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## Shrew or Sure? Rethinking Power in Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew

Devenny Denise Lupear

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SHREW OR SURE?: RETHINKING POWER IN SHAKESPEARE'S

*THE TAMING OF THE SHREW*

A Thesis

by

DEVENNY DENISE LUPEAR

Submitted to Texas A&M International University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2020

Major Subject: English

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## ABSTRACT

Shrew or Sure?: Rethinking Power in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (August 2020)

Devenny Denise Lupear, B.A., Texas A&M International University;

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This thesis investigates the difference between Shakespeare's written work *The Taming of the Shrew* and twentieth-century film director Franco Zeffirelli's adaptation in 1967, specifically the final outcome in the issue of power of Katherine's character. While some scholars consider Shakespeare a proto-feminist who endows Katherine with cleverness, wit, and cunning to secretly tame Petruchio in order to gain personal freedom within the walls of a forced marriage, Zeffirelli denies Katherine dignity in the face of public humiliation and physical violence. Furthermore, Zeffirelli also undermines Shakespeare's progressive agenda by perpetuating an oppressive narrative against women using twentieth-century film as his medium of mass influence. This thesis aims to prove that Shakespeare weaves subtle clues in his written text that support the belief that Katherine publicly performs an inauthentic—albeit, convincing—submission in her final speech to demonstrate her invisible grasp of power; ironically, she hoodwinks Petruchio by violating the expectation of silence prescribed to the female sex. This pretension of total devotion to Petruchio works to delude him into believing he has tamed Katherine. The disparities between the original text and Zeffirelli's film illuminate how contemporary social climates with fixed ideas about gender. Whereas Shakespeare was aware of the static gender norms of his time and included elements of this culture in his works, he also

included new cultural and social possibilities with radical ideas—like a strong female lead who gets her way after all—to further the progress of women’s liberation in England. Zeffirelli, on the other hand, caters to the male gaze that sustains a female-enslavement culture and sees to quash the women’s liberation movement in 1960s America.

DEDICATION

For my beloved brother Bennie.

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through this life and gives me the strength and wisdom to keep putting one foot in front of the other every day.

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## CHAPTER ONE: SHAKESPEARE AND THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

### Historical Background

The sociocultural climate in sixteenth-century England was a time when strict social gender codes governed both sexes; as a result, the general public accepted, adopted, and perpetuated these constructs almost without question. With Shakespeare composing texts that reflected the sociocultural state and shifts in his time, the power of *mimesis* in theater played a pivotal role in shaping new attitudes and perspectives in society. Shakespearean scholar Robert Weimann finds that an audience's "imaginative inversion of [experiencing] the actual situation—hunger, darkness, cold, or fear, for example—arouses a collective energy which in turn is applied to coping with reality" (2). Since Shakespeare often wrote with a particular actor in mind and welcomed and/or expected actor input during the writing process, the audience/actor relationship effect was two-fold: for the actors, the opportunity to engage in roles that exhibited taboo behavior strictly forbidden in public provided purgation and catharsis due to the safety of performance; for the audience, experiencing a Shakespearean performance in a time of great change meant being exposed to the potential germination of alternative-thinking seeds, especially with issues of power in gender roles.

The most potent power in the playwright/actor/audience dynamic belonged to actor, for it was through their performance that audiences were moved. Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann claim that:

[e]ven under the alien contours of an imaginary role, performers did not relinquish all the visible signs of their social or sexual identity. They invited onlookers to enjoy and judge their craft to the degree and in the way that this opened up for inspection not just the product of counterfeiting but the process, the modes of its production. (143)

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This thesis follows the model of *Shakespeare*.

Such a give-and-take dynamic as “‘secretly open’ role playing” (141) had a level of realness that impacted the actual lives of men and women. Essentially, there was power in publicly performing the embodiment of private behavior and being protected by the safety of the stage. These imaginary roles, such as openly overt power demonstrated by men and a subtle, yet potent, power endowed in women, planted seeds in society that germinated and came to fruition in later movements. The literature of this time period—both fiction and non-fiction—clearly conveys how men almost always had the upper hand when it came to controlling women’s lives and denying them autonomy over their own bodies. It began with fathers who acted in accordance with the authority they possessed in owning their daughters, their daughters’ bodies and their daughters’ sexual reputations. Elizabeth A. Foyster writes how “[i]f a man had children it was also important for his reputation as an honourable householder that they learnt to respect and obey his wishes” (91). Thus, daughters were born into their roles as subservient to men by default, their consent under control before they ever left the womb. This control was a crucial component of upholding patriarchal institutions that relied on women’s second-class status in order to uphold a patriarchal power.

While the oppression of women was extreme in a sixteenth-century gender binary system, men were vulnerable in their adherence—or not—to the expectations of manhood. It was up to men to be honorable, to be physically strong, to handle business affairs outside of the home, and to be heterosexual. In addition, men were supposed to demonstrate that they could control their wives because men were considered logical thinkers, while women were considered to be ruled by their emotions, categorizing them as frail and weak and in need of the placating authority of their husbands. Foyster adds “that marriage could be an important step in the process of acquiring manhood and enhancing reputation” (65). As a result, much pressure was

placed on men to prove their masculinity by successfully controlling a wife. The most potent threat to a man's publicly perceived masculinity was a wife incapable of being tamed (or a wife who would dare to gossip—truthfully or not— about her husband with other women, especially if that gossip defamed his reputation in the slightest), “for one's social and economic standing depended upon having a good name,” according to Marjorie Keniston McIntosh (24). Any revelatory information about a man's lack of power had the potential to ruin him forever. Thus, while women seemed to lack any real power—other than the domestic type—they possessed it in ways that unconsciously subverted the patriarchy.

Though men were also expected to live up to socially-constructed ideals of masculinity, women had it worse by far. Marjorie Keniston McIntosh (1998) provides a historical account into the ways women were controlled. The period marked by the most change took place from the middle of the fourteenth century and the end of the sixteenth century, where “disruptions and new patterns” in society began to alter traditional customs (23). With these changes came more social unrest that challenged the norm; therefore new laws were put in place that regulated these new and intolerable behaviors. A primary motivator for this new regulation was community shame; hence, women—condemned by Eve—were an easy target and scapegoat for the shifting foundations of England. The value of having a “good name” fueled oppressive regulation (24). Even the church denied aid to those who needed it the most if they violated protected and sanctioned traditional norms (25).

McIntosh goes on to describe the emerging court systems that handled different types of crime or code violations; at the time, there were “four main legal institutions responsible for controlling wrongdoing” (28), but unfortunately, due to the fact that these court systems were new and divided their duties, it is difficult to piece together exactly a coherent view of social

regulation (29). However, McIntosh utilizes what is available to create even a partial picture that provides insight into how the Crown and the rich were the primary developers of such forms of control, since most social misbehavior came from those who lived in poverty (33). It was typical of the time period that men headed the courts that administered the law, and since women were expected to be chaste, silent, obedient, and faithful to their husbands, those who stepped out of line found themselves at the mercy of the patriarchy.

Because men denied women any agency over the course of their lives, women mostly adhered to their inherited gender construction as a means of social stability and survival. The qualities of being obedient, silent, and chaste were expected of women and affirmed by the panopticon of a patriarchal society. To help a girl know her role, conduct books were written as explicit instruction manuals on what type of behavior was expected of and accepted from a woman. One such manual was penned by a man named Juan Luis Vives. In his book, *The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual*, Vives meticulously lists both the acceptable and unacceptable attributes of a good Christian woman. First and foremost, her chastity before marriage was her most valuable asset, for it made her highly desirable in the prospects of marriage. Vives asserted that due to perceived women's general weakness, they were in need of men's protection, since "when she is bereft of her husband, she is alone, naked, exposed to harm" (186).

Moreover, according to Vives, "[a woman] should not think that she deserves honors, nor should she seek them" (117). Nonetheless, Vives posits that "the young woman [. . .] collect examples of virgins from what she hears and reads, which she will hold up to herself for imitation" (119). As far as undesirable women went, Vives declared that worst defamation a woman could commit upon herself would be losing her virginity before marriage: "The unchaste

woman is a sea and storehouse of all evils [who] has no sense of shame” (116). The shame accompanied with violation of this precept was heavy and practically destroyed a woman’s future. Therefore, it was to a woman’s advantage to obey the laws of her sex if she sought to enjoy the privileges and rewards that resulted from silent obedience. More important than submitting to her husband behind closed doors was the way in which a woman behaved publicly or in the company of others. In performing the duties of their sex publicly, women affirmed their husbands’ manhood. Foyster states that “marriage,” as the most public act of a woman’s submission to a man, “could be an important step in the process of acquiring manhood and enhancing reputation” (65). Therefore, a man sought a woman who not only possessed all the desirable personal attributes assigned to a good woman but also one with a good family name and a substantial dowry. The marital arrangements, of course, were made by a young woman’s father, the man who followed the law by governing over their daughters’ lives, girls who were conditioned since birth to obey and not question men.

To support Vives as both feminist and antifeminist, Gloria Kaufman provides background information into what feminism looked like in sixteenth-century England. Kaufman insists that in order to understand sixteenth-century feminism, one must suspend twentieth-century biases and instead use the narrowest definition to produce the most “efficacious” effect to one’s understanding (892). She cites critics who laud Vives for his advocacy of women’s education even though the curriculum content differed for boys and girls: boys received a much more intellectually-based education while girls were taught more practical lessons. However, while Kaufman acknowledges the good in supporting and encouraging women’s education at all was revolutionary at that time, she is equally aware of Vives’ “antifeminist dicta” (891).

Kaufman expands on the contradictions in the “flowering of feminism” that occurred

during the Renaissance, citing Sir Thomas More as its spearhead. Just as Shakespeare captured the contradictions of complex characters, Kaufman recognizes the intermingling of patriarchy and feminism in his support of women's education while simultaneously forbidding them from every becoming teachers (892). A similar sentiment is threaded throughout Vives' instruction manual, where he believes that it is important for women to read, yet they are restricted to a narrow list of options pre-selected for them by a man (894). Furthermore, Kaufman makes it clear that *Education* is not so much meant to educate a women as to teach her how to conduct herself and regulate her behavior according to masculine prescriptions of femininity (894). Hence, Kaufman provides an angle that supports the contradictions found in the complexity of Shakespeare's characters.

To give further historical context to *Shrew*, Karen Newman discusses how the sociocultural politics of family and gender roles in sixteenth-century England are reflected in the work. She begins her essay with a story about a shrewish wife who beats her husband publicly when he comes home drunk demanding sex in a town called Wetherden in 1604. Then, a neighbor takes issue with the feuding couple because their quarrel "left the village in shame" (86). It grows into a bigger scandal that, according to Newman, is meant to reflect "the social anxiety about gender and power which characterizes Elizabethan culture" (87). When the quarreling husband presses charges against his complaining neighbor, his wife is silent, an object with no family (89). This leads to Newman making a connecting with language and identity: "Kate refuses her erotic destiny by exercising her linguistic willfulness" (90).

Newman continues by expanding on the direct relationship between language and power; she asserts that "[Katherine's] shrewishness [is] always associated with women's revolt in words" (90). This revolt is of particular interest to Newman because it characterizes how

Elizabethan and Jacobean society felt about the possibility of a collective female rebellion, especially because witchcraft accusations were at a boiling point at this time (91). Newman makes the case that Katherine's power lies in her use of language, which makes her evil in the eyes of society; yet, "by deliberately misunderstanding and reinterpreting her words [. . .], Petruchio effectively refuses her freedom of speech identified in the play as women's independence" (95). Yet, it is Kate's final speech where "having the last word contradicts the very sentiments she speaks" (99).

Contrarily, Sara Ahmed's "Willfulness and Feminist Subjectivity" elaborates extensively that being willful means being willing to accept the backlash of refusing to conform to societal and cultural expectations, and how to be ill of will is an inherent part of being feminist. Ahmed confesses that her own willfulness was born from a violent relationship with her father, where she embodied the spirit of the willful little girl in the Grimm story who would not obey her mother and died because "God had no pleasure in her" and whose arm kept sticking out of the grave each time they covered it; it was not until her mother came and beat it with a rod that she was finally able to rest (66-7). This violence perpetuates from "a tradition that assumes the child as stained by original sin, and which insists on moral correction. . ." (66). Essentially, all who are willing to be willful accept "the charge of willfulness" that include "those scenes of violence," for to be feminist means "[persisting] in the face of having been brought down" (84).

Ahmed uses a Grimm story, in part, to reveal how children, especially girls, are broken early so there is no chance to know what one is missing in terms of fundamental human rights, like the right to agency over one's own life. This lack births willfulness, and "[i]n the history of willfulness, women are found wanting" (70). What feminists want is justice and equity, yet this fight for basic human rights is distorted by the opposition as "a will to power, as if protesting

something masks a desire for that very thing. And when she speaks the language of injustice, that speech is heard as just another way she imposes her will on others” (71). Ahmed asserts that “feminism becomes a diagnosis: what stops or prevents girls from giving up their will, or what in giving girls permission to desire leads to girls becoming agitated by their desires. Becoming willing is here: accepting one’s fate, willing as fatality. Feminism as a form of activity becomes the cause of illness” (75-6).

As a proto-feminist and with the power of creativity and the freedom and safety of performance, Shakespeare subverted some of these socially-sanctioned gender norms through his works. While he contributed to the perpetuation of misogyny against women during the sixteenth-century, he simultaneously endowed some of his female characters with a power denied to them in the real world. Such is the case with Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Shakespeare was able to get away with creating such characters because, according to Weimann, “the dramatist was in a position honestly to face and incorporate [. . .] tensions within his poetic vision of society. He could do this only as long as he possessed, as a touchstone to test any experience or concept, a standpoint involving more freedom, or ‘license,’ and imagination than the particular social attitude or moral concept in question” (177). Weimann adds that “the vision possessed [. . .] the positive capacity for bringing to bear varied perspectives on the actions and morals of men, thus creating the experience rather than the ideologies of heroism, love, and tyranny” (177). The result is that the shifting ideologies represented in public performance have real consequences on real lives that mimic and act out these new ideas in private spaces.

### **The Power of Performance**

Thus, the performance of Katherine as shrew reveals how Shakespeare influenced the collective consciousness shift in attitudes towards women. The entire audience becomes

immersed in a thought experiment in which they are free to explore alternate perspectives induced by the portrayal of counter-cultural roles on stage. Katherine's character serves as a commentary on women's issues during this era; it also reveals a progressive side of Shakespeare. It is no doubt that this is what made attending a Shakespearean play so exciting: engaging with taboo topics no one speaks about yet everyone thinks about. This interplay between audience and performance blurs the line between fantasy and reality because, as Weimann states, "the more the public is drawn into the world of the play and the more the play is drawn into the real world, the more the essence of the play is brought out *in the course of performance* [emphasis in original]" (7).

Therefore, Katherine's character reveals the anxieties of women's subjugation as well as how women can live within the walls of patriarchal institutions and still have power. The greatness of Shakespeare rested on how he captured the complexities of being human, and Katherine's complexity lies in how she uses the power available to her to express her grave disappointment in her father and sister, to tame Petruchio and to win the battle of wits. Katherine then becomes an object of study since she is a rarity in her time. Contrary to popular belief, it is not Katherine who is authentically tamed: it is Petruchio. Katherine remains in her power and proves so through her linguistic agency and performance of submission to Petruchio among their peers, a coup de grâce that masquerades as Petruchio's triumph.

In her groundbreaking feminist essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1976), Hélène Cixous implores woman to write herself into history not only for herself but for other women. Women have been associated with and kept in the dark for too long, so Cixous emphasizes the necessity for women to "proclaim [their] unique empire so that other women, other unacknowledged sovereigns, might" free themselves through the spark of intuitive inspiration (876). Women,

according to Cixous, have lived too long believing there is something wrong with them because they do not fit into the conventional constructions of socially accepted feminine norms. She calls on all women to break ground in writing because “woman must write woman. And man, man” (877), rather than continuing to allow men to write women into history according to their masculine language. Men have “a fantasized obligatory virility meant to invade, to colonize [. . .] woman as a ‘dark continent’ to penetrate and to ‘pacify’” (877).

Cixous proclaims that the most violent crime men have committed throughout history is having women hate each other, “to be their own enemies, to mobilize their immense strength against themselves, to be the executants of [men’s] virile needs” (878). Therefore, she calls on woman to “liberate the New Woman from the Old by coming to know her[self]” through her own introspection and establishes her new self; in doing so, this new liberated woman’s proclamation of authentic self inspires other women to discover who they truly are since men have obscured the feminine ideal with their own writing and “reproduce [ ] the classic representations of women “as sensitive—intuitive—dreamy [. . .]” (878). When women write, they “become *at will* the taker and initiator [. . .] in every symbolic system, in every political process” (880, emphasis in the original). In order to accomplish this feat, Cixous claims woman must be “militant, [. . .] an integral part of all liberations” and “must be farsighted, not limited to blow-by-blow interaction” (882). Woman’s writing must be “volcanic [;] there is no other way” (888).

Luce Irigaray takes a similar stance in her critical essay, “The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine.” In it she addresses a series of questions about her book, *Speculum*, in which she begins by justifying why she chose to begin this work with a critique of Sigmund Freud. She believes it:

is important [. . .] to disconcert the staging of representation according to *exclusively* ‘masculine’ parameters, that is, according to a phallographic order. It is not a matter of toppling that order so as to replace it—that amounts to the same thing in the end—but to disrupting and modifying it, starting from an ‘outside’ that is exempt, in part, from phallographic law.” (68)

Irigaray continues the essay by deconstructing Freud and finding contradictions in his research and claiming that “Freud’s discourse belongs to an unanalyzed tradition [that tends] to fall back upon anatomy as an irrefutable criterion of truth” (70-1). She finds holes in his analysis by asking “What happens when the sexual function can be separated from the reproductive function?” (71). Another provoking question asked is “[s]ince the recognition of a ‘specific’ female sexuality would challenge the monopoly on value held by the masculine sex alone, [. . .] what meaning could the Oedipus complex have in a symbolic system other than patriarchy?” (73). Irigaray continues by calling on humanity to take action in order to disrupt the current ideological prisons that keep women in a perpetual state of subjugation. She also addresses the mirror aspect in “the architectonics of theatre” and the power to disrupt the current coherence: “we have to point out how the break with material contiguity is made, how the system is put together” (75).

From the onset of the play, it is clear that Shakespeare constructs Katherine’s home life as a significant contributing factor of her willfulness. Making Katherine a headstrong female aligns with support for belief in Shakespeare’s unarticulated progressive and proto-feminist agenda. Claire McEachern believes that Shakespeare was intrigued by “contexts he found provocative—or not provocative enough” (269). Therefore, though she is her father’s property, Katherine possesses a will of her own. This is significant because, as Sara Ahmed states, “*own* [the word] can be rebellious in a world that assumes some beings are property for others (being for others): to claim to be one’s own or to have a will of one’s own can be a refusal to be willing

to labor to provide services for others [emphasis in original]” (74). Katherine refuses to labor in fake pleasure just to keep up appearances; in this way, she practices self-preservation and authenticity. For example, when Baptista, her father, deals with potential suitors for her sister, Bianca, it is evident that Katherine intimidates him. Katherine takes offense at the transactional nature of finding a suitable husband for her: “I pray you, sir, is it your will / To make a stale of me amongst these mates?” (*Shr.* 1.1.57-8). By including the word “stale” in her question, Katherine asserts herself in a way that cancels out the lack of control imbued in such a role. It is also worth noting that this is the first time in the text that Katherine speaks; this is significant because it illustrates and establishes the power she holds over the most important male in her life. Interestingly, Baptista does not reply. This silence could be Baptista’s purposeful restraint to avoid further humiliation from his frustrated daughter and is read as an affirmation of his daughter’s authority in the household dynamic.

Katherine has no qualms about breaking the expectation of silence that comes along with being a woman in the sixteenth century and does so without any regard for her father’s dignity and reputation nor for the men in his company. To present these gender-code violations in public to a sixteenth-century audience was scandalous. This made Shakespeare a voice for women’s issues and rights and though anachronistic, a feminist. Feminism, according to Ahmed “becoming feminist was about becoming audible [. . .] feminism as making violence visible; feminism as acquiring a voice” (73). For sixteenth-century women, Shakespeare was one such voice. As a result, Baptista seems to fear his own daughter since he has seemingly failed at taming her himself. This is evident in the way the men react to her flippant attitude towards them; they are shocked that she would have the audacity to speak to upstanding member of the patriarchy—her father—in such a manner. Hortensio is first in attempting to put Katherine in

her place: “‘Mates,’ maid? How mean you that? No mates for you, / Unless you were of gentler, milder mold” (1.1.59-61). She is viewed as “stark mad or wonderful froward” (1.1.70) and a “devil” (1.1.67). These terms are used as a container to dismiss the legitimacy of Katherine’s anger; the goal is to dehumanize her and categorize her as a wild creature in need of domestication, something that can only be done by the most ruthless of men. The presence of Baptista and the suitors serve to emphasize Katherine’s sovereignty in the face of a governing patriarchy.

As if it is not enough that Katherine is outnumbered by the men in which she is in direct conflict with, her relationship with Bianca is also strained primarily because Bianca complies with the expectations imposed upon her sex. Her obedience to remaining silent emphasizes Katherine’s shrewness; Katherine seeks solidarity from Bianca by rejecting these constricting social codes and admits, “[Bianca’s] silence flouts me, and I’ll be revenged!” (*Shr.* 2.1.32). Katherine’s anger takes up space and illustrates her power to freely express herself, whereas Bianca’s silence represents an adherence to complacency. Therefore, the opportunity for the sisters to unite against the limiting social norms of their sex is denied due to Bianca’s compliance with the expectations of her sex. Moreover, the favoritism Baptista bestows upon Bianca exacerbates this tension, reinforcing the wedge between the sisters; the more he demonstrates a kinder attitude toward Bianca, the more Katherine feels shunned but her father. Katherine’s pain at being slighted by her father is evident when she asks him “What, will you not suffer me? Nay, now I see / She is your treasure” (2.1.34-5). The resentment towards both her father and her sister shows in the way she uses words to take down two birds with one stone: Katherine rails against Baptista by giving words to her pain. Her pain fuels her power to silence Baptista. This is so unusual during the sixteenth century that Gremio is astonished to witness such gross rebellion;

he highlights Baptista's defeat by asking, "Why will you mew [Bianca] up / Signior Baptista, for this fiend of hell, / And make [Bianca] bear the penance of [Katherine's] tongue?" (1.1.89-91). Baptista is powerless over Katherine, so he asserts himself over Bianca—who does not resist—as a way of maintaining his ego intact. This is why he seeks a "cunning" (1.1.99) man to do the placating for him: if Bianca were to marry first, Baptista would be alone in his home with Katherine.

Katherine's relationship with her father leaves one to speculate how her childhood upbringing influenced her lack of regard for the role society has constructed for her. Being that sixteenth-century women had little agency or authority over their own lives, they recognized their assigned inferiority and adhered to the silence was required of them for fear of public or private punishment. Therefore, Katherine's blatant disregard for the rules indicates that she may have been influenced by other powerful women of her time. In essence, it is unclear whether she is treated unfavorably by her father because she is shrewish or if she is shrewish because of how Baptista mistreats her and hurts her with his favoritism for Bianca. It is also reasonable to suspect that Katherine's mother may have played a significant role in her daughter's strong character, though Katherine's mother is most noticeably absent. Mary Beth Rose cites several possibilities for the phenomenon; one such theory is that because "by marriage, the husband and wife became one person in law—and that person was the husband, [therefore] the exclusion [. . .] could be viewed as a dramatic economy, the conflation of two characters into one" (293). Despite Rose's reasonable speculation for Katherine's mother's absence, Shakespeare's deliberate intention to ghost the mother in this play leaves the audience to wonder how impactful she was to Katherine. Additionally, the mystery of the absent mother creates a void to decipher how Bianca did not inherit the same authoritative traits.

However, another reason could be that having a mother in *Shrew* would negatively affect the plot because mothers have power over children's conceptions of good and evil, falsehood and truth" (300). If Katherine had her mother present, it would have been possible that her mother would advise against Petruchio; this is significant because her mother's absence opens possibilities that can nullify or justify Katherine's brazenness. Hortensio refers to Katherine as a "devil" (1.1.67) because she represents the extreme violation of her sex: disobedience. Without any information about her mother, it is impossible to know if Katherine inherited this willfulness from her mother or if Katherine is shrewish *because* of her mother's absence.

Also, her mother is voiceless—by default, powerless—in defending the insult inherited with being a mother to a devil: Gremio hurls at Katherine, "You may go to the Devil's dam!" (1.1.107). According to editors of the Folger edition, the "Devil's mother (in proverbs, [is] said to be worse than the Devil" (38). This clue does not rule out that Baptista could have possibly behaved similarly with a wife that conditioned him to accept emasculation. Fearing the devil—Katherine—is to acknowledge a powerful feminine force that renders Baptista powerless; therefore, "the best mother is an absent or a dead mother" (301). This hypothesis supports the presumption that Baptista fears living alone with Katherine for the rest of his life and invalidates the perceived authenticity of Katherine's performance of submission in her final speech.

Katherine's commitment to Petruchio begins as a farce and remains so after the text is over. The most apparent example of this occurs when Petruchio announces that "Tis bargained 'twixt us twain, being alone, / That she shall still be curst in company. / I tell you, 'tis incredible to believe / How much she loves me" (2.1.323.6). This is the way Petruchio keeps his masculine public image intact; it is a convenient move to pretend that Katherine does not truly detest him but pretends to maintain her reputation as untamable. By being "curst in company," Petruchio's

egotistic demands are satisfied, and Katherine appeases him with the lie as she appeases herself with a truth only she knows to be real within her and can be acted out in public as true because it is. This is one of the clues embedded in the text that supports the notion that Katherine possesses an instinct of self-preservation and protection, for pretending to be in love with Petruchio while in public with him affirms this instinct as innate power. Equally interesting is that Petruchio acknowledges Katherine's power even before he meets her; her equality of power is affirmed by him when he refers to himself and her as "two raging fires" (2.1.139).

Shakespeare's vision for Katherine reveals a heroine who mirrors the strength and dominance of masculinity and is unfavored for doing so unabashedly. Yet, she cannot be ignored, for she embodies the temper of a man with the conventional beauty of a woman, a most rare sight among sixteenth-century society. Strength is demonstrated through violence in Petruchio's eyes, so he cannot recognize Katherine's form of strength because she is covert. According to Louis Althusser, people who do not question their realities live and operate in it as if this is just the way things work; they freely adopt this reality as their free choice. Katherine's power lies in navigating the labyrinth of the patriarchy to her advantage by subverting it by asserting her own will; she skips questioning her reality and goes straight to dismantling oppressive social norms with her willfulness. Althusser speaks of "obviousness" and how this idea is a marker of a being that is fully conditioned by the various apparatuses of ideology (698). He ends with by emphasizing that "what [. . .] seems to take place outside ideology [. . .] in reality takes place in ideology" (700). Althusser investigates representational versus material ideology, specifically how the various perspectives do not align with actual lived reality. He is concerned with society's preoccupation with desiring to see their world represented through tangible realities and blames priests and despots for imposing these ideals to the unquestioning

masses in order to maintain their positions of power (694). Althusser adds that taking control of society's imagination creates a sense of alienation in the individual mind that becomes the bedrock for oppression; he also clarifies that it is "not the system of real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live" (695). When it comes to the manifestation of a material ideology, Althusser finds that, ultimately, "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material" (695). People who do not question their realities live and operate in it as if this is just the way things work; they freely adopt this reality as their free choice. Althusser speaks of "obviousness" and how this idea is a marker of a being that is fully conditioned by the various apparatuses of ideology (698). He ends with by emphasizing that "what [. . .] seems to take place outside ideology [. . .] in reality takes place in ideology. What really takes place in ideology seems therefore to take place outside it" (700).

Thus, Petruchio is duped by his mirror image: an equally empowered, yet covertly manipulative, Katherine. If he was less self-absorbed, it would be possible for him to suspect a formally unwilling Katherine as a deceitful performer. Cixous would agree that Katherine lacks shame and modesty because women like Katherine are "stormy, and that which is ours breaks loose from us without our fearing any debilitation [. . .] we never hold back our thoughts" (878). Shakespeare endows Katherine with this disregard for public opinion to introduce progressive ideological ideas through the form of masterful entertainment within the safety of artistic performance. Endowing Katherine with power to subvert Petruchio is a proto-feminist move that puts Petruchio in a vulnerable tunnel vision position; feminism is foreign to him, so he cannot possibly identify its subtle yet insidious attacks against because it is not a part of his gender-classified set of skills. In others words, he cannot recognize what he does not already

know about himself first.

### **Patriarchal Affirmation of Female Power**

Petruchio's recognition of Katherine's power occurs moments prior to meeting her. Hortensio affirms her agency and authority when he states, "She'll sooner prove a soldier" (2.1.152). This utterance is an important acknowledgement because it emphasizes Petruchio's ignorance, proving how his tunnel vision underestimates Katherine's masculine prowess that is traditionally denied culturally to her sex. He minimizes the degree of seriousness involved in forcing her to be his wife by referring to their first meeting as a "chat" (2.1.170), and in doing so deprives himself of an awareness that perhaps Katherine is more intelligent than he presumes even when she demonstrates a quick wit. He makes the mistake of underestimating her, and it is this arrogance that will lead him to be unknowingly tamed. When Petruchio attempts to assert his dominance over her by cutting her name to "Kate" (2.1.190) without her permission, he not only symbolically reduces her; he also attempts to seem friendly, hence also using the word "chat." Her reply oozes with indignation and self-actualized power: "Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing. / They call me Katherine that do talk of me" (2.1.191-2). This exchange immediately establishes a war between the two in which words are weapons.

As Petruchio embarks on his journey to tame Katherine, he is so aggressive while simultaneously teaching Katherine how to manipulate him for her survival's sake. His first attempt is to simply lie as a means of wooing until she caves. He claims to find her "passing gentle [. . .] pleasant, gamesome, passing / courteous" (2.1. 236-40). In this game, she constantly counters his wit with her own: "A witty mother; witless else her son" (2.1.279) because she is aware of his ploy. Then, when he realizes verbal flattery is not proving successful, he resorts to profanity: "with my tongue in your tail?" (*Shr.* 2.1.231). The remainder of their exchange is a

sparring match in which Katherine proves her resolve to remain in power; with her, Petruchio has met his equal. She ventures to defy her father in Petruchio's presence, demonstrating that not even her own father is capable of placating her; she is incapable of being subdued.

It is important to notice the absence of the wedding ceremony because it implies a lack of consent on Katherine's behalf. Rather, Shakespeare keeps the audience in the dark and proceeds to open Act 3 with a hyper-focus on Bianca's wooing session. In doing so, the wedding is omitted because it is all an act in the dark anyway. This ceremony is not Katherine's ultimate performance of submission; it is a prelude to her real performance of surrender. There is no evidence to support an abrupt transition from defiance to compliance in this gap; the sole reason Katherine shows up to her own wedding is because she is forced. Consequently, Katherine is ashamed to be in the position of waiting for Petruchio, who mocks her forced attendance and her dignity by arriving late and in ridiculous garb. Everything goes against the fiber of her being; however, her compromised compliance is essential to her ultimate objective. Therefore, to include a wedding ceremony scene would be uncharacteristic of Katherine based upon the evidence thus far. The only way the plot may proceed to unfold neatly is to completely eliminate the crucial moment of Katherine's verbalized consent; there is an inferential understanding that when Katherine utters "*I do* [This is mine]," it is purely out of force, a necessary performance needed for survival in her hostile world.

To further support Katherine's need to play along, it is necessary to look at Petruchio's close associates. Upon meeting Petruchio, his servant, Grumio, is also introduced. When Petruchio forces him to knock on Hortensio's door, Grumio hollers, "Help, mistress, help! My master is mad" (1.2.91). Then, in Act 3.2, just after the absent ceremony, Biondello refers to Petruchio as "A monster / a very monster in apparel and not like a Christian / footboy or a

gentleman's lackey" (3.2.68-70). As a member of the patriarchal brotherhood, Biondello's comments tarnish Petruchio's credibility as a man of honor and justify Katherine's rejection of Petruchio. Then, just before Petruchio enters after allegedly wedding Katherine, Biondello recites a short poem holding Petruchio in low esteem: "A horse and a man / Is more than one, / And yet not many" (3.2.81-5). This poem excerpt implies that Biondello does not support Petruchio as a real man because he fails to live up to a gentleman's code ascribed to men in sixteenth-century England. He is not following the rules of manhood. Foyster states that "the underlying insecurity that some men felt is revealed by their need to seek continually the approval of their peers" (45).

Biondello's disapproval of Petruchio emphasizes the contours of Katherine's power over Petruchio. Furthermore, this commentary performed by men is important because only men are seen as credible at this time, so one is able to confide in Biondello's testimony. Moreover, Grumio knows Petruchio better than anyone since he is exposed to the raw nature of his character daily. This places him in an empathetic position with Katherine, whether he consciously recognizes it or not. Only a man with something to gain, like a spineless Baptista, would still approve of a man like Petruchio even after he humiliated Katherine at the front steps of God's house. Since Baptista cannot humiliate Katherine as a means of controlling her, Petruchio does it publicly to teach Katherine a lesson: she is his property and will endure his cruelties without protestation on her behalf. This is how Petruchio attempts to tame her.

### **The Power in Being Underestimated**

Nonetheless, Katherine's new reality sets upon her, and so she commences in her own taming game. At first, her weapon of choice is charm; when Petruchio is hasty about departing immediately following their marriage ceremony, all his comrades attempt to change his mind.

When Petruchio remains unswayed, Katherine beckons, “Let me entreat you” (3.2.204).

However, since Petruchio is not truly in love with her, Katherine fails; he remains the one in control. Katherine, therefore, has no choice but to overtly assert herself in her willfulness to maintain what dignity and self-sovereignty she has left. Her rebuttal is “Nay, then, / Do what thou canst, I will not go today, / No, nor tomorrow, not till I please myself. / The door is open, sir. There lies your way” (3.2.14-6). Naturally, Petruchio undermines her subjectivity by publicly and forcefully imposing his will upon her:

I will be master of what is mine own  
 She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,  
 My household stuff, my field, my barn  
 My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything.  
 And here she stands, touch her whoever dare. (3.2.235-9)

These are all items belonging to Petruchio, and Katherine is simply another item to own. He publicly brands Katherine as a piece of property, an object without consent, and then proceeds to gaslight her by telling her to “Fear not, sweet wench, they shall not touch thee, / Kate. / I’ll buckler thee against a million” (3.2.244-6). It is obvious that the only one she needs protection from is Petruchio. The Act 3 ends with the absence of Katherine’s consent to be taken away from home, a kidnapping, essentially. She would need to be suffering from Stockholm syndrome to believe her final submission is authentic.

As Katherine begins to settle into her new surroundings as Petruchio’s captive, she observes his performance of hyper-masculinity. In doing so, he is unconsciously conveying that a hyper-gender performance is what he believes to be truly effective. He acts out towards his servants with unnecessary brusqueness as a typical way to establish dominance with Katherine. When she is not moved, he resorts to torture by starving her in an attempt to weaken her formidable resolve. Though she may be suffering physically, Katherine is keen on the purpose of

Petruchio's tactic: "And that which spites me more than all these wants, / He does it under the name of perfect love" (4.3.11-2). Therefore, Katherine has no choice but to utilize the power of words in this mental warfare to soften the blow; as Petruchio batters his servant, she refers to him as "husband" (4.1.168) for the first time since they wed and succeeds in calming him some. Petruchio's response is to admit that, together, they "are choleric" (4.1.174), reinforcing the illegitimacy of their union. His madness is justified on the grounds that he is a man, whereas her madness is a response to being held hostage. His madness is sadistic because her sturdy resistance compels him to resort to calculated evil in order to feed his starving ego since she will not nourish his need to keep his manhood intact. The degree of gaslighting done unto Katherine is most apparent in the lie Petruchio believes: "That all is done in revered care of her" (4.1.204).

Eventually, Katherine learns her enemy and makes necessary adjustments in her plan of attack. In order to survive and live the day to return to her father's house, Katherine must feed Petruchio's ego but not before cursing him and her oppressors: "Sorrow on thee, and all the pack of you / That triumph thus upon my misery" (4.3.33-4), a clue that nods to the audience in dramatic irony. These men underestimate her capacity for cleverness, but the audience knows Petruchio's blind ego will not anticipate her power to tame him without he being aware of it. Though she may curse, she has no choice but to resort to begging; however, she is validated by Hortensio who points the finger at Petruchio and states, "Signior Petruchio, fie, you are to blame" (4.3.50). Nonetheless, Petruchio presses on, starving Katherine of material riches that she most desires as another strategic move in this game. Again, she does not fully submit; instead, she carefully asserts her agency by disagreeing with Petruchio's belittling of the garments he ordered for her. Ever the reinforcer on the opposite side of the aisle, Hortensio affirms Katherine's authenticity as a powerful force not to be contained in his response to Petruchio, who

dictates to her, “When you are gentle, you shall have one too, / And not till then. Hortensio creates dramatic irony when he shares an aside with the audience: “That will not be in haste” (4.3.75-7). Hortensio is in cahoots with the audience who knows Katherine’s conviction is immovable. Further evidence of her self-preservation is reinforced when she takes a firm stand in the belly of the beast:

Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak,  
 And speak I will. I am no child, no babe.  
 Your betters have endured me say my mind,  
 And if you cannot, best you stop your ears.  
 My tongue will tell the anger of my heart,  
 Or else my heart, concealing it, will break,  
 And, rather than it shall, I will be free  
 Even to the uttermost, as I please, in words. (4.3.78-85)

Indeed, Katherine ends up using agreeable words as a reverse tactic to freedom with help from Hortensio.

Upon embarking on their way back to Baptista’s house for Bianca’s wedding, Petruchio refers to the sun as the moon. As if he had not yet proven his dementedness, he reaches again for blatant insanity as a child-like way of asserting his dominance. Katherine reacts instinctively and speaks truth: “The moon? The sun! It is not moonlight now” (4.5.4). When Petruchio counters, he is teaching her that he can be won over with lies. As a result, Kathrine must temporarily surrender her linguistic dominance by agreeing with the lunatic. The only to keep moving forward is to accommodate his behavior to an equally odd extent, so she must perform submission. Hortensio aids her in her next best move and implores, “Say as he says, or we shall never go” (4.5.13). Therefore, she takes his advice and makes a linguistically intelligent move by one-upping Petruchio while simultaneously affirming his ego. When Petruchio says, “I say it is the moon,” a wiser Katherine replies with, “I know it is the moon” (4.5.18-9). The juxtaposition of his “I say” to her “I know” illustrates her cunning and triumph in words. Petruchio does not

realize the cleverness of Katherine's plan and how he is falling victim to his own game. She is still "free [. . .] in words" (4.3. 84-5); Shakespeare has posited a compromise for women: speak freely, yet act/perform submission. This is where a facet of freedom and power lie for women within the walls of patriarchal institutions.

Arriving in Padua represents Katherine's return her truth; however, she must keep playing the game long enough to say a while. The first word she speaks in Act 5.1 is "Husband" (5.1.145) as she denies Petruchio a command to kiss because she is "ashamed to kiss" him in public (5.1.150). Petruchio, powerless to achieve his desire, threatens to turn back home; naturally, Katherine forcibly kisses him, reaffirming her need to fake submission to get her way. As she readies for her coup de grâce, Katherine's plan to publicly tame Petruchio begins when they are seated at table with other married couples, including Bianca and Lucentio and the Widow and Hortensio. They are unaware of their part in her plan. She capitalizes on the opportunity to weave the Widow into her symphony of seduction and conquering of Petruchio. When the Widow speaks her mind in a manner socially unbecoming to women in the company of men, their husbands' egos are aroused and, therefore, primed for manipulation. They egg on their wives: "To her, Kate! To her, widow!" (5.2.35-6). All three women exit and when a bet is made between the men as to whose wife will obey their beckoning of them, only Katherine rejoins them.

At this point, Katherine's obedience is believed to be inauthentic and only a product of force. This also discredits the truth of her words in her final speech. Each time that Katherine is taken against her will by Petruchio, the scene ends without any agreeable behavior, without a hint that perhaps she is ambivalent towards her captor. On the contrary, each time she re-enters an act or scene, it is always with some relation to disagreement. This supports the idea that

Katherine returns to the table in disagreement, and since Petruchio puts her on the spot, she must perform like her life depends on it, resorting to chastising her fellow species to fulfill her goal of taming the supposed tamer.

Ultimately, Katherine remains intact despite Petruchio's attempt to fragment her by cutting her name to "Kate" because Shakespeare keeps her name as "Katherine" until the end, the last clue of her preservation of character. McEachern notes that:

Pioneering feminist forays into Shakespeare's canon [. . .] discovered in Shakespeare an apparent commitment to the portrayal of liberated female characters, strong in voice and action. Shakespeare here becomes a proto-feminist, testifying either to the Renaissance's general cultural emancipation of women, or to Shakespeare's own ahistorical transcendent genius, his freedom from his culture's assumptions. (269-270)

Shakespeare knew that the key to success was innovation, so it was necessary to step out of the bounds of tradition and reflect an ever-evolving society during his lifetime. The result is a dynamic exchange between creator and consumer that relies on its interconnectivity to flow with the tides of change; the creator is inspired by humanity, and humanity enacts new ideologies presented in a representation of reality on stage. This mirror exchange is the source of progress in the liberation of women as second-class citizens during the sixteenth century.

## CHAPTER TWO: ZEFFIRELLI'S TWENTIETH-CENTURY FILM ADAPTATION

### Historical Context of 1960s America

During the 1960s, the United States was experiencing a second wave of feminism that piggy-backed off the Civil Rights Movement. At this time, the National Organization for Women was born and was responsible for disrupting accepted gender norms and “set groundbreaking social and legal changes” for women (Khan Academy), such as the passing of Title VII in 1964, which prohibits employers from discriminating on the basis of gender. Records show that when the 1964 Civil Rights Act was amended to include the word “sex, [. . .] the reading of the [. . .] amendment in Congress was met by laughter,” notes Cynthia Deitch (183). Deitch adds that “the founding of the National Organization for Women [. . .] is one of the events often cited as marking the emergence of the second wave of American feminism [and] “Title VII became one of the movement’s most important vehicles for expanding women’s rights under the law” (199). However, giving women rights by law did not prevent them from continuing to experience discrimination and violence. To make a statement, radical feminist group New York Radical Women staged a protest in 1968 during the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City, New Jersey, where they “bring attention to the contest’s—and society’s—exploitation of women. The protestors crowned a sheep Miss America and tossed instruments of women’s oppression, including high-heeled shoes, curlers, girdles, and bras, into a ‘freedom trash can’” (Khan Academy).

Posited in between the passing of the Equal Rights Act of 1966 and the protest at the Miss America Pageant of 1968 is Franco Zeffirelli’s 1967 Shakespearean film adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*. In a 1985 television interview, Zeffirelli explains how he became involved in this project and the choosing of Hollywood power couple Richard Burton and Elizabeth

Taylor as his star duo. When the interviewer asks him about this new style of film aesthetic, the interview cites critics who named this new style “art-directed movie” (The Seventh Art), implying a sneer from Zeffirelli’s contemporaries at breaking traditional Shakespearean aesthetics. Yet, Zeffirelli defends his artistic direction because he claims that “people can’t stand anymore backlit gray black productions [. . .]they want splendor [. . .]they want beautiful women to be beautiful women” (The Seventh Art 6:00-7:00). Zeffirelli claims that those who oppose his vision would rather he “create ugly looking pictures” (3:32), that these same “people” want “moral beauty” because of this “new cult of aesthetics” (3:35-4:10). By “moral beauty,” Zeffirelli implicates his disdain for those who rally against the exploitation of women as sex objects. Moreover, Zeffirelli remains defensive and eventually contradicts himself when he implicates the source of his inspiration as deriving from what people actually want, “the real richness of mankind not fantasy,” and people who “make us proud of being human” (6:51-7:10). This is a contradiction because a) it is unclear if women are included as “mankind” here, b) a film is a fantasy, and c) it is unclear who “us” is and why they are proud of violence against women.

When it comes to the purporting ideological constructions, Colin MacCabe expounds on the development of realism in film, specifically how ideologically influenced choices limit or destroy the possibilities of a film’s potential. MacCabe is interested in tracing the inception of realism and how it became a dominant format in the twentieth century. He observes that it was not until about the 1960s that people began to “question the very validity of the representational relation” on film (180). This is due to the hyper-realism that come from extracting the “essence of the object” and inflating it with various cinematic techniques (181). Furthermore, he argues that it is the discourse of a particular text that heavily influences the final

production of a film and how these discourses politicize a film.

Therefore, though Zeffirelli does not explicitly state that he adapted *Shrew* for the male gaze, it is clear that the “people” (The Seventh Art 6:12) who crave Zeffirelli’s aesthetic and look to his film as a source of self-pride are lustful men. Laura Mulvey posits that “the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film” (437) with their social and subjective influences affecting how masculine and feminine representation is presented to the masses through repeating images. The exploitation of women in film caters to a symbolic order in twentieth-century society in which “woman then stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other [so that] man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning” (439). In other words, in twentieth-century film, woman serves as pleasurable visual commodity for men rather than an agent of her own self-actualization. The Hollywood machine had successfully “coded the erotic into the language of the dominant patriarchal order” unchallenged (439). Mulvey uses psychoanalytic theory, the patriarchal tool women can use “as a political weapon, to demonstrate the way the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film form” (438). She specifically notes how the “paradox of phallocentrism is all its manifestations [. . .] depends on the image of the castrated woman to give order and meaning to its world” (438). She adds that “the function of woman in forming the patriarchal unconscious is twofold: she firstly symbolises [sic] the castration threat by her real lack of a penis and secondly thereby raises her child into the symbolic [. . .] she can exist only in relation to castration and cannot transcend it” (438). She, therefore, emphasizes the urgency of “examining the patriarchy with the tools it provides, of which psychoanalysis is not the only but an important one” (439).

Furthermore, Mulvey focuses on how “as an advanced representation system, the cinema poses questions about the ways the unconscious (formed by the dominant order) structures ways of seeing and pleasure in looking” (439). This is tied in with how with the invention of the 16mm camera art now became merged with capitalism and “the magic of Hollywood [. . .] arose [. . .] from its skilled and satisfying manipulation of visual pleasure” and how “[u]nchallenged, mainstream film coded the erotic into the language of the dominant patriarchal order” (439). Mulvey uses Lacan’s “mirror phase” to explain how a person may use a performer’s role as mirror and “imagine [the reflected image to be] more complete, more perfect than they experience in their own body” (441). For example, “[a]s the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look onto that of his life, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist [. . .] coincides with the active power of the erotic look” (443).

Similarly, Catherine Belsey focuses on deconstructing ideology and focuses on Althusser’s watershed essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” which discusses how literature shapes to the ideological state and behavior of society (657). Belsey deduces that “ideology is not simply a set of illusions [. . .] but a system of representations (discourses, images, myths) concerning the real situations in which people live” (657), yet ideology does not fully represent society in a realistic way. Rather, ideology depicts an ideal that is then acted out in real life. In other words, performance is a simplified representation of real life that cannot accurately capture its nuances and contradictions. An audience, nonetheless, internalizes these representations and attempts to mimic this behavior in the real world successfully, yet conflict arises because one fails to take into account the unconscious contradictions that lie in the gap of recognizing an image and oneself in the image. As per Belsey, ideology hides in everything that is “‘obvious’”; yet, it also “appear[s] to provide answers to questions which in reality it evades,

and masquerad[es] as coherence in the interests of the social relations generated by and necessary to the reproduction of the existing mode of production” (658).

Furthermore, Belsey asserts that language grants a person agency to establish themselves as a subject. She connects this idea to Lacan’s “mirror-phase” in which an individual’s “unconscious is a constant source of potential disruption of the symbolic order” (661). Belsey continues by connecting language and the unconscious: “In offering the child the possibility of formulating its desires the symbolic order also betrays them, since it cannot by definition formulate those elements of desire which remain unconscious” (661). Belsey further stipulates that there is a tendency to project oneself onto “non-contradictory subject-positions” (661) which do not align with real-life social relationships. Moreover, Belsey argues that the “classic realist text instills itself in the space between fact and illusion through the presentation of a simulated reality which is plausible but *not real*. In this lies its power as myth” (672).

With a license to exploit, Zeffirelli directed his film to satisfy the scopophilia of men who were struggling with their masculinity after WWII, according to James W. Chesebro and Koji Fuse. In their article, “The Development of a Perceived Masculinity Scale,” both authors claim that “[f]rom a communication perspective, masculinity is the study of the discourses and the effects of the discourses generated by men, unifying men, and revealing the identity and characteristics men ascribe to themselves, others, and their environment” (203), and nothing united manly, post-war veterans like violence and sex.

For men who suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, returning to civilian life becomes challenging when their virility can only be validated by engaging in violence. If engaging in physical violence was not available, men could live vicariously their sadistic fantasies through film. Chesebro and Fuse cite Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. who, in the mid-1950s,

believed the American man was experiencing a “crisis in masculinity”:

‘What has happened to the American male? For a long time, he seemed utterly confident in his manhood, sure of his masculine role in society, easy and definite in his sense of sexual identity.... Today, however, men are more and more conscious of maleness, not as a fact, but as a problem. The ways in which American males affirm their masculinity are uncertain and obscure. There are multiple signs, indeed, that something has gone wrong with the American male's conception of himself.’ (qtd. in Chesebro and Fuse 204)

To reaffirm themselves, men seek “pleasure in looking” (Mulvey 440) at violent images. To add to the pleasure principle, women and sex are mixed in with the violence to create the ultimate viewing experience. Mulvey adds that “the mass of mainstream film, and the conventions within which it has consciously evolved, portray a hermetically sealed world which unwinds magically, indifferent to the presence of the audience, producing for them a sense of separation and playing their voyeuristic fantasy” (440). This explains why the violence against Katherine is so overt in this film: Burton produced it, and Zeffirelli directed it. Because of the distance between the world of the viewer and of the film, men are able to experience a sort of catharsis that comes from vicarious violence against women without real-world consequences, a type of “media rape,” which Despoina Mantziari coins as a “term used [. . .] to signify the exploitive uses of various media technologies and platforms [. . .] to perform (mostly) woman’s victimisation [sic]” (397-98).

However, experiencing repeated images of violence against women has the potential to influence real-world behavior; therefore, violence against women in films is a danger to women at large. Mantziari stakes that “the concept of media rape illuminates the intricate relations between technology, [. . .] and misogyny as the sadistic scope regime of cinema is transposed from the realm” of imagination to reality (398). This is supported by a 1950s-attitude that viewed domestic violence as therapy. Eliana Dockterman, a writer for *Time* magazine, informs that in

post-war times, men became alcoholics who would not only beat their wives but would perform martial rape to cope with their anxieties. “Doctors,” Dockterman writes, “believed that a man beating his wife under these circumstances was actually a *good* [emphasis in original] thing. They called it ‘violent temporary therapy’” (par. 6). Gloria Steinem observes that “torture and murder [are] presented as sexually titillating [. . .] there is no equal power or mutuality” granted to women in twentieth-century film (231). Rather than being granted agency, a woman is “exposed for an unseen but powerful viewer” (231) who is complicit to her violence through is consumption of the film fantasy.

### **Film Analysis**

Therefore, it is clear that Zeffirelli’s interpretation of Shakespeare’s original written text undermines the progressive mindset for women’s rights during the twentieth-century and that of Shakespeare porto-feminist agenda in the sixteenth-century. While Shakespeare’s written text lends itself to claims of an empowered and clever Katherine who ends up taming Petruchio, Zeffirelli’s film grossly denies Katherine any real agency; furthermore, she is humiliated without standing up for herself as would be characteristic of her. For instance, when Petruchio attempts to woo Katherine upon first meeting her, she tries to move away from him but he pulls her down onto his lap (Zeffirelli 39:01). Another instance occurs when Katherine believes she has escaped Petruchio; when he pops out of a floor door, she sits on it only to have him forcefully push up underneath her anyway (41:13). The implications of rape in this scene are manifested through these grossly forceful actions. In this way, Zeffirelli stays true to a sixteenth-century disregard for women’s rights.

Still, Zeffirelli sought to cater to an audience who agreed with his idea of beauty and wanted “beautiful women to be beautiful” (The Seventh Art 6:40). Mulvey would agree that the

exploitation of a beautiful woman like Taylor “functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium” (442). Of course, Katherine must be goddess-like in order to justify Petruchio’s willingness to take on the challenge of taming her despite the pushback he receives from her; yet, she must also please the audience, one of which caters to the male gaze and that experiences purgation while watching playful violence against women. By choosing the 1960s American sex symbol, Elizabeth Taylor, to play the part of Katherine, Zeffirelli conveys the notion that not even beautiful women are exempt from physical violence if they dare to step out of the bounds circumscribed to them by a patriarchal society.

While Zeffirelli’s perspective and artistic direction certainly plays a major role in the portrayal of Katherine and Petruchio, Taylor and Burton’s actual tumultuous relationship heavily tips the scale towards believing that Katherine’s submission to Petruchio is an act of her free will. Sara Kettler informs how Burton admitted, “‘Elizabeth and I lived on the edge of an exciting volcano [. . .]. It was marvelous. But it could be murder’” (qtd. in Kettler, par. 16). As the film opens, a chaotic festival atmosphere pervades throughout Padua as a festival of some sort is taking place. Attention pans to Bianca, who is blonde and dressed in a light-blue dress and wears a white veil over her face. She is cast according to the common trope of blonde representing good and brunette—Katherine—representing evil. In this way, Zeffirelli layers the social norms of the sixteenth century onto the twentieth, proving that these tropes persist through the generations and are difficult to overcome like gender expectations.

Shortly after Bianca’s scene, Baptista is seen rejecting potential suitors who have come to ask for Bianca’s hand. Then, Katherine bursts through the second-floor window and willfully calls out Baptista with great disdain and an almost chastising tone in front of the men. At this

point, Shakespeare's progressive Katherine comes through on screen. Rather than refer to herself as a "stale" (*Shr.* 1.1.68), as is true to the original text, Zeffirelli has Katherine use "whore" instead (Zeffirelli 11:09). According to *A Shakespeare Glossary* by C.T. Onions (264), the sixteenth-century meaning of the word "stale" aligned with being a "decoy," "laughing stock," and/or "harlot" (264). Yet, "stale" would not have the same impact on a twentieth-century audience, so Katherine is endowed with more tenacity with her unapologetic use of the "whore."

To complement Katherine's astuteness, allowing the viewer to see Katherine's watchful eye peek through a hole in the wooden shutters illuminates her heightened level of awareness. Juxtaposing Katherine's open window scene—in which she publicly attempts to assert agency over her life—with the eye peeping behind a closed window reveals how Katherine secretly observes the actions of men closely so that it benefits her own subjectivity. Her willfulness is further supported by the fact that Baptista and the other men are literally beneath her; she literally looks down on them from the second story balcony (Zeffirelli 11:16). Her restrained disgust with the whole marriage transaction shows in the forceful way she speaks and livid eyes she makes. This moment is crucial to her final submission because it demonstrates that Katherine is aware of her second-class status; she cannot be overtly aggressive; she must be subtle in her taming of Petruchio.

Therefore, it is worth noting how Zeffirelli portrays Petruchio's journey to genuinely conquer Katherine. When Petruchio first tells Hortensio that he intends to "thrive and wive it wealthily in Padua" (Zeffirelli 18:12), Hortensio is very eager to let Petruchio into his home to proposition and tempt him into marrying Katherine because it means that Bianca is free to marry. As Petruchio enters the house, a little dog follows him in, a minor clue at how Katherine, a wild bitch in need of taming—according to general public opinion—, will be following behind him

later (18:22). Then, flourish plays as if in celebration of some great feat (18:24). Then, as Petruchio makes his way to Baptista's house, the same flourish is played as Petruchio is followed by a liege of supporters, all men. This musical score emphasizes an atmosphere of heroic proportions and adds to the stereotypical tone of conquest; Petruchio reassures himself that he has faced and conquered worse than Katherine. Zeffirelli places importance on Petruchio's bravery to take on such a challenge in attempting to marry Katherine. The scene that follows is of a willing Baptista welcoming Petruchio into his home with Baptista gazing at Petruchio with dotage as Petruchio speaks with confidence about his conquest.

What follows in Act 2.1 is outright violence when Petruchio first catches a glimpse of a distressed Katherine in the utility room. Whereas in the written text, Katherine and Petruchio's meeting is a tense battle of wits, in the Zeffirelli's version it is simply a scene of a man chasing a woman. This reinforces the expectation of manliness through the domination of a helpless woman and alludes to the spike in domestic violence during this era. However, the Katherine and Petruchio maintain a bodily civility at first sight because there is a subtle yet definite instant physical attraction between the two. This mutual recognition in their eyes foreshadows Katherine's eventual submission to Petruchio (Zeffirelli 37:42-8). This version of *Shrew* suggests that female desire and sexual arousal is ignited by violence. A supporter of the women's movement would likely view this as a regressive tactic to maintain the status quo that women are second-class citizens undeserving of dignity and respect. Moreover, their warfare is one of the mind, yet as she tries to escape his reach, Katherine is sexually harassed by Petruchio as he grabs her forcefully and sits her on his lap after she has knocked him off the stool he sits on (Zeffirelli 38:56-39:02). This is the first of many violations that he will commit upon her, and she will continue overlook. Though she does slap his arms as she tries to free herself from his grasp, they

are more superficial than violent. Her instant attraction to him despite his barbaric ways is a by-product of Burton and Taylor's marriage in which, according to Daphne Merkin, they "enjoyed a kind of edgy passion, consisting of huge rows in which they hurled insults at each other [. . .] followed by makeup sex" (2), a result likely inspired by actual events in their relationship and a probably factor Zeffirelli utilized in his direction of her eventual submission to Petruchio. This relationship helps the viewer understand how much of Burton and Taylor's marriage problems benefitted them with on-screen acting and improv in depicting these characters as dysfunctional.

Katherine's unsuccessful attempt to ward off Petruchio continues on in the form of an all-out chase throughout the house. She manages to escape Petruchio and throws herself onto a pile of goose down in a barn, laughing with triumphant glee at her success; to emphasize her satisfaction with herself, she bites into an apple, a biblical allusion that highlights her satisfaction with herself (Zeffirelli 40:40-6). However, her ecstasy is short-lived. When she is sitting on a cellar door, and he pushes up to open it were her on top anyway is representative of rape; the door, with Katherine on it, symbolizes the barrier of no consent, yet Petruchio forces his way through and chuckles smugly as he does (41:13). Rather than show real terror, Katherine moans as if she is experiencing sexual pleasure in her half-hearted attempts to escape Petruchio's grasp. This scene implies and reinforces the patriarchal belief that when a woman says "no," she really means "yes," that a woman wants to be conquered by a man because passion—confused for violence—indicates true romance in the future.

Steinem posits that "untangling sex from aggression—from violence or the threat of it—is going to take a very long time. And the process is going to be greatly resisted as a challenge to the very heart of male dominance and male centrality" (233). Directing Burton to

play up the mischievousness of Petruchio's character as he proceeds with his mission of violently taming Katherine conditions an audience of both genders to unquestionable correlate violence as an inextricable part of courtship. Again, Steinem writes, "This confusion of sex with violence [. . . creates] the inability to empathize with the 'opposite sex' [. . . women] have been so deprived of self-respect or positive human contact that [they expect] pain or loss of freedom as the price of any intimacy or attention at all" (232). Katherine's freedom is officially lost when Petruchio emerges out of a bedroom with her by his side, holding her arm up behind her back in forced submission. She grunts a little, but shows no visible signs of struggle. Oddly enough, during this procession, Katherine gives Petruchio a resigned smile and does not protest (Zeffirelli 50:25). Her resignation seems authentic, as if she is depleted due to climaxing after rough sex. However, there is no transition scene logically showing Katherine give in to Petruchio; he simply locks her in a room in her own house and walks away. The violation is compounded by the fact that Petruchio has invaded Katherine's sanctuary—her home—and turned it into her prison, much the the rapist who breaks into a woman's home, rapes her, then leaves without remorse. The only difference here is that Katherine is portrayed as accepting of and happy with her own rape as she walks out of her room of her own volition in her wedding gown.

Something about this violent form of wooing speaks to the emergence of rape culture in the 1960s. For ages, young girls believed that if a boy struck or teased her, it meant that he liked her. Mantziari concludes that "[s]ince the 1970s, in particular, feminist scholars have been critiquing the gender discrimination [contributing to rape culture] that is deeply ingrained within dominant structures of pleasurable looking in pictorial art, photography, cinema and other media" (408). Film theorist Colin MacCabe gives credit to realist critic André Bazin, who posited that the "realist" cinematographic style "'is any system of expression, any narrative

procedure which tends to make more reality appear on the screen' [. . .] It measures the extent to which the essence of the object represented is grasped" (180-1). Zeffirelli knew he had to please both male and female audiences, so he concocted a film that allowed manly men to identify with the protagonist's take-charge persona. Yet, women were to keep believing that violence against them is justified—even flattering—in the name of courtship and romance. All this direction is done with the male gaze as the creator. Mantizari adds that “media practices have transformed the vicarious sadism of cinematic scopophilia into an active form of violation” (408).

Additionally, Mulvey posits that “the man controls the film fantasy and also emerges as the representative power in a further sense: as the bearer of the look of the spectator, transferring it behind the screen to neutralise [sic] the extradiegetic tendencies represented by woman as spectacle” (443). Zeffirelli directs the process leading to Katherine and Petruchio's union as dysfunctional and necessarily violent to maintain the patriarchal institutions that seek to disrupt the efforts of second-wave feminists and perpetuate the myth that women enjoy violence in romance.

This myth is then reinforced when a willing Katherine emerges from a locked room all done up for her wedding; it is not clear what transpired while she remained prisoner behind that door that convinced her to go through with the wedding. She walks out of that room looking sullen yet regal with a lush green wedding gown; she smiles slightly as she relishes in the positive attention she is receiving for a change. As Katherine walks among all the wedding guests, she seems to take pleasure in the material splendor of the celebration, gazing lovingly at the food on the tables right before walking out to the church (Zeffirelli 56:47). Additionally, being that Katherine has already been established as proud, it difficult to believe that she would be willing to marry Petruchio, but if marrying Petruchio means that she would gain material

riches and positive attention, she may find all this worth it, even after he humiliates her by showing-up late to the church and making her wait with the crowd. Then, Katherine furiously marches herself to the altar regardless (1:01:44). This is the moment of no return: In the film, she does this of her own volition. This is not the case in the written text; Shakespeare simply omits a compliant Katherine. Whereas, in the film, Katherine's ambivalence leans more toward willing compliance. The fact that she does this with anger further diminishes Katherine's integrity as she looks ridiculous storming off into the church. Zeffirelli's direction, therefore, grossly robs Katherine of her dignity.

Another unbelievable gap occurs after the wedding ceremony is over. A crowd surrounds Katherine and Petruchio; they smother Katherine as she disappears under all the bodies, while Petruchio is elevated into the air, high-fiving everyone around him. As Katherine's face disappears, she looks horrified, as if she cannot breathe, eyes wide with terror (1:06:54). Yet, the scene ends and is followed by the reception where a smiling Katherine pleasantly entertains her guests with her smile. This choice in direction creates a contradiction that affirms Katherine's genuine and voluntary submission to Petruchio since she wears the look of authentic delight as she scans the decorated tables with a smile on her face at their celebratory dinner. However, just when it seems as if Katherine has complied with the expectations of her role as wife, Petruchio carries her away against her will, with Katherine yelling for her father who does nothing to help her but wear a look of concern on his face (1:10:39). This kidnapping serves as a gap filler to move the plot forward and reinforces Petruchio's primitive, caveman-like ways.

Then, when they are on their way to her father's house, the moon and sun exchange depicts a Katherine that is being slowly but effectively controlled. The looks she gives Petruchio show a developing endearment that begins to look like Stockholm syndrome. She smiles at him

with joy in her eyes (Zeffirelli 1:42:06). Those watchful eyes are now clouded with delusion. A heavier concentration of that glassy-eyed look is observed when they finally arrive at Bianca's wedding; when Petruchio demands a kiss, Katherine chuckles and tries to pull away but is soft in her willingness to be withheld from mingling in the crowd (1:48:00-08). In this moment, Katherine demonstrates her public subservience: The transformation to a willing woman is complete when in her final speech, romantic and moving violin music plays as she looks upon Petruchio with conviction in her eyes, voice, and body; she bows to him when she says "my hand is ready" (1:57:50-60).

Ultimately, Zeffirelli's twentieth-century film adaptation of *Shrew* was clearly produced and directed with men's sexual appetites in mind. Because the women's movement of the 1960s played the role of David against the Goliath—minus the victory—of the patriarchy, women could not sway a male-dominated, profit-oriented, exploitation-centered Hollywood to portray female characters as equal to the power of men. Instead, "[t]he idea that aggression is a 'normal' part of male sexuality, and that female passivity or need for male aggression is a 'normal' part of female sexuality, are part of the male-dominant culture we live in" (Steinem 232). Zeffirelli is complicit in perpetuating this "normalcy" since "[v]ery few male authors and filmmakers have been able to escape society's message of what a man should do, much less imagine their way into the identity of a woman" (235) because "the degradation of women of all races is still thought to be normal" (241). As long as the male gaze craves sexual violence against women, this myth that women seek to be violently courted and are aroused by sexually violent men will continue. The pleasure men derive from a "scopophilic [. . .] pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight" (Mulvey 441). Zeffirelli's directorial decisions to emphasize overt violence against Katherine was influenced by vicarious needs of his male

audience. Therefore, Zeffirelli's film version of Shakespeare's text stands as a political rejection of the demands for equality of the women's movement, reifies sixteenth-century social norms for women in the twentieth-century and stands in contrast to Shakespeare's secret proto-feminist agenda.

## CONCLUSION

When comparing both texts, it is necessary to closely investigate Shakespeare's original work while keeping in mind that his motives were fueled by more than just creativity. He sought to capture the transitory nature of the major cultural shifts in his time, while also setting new trends through his art. It is likely that Shakespeare sympathized with the oppression experienced by women, especially at a time when the most powerful monarch in the world was an unmarried woman. It is well-known that Shakespeare favored Queen Elizabeth I and was inspired by her meld of the feminine and masculine to rule like a king. In essence, though the term "feminist" remains anachronistic in Elizabeth's England, the idea remains viable. Shakespeare proves that "the woman's part, and the man's, are hardly essential and stable categories of identity but contestable and changeable social constructs" (McEachern 271). The Bard's power lies in his capturing the complexities and potentialities of the human experience—especially that of multi-dimensional women— and representing them in a way that fully engages a curious audience that will mimic these controversial new ideologies in their own private lives, affecting the wave of sociocultural dynamics. With emboldened female characters like Katherine to inspire them, women were free to take agency over their own lived experiences. Thus, Shakespeare contributed to the groundwork for women's liberation in later movements for women's rights.

The same is not so for Zeffirelli. His film direction works against the progress of the women's rights movement that was at its peak during the 1960s. It is ironic that Zeffirelli directed his film four-hundred years later, yet the film's treatment of women is depicted most archaically. It is as if Shakespeare and Zeffirelli would have been more in sync with the time if they swapped eras of lived experience. This is because Zeffirelli was not interested in

progressive politics like Shakespeare; he wanted to satisfy the male gaze that was/is responsible for the exploitation of women through violence. Rather than recognize that the women's movement was working tirelessly to eradicate the stifling housewife stereotype and contribute to its cause through the power of mass media, Zeffirelli worked to preserve the status quo. By limiting the audience to the perpetuation of gender-role stereotypes, Zeffirelli fails to further the advancement of gender equality, which would be expected from a twentieth-century text compared to a sixteenth-century one. Zeffirelli could have chosen to use the tremendous power of film and its insidious ability to program human behavior and perceptions to advance the liberation of both men and women from dangerous stereotypes that stifle personal growth and expanded awareness in humanity at large. The reinforcement of archaic gender stereotypes becomes more pronounced when an individual repeatedly views films of this nature, especially with the advent of instant-access cable programming. The ability to re-watch films like these inhibits the average person from realizing that they are being conditioned to perpetuate the social constructs regarding fixed gender norms.

Overall, the lesson is that great care is needed in the process of creating art for the masses. There is a distinct separation from intended message and subjective perception. Though art has no rules governing its purpose, its power to shape and reshape values, morals, and behavior lies in the heart of its creator. Ultimately, the disparities between Shakespeare's original text and Zeffirelli's film adaptation demonstrate the difference between innovative and complacent art, respectively, and innovation is the reason why we still study Shakespeare today.

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