

CHAPTER TWO

THE SHREW'S MYSTERIOUS METAMORPHOSIS

A Fresh Perspective to Katharina's Transformation

Hortensio : *Now, go thy ways, thou hast tamed a curst shrew.*
Lucentio : *'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tamed so.*

These two short remarks addressed to Petruchio behind his back at the close of the play offer the golden clue to his wife's demeanour during the presentation of her pivotal finale upon the submission of women in marriage. The last observation, in particular, provides a valuable key to the true nature of Kate's apparently sudden transformation and, seen in the light of the speech itself as well as the events leading up to it, hints strongly at the pathway of self-discovery that she has traversed since having met Petruchio.

In the preceding review of critical analysis on Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, I have endeavoured to establish that the entire interpretation of the play itself hinges upon this particular speech – its content, its imagery, its delivery. Petruchio declares that his wife is *not* a shrew in a company of men who wait eagerly for the chance to upstage him, and to compound his potential humiliation should the situation backfire upon him, he actually wagers a substantial amount of money upon his conviction of Kate's changed self. Not only his veracity but his pocket, his reputation, and possibly his entire worth as a man rests upon the verisimilitude of her attitude. Any dishonesty or sarcasm on Kate's part would definitely be sensed, and if one argues that men may not be very perceptive where women choose to be subtle, let us remember that two

women were present at the speech – indeed, the targets of it! – and their previously-demonstrated personal hostility towards her would certainly spur them on to publicly point out any discrepancy between word and manner. Why should they keep silent in the face of unfavourable comparison with an erstwhile shrew? Neither sisterhood nor female solidarity would excuse the threat of humiliation in front of their men.

Hortensio's remark represents the men's conviction of Petruchio's success, delivered in rueful concession of an impossible task that has not only been completed against all odds, but brought to a fruition beyond all expectation. Thus, it is logical to conclude that Kate's speech was most certainly delivered in a fashion calculated to astound the men, who were probably listening closely for any hint of mendaciousness since loss of money was confirmed by her immediate response to her husband's call and loss of pride was imminent in the successive verbal demonstration of her obedience. Not only did she astound the men, but she confounded the women, who were made conspicuous by their silence at the close of the play. In other words, she must have sounded completely sincere since only sincerity could have had such an impact on her audience. There is simply no other plausible explanation for it.

Lucentio's comment is a very simple one but it brings to our attention a most profound fact. Facing the evidence of a reformed shrew, which he cannot gainsay, he basically says to the shrew-tamer, 'No offence, mate, but it's a miracle she's allowed herself to accept you after your mad methods.' He very clearly implies that the main reason Petruchio has been successful in Kate's transformation is because Kate herself has deigned to make him her 'lord and master' and Kate herself has decided to be teachable to the lessons he has

compiled for her. Kate has *willed* her taming – that is the implication behind Lucentio's use of the word 'will' – and only the single fact that she has done so has made the difference between triumphant success and utter failure on the part of the tamer.

Indeed, the wonder of it all, as Lucentio says, is that the shrew should have let herself be tamed. And in such a manner! He wonders aloud why she should have allowed this. Therefore, the underlying mystery of this play is the WHY of Kate's sudden metamorphosis from shrew to paragon. It is clear that she has willfully succumbed to Petruchio's taming, but what reason *could she* possibly have had to do so? This is the mystery, the wonder of it all, the cause of Lucentio's puzzlement.

This is the reason why the play has been so difficult to accept when performed in a straightforward way. On the surface, there seems to be little viable explanation behind Kate's acceptance of Petruchio's headship without modifying the play itself in some major way to conform to commonly-held modern concepts of gender and power, or reading it as an archaic symbol of the patriarchal system, as we have seen in the previous chapter. This, of course, is also why *The Taming of the Shrew* has been tagged as a problem play from the moment it was first performed, and why it continues to be unless valid reasons can be found for Kate's honest delivery of her final speech. In order to preserve the accuracy of any observations or explanations made regarding the shrew's change of heart, the text itself must serve as the main source of such justification. Moreover, any psychoanalysis of human nature used to substantiate Kate's reformation must also be made in relation to it so that the validity of the analysis is securely preserved.

Kate has indeed very real and very valid reasons for accepting Petruchio's taming. However, in order to ascertain the nature of these, one must first examine the conditions of her womanhood and the foundations of her character that were responsible for the initial adoption and development of her shrewishness in the first place. The method in the shrew-tamer's madness may only be clearly discerned once these essential aspects of the shrew herself are fully understood.

EVE AND HER MATE

The Biblical Basis of Female Psychosexuality

*'So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.
And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.
Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.*

*And Adam said:
"This is now bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man."
(Genesis 2:21-23)¹*

Although Katharina's character is a unique individual in herself, she also represents Everywoman in *The Taming of The Shrew*. Her famous speech addresses issues central to womanhood, and takes into account a womanhood that must survive in a widely-adopted patriarchal gender bias which is based upon inaccurate interpretations of scriptural authority which are then commonly and wrongfully appropriated as an excuse to subject women to physical and psychological bondage. Her anger against injustice and her refusal to be cowed

¹ All biblical references are drawn from the New King James version of the Holy Bible.

by intense pressure to conform to misconceived ideals of society strike an answering chord in any intelligent woman frustrated by the shortcomings of the world she is forced to live in.

Since the Christian religion has been employed in Kate's world as the rod by which women have been unjustly subjugated by their men throughout the centuries, and since the gender roles ascribed to the sexes have their basis in scripture, then scripture itself must speak for justice and offer righteousness wherever it has been misused to justify wrongdoing. By conducting a close analysis of scriptural passages pertaining to the natural order between man and woman within the institution of marriage, a clearer picture of this issue can be accessed which will show that what was meant to be is very different from what is. It is this discrepancy that results in the patent discontent of Everywoman with Everyman, which if left without resolution, has infinite potential to warp the female soul beyond redress.

Adam's Rib or the Thorn in His Side?

The Nature of Kate as Woman

*'So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him;
male and female He created them.'
(Genesis 1:27)*

Woman was created to be a fit helpmeet and perfect companion to man, equal in intrinsic value to the male of the species; identical to him in every way while simultaneously being completely and utterly different. The use of the generic term *man* in the above extract from the creation story identifies the

species, not the male sex. This is confirmed in the concurrent use of the generic pronoun *him*, making reference to mankind as a form of creature, and not referring only to the male. Thus, man and woman were created in the image of God - woman just as much a representation of God as man himself. The differentiation of sex is then made apparent - 'male and female He created *them*' - stressing now the separate gender yet affirming the unity of a species made to replicate the nature and form of God upon earth. The following passage reinforces this point, where man and woman were told to multiply, take dominion over the earth and subdue it (Genesis 1:28). They were given responsibility over themselves and the earth itself and the freedom to live and grow in the image of God.

Woman was designed to complete man. Without woman, man is incomplete and alone. Without man, woman is unfulfilled. However, nothing is owed by one sex to the other. Despite the fact that woman first drew her life from man, the debt is completely repaid by her bearing of their children². Both sexes were meant to complement each other by using the specific strengths of each sex to provide balance to their respective weaknesses. Man has greater physical stature and superior bodily strength, as well as a more logical system of thinking which is not usually prone to emotional sway. Woman's physical weakness embodies the female requirements of emotional nurturing and physical protection from the male (which are in turn essential things for him to provide in order to satisfy his own instinctive needs) before mating and procreation can occur, which conversely then establishes the woman's body as the protective matrix for young. Emotional strength and spiritual sensitivity are stronger in the woman, thus

² Refer 1 Corinthians 11:12

enhancing reason with intuition, but making the female more susceptible to deception and delusion. Hence, a man and a woman united make a far stronger team than two men or two women. Nevertheless, despite these general distinctions between male and female, all these aspects are shared to some degree between the sexes and are not completely exclusive to one sex alone, thus demonstrating unity and similarity within sexual difference. Consider Dias's excellent explanation of this paradoxical union of like and unlike (1977:18-19):

'..The Bible expresses a fundamental psychological truth through symbolism. ... Adam and Eve, at creation, were endowed with both sets of characteristics, with the difference that in Adam's set, the masculine, as in Eve's, the feminine, traits were preponderant. At creation, therefore, man and woman stood sovereign in their own respective domains, and yet, interdependent because of their being complementaries.

Man and woman, however, are [also] in sharp contrast to one another ... Woman is tender, man is tough. Her comparative physical weakness, however, has been reinforced by a variety of feminine charms, by virtue of which she wins over the mightier man.'

Concurrently, modern scientific research has shown that a complete individual of either sex may be cloned from male bone tissue, which can provide all the necessary genetic data for such a feat, should it ever be put to the question. Thus, the choice of Adam's rib above all other bones in his body is a significant one. The rib is a bone from man's side, beneath his arm and guarding his heart – symbolizing the equality of woman, her right to be afforded protection by man, and her need to be loved and cherished by him. In the same way, the need to mate with an equal who requires physical protection and deep love from him is a strongly instinctive desire within man. Both sexes were made to be paired, with complete loyalty between the members of each pair to reinforce solidarity and security in an ideal relationship. To forge this pairing, all other loyalties – except that which was due to God – were to be forgone to a significant extent; 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined unto his wife,

and they shall become one flesh' (Genesis 2:24). The term 'one flesh' here is not merely a reference to the joining of the sexes in coitus but serves also to illustrate the necessary spiritual and mental oneness of two people in marriage.

When the fall of Man occurred, the first thing to be destroyed was the solidarity between mankind and God. The next thing to go was the solidarity between man and woman. Deceived by the serpent (representing Satan) while she was alone, the woman ate of the forbidden fruit in the hope of increasing knowledge, and then offered it to her husband, who was not deceived but consciously chose to follow her into disobedience. Questioned by God, man immediately shifted the blame to woman, who in her turn admitted that she had been deceived and blamed the serpent. Three curses were put upon the three offenders, the severity of which fit the degree of their crime. In retribution for his ultimate crime of insurrection, Satan was promised enmity between him and the woman's seed which would result in an insignificantly small wound to the child but complete annihilation for Satan himself - a foreshadowing of Christ's birth by a woman, his death by crucifixion, and his resurrection and victory over sin and death, thus effectually freeing mankind from the consequences of their disobedience.

Adam's curse involved the tainting and eventual destruction of the earth of which he was master, and the condemnation of his species to a life of toil that would end in death. His curse was more severe than that of the woman because his disobedience was calculated rather than provoked, and he did not rightfully employ the gifts of intellect that he had been given to reject the woman's offering of the forbidden fruit. He knowingly chose to share her offence rather than make

a stand against his wife in obedience and reverence to his creator. Thus, through his sin, death came to the world.

The woman's curse, because she had been foolish enough to allow herself to be seduced by smooth arguments and the promise of knowledge, effectively destroyed the sound foundation of her relationship to man and robbed her of a great portion of her share of power in the male-female relationship. Despite being much less severe than the other curses in regard to her having been deceived instead of willfully recalcitrant, it was nonetheless a devastating curse.

*'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception;
In pain you shall bring forth children;
Your desire shall be for your husband,
And he shall rule over you.'*
(Genesis 3:16)

A life of joy spoilt by sorrow, the glory of procreation tainted by pain and threatened with overpopulation, and perfect equity overturned by rule. Even the most hardboiled skeptic must admit in all honesty that this last has been indeed the universal struggle of women everywhere throughout the ages – to escape oppression at the hands of men whilst secretly yearning after the lost ideal of idyllic partnership.

However, by the blood of Christ shed on the cross and by his resurrection from death, all curses were broken over the earth. Man who was condemned to die had eternal life offered to him as a gift, and woman was given reconciliation with her mate and the power to forge an equal bond in marriage again. By the redeemer's ultimate sacrifice, the sullied relationship between man and woman is restored to perfection, covering the still-fallen nature of mankind with the righteousness of God. Through exercising his freedom of choice, which got him

into sin in the first place, Mankind was given the ability to accept his rightful nature once again by the expedient of receiving Christ as saviour.

The ideal relationship between man and woman is now explained and clarified in this light. After the apostle Paul exhorted the church to submit to one another in the fear of God regardless of age, relation or gender – a fact usually conveniently forgotten! – he went on to outline the special roles of man and woman in marriage.

*'Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.
For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is Head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body.
Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.
Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,
that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,
that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing,
but that she should be holy and without blemish.
So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies;
he who loves his wife loves himself.
For no one ever hated his own flesh,
but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.'
(Ephesians 5:22-29)*

The misunderstanding and misappropriation of the word 'head' here has been the cause of much dissension and rebellion among women since it has been used by men as a leeway to 'legitimately' suppress and oppress them. However, it must be made crystal clear at this point that headship is not lordship and was never meant to be. The word 'head' here is a term that means 'first of' or 'leader' – Christ represents the first-born of the children of God who make up the church, although he himself is the redeemer. He exemplifies all goodness and perfection, and the church should follow the example of his leadership. In the same way, the man is 'the first of' the woman – the version of her which came first and is meant to lead the way in following the ways of God.

In no way does this mean that woman is subordinate to man or that her value is less than his. What it does mean is that man is responsible for the physical and spiritual well-being of both himself and his wife, and by right of

birth is compelled to honour that responsibility. One must constantly keep in mind that Christ not only gave his life willingly for the church, but washed his disciples' dirty feet and loved them tenderly despite their initial reluctance to believe in him. He did not compel the obedience of the church by forcing the fact of his lordship down their throats but won it by virtue of proving his complete worthiness to be imitated in every possible way. Man, thus, as a fellow recipient of Christ's peerless love and redemption together with woman, must do likewise in order to be worthy of his headship of the woman and to receive in turn her trustful regard and obedience. Happy is the man whose wife deems him worthy of her trust, and happy indeed is the wife herself in that trust! Redeemed man's headship of his wife, as well as her submission to him, is ever and always subject to the lordship of Christ over them both. Alternatively, of course, both man and woman can choose to bypass marriage and find emotional fulfillment in a single life without functioning as either husband or wife.

It is undeniable that woman herself has intrinsic needs that are fulfilled by submission to a righteous man in the bond of marriage. Submission, however, is neither to be blind nor stupid. This rider is added in Ephesians - 'let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband' (Ephesians 5:33). This is not an exhortation to wives to show respect to their husbands whether they are deserving of it or not, but a wise reminder to women to ensure that they really do respect their mates. It is impossible to submit in marriage to a man whose character one does not respect, regardless of sexual compatibility or affection. Man, likewise, is only to take as wife she whom he truly loves as much as he loves himself - mere sexual desire, admiration of good looks or an appreciation of surface qualities without a real

and enduring passion for the essential person herself makes a shallow and unacceptable marriage.

Thus, it may be inferred that it is essential to the selfhood of woman that she not only loves her husband but respects him enough to receive his headship, and receives both honour and love from him as well. In another portion of scripture, husbands are told to 'dwell with [their wives] with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life' (1 Peter 3:7). 'Understanding' means realization and knowledge - as opposed to condescension and a false sense of superiority over the woman - that the physically weaker body of the equal female is to be honoured and cherished with man's strength instead of threatened by it. Thus, the headship of man and the submission of his wife is the natural order³, with equality of status, love and understanding leavening a firm and rightful definition of sexual roles. Indeed, woman's spirit - by very virtue of its womanhood - is crafted in such a way that she must be able to sincerely respect her husband's headship and have complete confidence in his physical and emotional protection of herself before she can love him truly and be satisfied in that love. Only then can she come into the fullness of her womanhood and take up her own responsibilities as helpmeet, companion, sister and friend as well as sexual partner to man and fellow worshipper of God.

³ Joel Fineman asks a thought-provoking question in his 1985 paper *The Turn of the Shrew* - 'is it possible to voice a language, whether of man or of woman, that does not speak, sooner or later, self-consciously or unconsciously, for the order and authority of man?' (page 138 in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*).

Adam's Impotent Sons

The Façade of Male Superiority in the Face of Plummeting Masculinity

Manliness and the concept of masculinity is very much an issue in *The Taming of the Shrew*. The play serves as a showcase of manliness by inviting a comparison between the commonly accepted and generally celebrated type of courtly lover to the rough and ready manners of a comparative barbarian. Typical of Shakespeare's quirky irony, the barbarian is revealed to be the true gentleman, and the courtly lover a fop, a fool and a half-man next to him. The play also provokes a comparison between stated motives and demonstrated priorities, highlighting the moral injustice of Baptista towards his daughters and how it is veiled behind verbal declarations of filial concern.

Initially, Petruchio's candid statement that he intends to marry for money deceives the audience into thinking that he is a cold-hearted gold-digger, but as the play unfolds, his obvious integrity shines in comparison with the old man who callously auctions his avowed favourite off to the highest bidder while professing fatherly adoration with every breath. Indeed, although Petruchio states the terms of the marriage contract in monetary terms, only one line in the wooing of Kate refers to her dowry, and as that wooing is the longest and most persistent one in the play, their union cannot be called a marriage of convenience with any degree of accuracy (Phialas 1966:39). If Petruchio were really as heartlessly mercenary as Baptista, he would have taken no trouble to win Kate's heart after he had won her hand. As it is, he combines the best elements of practical business and romantic purpose in his actions. Baptista, however, is concerned

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mind and expression of intelligence, Kate and Bianca are still bound by the way they are perceived in the eyes of the men in their lives. Their individual personalities are counted a poor second to their femaleness, and subject to the judgement of father and potential lovers as representations of their sexuality.

One interesting requirement of positive female sexuality in the eyes of the courtly male is comparative silence in all areas designated as male territory, ergo anything requiring a modicum of intelligence or insight. By denoting the woman who speaks out against injustice as unwomanly, a very effective male tool for silencing women has been developed to perfection. The courtly male is terrified of the woman who speaks, hence Kate is called a shrew (which animal makes an incessant chattering noise) and a scold, and pointed references are made to her sharp tongue. However, if the play is scrutinized, Kate does not speak very much at all. The point is, whenever she speaks, she speaks the unpleasant truth as she honestly sees it to be. This lack of apologetic female submission in the company of men is completely unacceptable in her world because it offers a challenge to the pseudo-man to address the issues as they are. Instead of paying attention to Kate's speech, therefore, the femininity of the speaker is conveniently called into question because of her speech.

Carroll comments significantly that 'female sexuality in Shakespeare's plays is invariably articulated as linguistic transgression' (1994:107). This is certainly the case in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Kate is a hundred times more sexual in herself than Bianca because of her courage to speak, yet she is punished for it because true female sexuality is considered unwomanly. The traditional romantic lover's puffed-up opinion of himself cannot survive in the company of a woman who constantly makes him feel like the idiot he is. He needs silence in

his woman to feel more of a man, and so Bianca's sly techniques result in a far better advantage to herself compared to Kate's honesty.

All the attributes of female mind and personality, then, are worthwhile only if they please the current definition of womanliness held by the men of power in their lives, and it is likely that no intelligent woman would endanger the favourability of the verdict by threatening to appear smarter or more savvy than her judges. The clever woman would nevertheless be able to manipulate such circumstances to her own advantage by endeavouring to project an attractive façade that effectively gains her the adoration and support of a malleable father or husband, according to her marital status. Her success as a female wholly depends upon her ability to convince her beggar that he is indeed a lord among men while establishing and maintaining secret sexual control. Thus, by creating an artificial pseudo-woman to match the real pseudo-man, a female can dominate her male, either without his knowledge indefinitely, or by keeping up appearances until the marriage contract has been finalized and there is no legal escape. By these standards, Bianca the sly conformer shines and Kate the honest rebel is thrust into the limelight of disgrace.

In other words, then, women are oppressed by a misguided interpretation of the nature of their womanhood by their men. However, by upholding this mistaken outlook on what constitutes femininity, men unwittingly serve to erode their own manliness. This is because the denial or misinterpretation of true womanhood in all its diverse aspects must correspondingly affect the male at some point since maleness itself hinges on its very difference to femaleness. Both male and female are inextricably bound to one another both as individuals and as a community, whether they perceive it to be so or not, and any bondage

inflicted upon women, whether physical or psychological, eventually rebounds with greater effect upon their men.

This is clearly demonstrated through the characters themselves and the events of the play. The courtly lover, represented by both Hortensio and Lucentio as the young suitors for Bianca's hand, expresses wide-eyed wonder at the beauty of his love in lavish verbal praise. He is charmed by her apparent shy silence, captivated by her 'maid's mild behaviour and sobriety' (1.1.71), and utterly convinced of her modesty and submissiveness by the overwhelming meekness of her speech and demeanour. It is love at first sight, and further glances only serve to make him adore his chosen goddess even more. And that is exactly what she is to him – a goddess on a pedestal, not a real flesh-and-blood woman with faults and imperfections. Despite the many spoken references to Bianca's sexual role as wife, she is actively seen as a sexless porcelain object of perfect beauty and not in her wholeness as a woman.

Although Bianca herself encourages this false view of herself for the practical purpose that it serves in increasing her market value, she does let the mask slip a few times, most notably when she is alone for the first time with both Hortensio and Lucentio. She lets them bicker and quarrel over her for a time, evidently enjoying being the object of their competitive attention, then calmly exerts control over them both by coolly asserting her will above theirs.

Bianca :

*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.*
(3.1.16-20)

She poses as 'a milk-and-water miss in front of her father, which rouses poor Kate's honest indignation, [but] once out of his sight reveals herself as the imperious coquette she really is' (Donovan 1962:xxvii). Her suitors are far too busy arguing with each other to notice this, and again Bianca shows her power by allocating time for each suitor's 'lessons' and flirting with them both. Although she finally shows a marked preference for Lucentio, she keeps her hold upon the situation by warning him neither to presume upon her reciprocation of his passion nor to despair that she will never respond (3.1.41). Thus she keeps him dangling, fully aware that she pulls the strings. Even after showing a greater penchant for Lucentio, she is careful not to burn her boats with Hortensio, sweetening her power play with compliments to both men before leaving them. When she finally elects to marry Lucentio, she elopes rather than trust herself to her father's judgement, knowing how the full measure of his greed may predispose him against her choice. Again, she achieves her aim while simultaneously preserving her docile appearance. Her meek façade and submissive exterior affords her an effective camouflage which disguises her strong-willed determination as the shy and slightly diffident mischief of a sweet virgin. She is essentially a mixture of prudent hypocrisy and purposeful coquettishness.

Bianca's disguise is only successful because it fulfils a certain requirement in the person of the courtly lover – namely, that only in the presence of an outwardly meek and submissive girl, who shows herself a paragon of feminine self-effacement while combining apparent beauty of soul with a beautiful face and body (and who is also blessed with the world's goods), can such a man as the courtly male feel like a real man. She strokes his fragile ego by

fact that harlots were often carried through the streets in carts to be exposed to the public (1.1.55). A shrew is thus likened to a woman of easy virtue, a great insult that bears a warning to her from the common man of her world – if she cannot conform to the requirements of society, she is no better than a whore. So easily does Gremio dismiss a woman's womanhood, demonstrating that the shallowness of the pseudo-man is not confined to the young man alone since age does not necessarily confer any measure of understanding or enlightenment. Not surprisingly, Hortensio puts across a similar idea as his older rival but less offensively – 'No mates for you,/Unless you were of gentler, milder mold' (1.1.59-60). Kate rightly scorns them both as the fools they are, declaring that she could never accept men like them except as victims of her wrath:

Katharina :

*I' faith, sir, you shall never need to fear:
 Twis it is not halfway to her heart.
 But if it were, doubt not her care should be
 To comb your noddle with a three-legged stool,
 And paint your face, and use you like a fool.*
 (1.1.61-65)

The gentlemen recoil in shock at her harsh words, but with sublime irony, they are going to be made fools of indeed, but by a woman famed for her submissive attitude instead of by a shrew. Indeed, this is deservedly so, for the courtly male actually lets Everywoman down by demanding an unnatural pattern of behaviour from her without demonstrating any worth of his own apart from insipid good-nature, some measure of physical beauty or wealth, and a tendency to spout poetry. The traditional lover can woo a passive sweetheart with soft words and loving looks, but is completely thrown for a loop at any sign of independence or intelligence in his love object. He would be appalled at any hint of anger or rebellion in her, or any criticism of his own behaviour. A true woman

would be unconscionable as a mate for a pseudo-man, for his ego cannot cope with either the challenge or the reward.

The only difference between Baptista and his younger daughter's lovers is the fact that he is a courtly male who has become a father and developed rather mercenary tendencies. He is completely blind to Bianca's manipulation of him and completely fooled by her façade of virtue, yet he cannot bring himself to forgo making a profit out of her marriage. He plays 'a merchant's part' (2.1.324) throughout without taking into consideration his daughter's wishes, and it is his great fear 'that he may be cheated in the business or cash side of the marriage' that upsets him when he learns of the secret marriage which Bianca has deceitfully contrived on her own terms without the least qualm (Donovan 1962:xxxv). His self-centred greed nullifies his rightful leadership over Bianca, who manipulates him mercilessly.

He despairs of Kate and has the courtly male's horror of her shrewishness. He cannot see her heart or the just cause of her anger, and publicly displays his favouritism towards Bianca, which she in turn revels in, thus intensifying Kate's resentment towards them both. In this way, he negates his legal and filial headship of his elder daughter, not only by failing to protect her against attacks on her character by other men, but failing to recognize that she needs and warrants his protection from the destructive tendencies of her unresolved anger. Instead, he subjects her to the moral anguish of counting her own father against her because of her shrewish behaviour. His concern for her unmarried state is less concern for her than concern for himself, for Bianca's marriage is assured, and he would then undoubtedly be saddled with a spinster shrew. With this in mind, he formulates the plan which frees Bianca to be

courted only after Kate is safely married. The fact that as her father he feels no resentment against strangers who insult his daughter – shrew or no shrew – is already significant of his neglect, and turns a sympathetic spotlight on Kate's predicament.

'It is as if Shakespeare set out to write a farce about taming a shrew but had hardly begun before he asked himself what might make a woman shrewish – and found the answer in her home background. ... We sympathize with Katherine – and as soon as we do, farce becomes impossible.'

(Oliver 1982:51)

It comes as no surprise then, in light of the issues discussed above, that the basic problem underlying Kate's shrewishness is the inability of Everyman to recognize her for a true woman who scorns to pretend respect when she does not feel any, nor submit senselessly to unworthy men who repeatedly prove their unworthiness by undermining her femininity. Her right to be afforded a real man and not a pseudo-male is neither recognized nor acknowledged, and she is given only two choices – conform to the courtly ideal of pseudo-womanhood or be forever counted a non-woman. Is it any wonder then that she rejects Everyman utterly and retreats behind a wall of baffled fury?

The Rebellion of the Daughters of Eve

Female Indignation in the Face of Suppression

'As we look through the social history of mankind, we become aware of two great facts: first, that woman is central to life; and second, that the greatest social misfortune, from the primitive to the polished man, is "what man has made of woman!".... For, man still had his woman under his servile subjection to restore his temperamental equilibrium. Woman had no such relief, and in consequence, her soured soul, as it were, festered in an ulcerous cess-pool of temperamental inequilibrium, an imbalance that woman sought ever to correct.'

(Dias 1977:17)

The fractious shrew and her sly sister represent two different methods of rebellion, each suiting her way to her personality and perception of life. In the absence of any rightful headship of man, each of these two women strives in her own way to overthrow the wrongful lordship which has been exercised over them both in order to establish themselves as dominant females – thence to accept no subsequent authority from Everyman, but to garner power great enough to enable them to gain authority over him instead. Both are shrews, one inwardly and the other outwardly, but their methods of displaying their contempt for the pseudo-man differ widely because of one essential characteristic difference between them.

Bianca chooses to secretly exploit the system rather than actively rebel against it. She assumes the appearance of the perfect female according to the standards set by the males of her world and manipulates the very essence of these 'ideal' attributes into serving her purpose, which, of course, is to remove herself from her father's sphere where she has no more room for advancement in terms of independence and provide in its stead a wealthy home where she may reign as undisputed queen over her husband and members of her own household. She is single-minded and completely unromantic – status, looks and money count where love does not.

Tillyard calls Bianca 'a convincing picture of a pretty, sly little thing [who] affects the good girl with a completeness that cannot be sincere' (1966:98). She masterfully uses her cunning assumption of the façade of complete submission and maidenly modesty to enhance her sexual attractiveness

to the opposite sex, who, themselves generally being underdeveloped males, are most unlikely to be drawn to strength of character or individuality in a prospective wife. Bianca has seen, probably by Kate's example and wisely enough, that a policy of open rebellion will not benefit her in any way but will instead mark her downfall in an era where women had no future apart from the dignity conferred by marriage and matronhood. Therefore, she gains the advantage over her sister by using subtlety instead of force. Consequently, her gullible father – and later, her naïve husband – is putty in her hands. Greer summarizes the situation perfectly:

In *The Taming of the Shrew* Shakespeare contrasted two types in order to present a theory of marriage which is demonstrated by the explicit valuation of both kinds of wooing in the last scene. Kate is a woman striving for her own existence in a world where she is a *stale*, a decoy to be bid for against her sister's higher market value, so she opts out by becoming unmanageable, a scold. Bianca has found the woman's way of guile and feigned gentleness to pay better dividends; she woos for herself under false colours, manipulating her father and her suitors in a perilous game which could end in her ruin. Kate courts ruin in a different way, but she has the uncommon good fortune to find Petruchio who is man enough to know what he wants and how to get it.' (1971:208-209)

It is my firm opinion that the major fundamental difference between the sisters is this – Bianca has guile and Kate has none. The shrew called Katharina is shrewish only because she is far too honest and straightforward to disguise her righteous rebellion under the guise of submission, as her sister does. She cannot seem to countenance or comprehend such a course of action, as is plain from the disgust she has for her sister. It is unlikely that Kate is even aware of Bianca's duplicity until perhaps the last stage of the play, for her own honesty blinds her to guile in others. This is indeed further proved by her muttonheaded obliviousness to Petruchio's tactics before she stumbles onto a realization of his real intentions.

However, as ineffectual as her overt rebellion may seem, she has won valuable ground in advance of her sister. By stubbornly declaring her will, she has 'wrung one important concession' from her father, in that he insists that whoever marry her wins her love, for there is 'obviously no point in matching her against her will' (Leggatt 1974:51). No such conditions exist for malleable Bianca, whom he mistakenly assumes to be easily-controlled. Thus, as Leggatt notes, 'the shrew's unorthodox behaviour has its value, forcing attention to her personality and her wishes, keeping her from being simply a counter in a social game' (1974:51).

Kate is, not surprisingly, bitterly jealous of Baptista's preference for Bianca, and furiously resents his lack of understanding and rejection of herself. In Bianca, she has no ally but a coldhearted rival who cares not one jot for her except as an unfavourable foil to cast her own perfections up in a better light to both father and prospective husband. Bianca never loses an opportunity to rub Kate's nose in her disgrace as a reputed shrew. Her constant sly allusions, even when they are alone together, draw attention to her own 'humble duty' and submission compared with Kate's headstrong rebellion and her consequent worthlessness as a marketable commodity. Interestingly enough, their father never denies Kate's accusations of favour towards Bianca, although there would be no real point to it even if he did. Kate therefore takes every opportunity to wreak vengeance upon her sister by bullying her, again completely unaware that her violent reactions to her own unhappiness accentuate Bianca's holier-than-thou patience and purity in the eyes of the community.

Indeed, it is astounding how Bianca's catty comments to her sister go completely unnoticed by her father and the other men. When Baptista announces

his intention to withhold Bianca's favours until Kate is wed, he makes sure to reassure his little favourite that he loves her very much despite his actions. Kate jealously declares that her father's pet would weep if she knew why she was his favourite daughter, referring to Baptista's eagerness to profit from Bianca's marriage. This reveals that Kate is aware of her father's greed, disguised as it were under filial love. Bianca's butter-wouldn't-melt answer – 'Sister, content you in my discontent./Sir, to your pleasure humbly I subscribe' (1.1.80-81) – shows Kate's temper up in a bad light in the company of men by highlighting her own docility to her father's will, and thus indirectly suggesting such obedience to her husband in turn. As Tillyard remarks, 'the first line is neatly -calculated coals of fire, and the humble sentiments of the rest are aimed at impressing the listening suitors' (1966:99). An unwitting accomplice, her father proudly enlarges upon Bianca's homely pursuits and ignores Gremio's reference to Kate as a 'fiend of hell' *in her very presence* (1.1.88) before telling Kate to remain where she is because he would like to discuss things with her sister in private. Kate's furious sorrow and embarrassment in front of her sister's suitors is only to be expected.

For all her anger, Kate desires love and marriage as much as the next girl, and takes a lively interest in Bianca's prospects of marrying. She bullies her sister to elicit some form of real response from the ever-submissive Bianca as to which man she loves, calling her a 'minion' in reference to her apparently meek observance of foolish standards set by men, and charging her to 'dissemble not' (2.1.9). Bianca tells her sister that she is willing to do anything Kate commands her to, so well does she know her duty towards her elders (2.2.6-7), getting in a sly dig at Kate's bad behaviour in contrast. This is enough to infuriate a saint, let

alone Kate, who can never control her irritation. Typically, the queen of dissemblers does not state a preference but subtly insults her sister by promising to donate whichever man Kate fancies to her poor shrewish sister who envies her good fortune so.

Understandably, Kate hits her, and unfortunately as usual is caught in the act by her father who calls her 'a hilding of a devilish spirit' who wrongs one that never wronged her (2.1.26-27), a piece of shortsighted rubbish that only the courtly male can manage. Kate's answer – 'Her silence flouts me, and I'll be revenged' (2.1.29) – is significant of the damage Bianca's policy of silence has done to Kate's own fight against injustice. Bianca's silence is for strategic purposes. She does not divulge her heart at all, whether about which man she prefers or anything else for that matter. Indeed, she disguises herself by submerging her identity under a modest silence that makes it impossible for anyone to pierce the paragon-of-virtue armour she wears to find the real woman underneath.

Kate, on the other hand, is completely above board in her actions and reactions. Everything she feels, she shows – perhaps not a very wise course of action. There is no dishonesty within her, and this combined with her guileless nature has made her respond to the injustice of her situation with unconcealed fury, thus provoking her shrewishness. She longs for the love that has been denied her at home, and longs for a home of her own. Bitterly hurt by Baptista's blindness to her needs as a woman, and by Bianca's catty offers to plead for a husband for her, she asks her father angrily if she is never to have a husband.

Katharina :

*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.*
(2.1.32-36)

As it happens, her fear of becoming an old maid is unfounded, for the very next moments bring Petruchio into the tale, promptly turning her whole unhappy life upside down.