested now as *royally*,
 Even by the mighty hand of Tamburlaine,
 As if as many *kings* as could encompass thee
 With greatest pomp had *crown'd* thee *emperor*. (2.5.1-5; my italics)

Here we note that the repetitions and parallelisms (abc/cba) encircle the image of sovereignty in the middle line ("the mighty hand of Tamburlaine"). The speaker is in a strong position and has complete control over the flow of words. A large-scale example in the same play of the same architectural technique is the famous "Nature that fram'd us of four elements" speech (2.7.12-29), which I have discussed in detail elsewhere (1987: 69-71). There the topoi of Tamburlaine's quest for power are arranged symmetrically within a strongly marked rhetorical frame constituted by the repeated thematic keywords "sweetness/sweet" and "crown" (12; 29). In these speeches in *Tamburlaine*, Pt. 1 the Aristotelian formula for wholeness has been applied to create a dynamic whole. Despite the dialectic and progressive linearity that naturally inheres in dramatic dialogue, the separate elements in its processual flow form one well-disposed verbal construct, "one poem's period" (5.2.107). The speech and others of its kind behave like a stanza, one of the "rooms" of poetry, and therefore can be analysed in terms of spatial form by a simple method of pattern recognition.

But not all speeches are as elaborate in their rhetorical patterning as the cited speech, albeit some are more highly wrought, many more considerably less patterned or not at all. What nevertheless characterises Marlowe's compositional style in *Tamburlaine* is that as many as 31% of the speeches in Part 1 and 24% of the speeches in Part 2 have structures of this kind (cf. Appendix 1). The author of *A Shrew*, too, closely adheres to this style for the play abounds with speeches patterned in this fashion.

The following six examples taken from scenes 1, 16, and 19 in *A Shrew* illustrate the type of patterns involved. Repetitions are underscored in the text and single letters placed in the margin signal the

-
- 2) derivations and inflexions (come ... coming ... came)
 - 3) Synonyms (house ... abode ... hovel)

repetitions of identical words and derivations, whereas letters in brackets signal synonyms (pot *vs.* cushen; view *vs.* see).

- 1) *Slie*. Tilly vally, by crisee *Tapster* Ile fese you anon. a
Fils the tother *pot* and alls paid for, looke you b (c)
 I doo drinke it of mine own Instegation,
Heere Ile *lie* a while, why *Tapster* I say, d a
Fils a fresh cushen heere. *Omne bene*²⁰ b (c)
 Heigh ho, *heers* good warme *lying*. (1.10-20) d
- 2) *Lord*. Now that the gloomie *shaddow* of the *night*, a b
 Longing to *view* *Orions* drisling lookes, (c)
 Leapes from th'antarticke World vnto the skie
 And dims the Welkin with her pitchie breath,
 And darkesome *night oreshades* the christall heauens, b a
Here breake we off our hunting for to *night*, d b
 Cvppe the hounds and let vs hie vs home,
 And bid the huntsman *see* them meated well, (c)
 For they haue all deseru'd it well to daie.
 But soft, what sleepeie fellow is this lies *here*? d
 Or is he dead, *see* one what he doth lacke? (c)
- 3) *Ferando*. Why so, did I not tell thee I should be the man,
 Father, I leave *my* lovelie *Kate* with you, a
Provide your selves against our marriage daie, b
 For I must hie me to my countrie house
 In haste, to see *provision* may be made, b
 To entertaine *my* *Kate* when she dooth come. (5.47-52) a
- 4) *Alfonso*. Let me give thanks unto *your* royall *grace*, a
 For this great honor don to me and mine,
 And if *your* *grace* will walke unto my house, a
 I will in humblest maner I can, show
 The eternall service I doo owe *your* *grace*. a

²⁰ The opening words of the Latin drinking chant are placed in the margin after 1.6 in the quarto, whereas it appears to belong in 1.8.

- 5) *Duke*. Thanks good *Alonso*: but *I came alone*, a
 And not as *did beseeme* the *Cestian Duke*, b
 Nor would I have it knowne within the towne,
 That I was here and thus without my traine,
 But as *I came alone* so will I go, a
 And *leave* my son to solemnise his feast, c
 And ere't belong Ile come againe to you,
 And do him honour as *beseemes* the son
 Of mightie *Jerobell* the *Cestian Duke*, b
 Till when Ile *leave* you, Farewell *Aurelius*. c
- 6) *Tapster*. Now that the darksome *night* is overpast, a
 And dawning day apeares in cristall sky,
 Now must I hast abroad: but soft whose this?
What Slie oh wondrous hath he laine here *allnight*, b a
 Ile *wake* him, I thinke he's starved by this, d
 But that his belly was so stuf with ale,
What how *Slie*, Awake for shame. b d

I will briefly comment on the holistic repetitions in the six speeches, which however humble do contribute to stringing the speeches together on a formal level: Example 1 presents a combination of *epanalepsis* (*Fils ... cushen vs. Fils ... pot*) with double *epanados* (*Tapster ... Here Ile lie vs. Tapster ... heers ... lying*). The following more developed speech by the Lord (Example 2) reveals a combination of the three defining repetitions, arranged so as to give the speech a peripety of its own in 1.15 (“Here breake we off...”). The initial mythological half of the speech (10-14) which is built around the image of the hunter Orion, is considerably more patterned and stylistically artificial than the second half,²¹ but its basic image is echoed in the hunting imagery that introduces the Lord’s theatrical sport. There is of course deep irony in letting the soaked *Slie* be introduced by the image of “*Orions drisling lookes*.” The speech is clearly not the result of badly jointed shards.

Example 3, *Ferando*’s farewell to *Alonso* in 5.47-52, presents an example of antimetabole (*ab ... ba*), where exact words (*my ... Kate*)

²¹ For the stark stylistic contrasts, see Holderness and Loughery 1992: 23-24.

and a derivation (provide vs provision) gives balance, framing his intention declared in the central line to leave for his country house. My fourth example, Alonso's speech of thanks at 17.111-115) provides a simple example of *epanalepsis* in which a formula of address "my grace" is repeated in the initial, central, and final verse of his speech. The difference between the merchant and the prince is seen in the fifth example, the Duke's response to Alonso (17.116-125). In a highly formalised reply he rejects the informality of the situation and the breach of princely decorum by marshalling his words into a rigid pattern that emphasizes his own singularity ("But as I came alone so will I go"). The repetitions are multiple examples *epanados* and *epanalepsis* ("not as did beseeme the *Cestian Duke*" vs "as beseemes ... the *Cestian Duke*"). As observed in examples 1, 3, 4, and 5 titles and names are frequently used to provide linking in speeches, and so it is in my sixth and final example, the Tapster's discovery speech (19.1-7). Here Slie's name (4; 7) and references to the night (1; 4) interlock with the repetition of "wake ... awake" (5; 7) to a configuration where instances of *epanados* emphasize the beginning, middle and end of the speech, as seen in most of the cited speeches. As a point of general importance, characters of authority (the Lord and the Duke) or in a powerful position exhibit more rhetorical repetitions (cf. Eriksen 1996: 123-25).

The practice revealed in these examples, and they are sufficiently many to be accepted as typical of the dramatist's style of composition, we can term mannerist, because it corresponds well with the mannerist aesthetic principle of "order with more ornament" put into use in written compositions and visual art (Eriksen 2001: 79-109; 164-167). Such practice went against contemporary academic and 'classical' views of period composition, and was thus severely criticised by Scaliger, who warns against creating "false periods." For a sentence does not become a true period merely because it is endowed with rhetorical ornaments connecting it beginning and end. "Falsos autem nomine ipsos puto, quum [periodeia] non in motu, sed in spatio posuere" (1561: 4: 197, c.2) Marlowe, who in *Dido* and *Tamburlaine* established the practice of creating what Harry Levin terms "verse sentences" by piling cause on clause, also composed with extrasyntactic but architecturally plotted verbal repetitions, did not heed such warnings and created speeches bound together by verbal ornaments. The technique caught on and although Shakespeare is the dramatist who learned most from Marlowe's

technique in this respect, the author of *A Shrew* apparently was an even more eager follower.

By applying the method—based on Renaissance prescriptions and practice—developed for my study of *Doctor Faustus* (B) to the speeches in *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* interesting patterns emerge (see Appendix 1). For instance, there is twice as much holistically patterned text, meaning speeches that in terms of repetitions are treated as periods, in *A Shrew* than in *The Shrew*; 31% versus 15%. Besides, *A Shrew* has more than twice as many complex segments, i.e. speeches with two or more of the verbal figures identified: 29 versus 12. This means that *A Shrew* presents figures that are very close to Marlowe's early plays, and more particularly *Tamburlaine* (31% and 24%), whereas *The Shrew* is closer, for example, to *The Comedy of Errors* (12.7%), *I Henry VI* (12.9%), *Titus Andronicus* (13.0%), and *Romeo and Juliet* (15.8%). We can safely conclude that Shakespeare did not write *A Shrew* and that it is probable that *A Shrew* was composed before 1590.

The frequency with which the author of *A Shrew* patterns his speeches is in itself not sufficient to identify the author. This type of evidence must be supplemented by other types of evidence such as parallel passages and verifiable linguistic preferences. Borrowings in *A Shrew* from plays by Marlowe are legion as indeed they are internally between works within the Marlowe canon. I do not think, therefore, that it is “incredible that Marlowe would mimic himself so crudely” (Bulloughs 2000: 1: 58). In fact, as Levin pointed out (1961: 148-49) such mimicking is in keeping with Marlowe's practice in *Doctor Faustus* (B), and elsewhere.²²

Let me conclude by offering four examples drawn from *Doctor Faustus* and *A Shrew* that elaborate on one particular formula, a phenomenon that is quite common in the Marlowe canon (Eriksen 1987: 192-99). When Faustus requests a wife, Mephostophilis instead promises him a courtesan

As *chaste* as was Penelope,
As *wise* as Saba, or as beautiful
As was *bright* Lucifer before his fall. (B 545-47; my italics)

²² For more self-parody internally in *Doctor Faustus* (B), see Eriksen 1987: 175-177.

A similar passage with a series of three comparisons, but in a somewhat expanded version, crops up in *A Shrew* when Aurelius tells Valeria that he has

A lovely love,
As bright as is the heaven cristalline,
As faire as is the milke white way of Jove,
As chaste as Phoebe in her sommer sportes
As softe and tender as the azure downe,
That circles Cithereas silver doves. (10.1-6; my italics)

The properties of chastity, wisdom, and beauty are transformed to brightness, beauty and chastity in *A Shrew*, but the reference to Venus, or Lucifera, in the mention of bright Lucifer is kept in varied form in “Cithereas silver doves”. The underlying reference to Paris’s choice between the three goddesses is obvious, and so the first version of the topos becomes a fitting anticipation of Helen:

Clad in the *beauty* of a thousand stars.
Brighter art thou *than* flaming Jupiter
When he appeared to hapless Semele,
More lovely than the monarch of the sky.
In wanton Arethusaes *azurde* armes. (B 1888-92; my italics)

We note that a number of elements are repeated and new are added, but in principle the same image cluster is repeated with a halo of related images; in this instance Jupiter takes the place of Jove and the azure down of Venus’s unchaste doves are transmuted into “wanton *Arethusaes azurde armes*,” as the author forages in his treasure house of classical reference. A fourth reworking of the same cluster comes in *A Shrew*, when Aurelius praises Phylema and Emelia:

Those lovelie dames
Richer in beawtie then the orient pearle,
Whiter then is the Alpine Christall mould,
And farre *more lovelie then* the terean plant,
That blushing in the aire turns to a stone. (5.121-125; my italics)

The topoi of beauty and the turn of phrase in the comedy are virtually indistinguishable from those in *Doctor Faustus* and related ones found in

Tamburlaine. The similarities are such striking examples of the Marlovian idiom that it becomes hard to distinguish between the passages, and when we accept that self-parody was not beyond Marlowe, it appears more than likely that he was responsible for all four.

Therefore, when we add this observation on the close relationship of the discussed passages to the well-organised plot structure of *A Shrew*, including the special formal features it shares with *Doctor Faustus* (B), and new empirical data that show that the former displays a high frequency of patterned speeches of the kind introduced by Marlowe, the conclusion seems inevitable: Marlowe had a hand in *A Shrew*, and most likely he alone was responsible for penning it. His style can be documented on all levels of composition. As is evident from the brevity of this article, more work needs to be done on this topic, particularly on the use of farce and parody in the play. Still, one preliminary result seems clear: the author of *A Shrew* is no longer anonymous.

Appendix 1

(A) here refers to the percentage of the text found in patterned speeches, (B) the total of patterned speeches, and (C) the number of speeches with a combination of two or three verbal figures:

A	B	C	
1 Tamburlaine	31.1	59	
2 Tamburlaine	24.7	42	
Dido	21.2	29	
The Massacre at Paris	25.4	39	
Doctor Faustus (B)	18.7	37	
Edward the Second	17.0	52	
The Jew of Malta	12.0	38	
A Shrew	31.2	66	29
The Shrew	15.0	32	12
The Comedy of Errors	12.7	23	13
1 Henry VI	12.9	35	
2 Henry VI	21.8	72	
3 Henry VI	22.9	58	

Titus Andronicus	13.0	40
Romeo and Juliet	15.8	53

References

- Allen, Michael J. B. and Muir, Kenneth (eds). 1981. *Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto: A Facsimile Edition of Copies Primarily from the Henry E. Huntington Library*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bevington, David and Rasmussen, Eric (eds). 1993. *Doctor Faustus: A- and B-texts (1604, 1616)*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Boas, F. S. (ed). 1908. *The Taming of A Shrew*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Bradley, David. 1991. *From Text to Performance in the Elizabethan Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bullough, Geoffrey (ed). 2002. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. 8 vols. London and New York: Routledge.
- Dolan, Frances E. (ed). 1996. *The Taming of the Shrew: Texts and Contexts*. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Eriksen, Roy. 1981. "The Misplaced Clownage-Scene in *The Tragedie of Doctor Faustus* (1616) and Its Implications for the Play's Total Structure." *English Studies* 17. 249-58.
- Eriksen, Roy. 1985. "'What resting place is this?' Aspects of Time and Place in *Doctor Faustus* (1616), *Renaissance Drama*. 16: 49-74.
- Eriksen, Roy. 1987. *The Forme of Faustus Fortunes: A Study of The Tragedie of Doctor Faustus (1616)*. Oslo and Atlantic Highlands, Conn.: Solum and Humanities Press.
- Eriksen, Roy. 1996. "Ars Combinatoria: Marlowe and the Art of Framing." *Variations sur la lettre, le mètre e la mesure: Shakespeare* Ed. Dominique Goy-Blanquet. Amiens: CRDP de l'Academie d'Amiens. 111-26.
- Eriksen, Roy. 2001. *The Building in the Text: Alberti, Shakespeare, Milton*. University Park, Penn.: Penn State Press.
- Greg, W. W. (ed.). 1950. *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, 1604-1616*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hermogenes. 1614. "Ars oratoria absolutissima, et libri omnes." G. Laurentius (ed). *Coloniae*, n.p.

- Holderness, Graham and Loughery, Brian (eds). 1992. *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, Called The Taming of A Shrew*. Eastbourne: Pearson Education.
- Hosley, Richard, 1964. "Sources and Analogues to *The Taming of the Shrew*." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 27: 289-308
- Hosley, Richard (ed.). 1981. *The Taming of the Shrew*. Gen. ed. Alfred Harbage. *Complete Pelican Shakespeare: The Comedies and the Romances*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Laroque, Francois. 1993. *Shakespeare's Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maguire, Laurie E. 1996. *Shakespearean Suspect Texts: The 'Bad' Quartos and Their Contexts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maguire, Laurie E. 2004. "Marlovian text and authorship." Ed. Patrick Cheney. *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 41-54.
- Maguire, Laurie E. and Berger, Thomas L. (eds.) 1998. *Textual Formations and Reformations*. Newark: University of Delaware Press.
- Marcus, Leah. 1992. "The Shakespearean Editor as Shrew-Tamer." *English Literary Renaissance* 22.2: 177-200.
- Marcus, Leah. 1996. *Unediting the Renaissance: Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Marlowe, Christopher. 1592. *Tamburlaine the Great*. London: Richard Jones.
- Miller, Stephen. 1998. "*The Taming of a Shrew* and the Theories; or, 'Though this be badness, yet there is method in' t,'" in Maguire and Berger (eds). 251-63.
- Pettitt, Thomas. 1980. "The Folk Play in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*." *Folklore* 91: 72-79.
- Pettitt, Thomas. 1988. "Formulaic Dramaturgy in *Doctor Faustus*. Eds. Kenneth Friedenreich et al. "*A poet and a filthy play-maker*": *New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*. New York: AMS, 167-191.
- Pettitt, Thomas. 2006. "Towards the *Zielform*: Oral Transmission and the Reshaping of Marlowe's Plays." *Comparative Drama* (forthcoming).
- Rose, Mark. 1972. *Shakespearean Design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Salingar, Leo. *The Traditions of English Renaissance Comedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scaliger, J. C. 1561. *Poetices libri septem*. Lugduni, n.p.
- Shakespeare, William. 1997. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Gen. ed. G. Blakemore Evans. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Thompson, Ann (ed). 1984. *The Taming of the Shrew*. New Cambridge Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Urkowitz, Stephen. 1988. "Good News about Bad Quartos." Ed. Maurice Charney. *'Bad' Shakespeare: Revaluations of the Shakespeare Canon*. London and Toronto: Associated University Presses.
- Werstine, Paul. 1998. "Touring and the Construction of Shakespeare Textual Criticism," in Maguire and Berger (eds). 45-66.