

## ABSTRACT

At first glance, Shakespeare's controversial battle-of-the-sexes play *The Taming of the Shrew* appears to be the story of a vile-tempered woman who is taken on as a challenge by a man who then 'tames' her into becoming a docile wife by subjecting her to a number of harsh experiences. In actual fact, however, the play is more than a simple far-fetched farce or comedy despite the undeniable fact that it is both funny as well as farcical. Although exceedingly entertaining in terms of both slapstick humour and witty repartee, the play has depths of meaning not at once apparent to the casual reader or playgoer. It chronicles a remarkable woman's spasmodic journey into the mysterious realms of her own womanhood, culminating in the discovery and final establishment of her own sexual identity.

The play must be examined closely from a number of aspects in order to provide a clear picture of Kate the shrew and Petruchio the tamer. When one wades through the enormous amount of literary criticism centred upon the relationship between the two protagonists, one is made aware of many discrepancies and differences of opinion regarding key issues pertaining to it. Is the play serious or not? Who is Katharina and why is she shrewish? Why should she suddenly accept Petruchio's mastery in the final act?

The pivotal point of the play is irrefutably Kate's final speech. This dissertation aims to uncover Kate's individual journey of self-discovery through Petruchio's eventful courtship, thereby showing that the notorious 'taming' of the shrew is actually a forceful wooing. The famous speech is shown to be made with a genuine sincerity, highlighted with touches of ironic humour that do not in

any way undermine its gravity but serve instead to accentuate the serious message behind it. Kate's shrewishness, donned as a necessity in a stifling male-dominated environment, becomes a habit with her until she encounters a man who shows her exactly what she is like and, at the same time, shows her that here at last is a worthy man whom she can safely respect and love. Once Kate realizes this, she no longer needs her shrew-like manner to act as a barrier between herself and an unacceptable life, and she throws it off as if it were a cloak. All this happens in an atmosphere of deliberate farce which is a contrastive parallel reflecting the struggle within an intelligent, emotional and altogether straightforward woman to find her personal reality in an artificial world.

In order to facilitate the uncovering of Kate's selfhood, I have examined some of the most commonly expounded views on *The Taming of the Shrew* and many different interpretations of Kate's climactic capitulation in order to offer a holistic understanding of the various possible psychological implications of the play through a detailed critical analysis of current literary opinion. I have then examined Kate from the point of view of gender – what it means to be inherently female – to shed a measure of light upon the struggles of womanhood that cause her to reject the world and retire into the refuge of shrewishness. Finally, I have detailed how Petruchio shocks her out of her furious and hopeless rebellion, and demonstrates his masculine worth for her hand and heart while simultaneously breaking the back of her shrewishness by providing her with a new realization of the desires of her true self as a woman, which eventually leads to mutual satisfaction and fulfillment.

## ABSTRAK

Jika dipandang sepintas lalu, drama Shakespeare yang bertajuk *The Taming of the Shrew* mungkin dilihat sebagai cerita ringkas yang mengisahkan seorang wanita bengis yang dikahwini oleh seorang lelaki yang menganggapnya sebagai satu cabaran. Lantas, lelaki itu pun 'menjinakkan' perempuan ini selepas menderakannya. Sebenarnya, drama ini adalah lebih daripada suatu jenaka lucu walaupun tidak boleh dinafikan bahawa ianya lucu. Walaupun menghiburkan hati dari segi adegan dan dialog, drama ini mempunyai maksud tersirat yang mungkin kurang mudah dikesani oleh penonton umum. Ia adalah kisah perjalanan jiwa seorang wanita yang unggul ke dalam dunia kewanitaannya sendiri. Ia berakhir apabila dia menemui identiti dirinya sendiri sebagai seorang wanita.

Lakonan ini mestilah diteliti dari beberapa aspek untuk mengenali Kate – iaitu wanita yang diibaratkan sebagai tikus kasturi kerana mulutnya yang celupah – dan Petruchio, 'penjinak'nya. Bila kita meneliti kritikan tentang perhubungan mereka berdua ini, kita pasti sedar bahawa ada banyak pertelingkahan dan percanggahan pendapat mengenai isu-isu utama dalam lakonan ini. Adakah lakonan ini serius ataupun lucu semata-mata? Kenapakah Katharina bersikap bengis? Kenapakah dia akur kepada Petruchio di dalam adegan terakhir?

Detik yang paling penting dalam lakonan ini adalah tatkala ucapan terakhir Kate. Disertasi ini bertujuan untuk mengikut pengembaraan peribadi Kate melalui lamaran kasar Petruchio yang penuh bercabaran, dan dengan ini

menunjukkan bahawa 'penjinakan' perempuan bengis ini adalah sebenarnya suatu lamaran penuh romantis walaupun tegas. Ucapan Kate yang masyhur itu akan didedahkan sebagai suatu ucapan yang tulus ikhlas, dengan beberapa unsur ironi yang sama sekali tidak mengancam keikhlasan ucapannya itu tetapi sebaliknya menguatkan mesejnya.

Kebengisan Kate telah diambilnya sebagai perlindungan daripada persekitaran buatan kaum lelaki yang menindasnya, tetapi ia telah menjadi suatu tabiat buruk yang merosakkan jiwanya. Petruchio telah menunjukkan Kate kehodohan sikapnya, dan pada masa yang sama, dia mendemonstrasikan kepada isterinya itu bahawa dia boleh menyayangi dan menghormatinya dengan ikhlas kerana dialah satu-satunya lelaki yang boleh dipercayainya. Apabila Kate sedar akan hal ini, dia menyingkirkan kebengisannya serta reputasi sebagai 'perempuan tikus kasturi' dengan serta merta.