



BELL SHAKESPEARE'S

THE TAMING OF THE

SHREW

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE DIRECTED BY DES JAMES

TEACHER'S KIT

THE BELL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

Launched in 1990, The Bell Shakespeare Company is a dynamic, Australian theatre company with a broad mandate to educate and entertain the public. The Company strives to present – at the highest possible standard – the works of William Shakespeare, and, from time to time, other classics.

The Bell Shakespeare Company is Australia's only national touring Shakespeare theatre company. We are committed to taking our productions and education programmes to audiences in capital cities, regional and rural centres across Australia. We are also committed to the development and training of actors and an ongoing examination of the role of theatre in the life of the community. We believe that great theatre is a source of spiritual enrichment, wisdom and pleasure.

BELL ON-LINE

The Bell Shakespeare Company's website is useful, relevant and entertaining. **www.bellshakespeare.com.au** is the place to have your say about us and to come for informational needs.

It is simple to use and easily defined. Our website comprises sections relating to our education programmes and initiatives. We have also got interviews for you to listen to, trailers of shows to watch, cast biographies, backstage information and history. We encourage educators and students to enter our DIALOGUE zone where you'll find message boards and TALKS. And at POLL, you get to give us your feedback via questions we pose. There's our FUN pages filled with trivia and facts and files quizzes. For teachers, there are specific areas to help you bring the vitality of Shakespeare to students.

**BELL SHAKESPEARE'S
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

Director	Des James
Designer	Mark Thompson
Lighting Designer	Brett Graham
Composer	Drew Crawford
Assistant Director	John Trutwin

CAST

Baptista	James Hagan
Katherina	Heidi Arena
Bianca	Nicole Winkler
Petruchio	Matt Passmore
Grumio	Julia Davis
Lucentio	Tim Richards
Tranio	John Trutwin
Gremio	Edwin Hodgeman
Hortensio	Stephen Pease

Stage Manager	Fritha Truscott
Technician	Andrew Tindal-Davies
Head Mechanist	Bryte Cameron
Head Electrician	David Mansfield
Costume Supervisor	Roger Tait

This production of The Bell Shakespeare Company first premiered Thursday 6 June 2002 at Glen Street Theatre, Sydney and will tour NSW, NT, WA, TAS, VIC and QLD.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
DIRECTOR'S THOUGHTS By Des James	5
SYNOPSIS	7
DETAILED SCENE BY SCENE SUMMARY	9
LESSON ONE <i>THE TAMING</i> By Neville Harrison	17
LESSON TWO <i>THERAPY OR BRAINWASHING?</i> By Neville Harrison	29
<i>GENDER, GENDER</i> By Clarence Dany	30
LESSON THREE <i>THE TWO WOOING PLOTS</i> By Neville Harrison	36
<i>METAMORPHOSIS</i> By Clarence Dany	39
LESSON FOUR <i>COMMEDIA ELEMENTS IN THE SHREW</i> By Clarence Dany	43
RINGS AND THINGS – DESIGN THOUGHTS By Mark Thompson	52
DESIGN IMAGES <i>SET</i>	54
<i>COSTUME</i>	55

CONTRIBUTORS TO THESE NOTES

Neville Harrison was formerly an English and Drama teacher at Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School in Castlecove, Sydney. He has been contributing to The Bell Shakespeare Company's Teachers' Notes for some years.

Clarence Sophie Dany is a freelance actor, director, and writer. She teaches acting, directing, and commedia for the NIDA Open Programme in Sydney, and has run Shakespeare workshops and been an assistant-director for The Bell Shakespeare Company.

Nell Hourn is Education Officer for The Bell Shakespeare Company. She conducts interactive Shakespeare workshops for teachers and students all over Australia.

DIRECTOR'S THOUGHTS

By Des James

The Taming Of The Shrew is an interesting example of Shakespeare's early writing. It reflects his youthful enthusiasm for comedy and desire to entertain a theatre audience. His rising star was attached to the success of an emerging professional theatre which at the time needed the patronage of the Lord Chamberlain and later Queen Elizabeth in order to protect his theatre from its many detractors and to give his profession an official imprimatur and guarantee against closure by sometimes hostile political enemies. But above all, businesses like Shakespeare's theatre needed paying customers and successful seasons, and to this end the formative playwright appears to have committed himself to the delivery of popular and exciting entertainments.

Things haven't changed that much. A successful show today still depends on engaging an audience in ideas and material that reflect contemporary issues and popular themes. It is difficult for us to judge how an Elizabethan audience would have reacted to a production of *The Shrew* but I would hazard a guess that Shakespeare's audience would have demanded something familiar and provocative to keep them engaged and entertained. And what better subject to stir the humour of his audience than a battle between the sexes. *The Taming Of The Shrew* is "popular" entertainment in its truest sense. The challenge presented to male culture of that time by Shakespeare's central character Katherina usually reflected the archetype of the 'shrewish wife' and post marriage mythology. Katherina's pre-nuptial behaviour presented audiences with an unusual theatrical challenge.

The notion of a rebellious and fiercely independent single woman was presumably highly provocative, unlikely, and therefore the catalyst for much hilarity. In a world where women were traded for financial considerations, often regarded as burdens and in reality, had little political and economic power, Shakespeare's comic take on the rituals of courtship, love, and marriage may have caused a stir. Of course this situation is unthinkable today. Or is it?

The greatest challenge of presenting *The Shrew* today is tied up with a reaction to its perceived sexual politics. From a contemporary director's point of view it is problematic to second guess what Shakespeare's real political position was. I can only respond to what has been passed down to us. In my experience his creations are surprisingly well populated by powerful, independent intelligent women who are often forced to face up to unpalatable choices. This is where my interests intersect with those of Shakespeare. The presentation of a strong,

intelligent, and independent Katherina is vital to this production. I have endeavoured to keep

this debate about the representation of women in the world in which we live by presenting accessible and vibrant entertainment which not only brings Shakespeare's delightful text and comic inventions to life, but at the same time revisits critical ideological paradoxes faced by contemporary audiences.

Bold and bright, *The Shrew's* energetic and robust humour is based on Shakespeare's observations of Italian Commedia. Its style, archetypal characters, and comic situations are given their full measure and mirth, albeit with a slightly modern twist. And let's not forget Shakespeare's surprising and challenging conclusion. To my way of thinking *The Taming Of The Shrew* is relevant for anyone who has ever fallen in love, and managed to survive it.

Bell Shakespeare's touring production employs nine actors who play multiple roles. This flexibility, versatility, innovation and imagination are key aspects of our rehearsal process and performance. There is a rich musical tradition in The Bell Shakespeare Company, as indeed there is in Shakespeare's plays, and this production is no exception.

In keeping with Bell Shakespeare's commitment to presenting modern productions of Shakespeare's plays *The Taming Of The Shrew*, in a design sense, could be located in any up-market Australian resort town. Our Padua is wealthy, ostentatious, pretentious and somewhat tacky. The Italianate piazzas of Padua reflect the trend today to recreate (often quite badly) a rich but relaxed Mediterranean ambiance.

In contrast Petruchio's world resembles the alternative retreat of a struggling artist with that sense of creative squalor which sometimes accompanies this particular lifestyle. Here lies a socio-cultural tension between these two worlds. In dramatic terms, this serves to amplify the conflicts at the heart of *The Taming Of The Shrew*.

SYNOPSIS

The Taming Of The Shrew is set in Padua, near Verona and is the story of a strong-willed young woman whose father, Baptista, is determined that she will be betrothed before her sweet-tempered, beautiful younger sister.

Shakespeare includes a prelude - or Induction - to the play proper, though it is rarely performed. In this we see a drunken tinker, Christopher Sly, dressed up as a gracious lord as an elaborate practical joke by the real lord of a manor. When the tinker wakes from his stupor, he finds himself transformed and the real lord's servants fuss over and pamper him, and then seat him to watch visiting actors perform the play of *The Taming Of The Shrew*.

Lucentio, the son of a wealthy merchant is studying in Padua, attended by his servant, Tranio, when he haply sights Baptista's younger daughter, Bianca, and falls readily in love. Lucentio decides the best way to win her is to be near her, so he disguises himself as a teacher called Cambio, and gains work as her Latin tutor. Tranio must necessarily take his master's place in Padua to convey their business, so he dons the rich garments of Lucentio.

However, Lucentio has several rivals for Bianca's love: Hortensio, and a rich, old man, Gremio. Hortensio also thinks to disguise himself as Bianca's tutor - her music teacher, Litio - to win her attention and love.

But Hortensio is met by his friend Petruchio who hears of Bianca's shrewish, elder sister, Katherina, and determines to marry her - against every objection around him. He seeks out Baptista and asks for her hand, meets Katherina, seems to stun her into assent and thereby wins her hand in marriage.

Petruchio is every bit as witty, sharp, obstinate, and shrewish by return to Katherina and everyone declares they are both mad and 'madly mated'. Petruchio's plan is very deliberate: to give the obstinate Katherina a taste of her own medicine. He abandons the wedding feast, taking her with him to his own house, where he proclaims his love for her, and then deprives her of food and sleep and eloquently out-wills her at every turn.

Gremio and Hortensio soon drop out of the contest for Bianca's hand and Lucentio, disguised as Cambio, is doing well but needs the financial guarantee of his absent father for the coming marriage. Tranio, still posing as Lucentio, gains the help of an elderly foreign stranger who in turn disguises himself as Lucentio's father, Vincentio, in order to expedite the required guarantee.

But Katherina and Petruchio, en route back to Baptista's house, meet the *real* Vincentio who has come to Padua to visit his son. They innocently bring him to the family home where Tranio, and the man posing as Vincentio, are forced to admit they are imposters. The real Lucentio and Bianca enter happily having just been married, and the plot of disguises is unravelled.

At the wedding feast it is Katherina, 'the shrew', who is transformed into a gentle and acquiescent wife, while Bianca and Hortensio's new wife who are petulant and difficult. In the final speeches, it is clear that Petruchio has succeeded in taming his shrew and that she is happy to be tamed.

SCENE BY SCENE SUMMARY

Induction

The play begins with an 'Induction' or prologue to the play proper, set in a country Inn.

A drunken tinker, Christopher Sly, is removed from an ale house for refusing to pay his bill. He is immediately discovered by a country lord just returned from hunting. For an elaborate practical joke, the lord orders that the unconscious Sly be taken upstairs to bed and dressed and arrayed as an aristocrat with servants, fineries and delicious food all about him, so that when he awakes he might not believe the scene before him.

A band of players enter to stay at the Inn and the lord orders them to play that night before 'the other lord' – Christopher Sly. He also orders his page to dress as Sly's dutiful lady wife, to be there at his bedside as he wakes, and to care for and provide his every wish and need.

The lord is assured that all will play their parts well in deceiving Sly of his true identity. Indeed, when Sly awakes he is astonished by his surroundings and remembers well that he is just a humble tinker who loves ale. But those appointed to serve him convince him that 'For these fifteen years, you have been in a dream or when you waked, so waked as if you slept' and content with ale, and wife, and rich comforts he settles down to watch the play presented by the travelling players, *The Taming Of The Shrew*.

Act 1 Scene 1

Lucentio, a university student from Pisa has come to Padua with his servant, Tranio, and is determined to study philosophy in this fair city. As they have not yet met anybody native to the town, they stand back discreetly and watch the scene of Baptista, his daughters Katherina and Bianca, and the latter's suitors arguing over her hand in marriage. Baptista informs the assembly that his younger daughter, Bianca, will not be available for marriage until his elder daughter Katherina is married. But Katherina's fiery temper deters both the suitors Gremio and Hortensio from any thought of wooing her to marriage.

Baptista requests that the suitors meanwhile find music and poetry tutors to instruct his daughters so that they may be productively occupied. He exits to confer with Bianca, leaving Katherina behind.

Hortensio and Gremio decide with alacrity to find a husband for Katherina, so freeing Bianca for marriage.

However, Lucentio has also fallen in love with Bianca from his covert position on the side. He waxes lyrical over her virtue, and he and Tranio decide the best way to win her is to be near her. So the two swap garments and Lucentio is thus disguised as a schoolmaster to Bianca, and Tranio as Lucentio himself in order to take upon his master's necessary duties in Padua.

When another servant, Biondella enters, Lucentio explains their disguises with the story he has killed a man in town and Tranio is dressed as a decoy so he, Lucentio, can escape. Biondello promises to go along with it.

As they exit, the focus is drawn to Sly, 'his wife', and the real lord watching the players perform *The Shrew*. Sly wishes it were over, perhaps so that he can bed his lady, but they sit and mark the play.

Act 1 Scene 2

Petruchio from Verona enters to visit his friends in Padua, and a senseless and comedy filled scuffle ensues with his accompanying servant, Grumio at Hortensio's door. The latter parts them, and Petruchio states that as his father has died he has money and a desire to travel and find a wife.

Hortensio jokingly suggests he take on a rich shrew (with Katherina in mind) and Petruchio replies that actually wealth is his main criterion for choosing a wife – her beauty, age, and disposition are of no consequence whatever. Hortensio warns him further about Katherina, 'that she is intolerable curst', but Petruchio is determined to meet her. Grumio tells us that Petruchio is a difficult man himself, a good match for 'Katherina the curst'.

In order to woo Bianca, Hortensio says he will disguise himself as her schoolmaster, and asks Petruchio to present him with recommendation to Baptista.

As Lucentio, disguised as the tutor Cambio, and Gremio enter, Petruchio's party stand aside and watch the scene.

Cambio (Lucentio) has agreed to plead Gremio's wooing case to Bianca while in service as her tutor, and Gremio takes him through careful motions. Hortensio emerges and boasts that he also has found a tutor to proffer to Baptista (himself) and announces the important news that his friend Petruchio here will woo and wed 'curst Katherina'. With great bravado Petruchio conveys that whatever

challenge Katherina presents she cannot possibly present any greater than those he has already met with.

Tranio enters disguised as Lucentio and expresses his intention to woo Bianca as well, to the great dismay of Gremio and Hortensio. But all suitors are grateful to Petruchio for clearing the pathway of their suits, so they all depart for a celebratory drink together.

Act 2 Scene 1

Katherina and Bianca enter, the latter bound and tied by her sister. Katherina demands to know details of Bianca's affections for her suitors. Katherina strikes her sister. Baptista enters to find Katherina goading, and Bianca sweet and correct, but both girls depart in tears – Katherina clearly jealous of her father's affection for Bianca.

Petruchio and his party of suitors approach Baptista, and Petruchio announces his suit of Katherina. He introduces Hortensio disguised as the music tutor, Litio; Gremio proffers Lucentio disguised as Cambio, a Latin tutor; and Tranio disguised as his master, Lucentio, offers himself as yet another wooer to Bianca – but is really there to do ground work for the real Lucentio. He presents gifts of a lute and books, and Baptista accepts both his suit of Bianca and engages both tutors.

Petruchio and Baptista discuss his wooing of Katherina and the dowry terms and while Baptista is open, he is definite about one thing:

Ay, when the special thing is well obtained
That is her love for that is all in all.

Petruchio is supremely confident he can woo and win her, no matter what she dishes out to him and this, despite Hortensio's mournful entrance with his lute broken over his head by the petulant Katherina.

Petruchio announces his wooing strategy to the audience: *contrary motion*. Whatever Katherina does or says of a negative nature, he will insist it is the opposite. He will praise her no matter what she does.

Indeed when Katherina does enter he proves himself a brilliant match in rapid-fire, vitriolic, and sometimes bawdy repartee.

When Baptista, Gremio and Tranio re-enter, Katherina seems so shocked by Petruchio's display of self-confidence and eloquence that her protests to his proposal are not very convincing, and Petruchio quickly smooths them over by

saying that Katherina has agreed privately to the match, but remains cursed in company. It is then in some way agreed that they will be married on Sunday, and the happy groom departs for Venice to prepare for the wedding.

Gremio and Tranio immediately seize upon the opportunity to pursue Baptista with their marriage suits. They compete with lists of their lands and riches to offer Bianca, but finally Baptista accepts Tranio's offer as the better one, provided Tranio's father will guarantee the offer. Tranio realises that this is indeed his next problem: to find someone in Padua to pose as Lucentio's father and underwrite the marriage offer.

Act 3 Scene 1

Hortensio and Lucentio as tutors to Bianca are squabbling over time alone with her. Lucentio wins out first and while pretending to teach Latin reveals his true identity to Bianca; Hortensio takes a similar tack while ostensibly teaching her music, but Bianca is not entirely impressed with either suitor.

Bianca departs to help Katherina prepare for her wedding, and Hortensio suspects Cambio of being in love with Bianca. He is definite that if Bianca should give attention to other men, he will quit his suit immediately.

Act 3 Scene 2

It is Katherina's wedding day and all are assembled to go to church, but Petruchio has not arrived. Katherina laments that Petruchio is mad and never meant to marry her anyway and so exits weeping.

But Biondello enters with the news that Petruchio is on his way wearing the most inappropriate wedding attire, his servant also poorly fitted out, and riding on an old nag of a horse.

Upon arriving, Petruchio demands to know where his bride is, and though Baptista and the company rail at him for his tardiness and disrespectful costume, Petruchio takes control stating that it is his person she is to marry, not his clothes, and so the company depart for church.

Tranio and Lucentio are allowed a brief moment together in which the former explains his plan to find a man to pose as Lucentio's father for the necessary guarantee of the dowry; Lucentio counters that he would love to elope but is watched too closely by Litio.

Gremio returns from the church relating the hilarious story of Katherina and Petruchio's strange, mad wedding – even stating that she is a 'lamb' compared to

him. It has apparently been a travesty of a church wedding with Petruchio striking the priest, swearing liberally, and raising a toast afterwards more fitting to a bunch of rowdy sailors than to his new bride and her wedding party.

The rest of the wedding party re-enter and Petruchio astounds both bride and assembly by his news that he must forgo the wedding feast and depart without delay. Katherina entreats him to no good effect, and then refuses to leave with him. But the groom once again takes control and orders the party all forward to the bridal dinner except Katherina whom he claims as 'his goods and chattels', thus giving the company a firm warning that should anyone take her from him, he should be guilty of breaching The Commandments. He draws his sword as if surrounded by thieves and with Katherina and Grumio in tow, departs.

The assembly is astounded by what they have witnessed and all seem to agree that Petruchio and Katherina are well matched – "That being mad herself she's madly mated.'

Baptista says that Bianca and Tranio shall take the place of the bride and groom at the wedding table.

Act 4 Scene 1

Grumio has arrived at Petruchio's house ahead of his master and new mistress to make sure of preparations. Curtis, a servant, assures Grumio all is completely ready and waiting for Petruchio's arrival and then listens to Grumio's funny tale of their sorry, awkward journey from Baptista's house in which Katherina's horse overturned upon her forcing her to roll in the dirt and for which mishap, Grumio was beaten by his master.

The rest of Petruchio's household enter in readiness for his arrival, yet Petruchio suddenly enters demanding to know why no-one was there to meet them outside. Grumio offers a multitude of excuses but Petruchio demands food, welcomes Katherina, sings heartily, calls for his dog, his slippers and his cousin, Ferdinand. And without warning, beats and rails his servant for clumsiness.

Katherina begs him to have patience, but he goes further and rejects the meat as over-cooked and leads the supper-less Katherina off to her bed.

In soliloquy, Petruchio explains that his taming strategy is the same as that used by falconers to tame a falcon. He will make her abstain from food and sleep and with over attention and care, he will 'kill a wife with kindness', so curbing 'her mad and headstrong humour.'

Act 4 Scene 2

At Baptista's house, Tranio and Hortensio are spying on Bianca and Cambio and both see that Bianca indeed has affections for him. Tranio (for Lucentio's sake) makes a big performance of Bianca's inconstancy and this incites Hortensio to do the same. He is horrified to see Bianca' courting Cambio and declares that he will drop his suit immediately and marry a kind, wealthy widow who has long loved him. Lucentio is delighted to hear this news from Tranio, and Biondello informs the two that he has found an old pedant who would be useful to pose as Vincentio, Lucentio's father.

Tranio meets the old man and sets to making his plan work. He convinces the pedant that he is a forbidden alien in Padua and offers him protection at his home in exchange for a favour - to pose as one Vincentio, a wealthy merchant of Pisa and father of Lucentio.

Act 4 Scene 3

Back at Petruchio's house, Katherina is starving as she has eaten nothing for several days. Grumio teases her with various appetising dishes and then offers her nothing. But Petruchio enters with Hortensio who has apparently come to visit, bearing meat he has dressed himself. He makes her thank him before he will allow her any food but then quietly instructs Hortensio to eat it all, leaving Katherina none.

He announces he will dress her in fine array before taking her back to her father's house, but then rails and spoils the work of the haberdasher and tailor whom he has commissioned to make a hat and garments for his wife. He refuses to allow Katherina to wear the hat proclaiming it not good enough for her, despite the fact that she likes it very much; and similarly sends the tailor away in disgrace, scorning his best efforts. However, we hear him surreptitiously instruct Hortensio to make it known to the tailor that he will be paid.

Katherina must travel in her ordinary clothing, and Petruchio points out that it is the quality of the mind that makes us rich, not our appearance. When Katherina contradicts him over what time it is, he calls off the trip altogether, saying that he will not depart until she agrees it is what time he says it is.

Act 4 Scene 4

Tranio, and the pedant posing as Vincentio meet with Baptista to further marriage arrangements between Bianca and Lucentio. Baptista gives his consent but the party withdraw to discuss the finer financial details.

In a comic interlude, Biondello informs Lucentio that the priest awaits at St Luke's Church for his secret wedding to Bianca.

Act 4 Scene 5

Petruchio, Katherina, Hortensio and Grumio are journeying toward Baptista's house. Petruchio is insistent that Katherina agree with his every whim: if he says the sun is the moon or visa versa she must be compliant or else he will order the retinue home once more. To keep the journey going forward, Katherina begins to comply, and when Petruchio bids her greet an old man, in fact the real Vincentio, as 'a young, budding virgin', she does so; when he quickly changes his mind she is ready to agree with him.

Vincentio reveals to the company he is on his way to Padua to visit his son, Lucentio, whereupon Petruchio hastily informs him that they are all in fact now related by marriage as Lucentio has married Bianca, Katherina's sister.

Act 5 Scene 1

Petruchio, Katherina and Grumio presently lead him to Lucentio's door where he, the real Vincentio, and the imposter Vincentio parry over identities.

When Biondello refuses to recognise his real master Vincentio and claims the pedant as his master, confusion and tempers are rife, and Petruchio and his party stay to watch the outcome. The real Vincentio cries out over the murder of his son and calls for an officer, and is almost wrongly imprisoned himself, but with the appearance of the newly married Bianca and Lucentio, the muddle of identities begins to be sorted out.

Petruchio requests that Katherina kiss him in the street. She is at first hesitant but at last willingly kisses Petruchio in public.

Act 5 Scene 2

The final scene of the play is set at Baptista's house at the wedding breakfast of Bianca and Lucentio. Hortensio and his new wife are present as are Katherina and Petruchio. There is some hot-headed verbal sparring between the women and Bianca withdraws, a little distressed. With the women absent, Petruchio sets up a rich bet with Hortensio and Lucentio that he has the most obedient wife, no shrew at all.

Lucentio thus 'bids' Bianca to come to him, but she refuses; Hortensio 'entreats' his wife to come to him, but she refuses; Petruchio 'commands' Katherina to come to him and she enters almost immediately, asking his will. He asks her to

fetch the other women and then to speak to them on the subject of their wifely duties to their husbands. Perhaps to Petruchio's surprise but certainly to everyone else's, Katherina delivers a dissertation on the loving call and duty of wife to husband, and the duties of husband to wife by return.

Petruchio is delighted to have won the wager and to have tamed his shrew and he and Katherina happily retire to bed.

LESSON ONE

THE TAMING

by Neville Harrison

Petruchio comes

.....to wive it wealthily in Padua;
If wealthily, then happily in Padua
(Act 1 Scene 2: 74-75)

And the circumstances bid fair, for in Padua, is Katherina, the elder sister of Bianca. The latter is beset with suitors and her father Baptista is far from unaware of the commercial value of his younger daughter in the marriage market. Standing in her way, though, has been Katherina, whom custom has it, as the elder, must be married first. So when Petruchio happens along, Baptista is overjoyed and also prepared to part with ready money – a very rich dowry – to see her wed. But Katherina is a shrew.

KATHERINA, THE SHREW

What is a shrew?

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* tells us that a shrew is:

1. A scolding woman.
2. A small long-snouted mammal, like a mouse, mainly feeding on insects.

The characteristics of the “small long-snouted mammal” have been described by natural historians to include the following:

- Shrews are active, solitary, surface dwellers.
- They are voracious and suffer from lack of food very quickly.
- Dispersion of individuals is maintained by aggressive behaviour at all times.
- Fighting does not involve actual physical contact but consists of high-pitched screaming contests.

There can be little doubt that Katherina is a “scolding woman”, and even the characteristics of the small mammal apply to her. Shakespeare’s simile is more than appropriate. It is interesting that the denial of food becomes part of the taming process. Gremio, the elderly suitor to Bianca, believes that only the devil would make a suitable husband for her, as any man who would marry her would

be “married to hell”, and he further describes her as a “wildcat”. Hortensio gives Petruchio fair warning:

Her only fault, and that is faults enough,
Is that she is intolerably curst,
And shrewd, and froward, so beyond all measure
That, were my state far worse than it is,
I would not wed her for a mine of gold.
(Act 1 Scene 2: 87-91)

At Katherina’s entrance in Act 2 Scene 1, she hauls in Bianca, whose hands are bound, strikes her and, when accosted by her father, flies off aggressively after her sister. She gives her music tutor, the disguised Hortensio, an unexpected lesson on the lute by breaking it over his head. In her first meeting with Petruchio she strikes him once, and once only, for he gives her fair warning of retaliation. As we find later, Petruchio’s threat might not be the only reason for Katherina’s disinclination to do him physical harm.

But even worse than her physical aggression, is Katherina’s tongue. She is a noisy, irascible shrew, and uses her tongue more shrewishly and more effectively than her fists. She is described as “an irksome, brawling scold”, renowned in Padua for her “scolding tongue”, and Tranio, servant to another of Bianca’s suitors, Lucentio, describes how she:

Began to scold and raise up such a storm
That mortal ears might hardly endure the din
(Act 1 Scene 1: 144-145)

and he further compares the two sisters:

The one is famous for her scolding tongue
As is the other for her beauteous modesty
(Act 1 Scene 2: 231-232)

Katherina revels in verbal contests, not least with Petruchio. Their first exchange looks forward and is almost worthy of Beatrice and Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*. But the animosity is stronger here, at least on Katherina’s part.

Ultimately, of course, Katherina is “tamed” of her shrewishness, but it is significant that her freedom to give vent to anger through speech is the last liberty she surrenders. With the worst of her taming over and her testing about to begin, she can still cry out for freedom of speech:

Why sir I trust I may have leave to speak
And speak I will, I am no child, no babe
Your betters have endur'd 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.
(Act 4 Scene 3: 73-80)

Why is Katherina a shrew?

Student discussion on this question after seeing the production could be variable. Could it be that shrewishness is inherent in Katherina's nature or could it have been induced by her surroundings? What evidence do we have?

Enraged at her sister, Bianca, Katherina has this exchange with her father:

Baptista: Why now, dame whence grows this insolence?
Bianca, stand aside. Poor girl, she weeps.
Go ply thy needle; meddle not with her.
For shame, thou hilding of a devilish spirit,
Why dost thou wrong her that did ne'er wrong thee?
When did she cross thee with a bitter word?

Katherina: Her silence flouts me, and I'll be reveng'd
[She flies after Bianca]

Baptista: What is my sight? Bianca get thee in.

Katherina: What will you suffer me? Nay now I see
She is your treasure, she must have a husband,
I must dance barefoot on her wedding-day,
And for your love to her lead apes in hell.
Talk not to me, I will go sit and weep,
Till I can find occasion of revenge.
(Act 2 Scene 1: 23-36)

To dance barefoot on a younger sister's wedding day was proverbial for remaining unmarried; and leading apes into hell was proverbial for being an old maid. So Katherina sees Bianca as her father's favourite and her own marriage unimportant. She believes that her father will give her to anyone who will have her; his intention to have his elder daughter married first must be known to her.

As we know, and she no doubt does as well, he will pay generously for someone to take her off his hands and were it not for her standing in the way of Bianca's marriage, Baptista would not care whether she married or not.

But stand in Bianca's way she does, so we can assume that Baptista has tried to marry Katherina off before. It is significant that Gremio, Hortensio and Tranio (as Lucentio), all of them suitors, know of Katherina's shrewishness. When we look at those "stock characters" and their lack of individuality, we can perhaps imagine the suitors that have been presented to Katherina. Her individuality, her strength of character – be it of a positive or negative nature – could never be satisfied with the Hortensios, Lucentios, or Gremios of Padua.

Could her shrewishness be a defence mechanism?

Then there is Bianca: apparently so mild-mannered and submissive, yet she is capable of putting her tutors in their place. When her disguised rival suitors argue over whose lesson will proceed first, she is quick to decide for them:

Why gentlemen you do me double wrong
To strive for that which resteth in my choice.
I am no breeching scholar in the schools.
I'll not be tied to hours nor 'pointed times,
But learn my lessons as I please myself.
(Act 2 Scene 1: 16-20)

Perhaps Katherina is more aware of her sister's true nature than the other characters and we, the audience, are. All our eyes will be opened later in the play.

It might be possible then to make the case that Katherina has taken on a disguise, consciously or unconsciously, as a shrew because of a neglectful father, a sly sister, a parade of inappropriate suitors, and indeed a society unsuited to her strength of character and her temperament.

PETRUCHIO

What of Petruchio? Why does he marry Katherina?

Petruchio could not be clearer in stating that his motive for marrying Katherina is materialistic. He sees her as a source of wealth. Although well off already, having inherited from his deceased father, he seeks to marry:

One rich enough to be Petruchio's wife
As wealth is burden to my wooing dance –

Be she as foul as was Florentius' love,
As old as Sibyl, and as curst and shrewd
As Socrates' Xanthippe, or a worse,
She moves me not, or not removes at least
Affection's edge in me, were she as rough
As are the swelling Adriatic seas.
I come to wive it wealthily in Padua;
If wealthily, then happily in Padua.
(Act 1 Scene 2: 65-75)

When directed toward Katherina as someone who might suit his purpose, he is undeterred by the warnings of her shrewishness.

For I will board her though she chide as loud
As thunder when the clouds in autumn crack
(Act 1 Scene 2: 94-95)

But Katherina will need taming. Source of wealth she might primarily be, but wife she will also be. As wife, Katherina in her shrewishness is most unfitted; for domesticity and shrewishness together are unacceptable to Petruchio. The role of wife, certainly in his eyes, requires the orderly running of a household, and orderliness is not a strength Katherina possesses. Hints as to whether orderliness and domesticity are *all* that Petruchio looks for in a wife are not long in coming.

THE TAMING PROCESS

How does Petruchio actually set about taming Katherina? What thoughts might the students have after seeing the play?

Petruchio: I'll attend her here
And woo her with some spirit when she comes.
Say that she rail, why then I'll tell her plain
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale.
Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear
As morning roses newly wash'd with dew.
Say she be mute and will not speak a word,
Then I'll commend her volubility,
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence.
If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks,
As though she bid me stay by her a week.
If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day
When I shall ask the banns, and when be married.
But here she comes, and now, Petruchio, speak.

[Enter Katherina]

Good morrow, Kate, for that's your name, I hear.

Katherina: Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing;
They call me Katherine that do talk of me.

Petruchio: You lie, in faith, for you are call'd plain Kate,
And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst;
But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom,
Kate of Kate Hall, my super-dainty Kate,
For dainties are all Kate, and therefore, Kate,
Take this of me, Kate of my consolation,
Hearing thy mildness prais'd in every town,
Thy virtues spoke of, and thy beauty sounded,
Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs,
Myself am mov'd to woo thee for my wife.
(Act 2 Scene 1: 168-194)

It is not difficult to suspect the romantic in Petruchio from the lines 187 onward in the above passage and his desire for Katherina involve more than a need for someone to run his household.

We also see him in this speech sum up his approach to the taming process. He will have two concurrent strategies: the first will be to befuddle or bewilder her; the second will be to keep reinforcing in her mind the ideal of womanhood he believes she is capable of seeing in herself. And, of course, he knows how to deeply flatter this woman; something we can presume no-one has done before.

At their first meeting, Petruchio and Katherina indulge in vitriolic verbal exchange. Initially, these are one - or two-line insults from Katherina, evoking brief responses from Petruchio, as shown in the following passage:

Petruchio: Thou hast hit it. Come sit on me.

Katherina: Asses are made to bear, and so are you.

Petruchio: Women are made to bear and so are you.

Katherina: No such jade as you, if me you mean.

Petruchio: Alas, good Kate, I will not burden thee,
For knowing thee to be but young and light.

Katherina: Too light for such a swain as you to catch,

And yet as heavy as my weight should be.

Petruchio: Should be? Should – buzz!

Katherina: Well ta'en, and like a buzzard.

Petruchio: O slow-wing'd turtle, shall a buzzard take thee?

Katherina: Ay, for a turtle, as he takes a buzzard.

Petruchio: Come, come, you wasp; i'faith, you are too angry.

Katherina: If I be waspish, best beware my sting.

Petruchio: My remedy is then to pluck it out.

Katherina: Ay, it the fool could find where it lies.

Petruchio: Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting?
In his tail.

Katherina: In his tongue.

Petruchio: Whose tongue?

Katherina: Yours, if you talk of tails, and so farewell.

Petruchio: What with my tongue in your tail? Nay, come again,
Good Kate, I am a gentleman-

Katherina: That I'll try.
[She strikes him]

Petruchio: I swear I'll cuff you, if you strike again.
(Act 2 Scene 1: 198-218)

Gradually, Katherina's rebukes and protestations against Petruchio's claims that he will marry her begin to weaken until she says little at all. Petruchio's lines become lyrical and indeed quite beautiful speeches, and again we can sense the romantic behind the actor-strategist:

Petruchio : T'was told me you were rough, and coy, and sullen,
And now I find report a very liar;
For thou art pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous,

But slow in speech, yet sweet as springtime flowers.
Thou canst not frown, thou canst not look askance,
Nor bite the lip, as angry wenches will,
Nor hast thou the pleasure to be cross in talk;
But thou with mildness entertain'st thy wooers,
With gentle conference, soft and affable.
Why does the world report that Kate doth limp?
O slanderous world! Kate like the hazel twig
Is straight and slender, and bright as brown in hue
As hazel-nuts, and sweeter than the kernels.
O, let me see thee walk. Thou does not halt.

Katherina: Go, fool, and whom thou keep'st command.

Petruchio: Did ever Dian so become a grove
As Kate this chamber with her princely gait?
O, be thou Dian, and let her be Kate,
And then let Kate be chaste and Dian sportful.

Katherina: Where did you study all this goodly speech?

Petruchio: It is extempore, from my mother-wit.

Katherina: A witty mother! Witless else her son.

Petruchio: Am I not wise?

Katherina: Yes keep you warm.

Petruchio: Marry, so I mean, sweet Katherine, in my bed.
And therefore, setting all this chat aside,
Thus in plain terms: your father hath consented
That you shall be my wife; your dowry 'greed on;
And will you, nill you, I will marry you.
Now, Kate, I am a husband for your turn,
For by this light, whereby I see thy beauty,
Thy beauty that doth make me like thee well,
Thou must be married to no man but me;
For I am he am born to tame you, Kate,
And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate
Conformable as other household Kates.
(Act 2 Scene 1: 237-271)

There follow one or two mild protestations from Katherina, perhaps mainly for the benefit of onlookers who have arrived, but finally no reply to Petruchio's:

We will have rings, and things, and fine array,
And kiss me, Kate, we will be married O'Sunday
(Act 2 Scene 1: 324-325)

The wooing is completed, the wedding day has arrived and the taming process begins in earnest. Petruchio's behaviour now takes on aspects of the manic. In the following order, he subjects Katherina to something near mental torture and physical deprivation by:

- Delaying his arrival at the wedding.
- Arriving to be married in ludicrously inappropriate clothing.
- Cuffing the priest.
- Carrying the bride off and denying her any partaking of the wedding feast.
- Thereafter refusing her food on the pretext that it is of inferior quality.
- Lecturing her (by report) on restraint and moderation when his own behaviour has been almost insane.
- Depriving her of sleep with the excuse that the bed is not properly made.
- Denying her proper clothing to wear when visiting her father.

By taking wildly fastidious care over his wife's comfort and wellbeing, he presents her with extreme examples of how disarray prevents caring and wellbeing. By creating chaos, Petruchio perhaps aims to get Katherina to long for the ideal: a quiet domesticity and a peaceful marriage through orderliness and unity, and to prompt her to take some action to achieve it.

Each stage of the taming process involves some degree of travesty and the wedding is an obvious example of this. Petruchio parodies Katherina's unyielding lack of preparation for being a wife by his flouting of all wedding convention. At every stage it is as if Petruchio holds up a mirror and Katherina knows what the reflection should be but Petruchio's mirror gives gross distortion. He is again prompting her to desire convention or order.

It is significant, though, that the only time Katherina appears to suffer real mental anguish is when Petruchio is late in arriving for their wedding. This could be taken as concrete evidence that Katherina wants to marry him, and so it might well be argued that she falls in love during their first meeting.

An alternative theory could be that she sees Petruchio as a way of escaping her existing domestic situation. Again, the students might be asked to discuss whether this production supports either of these propositions.

The taming process has involved frantic action: a rumpus at the wedding, arguments at the feast, altercations with servants, the flinging of bedclothes, and quarrels with the tailor and haberdasher. But the mood quietens as the couple set out to visit Katherina's father. Katherina has even given up her use of angry speech. The taming might now be complete, but the testing process must now begin.

PETRUCHIO – THE FALCONER

During the taming process, in fact immediately after denying food to Katherina, Petruchio likens himself to a falconer training a bird of prey.

Thus have I politicly begun my reign,
And 'tis my hope to end successfully.
My falcon now is sharp and passing empty,
And till she stoop she must not be full-gorg'd,
For then she never looks upon her lure.
Another way I have to man my haggard,
To make her come and know her keeper's call
(Act 4 Scene 1: 175-181)

The phrase "man my haggard" means to tame my wild hawk. But the allusion is closer than at first it seems, for a falcon in training is deprived of food, and until it proves itself with obedience, it cannot be allowed to eat. Even then, it cannot consume its prey but must be fed by the falconer. Katherina, too, endures forced fasting, but is eventually permitted to eat. It is noteworthy that Petruchio himself fasts along with Katherina, so his starving her is not really the cruel action it may at first appear to be.

After training, the falcon must be tested, first with the falconer present. This stage for Katherina occurs on the road to her father's house. Here she must agree with whatever Petruchio has to say – that the sun is the moon, or that the elderly Vincentio is a "young, budding virgin".

Katherina, of course, is not stupid, so why is she willing to agree? Certainly it is to show submissiveness, but is Katherina completely browbeaten and defeated as a human being?

Or might she be playing Petruchio at his own game and showing him she is ready for a peaceful domestic life?

The real test comes, though, when the falconer is not present. In the final scene, where we find three married couples present – Petruchio and Katherina, Bianca

and Lucentio, and Hortensio and his wife – Katherina is put to a test by Petruchio, which she passes, perhaps beyond his imaginings. She not only comes to him when he “commands” her to do so – unlike the two other women who refuse, when “bidden” or “entreated” by their husbands – but she fetches the two women, and then delivers a chastisement and a call of duty to them in one of the most famous and, nowadays, most controversial speeches in the whole of Shakespeare (see Act 5 Scene 2: 137 –180).

Who has really been tamed?

The point has been made earlier that Katherina might have fallen in love with Petruchio quite early in the play or she might have seen him as a visa out of her father’s house and/or the shame of spinsterhood. She might then have been quite ready, and happy, to be tamed. There is no doubt that Petruchio appears as an attractive suitor: he is energetic, experienced and sexy, and a real individual – a far cry from the “cardboard” characters who pursue Bianca, and those we imagine might have been previously presented to Katherina.

It is quite a possible interpretation then, that in the wooing, wedding and taming, Katherina is outwardly furious as is her everyday habit anyway, but inwardly smitten. As stated earlier, her only real agony is when she believes she has been jilted. On the other hand, during the taming, Petruchio appears outwardly manic but is inwardly controlled.

His taming of Katherina is successful, but could it be that he, too, is ultimately tamed?

Let us not forget that Petruchio married for money. He might have had any woman who would enhance his purse. Yet the tenderness of the closing scenes leaves the majority of commentators with the view that Petruchio falls deeply in love with Katherina. He, too, might be tamed. He is certainly changed.

Professor Morris, in the preface to the Arden edition of the play, expresses this view. On hearing Katherina’s final speech and its concluding lines which offer “A public gesture of (personal) subservience freely and unasked”, for Petruchio only asked for a general statement. Morris goes further:

Petruchio responds to this unsolicited act of love and generosity with one of the most moving and perfect lines in the play, almost as if he is lost for words, taking refuge in action: “Why there’s a wench! Come on, and kiss me Kate.” I believe that any actor striving to represent Petruchio’s feelings at this moment in the play should show him perilously close to tears, tears of pride, and gratitude, and love.

LESSON TWO

THE TAMING – THERAPY OR BRAINWASHING?

By Neville Harrison

Shakespeare's original play disappeared from the stage for many generations. Although adaptations and abridgements were performed it has only been since the end of the 19th century that audiences have really been confronted by Katherina's closing speech. Productions since that time have treated the issues raised in a variety of ways, reflecting the variety of views of individual directors, actors and societies. Some of these views and interpretations will be approached later in this chapter.

There is little doubt as to the expectations of an English audience of Shakespeare's day. They would have accepted the subjugation of the wife to a husband's rule. Indeed such was the natural order of the universe, according to the Elizabethan world view with man one rung above woman, and King / Queen and God above them. However it would have been something of a joke in society as to how easy or difficult this belief was to practise. Thus the stock comic invention and popularity of 'the shrew' in the theatre.

St Paul's letter to the Ephesians instructs: 'Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church...' It is interesting that Shakespeare sets another play dealing with husband and wife relationships, *A Comedy Of Errors* in Ephesus, and tantalising to think that Shakespeare might well have been involved in the production of the King James' Bible.

Therapy or brainwashing? What do the students feel on this issue after seeing the play?

The answer to this question lies in the taming effect on Katherina. Is its effect that of strengthening her, of giving her control of herself and of galvanising her to behave more peacefully as woman and wife? Will her life be happier and will she feel more fulfilled?

Or has her will been broken by being brow-beaten into submission?

Or perhaps she has learned to play a game, to appear submissive but not to have changed at all?

GENDER, GENDER

by Clarence Dany

Early shrew stories go back to classical literature and there are many medieval and renaissance folk tales on the shrew-taming theme. Modern audiences, however, sometimes see the play as little else than an example of the subjugation of women. It really all depends on how one interprets the text. As most young people today are aware of issues relating to equality of the sexes, the play should easily challenge the views they already hold in one way or another.

Sexual politics has changed little and perhaps this is the reason that *The Taming Of The Shrew* has remained a much-loved and popular play over many generations, despite varying opinions. This highly contentious statement should be qualified. The play is essentially a comic celebration of the patriarchal system, with a twist. Katherina is that twist. It is because the struggles, arguments, political implications, and abuses in the relationship of Petruchio and Katherina are so recognisable today that we find them amusing.

The main plot revolves around an unruly woman of Padua, Katherina, who is tamed by marriage under the forceful guidance of Petruchio. It is this central idea that has caused much discussion in the area of sexual politics and specifically the issue of wifely submission. The play, however, has an independent life of its own. Written in a farcical, light fashion with many physical and visual gags, it works very well in the theatre and is a popular, if at times perplexing, choice of play to direct.

Productions of *The Shrew* have run the full gamut of interpretation. Early productions post WWII, were examples of rollicking farces, throwing-pies-in-the-face extravaganzas, using every acrobatic trick in the book to get a laugh. Katherina was often in love at first sight and simply playing hard to get, while Petruchio was often a swashbuckling hero. Shakespeare's poetry was a necessary sacrifice to the appeal of slapstick.

It was not until the 1960s that the text came into prominence and the Induction took on a larger life. Emotional realism became more important than the comedy. Fundamentally, though, the characters were still very much unchanged in the eyes of the audience who continued to see Katherina playacting the shrew and Petruchio as the handsome hero. Even in Trevor Nunn's 1967 production that gave claim to a feminist appraisal, it was a case of love at first sight. Productions in the 60s and 70s further explored the Induction as a proper framing device and what became evident was that too much attention to it overshadowed the human legitimacy of Katherina and Petruchio's struggle.

DIFFERENT DIRECTORS: DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

MICHAEL BOGDANOV

It was not until Michael Bogdanov took a seriously feminist look at the play in 1978, that the cruelty and oppression of women became the context for a production: "Shakespeare shows women totally abused – like animals – bartered to the highest bidder... There is no question of it, his sympathy is with women, and his purpose, to expose the cruelty of a society that allows these things to happen." Bogdanov put *The Shrew* in modern dress, 1930s Mafia-style, and played the abuse for real. Katherina was completely destroyed and humiliated. The action began in the audience with Christopher Sly coming on stage drunk, then falling asleep, followed by the play within the play which became his "supremacist's fantasy of revenge upon women". Bogdanov made his point very clear: these issues are a prevalent and a *present* problem. No love at first sight in this production. The result was a despairing and unresolved look at the systematic destruction of a woman's dignity. Most reviewers, however, still found it highly amusing and the modern context was very successfully received. In this production, Paola Dionisotti played Katherina.

BARRY KYLE

By the late 20th century, the general consensus among intellectuals was that *The Taming Of The Shrew* was a problematic and unpleasant play. In 1982, Barry Kyle, however, revisited the older models and also used Sly, this time in an Elizabethan context, for a Stratford production. Kyle comments on his choice thus: "Obviously you can't do the play unaware of the rise of feminism. The only way to answer feminist criticism is to see Katherina as a wild, wonderful, free woman who is shackled by a barbarian. The feminist mistake is to assert that she (represents) all women. She (doesn't). She finds her own particular destiny, but her solution is not everybody's." The world-within-a-world became a highly symbolic and "fantastic" world devoid of any of the Tudor realism of Sly's world. There was a great deal of slapstick and every trick imaginable so as to avoid the sticky themes of the play. Audiences found the lack of new insights unsatisfying. In this production, Sinead Cusack played Katherina.

JONATHAN MILLER

Jonathan Miller's 1987 stage production for the Royal Shakespeare Company became a BBC-TV version. Miller was contractually obliged to follow Elizabethan conventions of costumes and sets but was able to experiment with casting (John Cleese played the TV Petruchio) and interpretation. Television forces a more naturalistic playing. There was no Induction, farce was reduced to the minimum, and Katherina was seen as victim of a socio-economic situation. Katherina was

thus portrayed as an emotionally disturbed woman and Petruchio as the psychiatrist. The production's statement was that for society to function, a personal sacrifice of freedom is necessary. Miller believed *The Taming Of The Shrew* addressed more serious moral issues, a belief reflected in the production's Puritan theme, which further informed costume choices. For example, Katherina's costume went from dark clothes to light, while Bianca's from light to dark clothes. In the TV version, there was even a hymn sung at the conclusion – Psalm 128 – in which the theme of ordinance and beauty of the family is expressed in the line: "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house."

Miller used research on Elizabethan society, believing that feminism distorts Elizabethan thoughts. He removed Sly, considering it a stage device and therefore not appropriate for the small screen. Katherina finally complies with patriarchy and does not care what people think. An unashamedly conservative director, Miller believed that Katherina behaves like an unloved child, which his actress playing Katherina, Fiona Shaw, did not agree with. He had a clear case history for Katherina, from the age of three – Katherina lost her mother at a young age, perhaps giving birth to Bianca, and from childhood was "told" that she was a shrew. This title began to hold power for Katherina, the only power she had, to the point that she became completely identified by it.

GALE EDWARDS

Australian director, Gale Edwards, directed a controversial production of *The Taming Of The Shrew* for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1995. She highlights the difficulty of being female and directing this play:

A woman directing *The Taming Of The Shrew*, whoever she is, might as well get a loaded shotgun and put it against her temple, because half the critics will be disappointed and will criticise it if the view of the play is not radical and feminist because they expect that from a woman; then the other half will shoot you down in flames because you're doing a feminist, "limited" view of a play which is meant to be about the surrender of love. So you *cannot* possibly win.

Edwards, however, produced a very strong statement by making all of Katherina's submissions painful to witness. In the final speech, the actor playing Katherina, Josie Lawrence, spoke the lines "loudly, often angrily, stressing the extreme nature of what was being said, and growling ferociously when telling the other women off". The overall effect was one of confrontation with the question to Petruchio – "Is this really what you want? This speech ended the Katherina/Petruchio story line and the focus then went straight back to the Christopher Sly frame, eliminating the lines:

Why, there's a wench! Come on, and kiss me, Katherina.
(Act 5 Scene 2: 185)

In addition, Edwards added a different slant to the Sly story line, ending with an apologetic Christopher Sly hugging his wife on his knees and with Mrs Sly looking out into the distance. Melancholic music layered this ambiguous ending, which received some fairly virulent criticism from the press, such as: "to finish the play in ways that directly contradict the Bard's wishes; and all for the sake of extracting a right-on moral for the right-thinking 1990s."

DIFFERENT ACTORS: DIFFERENT KATHERINAS

PAOLA DIONISOTTI

Paola found Boganov's vision problematic. As the play was in modern dress, she found it difficult to reconcile how such an angry woman today would find herself in such a predicament. The character therefore was repressing herself by remaining in this abusive relationship, and Paola felt that the interpretation was against Shakespeare's text: "I kept wondering why I didn't just get up and go." In this interpretation her family abandons Katherina, and Petruchio is used as a ploy to get rid of her. Katherina was therefore a complete victim. By the end of the play, however, Petruchio finds himself engulfed by his own tactics: "My Kate was kneeling and I reached over to kiss his foot and he gasped, recoiled, jumped back, because somehow he's completely blown it. He's as trapped now by society as she was in the beginning... The last image was of two very lonely people."

SINEAD CUSACK

In this production, Sinead felt that Petruchio's function (played by Alun Armstrong) was to liberate Katherina from the role of "shrew" that she had encased herself in, as a protection from a brutal man's world. In preparation for the role, Sinead "pumped iron" which came in handy for the very physical stage fighting scenes, which couldn't completely avoid "savage" undertones. There was definitely a belief among reviewers that the casting was mismatched: "Locking those two up together is like pairing Mr Punch with the Bride of Lammermoor.... Miss Cusack repeatedly seems to have taken leave of her sanity and then makes lightning recoveries to her old grimacingly imperious self. The effect is more cruel than in any other version I can remember." Sinead Cusack speaks passionately about the final scene, which was played with both characters on the floor in an almost private discussion: "This so-called "submission" speech isn't a submission speech at all: it's a speech about how her spirit has been allowed to soar free.

She is not attached to him. He hasn't laid down the rules for her, she has made her own rules, and what he's managed to do is allow her to have her own vision. It *happens* that her vision coincides with his."

FIONA SHAW

Without Sly, this production highlighted Katherina's world and she became a more central figure. This brought into focus the political and domestic issues, and the actual taming itself and the implied submission. Fiona Shaw was in the 1987 Royal Shakespeare Company production and describes Katherina as a difficult character to play who first "speaks in a kind of merry-go-round language, in jangly rhymes, dum-de-dum-de-dum". She then compares this with the change in Katherina's speech rhythms at the conclusion of the play and uses this beautiful quote as example:

But now I see our lances are but straws
Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare
That seeming to be most which we indeed least are.
(Act 5 Scene 2: 190-192)

Fiona Shaw saw Katherina as a woman and not the child-like character needing "therapy" of Miller's interpretation. She saw Katherina enjoying the pleasure of behaving badly, as an act of defiance and to counter her unhappiness. She comes on stage in crisis, without any standing in Padua, and in conflict with a world ruled by merchants and arranged marriages. Fiona established Katherina as the misfit with her first entrance – flashing scissors about and hacking off handfuls of hair, and therefore turning her aggression onto herself. Interestingly, notes Fiona, Katherina is silent for a great deal of the play but uses action as her language with bangs and whacks! It is Katherina's father, not the suitors, who, for Fiona, disturbs Katherina the most in the opening scene. Katherina is "the voice of pain in the community" which is often silenced.

In Scene 2: 1, we see Katherina binding up her sister in an act of desperation which, for Fiona, clearly indicated how "out of control" Katherina had become. Here, Katherina is the one doing the binding but later in the play it will be her being bound up by someone else. The dispute between the sisters is concerning suitors and marriage and hints that this is the central issue for these women and women in this society. The symbolic physical action of bonding, in relation to this issue, is hard to miss. Marriage is on the minds of both girls. When Petruchio arrives, however, he is not a suitor that Katherina anticipates: "People have criticised my Katherina for not putting up more of a fight. I'm dying to put up a fight but look at the text – it ain't there!"

The actor playing Petruchio, in the stage version, Brian Cox, played the text straight and was thus gentle, accommodating, and dominant. This, says Fiona, completely disorients Katherina as it is probably the first time a man has *spoken to* her. He uses language to placate her and actually takes away her only power, that of being a “shrew” by calling her “the prettiest Katherina in Christendom”. She now has no identity! They are equal in this seduction scene and Fiona states that until the end Katherina seems to enjoy their banter, but Petruchio loses her respect when he makes the below-the-belt comment: “With my tongue in your tail?” Fiona followed the stage directions here by walloping him, and concludes that Katherina’s “behaviour is, ironically, a plea for dignity”. Petruchio, however, doesn’t retaliate physically at all but instead tells her he’s going to marry her and “she says nothing”.

During the wedding scene, Fiona’s Katherina was elegantly dressed which contrasted with the actor’s belief in the moment: “I don’t think Katherina should be in any way glamorous. I think she should have spit down her front. She’s beginning to appear the way people look at her. This then makes sense of Petruchio’s ‘monstrous’ outfit, which would be a mirror for Katherina to see herself in.”

Fiona comments on Petruchio’s famous “goods and chattels” speech in the presence of the people of Padua, as both a threat and a promise: “They shall not touch thee, Katherina!” In this production, Petruchio then proceeds to hand her a Bible. Fiona concludes that at the end of the play Katherina wins despite the fact her final speech is saying “I acknowledge the system, I don’t think we can change this”. Yet to say “I see... our strength is weak” in front of men is terribly strong. In this production the actor’s interpretation stood out and had a modern sensibility, perhaps against a director’s simplistic vision.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION AND EXERCISES FOR DRAMA STUDENTS

Do you agree with Michael Bogdanov’s assertion that Shakespeare’s sympathy in this play is with women? Discuss and use moments in the play to support your position.

How abusive is Katherina and Petruchio’s relationship? How much of their interaction is driven by attraction?

Why does silence become an important position for Katherina and how does this silence “read” today?

How could costumes be used to support the director’s vision of the production? Choose one of the above directors’ perspectives and design or workout costumes for the lead characters.

Take two directors' perspectives and rehearse the final scene one after the other. How different are they? What similarities are there? What does this exercise highlight about the actors' and directors' responsibilities to the text?

Does Katherina submit in her final speech? How different in meaning is the speech when spoken ironically? Is this Shakespeare's intention and does Katherina retain her dignity?

When does the struggle shift from war to love, if at all?

What are the most strikingly modern conflicts found in *The Taming Of The Shrew* and how are they still relevant to young people today?

LESSON THREE

THE WOOING PLOTS

by Neville Harrison

***The Taming Of The Shrew* contains two wooing plots, one for the hand of Katherina, the other for Bianca. A comparison of the two can be illuminating and students might be asked to compare them.**

EDUCATION

Both plots are in some way closely bound up with education. Bianca is tutored by her rival suitors and Katherina is schooled by Petruchio. Baptista would have had the tutors also educate Katherina but she makes short shrift of her music teacher by breaking the lute over Hortensio's head.

While all of the teachers have the same motive – to obtain an acceptable wife – their approaches are quite different. Hortensio and Lucentio, in disguise, hope that proximity and interaction with Bianca, while teaching their respective subjects, will win her love. We quickly appreciate their inexperience – that what they teach they have learned indoors, most likely from books, and we have difficulty differentiating one suitor from another. No doubt Bianca has the same difficulty. They are stock figures, without individuality and neither change during the play, although Bianca's refusal to come at Lucentio's behest at the play's close, might be the beginning of his education in the ways of marriage. He has entered marriage with little conception of who his bride is or what her behaviour will be.

Petruchio, by contrast, is under no illusion. His wooing is swift and he marries quickly. Katherina's "education" comes about mainly after the wedding. We cannot help thinking of Petruchio as older than Hortensio and Lucentio, probably because he is the more experienced "man of the world". He is fully aware of what he takes on in Katherina and confident of his ability to educate her to domesticity.

Why came I thither but to that intent?
Think you a little din can daunt mine ears?
Have I not in my time heard lions roar?
Have I not heard the seas, puff'd up with winds,
Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat?
Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,
And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies?
Have I not in the pitched battle heard
Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets' clang?

And do you tell me of a woman's tongue,
That gives not half so great a blow to hear
As will a chestnut in a farmer's fire?
Tush, tush, fear boys with bugs!
(Act 1 Scene 2: 197-209)

DISGUISES AND DECEPTIONS

The wooing and wedding of Bianca involves numerous complicated deceptions and disguises. Tranio takes on his master's cloak and identity, while Lucentio and Hortensio assume disguises as tutors. The ultimate "happy" resolution of Lucentio gaining Bianca, and Hortensio appearing just as happy with his second choice, an unnamed widow, leaves us in no doubt of the superficiality of these relationships which have not been tried and resolved after the working out of conflict through a test of wills. Conflict in this wooing has been between suitors and within a situation of comic confused identity.

If the suitors of Bianca took cloaks as disguises, Petruchio, and possibly Katherina, might be said to have taken on disguises of personality and character. Petruchio plays a role, he gives a performance, he changes his identity by being outwardly manic but inwardly controlled. As has been considered earlier, Katherina is outwardly shrewish but, before Petruchio arrives, might be using shrewishness, either consciously or unconsciously, to rebel. After they meet, she might soon be inwardly in love.

There are only three "flesh and blood" characters in the play: Petruchio, Katherina, and Bianca. Petruchio came to gain materially but he gains emotionally. Katherina was the shrew who might very well have become weak to gain strength. Bianca appears as the quiet submissive who becomes or perhaps always was the shrew. In the final scene, her riposte to her husband, having cost him one hundred crowns in the wager because of her disobedience, "the more fool you for laying on my duty", gives every indication that she will become an outspoken, if not really noisy, shrew.

The Taming Of The Shrew is a play within a play and something could be said about Sly, the drunken tinker who is convinced by others that he is really a lord and for whom the play is performed.

The students might like to discuss after seeing the production, if they feel there is any real significance in this Induction, or if it could "serve half a dozen other comedies by Shakespeare as well or as badly", as Harold Bloom (*The Invention of the Human*) has suggested.

However, many commentators have noted that its significance could be that it involves an imposed disguise. Sly is given the opportunity to take on a new personality, something beyond himself. Perhaps Sly prefigures Katherina in this way, for an ideal image is held up for him as it is for Katherina: for him, of the prosperous lord; for her, of the virtuous and dutiful wife. He is given the opportunity to act like a lord, if only for a joke and temporarily. But Sly, unlike Katherina, has no capacity to learn, change or develop. His field is barren and all he can say, so early in the entertainment is:

Tis a very excellent piece of work, madam lady.
Would t'were done,
(Act 1 Scene 1: 228-229)

No doubt he falls asleep soon after.

The students might perceive the begging question here: If Sly becomes a lord for a joke in the Induction, does this just set up for the audience the idea that we are watching a play that is also a joke concerning disguises and nothing more? If so, which is the joke – Katherina's disguise as a shrew, or as a model wife?

Or is Katherina really changed where Sly is not?

Is Katherina like Sly, (incapable of change) trying to live up to an impossible ideal, and so just pretending or being ironic at the end of the play?

METAMORPHOSIS

by Clarence Dany

We can explore the role of Katherina as an example of the metamorphosis necessary for an actor when creating a role in theatre or film. *The Taming Of The Shrew* has a play within a play, and within such a frame, Shakespeare is commenting on “performance” and levels of reality as much as Petruchio and Katherina’s relationship.

Though from a university town, the young and seriously immature Katherina needs to become educated, and Petruchio, an equal in passion and intelligence, arrives as her guide. The changes she undergoes are presented as an education, like the taming of a falcon, in order at the end to take free flight. Petruchio is “rough and very ready, and intent on being master”. Katherina, too, becomes a teacher for Petruchio. There is a reciprocal learning that goes beyond mere conformity as by the end of the play they remain individualised and separate from their society, yet united together.

The play is, of course, concerned with love and marriage. When Katherina surrenders to her feelings for Petruchio it is self-initiated and it is only then that she can achieve the upper hand. As Germaine Greer has put it, “The submission of a woman like Katherina is genuine and exciting because she has something to lay down, her virgin pride and individuality.” It is because Katherina is willing to consent that she becomes equal; her consent is a product that can be withdrawn, unlike the act of giving in, where there is no power left to take back. Power here is equated with self-awareness and truth to oneself.

Katherina is compared with the Roman moon goddess, Diana the huntress. Women are often compared elsewhere in literature with Io who also represented “Moon” and the white cow Goddess. Hera placed Io under the guardianship of hundred-eyed Argus Panoptes (All-Eyes), an allegory of the moon travelling under the many-eyed gaze of the starry sky. So Katherina and women in general, like the moon, change and see all. Sinead Cusack says of this: “Kate has a very strong watching brief.” Paola Dionisotti says, “Kate has eyes everywhere”, and Fiona Shaw adds, “I felt very watchful.” Perhaps this “education” Kate is undertaking is a form of female initiation from adolescence to womanhood. This is not to say only a young woman should play Kate; after all, many adults have difficulty growing out of their adolescence and taking responsibility for their actions!

Despite this, throughout the play Katherina is passionately vocal about her personal freedom:

I see a woman may be made a fool
If she had not a spirit to resist.
(Act 3 Scene 2: 216-217)

I will be free
Even to the uttermost, as I please, in words.
(Act 4 Scene 3: 79-80)

The metamorphosis that Katherina undergoes can represent the actor's experience of "getting into character". The willingness to experience a different point of view, to jump into the void, the confusion, is like the moment an actor walks on the stage and "becomes" the character. It is Katherina rather than Petruchio who represents this process because the feminine traditionally is symbolic of the forces of change; for example, the goddess as lover, mother, and destroyer. Petruchio, though, is the masculine equivalent for he, too, undergoes change, being the counter-balance of the universal phenomenon. Petruchio develops; he discovers love through participating in Katherina's transformation and gaining her consent. While struggling and fighting, the process of "becoming" is frustrated. The struggle, however, necessarily precedes the free-flow required to love, play, and create.

The taming metaphor, the breaking down of habitual behaviour, is a strong image for the performer. It is about learning control of the self, taming the wild spirit, to perform at will. Katherina learns to control hunger, her basic instincts.

During the "dress" scene, the tailor's costumes become symbols of another illusion to be broken. Again she learns to be reliant on inner resources as opposed to fashion. Katherina, the actor, must face herself. Petruchio says before the wedding:

To me she's married, not unto my clothes.
Could I repair what she will wear in me
As I can change these poor accoutrements,
T'were well for Kate and better for myself.
(Act 3 Scene 3: 92-95)

The "dress" scene echoes and dramatises this ongoing idea.

When finally Katherina goes along with Petruchio's game on their way back to Padua, they become partners in the play of their marriage/life. They learn to work together. Katherina also learns that a change in the mind leads to changes in the reality and in turn in their relationship (here transformation is associated with the imagination). By the time they reach Padua, the transformation is complete and,

of course, the journey to and from the country could be a metaphor for an inner journey, and Katherina is able to see the future. The relationship is sealed with two kisses; one is a private moment and the other a public display. Yet, this is only the beginning of a relationship and there is clearly an indication that it will remain equal and tempestuous. However, Katherina is aware that the internal life affects the external and refers to this in her final speech:

Why are our bodies soft, and weak, and smooth,
Unable to toil and trouble in the world,
But that our soft conditions and our hearts
Should well agree with our external parts?
(Act 5 Scene 2: 182-185)

Katherina's final speech is spoken as a young but matured woman. It is her first experience of love and the force with which she expresses her feelings comes as a shock to family, guests, and audiences alike. This is a woman who speaks her mind and heart not unlike she did in the beginning of the play. She is still very much Katherina, but transformed. She has also learnt to play and takes some satisfaction going along with Petruchio's game of the wager and at giving her "sisters" a hard time:

And dart not scornful glances from those eyes.
It blots thy beauty as frosts do bite the meads
Confounds thy fame as whirlwinds shake fair buds,
And in no sense is meet or amiable.
A woman mov'd is like a fountain troubled,
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty,
And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty
Will deign to sip or touch one drop of it.
(Act 5 Scene 2:154-161)

She owes nothing to anyone but herself and the husband of her choice, for after all she has chosen to love him and in doing so has chosen to take him, in a very true sense, as her husband:

Such duty as the subject owes the prince
Even such a woman oweth to her husband.
(Act 5 Scene 2: 172-173)

These are words spoken from a young woman in love, but she is aware of playing a role. Despite appearances, she turns the language to her benefit, emphasising the reciprocal nature of duty in marriage. She owes him only in exchange for "care, security and safety", remembering that contracts have been signed and that they are sole beneficiaries of each other's wills. In return he

wants “love, fair looks, and true obedience”. The distinction here is *true* obedience and not simply outright obedience. Petruchio has changed. In her speech, Katherina is telling her husband what she has learnt, that is, what she is willing to give but also what she expects in return. We are seeing a bargain prior to relations. Like Cordelia in *King Lear*, Katherina will love only according to her bond, no more, no less, and the limit of her bond will be reached whenever Petruchio’s authority ceases to love. This speech is not all that it seems.

This final portrayal of Katherina, the consenting bride and equal partner in a somewhat unequal society, mirrors contemporary life and reflects the many conflicting and contradictory issues in love, marriage, and appearances.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR ENGLISH STUDENTS

Research the socio-economic situation of Elizabethan women.

Recommended Reading: *Still Harping on Daughters, Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* by Lisa Jardine, The Harvester Press, 1983.

Is the Moon/Sun scene Act 4 Scene 5 a game, an attempt to free a fixed mind, or an act of brainwashing?

Compare Katherina’s rhythms and speeches early in the play with her final speech.

Outline Katherina’s transformation, pinpointing the lessons she has learnt.

Discuss a hypothetical relationship where no “masks” are worn and where role-play doesn’t occur within the home.

LESSON FOUR

COMMEDIA ELEMENTS IN THE TAMING OF A SHREW

by Clarence Dany

WHAT IS COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE?

Commedia is a masked performance style dating probably as far back as the fifteenth century, with its roots in Italy. The form is believed to originally stem from early Greek and Roman comedies but even this theatre was influenced by Asian theatre. The characters are fixed archetypes and women characters were introduced only in the sixteenth century and were consequently less fixed and therefore more intelligent. Commedia performances sprang up in market places and were common additions to carnivals and festivals. The fast and entertaining energy, the often-satirical subjects, the crazy plots, and its acrobatic slapstick style made it very popular, and commedia troupes travelled far and wide. They were often invited into the homes of the gentry to entertain.

The term "mask" refers to character type and not necessarily just the physical mask itself. It represents a persona, a limited range of contradicting qualities that must not be confused with the psychological realm of personality. A commedia actor must allow his whole body and being to be possessed by the mask, for the mask and the body are completely united. Therefore, the whole body acts like a frame for the mask to come to life.

COMMEDIA AND *THE SHREW*

A great deal of the play is set in the streets of Padua and in this resembles a commedia mountbank-style platform meant to represent a street, with either side representing a house. In this form, when the stage needed to be the inside of a house, a stool would be brought in from behind the curtain.

The most famous commedia characters are the *zanni* characters. They were lower-class servant types who bumbled along doing their master's bidding. The most famous *zanni* is Arlecchino because of his cheekiness and his child-like energy. He is a loyal character who will go to any lengths for his master, often disguising himself so as to employ some elaborate plot but getting entangled by his own undoing. He is always hungry and food is his priority, followed closely by sex.

Lucentio's servant, Tranio, is a *zanni* character who disguises himself as his master in order to help him in his pursuit of Bianca. He is also instrumental in finding the Pedant to impersonate Lucentio's father. Shakespeare may be using

Tranio as an analogy for Katherina's journey in the play, for Tranio becomes his own master by disguise.

It is Tranio and Lucentio we first meet after the Induction and it is here that Lucentio first sets eyes on Bianca. It is Tranio who questions his master's sudden attraction:

is it possible
That love should of a sudden take such hold
(Act 1 Scene 1: 143-144)

It is often the servants in commedia who speak the truth and highlight major themes; despite their lower status they are often smarter and more realistic than their masters.

It is also the *zanni* characters that employ *lazzi*. A *lazzo* is an insertion within a scenario that often stands on its own as a piece of comic business. They incorporated sight gags and word-plays but also situations and specific dialogues. They were opportunities for the commedia actors to throw in a bit of nonsense when the audience's attention lagged. They were the most popular and recognisable element of the commedia style. *The Taming Of The Shrew* is scattered with *lazzi*.

One example is the two strands of conversation that occurs between Lucentio and Tranio after they have seen Bianca and Katherina from afar:

Tranio: Master, you looked so longly on the maid,
Perhaps you marked not what's pith of all.

Lucentio: O yes, I saw sweet beauty in her face,
Such as the daughter of Agenor had,
That made great Jove to humble him to her hand
When with his knees he kissed the Creten strand.

Tranio: Saw you no more? Marked you not how her sister
Began to scold and raise a storm
That mortal ears might hardly endure the din?

Lucentio: Tranio, I saw her coral lips to move,
And with her breath she did perfume the air.
Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her.

Tranio: Nay, then, 'tis time to stir him from his trance.
I pray, awake, sir.
(Act 1 Scene 1: 162-175)

Had Lucentio been the *zanni* character he may have ended up with a beating for his vagueness.

The following set-up is a typical commedia scenario involving a reversal of status and an exchange of clothes, a recurring motif that Shakespeare employs in this play:

Tranio: You will be schoolmaster
 And undertake the teaching of the maid.
 That's your advice.

Lucentio: It is. May it be done?

Tranio: Not possible, for who shall bear your part
 And be in Padua here Vincentio's son,
 Keep house and ply his book, welcome his friends,
 Visit his countrymen and banquet them?

Lucentio: Basta, content thee, for I have it full.
 We have not yet been seen in any house
 Nor can we be distinguished by our faces
 For man or master. Then it follows thus.
 Thou shalt be be master, Tranio, in my stead,
 Keep house and port and servants as I should.
 I will some other be, some Florentine,
 Some Neapolitan or meaner man of Pisa.
 'Tis hatched and shall be so. Tranio, at once
 Uncase thee, take my coloured hat and cloak
 (Act 1 Scene 1: 189-204)

And like the good and loyal Arlecchino character that he is, Tranio follows this by saying with a very bad rhyme:

I am content to be Lucentio
Because so well I love Lucentio
(Act 1 Scene 1: 214)

Disguise is a constant theme in commedia and is most often used to try to woo a woman, such as in Hortensio's case:

Now shall my friend Petruchio do me grace
And offer me, disguise in sober robes,
To old Baptista as a schoolmaster

Well seen in music, to instruct Bianca,
That so I may, by this device, at last
Have leave and leisure to make love to her
And unsuspected court her by herself.
(Act 1 Scene 2: 128-134)

If we take the commedia as a comic reflection of the humanising theme of Katherina and Petruchio's relationship, it is possible to interpret Petruchio's wooing technique also as a disguise. Despite his rough-and-tumble manner, he never lays a hand on Katherina and his speech betrays a gentleness and vulnerability.

Another example of a *lazzo* is between Petruchio and his servant Grumio, another *zanni* character, at the front door of Hortensio's home:

Petruchio: Here, sirrah Grumio, knock, I say.

Grumio: Knock, sir? Whom should I knock? Is there
Any man has rebused your worship?

Petruchio: Villain, I say, knock me here soundly.

Grumio: Knock you here, sir? Why, sir, what am I, sir,
That I should knock you here, sir?

Petruchio: Villain, I say, knock me at this gate,
And rap me well or I'll knock your knave's pate.

Grumio: My master is grown quarrelsome. I should knock you first,
And then I know after who comes by the worst.
(Act 1 Scene 2: 5-14)

Petruchio ends up wringing Grumio by the ears! The misunderstanding in this scene is very like the "Lazzo of the Knocking" from Perugia 1734:

The master tells Pulcinella to knock on the door. Pulcinella asks what the door has done wrong that it must be hit.

Petruchio, in the initial stages of the play, is very like another commedia stock character, Il Capitano. This commedia character is masked, as are all the male characters, except for the lovers, and he usually has a very long nose, which depicts stupidity in commedia. Petruchio's loud, bustling and bragging temperament resembles that of Il Capitano who is well known for his

exaggerated descriptions and self-proclaimed famous feats of courage in battle by land and sea, just like the following speech by Petruchio:

Have I not in my time heard lions roar?
Have I not heard the sea, puffed up with winds,
Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat?
Have I not heard great ordnance in the field
And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies?
Have I not in a pitched battle heard
Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets' clang?
(Act 1 Scene 2: 197-203)

In the following scene, Hortensio (disguised as Litio) returns from within Baptista's house with "head broke" and says of Katherina "I think she'll sooner prove a soldier" (Act 2 Scene 1: 145). If Petruchio is playing an Il Capitano character, then Katherina, the soldier, is his perfect match. This idea is thus suggested very early in the play. It is when Katherina drops her fixed "mask" and realises its limited appeal or use, that Petruchio is able to take off his own disguise, just as if it were a mere physical mask.

Another commedia character, and stated as such in the text, is Bianca's third suitor, Gremio, a pantaloon. Pantalone is probably the central figure in commedia as he is the leading master. In *The Taming Of The Shrew* he is not a main character but is very recognisable as the lecherous and old commedia figure. Pantalone is very materialistic and foolishly believes that young women are in love with him. He is therefore easily duped. He is usually a wealthy merchant from Venice who exports treasures from the east and, interestingly, Gremio describes his home thus:

Is richly furnished with plate and gold,
Basins and ewers to lave her dainty hands;
My hangings all of Tyrian tapestry;
In ivory coffers I have stuffed my crowns;
In cypress chests my arras counterpoints,
Costly apparel, tents, and canopies,
Fine linen, Turkey cushions bossed with pearl,
Valance of Venice gold in needlework,
(Act 2 Scene 1: 348-356)

Likewise, the Pedant is a straight out description of an older-man commedia type who is usually a pedantic professional who uses a lot of academic jargon but says very little. Though not an important figure in the play, he does become embroiled in the disguised lovers' plot to play Lucentio's father, Vincentio. He is typically a fool and easily duped.

The lovers are almost always in a commedia plot and always members of the elite. They are often prevented from marriage because a father has chosen an unsuitable husband for his daughter (usually a rich old man) and they often need to engage *zanni* characters to help them. They are lightweight characters who moan and sigh continuously about their loved one and yet are very fickle. Bianca and her two other suitors are of this mode. A wonderful pay-off for all the disguises among the lovers is Bianca's lessons, and it is a typical commedia scene: there are at least six different layers of interaction. The risk of confusion is high but adds significantly to the humour. Here Lucentio is giving Bianca a lesson in Latin while Hortensio has been relegated to tuning his instrument and waiting his turn to teach:

- Lucentio: 'Hic ibat,' as I told you before; 'Simois,' I am
Lucentio; 'hic est,' son unto Vincentio of Pisa; 'Sigeia
tellus,' disguised thus to get your love; 'Priami,' is my man
Tranio; 'regia,' bearing my port; 'celsa senis,' that we
might beguile the old pantaloon.
- Hortensio: Madam, my instrument's in tune.
- Bianca: Let's hear. [*He plays.*] O fie, the treble jars.
- Lucentio: Spit in the hole, man, and tune again.
- Bianca... Now let me see if I can construe it.
'Hic ibat Simois,' I know you not; 'hic est Sigeia tellus,'
I trust you not; 'Hic steterat Priami,' take heed he hear
us not; 'regia,' presume not; 'celsa senis,' despair not.
- Hortensio: Madam, 'tis now in tune.
- Lucentio: All but the bass.
- Hortensio: The bass is right, 'tis the base knave that jars.
[Aside]
How fiery and forward our pedant is!
Now, for my life, the knave doth court my love.
Pedascule, I'll watch you better yet.
- Bianca: In time I may believe, yet I mistrust.
- Lucentio: Mistrust it not, for sure Aeacides
Was Ajax, called so from his grandfather.

Bianca: I must believe my master, else I promise you,
I should be arguing still upon that doubt.
But let it rest. Now, Litio, to you.
Good master, take it not unkindly, pray
That I have been thus pleasant with you both.

Hortensio: You may go walk and give me leave a while.
My lessons make no music in three parts.

Lucentio: Are you so formal, sir? *[Aside]* Well, I must wait
And watch withal, for but I be deceived,
Our fine musician groweth amorous.

Hortensio: Madam, before you touch the instrument
To learn the order of my fingering,
I must begin with rudiments of art,
To teach you gamut in a briefer sort,
More pleasant, pithy, and effectual
Than hath been taught by any of my trade.
And there it is in writing, fairly drawn.

Bianca: Why, I am past my gamut long ago.

Hortensio: Yet read the gamut of Hortensio.

Bianca: *[Reads]* Gamut I am, the ground of all accord,
A re, to plead Hortensio's passion;
B mi, Bianca, take him for thy lord,
C fa ut, that loves with all affection;
D sol re , one clef, two notes have I;
E la mi, show pity or I die.'
Call you this gamut? Tut, I like it not.
(Act 3 Scene 1: 31-77)

Asides are common in Shakespeare and commedia alike. In this scene, as with other commedia scenarios, characters often used direct audience address to ridicule, expose, or insult other characters, sometimes directly from the audience pit. Earlier in the play Gremio (the *zanni*) directly refers to the pantaloon in an aside:

Oh this woodcock, what an ass it is!
(Act 1 Scene 2: 157)

Throughout the play, a certain rhythm and comedy is suggested and not least of all by the constant use of slapstick. We start with the threat of violence between Petruchio and his servant Grumio at Hortensio's front door. A very physically exuberant scene between Bianca and Katherina follows this, which involves a slap. Soon we hear about Katherina's violence towards Hortensio within Baptista's house and then there is the high point during Petruchio's courting when Katherina gives him a nice slap across the face. So we see that slapstick can be between men, between women, and between the sexes. It is not limited by class either, as we see in Petruchio's home. Grumio lets out frustration on the other servants in the house as does Petruchio, and Katherina at one point. And these are simply the slapstick opportunities noted in the text! Possibilities in performance abound. Petruchio's game with the food is very like a *lazzo* called "Lazzo of Beating his Father" from Rome 1618:

*The newly-born Zannilet begins beating everyone because he is hungry.
By hitting the other, Zanni demonstrates to Zannilet why he should not
beat his father.*

Replace the Zannilet for Katherina and the Zanni for Petruchio and we have the scene, its purpose, and the style of performance.

There is another, probably unintentional, commedia reference concerning style. It is mentioned during a typical misunderstanding *lazzo* between Petruchio, Katherina, and a tailor:

Katherina: Belike you mean to make a puppet of me.
Petruchio: Why, true, he means to make a puppet of thee.
Tailor: She says your worship means to make a puppet of her.
Petrucio: O monstrous arrogance!
(Act 4 Scene 3: 103-106)

Clearly Petruchio is intentionally confusing the matter but the point here is that commedia gestures are closely related to the distinctive movement of puppets. The quick, mechanical, and fixed moves of a puppet may very well describe Katherina's physical state, early in the play, and that of many of the commedia-influenced characters. What is interesting is that Katherina makes this point when she is in fact becoming more human. This scene is also reminiscent of a *lazzo* from Venice 1660 called "Lazzo of Not This, That":

*Pantalone screams at Arlehhino to hand him his clothing, but no matter
what piece Arlehhino gives him, Pantalone shouts, "Not this, that!"*

It is interesting how the two central figures in the play grow and develop throughout in a un-commedia fashion. Commedia characters remain fixed to their type and never change. It is perhaps to highlight the changes that Katherina and Petruchio undergo, that Shakespeare has surrounded them by commedia-type characters.

It is when the real father of Lucentio arrives that utter chaos is created by the unravelling of disguises in Act 5 Scene1. This is pure commedia and an old *lazzo*, again from Rome 1618, called "Lazzo of Recognition".

Often a concluding lazzo, this involves the exaggerated and frantic scene of sudden recognition between several pairs of characters.

It is also at this point in the play that Petruchio and Katherina have finally found a loving understanding between them. They observe just how crazy the lives of fixed characters become and perhaps see what they have avoided.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

How would you describe Katherina's mask?

Discuss how a persona is like a mask, referring to characters in the play as examples.

Discover, within the text, the moments when masks are dropped. What is revealed?

What are the different ramifications when masks are dropped of the characters' own accord and when disguises are found out?

What masks are used in courting rituals today? Find media references and images.

How does role-playing still play a part in relationships?

Compare *10 Things I Hate About You*, directed by Gil Junger and starring Heath Ledger and Julia Stiles with Shakespeare's play and note the similarities and differences.

RINGS AND THINGS - DESIGN THOUGHTS

By Mark Thomson

'Set in a small, thriving town full of itinerates and passers-through, gold diggers and yuppies...'

The brief I was given by director Des James was an appealing one and led me to images of the new and often tasteless money of a town like Noosa and the contrasting, raffish, low rent aspirations of its hinterland.

The eclectic architectural styles of *new modernism*, embellished with appropriate Italianate decorations such as fake pink sandstone and heraldic lions, poorly interpreted classical architecture from grand origins applied badly to domestic use came straight to mind and are surely all fair game in satirizing the pretensions of Baptista's world.

If you examine the pictures of the set you will see where these styles and influences are realised.

This is contrasted by the more *avant garde*, *loche* life-style of Petruchio, that of the artistic Bohemian – a life that is lived fast and loose! The two worlds of these central characters are similar in style yet opposed in attitude.

However, the physical images of the two diverging worlds need to combine pretty adroitly with the physical needs of a touring production. There's the rub! Each influences the other; a designer's job is not all artistry. It is sometimes hefty pragmatism!

One of the over-arching requirements that had to be met was simply a logistical one: the show will have to be unpacked from our tour van and set-up on stage in less than 3 hours in every town to which we tour. Sometimes this means a different theatre every night. And of course this in turn dictates a need to be spare with elaborate details in the set design.

The nature of the budget also has an impact on the size and nature of the set and costumes. Generally, these factors as well as the important input of the director and the interpretation of the play all shape the design of a production.

The costume designs play an important role in determining the status and position of a character. These have been initially worked out in consultation with the director using the text as the *main* source of information as to a character's nature. These ideas are further explored with the cast which occurs early in the rehearsal period as they explore and develop the personal motivation that

underpin their characters. Each costume drawing has its origins in the text and is ultimately a distillation of many creative sources.

SET DESIGN



BAPTISTA'S HOUSE



PETRUCIO'S HOUSE

COSTUME DESIGN



KATHERINA 1



KATHERINA 2



PETRUCIO 1



PETRUCIO 2

THE BELL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

THE BELL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY GRATEFULLY APPRECIATES THE SUPPORT IT HAS RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS FOR THE EDUCATION PROGRAMME:



NATIONAL REGIONAL TOUR SPONSOR



New South Wales Education Sponsor



Actors At Work Sponsor



Actors At Work Sponsor



Actors At Work Sponsor

Victorian Actors At Work Sponsor



Tony Gilbert AM

Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC, DBE
Tim and Bryony Cox

In memory of Herta Imhof
George and Sabrina Snow

The Caledonia Foundation
The Danks Trust

EDUCATION SPONSORS



The Company is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



GOVERNMENT SPONSORS
