

CHAPTER THREE

THE CLOWN AND HIS SHREW

The Struggle For Supremacy

Although appearing to be light-hearted and humorous, the battle of wills that ensues between Kate and Petruchio from the moment they meet is actually a serious pitting of strength against one another. Petruchio is as determined to win Kate as she is determined not to be won. Delighted to find in her not only an independent and high-spirited woman but a worthy adversary, and recognizing the valid reasons behind her rebellion, he is nevertheless intent on destroying the outward shrew in order to reveal to Kate herself the woman beneath. She, however, accustomed to anger and disillusionment, holds tightly on to her shrewish mantle as a force of habit until she eventually realizes that she has no need for it any longer. Here indeed is a man worthy of respect, so confident in himself that he dares to take up the challenge she affords. He has no intention of suppressing her natural intelligence and spirit, but subjects her to a rough discipline to break her stubbornness and gain her trust. He spars with her, stimulating her imagination, taking pleasure in her fiery personality, and affording her his authority to righteously unleash it. The complex manner in which this happens is explained in this chapter, demonstrating the true man beneath the irate clown's disguise and his gallant ruthlessness in causing the metamorphosis of his shrew.

Petruchio's Mastery

The Mechanics of Gaining and Establishing Psychosexual Dominance

From the moment Petruchio walks upon stage, he establishes his character through his actions. He displays a razor-sharp wit and an eccentric temper that is not only very much in keeping with the farcical slapstick-comedy style of the play, but is also integral to the audience's understanding of his nature. He is impatient with his trusty old servant's willful (or playful!) misunderstanding of his ambiguous instructions to knock on Hortensio's gate, and demonstrates this by wringing him by the ears. This not only sets the stage for the many other instances in which Petruchio's quick temper results in some form of non-serious physical violence, but illumines the rather fond informal relationship between master and servant. Indeed, throughout the play, Grumio displays a puckish mischief disguised beneath a loudly-complaining exterior. Despite the constant protests of mistreatment at his 'mad' master's hands, he shows a good understanding of Petruchio's penchant for word-play, his stubborn will and his choleric good nature. The overall effect is that of a crusty old retainer who knows his master well and enjoys baiting him but whose complete loyalty to him is beyond question. This leads the audience to guess that here, then, is no ordinary master.

As the play progresses, the audience is given a clear picture of the man Petruchio's character, highlighting the differences between him and the other men of the play. He is a rich gentleman from Verona who has not only inherited land and wealth, but has actively prospered and substantially increased his riches instead of simply living off them. Although well-born and wealthy, he shows a

varied knowledge of the world uncommon for a gentleman, citing experience of adventure, travel and war. He has temporarily left his home after his father's death in search of new adventure, to perhaps find a wife and through her, prosper further. Thirsty for a new challenge, he leaps at the idea of an unconquerable woman, showing none of the smooth sentimentality of other men regarding love and feminine desirability. He displays a shrewd practicality concerning money in a hard-hearted manner which immediately calls forth Grumio's sarcasm. He initially takes on the challenge of taming the shrew for a number of basic reasons - her handsome dowry fulfils his practical desire to increase his wealth, her shrewish personality affords him his next challenge, and his male interest is piqued by Hortensio's description of her as young and beautiful but 'intolerable curst' (1.2.88).

He immediately establishes an equal footing with Kate's father, as opposed to the servile subservience of Bianca's suitors, well aware of his own power in the matter and determined to make a profitable marriage agreement. Overriding all Baptista's doubts regarding the suitability of his shrewish daughter as wife to such an eminent man, he brooks no delay in finalizing the monetary agreement between them and professing his intention to make Katharina, in turn, his sole beneficiary in the event of her widowhood. In a matter of seconds, he reveals the essence of his character - ruthless, practical, intelligent and fair. Here is, indeed, a man among men, the alpha male of the pack, a dominant personality with a very clear knowledge of his own abilities, and fearless because of them. He scoffs at the other men's evident fear of Kate, telling them in no uncertain terms that he is man enough to tame her, indirectly showing them up as callow, immature youths without what it takes to handle an angry woman who does not

fit into their shallow stereotypical ideas of what a woman should be. 'Frighten boys with bugs,' he tells them, 'but I am a man and no boy.'

Despite Petruchio's cold-blooded appropriation of the shrew as wife before meeting or speaking with her, his initial interest in her – sparked by the challenge of the attainable but inaccessible prize, as well as his friend's healthy awe of her hot temper – kindles to a greater flame when Hortensio enters the room with an injured head after Kate has wrecked the lute upon it.

Hortensio :	<i>I did but tell her she mistook her frets, And bowed her hand to teach her fingering, When, with a most impatient devilish spirit, "Frets, call you these?" quoth she, "I'll fume with them." And with that word she struck me on the head, And through the instrument my pate made way; And there I stood amazed for a while, As on a pillory, looking through the lute, While she did call me rascal fiddler And twangling Jack, with twenty such vile terms, As had she studied to misuse me so.</i>
Petruchio :	<i>Now, by the world, it is a lusty wench! I love her ten times more than e'er I did. O, how I long to have some chat with her!</i> (2.1.149-162)

Now, here is a woman of spirit to match Petruchio's own! Distinct similarities – the same hot temper, the same impatience with foolishness, the same quick wit with words, and the same tendency to physical violence. His surprised delight is revealing, and a sudden excitement of the chase mixes with his previously impersonal determination. He guesses, perhaps, that she has probably seen through Hortensio's disguise, and he longs to test her wit and try her temper. Quickly formulating a plan to counteract her every possible reaction to him, he immediately addresses her with a familiarity calculated to provoke her temper and proceeds to 'woo her with some spirit' (2.1.169). What follows is a blinding battle of wits streaked with strong sexual allusion.

(i) The Declaration of Desire

Arguably the most important facet of the fundamental foundation of the male-female relationship is the firm establishment of opposite poles of sexuality between prospective mates, especially initiated by the male towards the female. Petruchio's first meeting with Kate is rife with sexual sparks.

He signals his interest in her verbally, calling her by the shortened version of her name (which also means sweet confection or delicacy), and showers her with slightly barbed compliments as to the corresponding sweetness of her nature while pointedly ignoring her reputation as a shrew. He makes it clear that he is honourably interested in her, declaring immediately his intention to marry her. Not only does he show appreciation of her physical beauty, but he applauds her spirit. He storms her defenses by expressing social preference for *her* in full knowledge of the fact that she is generally thought of as socially undesirable compared to her paragon-of-virtue sister.

Kate responds to Petruchio's immediate declaration of intent and his lavish compliments with wit-laden insult after insult, which he suavely counters with equal wit but without insult, again demonstrating the difference between him and the lily-livered suitors to Bianca, who could only shudder in dismay at her sharp tongue, question her virtue and tell her she would never get a husband. Here, apparently, is a man genuinely interested in her and also less of a craven fool than any other she has met, and her competitive spirit urges her to test his mettle. Thereafter, the kid gloves are off.

Petruchio repeatedly displays an unmistakable sexual interest in Kate, which he expresses wittily but bluntly enough to show clearly that he has a

strong carnal appetite. He deliberately steers the conversation into wit-laced sexual channels, making her fully aware of her sexuality as a woman by *his* awareness of her female body. He presents himself as a sexually predatory male, marking her as the object of his lust. Understandably skeptical of his avowed desire for her, she tries to prove him fickle by giving him the full benefit of her lashing tongue, only to have every insult she aims at him skillfully twisted into sexual double entendre.

Confident that he will change his mind about wanting her, she calls him a movable stool and is promptly invited to sit on him to try him out. She calls him an ass 'made to bear', sarcastically commenting on his willingness to be sat upon. He retorts that she is a woman and thus doubly 'made to bear', both children and the weight of the man who will give them to her during sexual intercourse. Cleverly, he throws her femaleness into stark relief against his opposite and complementary maleness. She quickly says she will not bear an inferior specimen like him, and Petruchio responds that he will not burden her, for she is 'light'. This reference to the delicate stature of the female invites instant comparison to the hard-muscled body of the physically superior male, which is exactly what it is meant to do. Also, by letting her know that he is aware of her smaller, slighter female body, Petruchio subtly implies that he will not only be a considerate lover, but that he will never oppress her physically with his superior strength. Attempting to negate this, she says that she is too elusive for him to catch, but as heavy as she should be, thus subconsciously issuing not only a veiled sexual invitation – that she is able to bear him if she wants to – but throwing him the challenge to best her if he can.

After this, he purposely initiates a somewhat lighter exchange of puns to lull her into a sense of security. He gently counters her rising irritation with a mild rejoinder – ‘Come, come, you wasp, i’ faith, you are too angry’ (2.1.209). Immediately, she seizes the advantage and warns him that she will sting like a wasp, still sure that he will back off from his declared intent once he sees the extent of her shrewishness. He counters this with an assurance that he will pluck out the sting. She asks him if he even knows where it lies. Deliberately, he tells her that every wasp wears its sting in its tail. Kate replies that the sting is in its tongue, again an oblique reference to herself and her shrew-like nature, now unconsciously betraying discomfort with her own defence mechanism. Petruchio, understanding full well her meaning, asks her outright – ‘Whose tongue?’ (2.1.216), but she turns on him in self-conscious fury – ‘Yours, if you talk of tails, and so farewell’ (2.1.217). By this she makes known her opinion that he has been telling her fabricated and insincere tales of his attraction to her, and that the interview is therefore at an end.

Petruchio’s next comment rips these insecurities into shreds, for he reaffirms his desire for her in shockingly explicit terms – ‘What, with my tongue in your tail? Nay, come again’ (2.1.218). In one fell swoop he establishes the seriousness of his proposal as well as the extent of his desire for her with this blisteringly clear reference to oral sex, with a tacked-on invitation to resume their talk¹. Immediately after this earthy suggestion, however, he reassures her that he is indeed a gentleman, probably thinking this reassurance very necessary after such a breach of courtesy! Rendered speechless with shock at such a bold affront to her dignity, and perhaps more a hint of excitement at being desired by such a

¹ This allusion to *cunnilingus* subtly serves to further underline Petruchio’s previous subtle promises of his unselfishness as a lover and offer a corresponding guarantee of Kate’s sexual satisfaction in his arms should she accept him as a husband.

highly-sexed man, Kate slaps his face. He proves both strength and gentleness by allowing the small violence without retaliating in kind, and then proves his dominance with a threat to cuff her if she takes the liberty again. Once more, Kate is exposed to the power of his maleness, his superior strength as opposed to her female weakness, and the very real danger of unleashing that strength against her.

Being female, she has no choice but to acknowledge the powerful physical advantage of the male, and in doing so, concedes the need for protection. A little panicked, she bravely reminds him of his earlier assurance that he is a gentleman – ‘If you strike me, you are no gentleman’ (2.1.222), and Petruchio again reveals the intrinsic graciousness of a truly strong man by shifting the balance of power back to her, asking her humbly to favour him and his suit for her hand in marriage. Again she resorts to word-play and again he manipulates the witty exchanges to his purpose. She calls him too ‘young’ or inexperienced for her, and he agrees, using the word to mean strong and sexually virile, rendering her own statement now an insult to herself. Swiftly turning *about the argument*, she calls him ‘withered’. His playful bid for sympathy – ‘Tis with cares’ is quickly rejected by Kate’s ‘I care not’ (2.1.236).

At this point, he masterfully takes the advantage from her, forcing her to pay attention to him and warning her that she cannot escape him – ‘Nay, hear you, Kate. In sooth, you scape not so’ (2.1.237). Kate’s next words are full of a poignant significance – ‘I chafe you if I tarry. Let me go’ (2.1.238). This completely unguarded plea reveals the extent of the insecurity she struggles with. Clearly unwanted by her father in preference to her sister, and unwanted as a woman by men who are lesser than herself, she is mortally afraid that her one

and only suitor too will not want her once he really knows her. She is afraid that she will 'chafe him' with her character if she stays with him. Thus she tries to reject him before she can be rejected by him, another method of self-defence similar to her shrew-like cloak.

Petruchio again proves how much of a man he is by soothing her very real fears – 'No, not a whit. I find you passing gentle' (2.1.239). After reassuring her of her appeal as a woman to him with that one single sentence, he deliberately exaggerates her virtues in an elegy that quickly restores her composure by inciting her sarcastic response to his apparent foolishness. Nevertheless, despite his facetious compliments, his verbal mastery of her and his appreciation of her as a desirable female initiates a reluctant but unmistakable matching interest. It is this that prompts her to pause, a little amazed, to ask where he learnt the propensity to such 'goodly speech', before setting to the sparring match again. At the end of his encounter with her, Petruchio is firmly resolved – this is indeed the woman for him. And in no uncertain terms, he tells her so. He not only gains the last word in the verbal contest, but exerts his masterful will upon her again by ending the conversation there and telling her that he means to have her with or without her consent.

Petruchio : *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 born to tame you, Kate,
And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate
Conformable as other household Kates.
Here comes your father. Never make denial;
I must and will have Katharine to my wife.
(2.1.265-277)*

This is, basically, the 16th century version of the caveman dragging his woman by the hair to his cave, an outdated but nevertheless effective tactic that certainly appeals to the primeval instincts dormant within every civilized woman. Realistically speaking, Petruchio is certainly not of the ilk of the common fops which populate Kate's experience of the world. He is not a lovesick dandy who woos in the popular (and usually insincere) courtly style, but a real red-blooded man whose deliberate setting aside of shallow conventions in favour of fundamental sexual rites makes him the perfect mate for her. As West comments, 'If Petruchio's conquest of Kate is a kind of mating dance with appropriate strutting and biceps-flexing, she in turn is a healthy female animal who wants a male strong enough to protect her, deflower her, and sire vigorous offspring' (1974:69). Once more, one cannot help but notice that men like Hortensio and Lucentio appear colourless, if not downright effeminate, next to Petruchio.

Kate is well aware that any resistance she might put up after this is only as a token to her pride. She, too, is intrigued by this worthy opponent, and attracted to him by virtue of his attraction to her. Her feminine nature is excited by his arrogant determination to possess her, and she makes no real struggle for her freedom. Petruchio overrides her parting shot (preferring to see him hanged rather than marry him) by pretending that they have agreed that she should be shrewish in public but fond in private – in doing so, not only does he cleverly undermine her token opposition to the marriage but significantly hints that he knows and understands the real nature hidden behind her shrewishness, as well as her very valid reasons for behaving that way. As Bloom puts it, 'badgered into violence and vehemence by her dreadful father Baptista, who vastly prefers the authentic shrew, his insipid daughter Bianca, the high-spirited Kate desperately

needs rescue. The swaggering Petruchio provokes a double reaction in her: outwardly furious, inwardly smitten' (1998:29).

Indeed, Petruchio's remark to Baptista obliquely blames her father and the rest of the fault-filled world for Kate's trouble while simultaneously continuing to present her as an ideal woman, which is what he has been doing according to plan since their meeting.

Petruchio : *Father, 'tis thus: yourself and all the world,
That talked of her, have talked amiss of her.
If she be curst, it is for policy...*
(2.1.287-289)

For the first time ever, the shrew has found a defender. It is thus understandable that she is prepared on her wedding day, without any fuss mentioned, to marry Petruchio - something that would be inconceivable, given her strength of spirit, if she had really been opposed to it. Concurrently, she is heartbroken when she thinks he has jilted her at the altar, and she tries to disguise her depth of feeling by justifying her outward opposition to the marriage - 'I told you, I, he was a frantic fool/Hiding his bitter jests in blunt behavior' (3.2.11-12). She thinks she has been the butt of a cruel joke. She naturally supposes that Petruchio has not been serious in his wooing of her - '[he] never means to wed where he hath wooed' (3.2.17) - betraying the important fact that Petruchio's wooing has indeed been successful. After an understandably hysterical diatribe about his apparent insincerity, she breaks into a storm of weeping. This behaviour is not consistent with mere embarrassment about being jilted. The shrew is truly hurt, because Petruchio's non-appearance at the wedding confirms to herself his concurrence to the world's view of her undesirability as a woman, immediately after he had won her reluctant heart by affirming her desirability to

him. Thus, by his absence, he is giving the lie to all that he has earlier convinced her of, namely, his recognition of her as a beautiful, desirable woman who is shrewish for good reasons. And his sexual attraction to her now appears as empty flattery.

Petruchio, however, has method to his apparent madness. Having conceived of a plan to kill her shrewish veneer in order to reveal the true woman beneath, he himself adopts a veneer of his own – that of a madman-clown whose intention is to oppress her shrew-like habit in the name of love. He exaggerates the hot-tempered nature he shares with Kate and submerges the existence of his patience and good sense beneath it. From thenceforth, he takes on the personality of a male shrew, counting on the hope that Kate's essential womanliness will eventually overthrow her instinctive struggle for superiority over him once the futility of this behaviour is sufficiently demonstrated to her. In order to gain her respect, he must therefore be merciless by breaking her resistance and defeating her at every turn, so that by conceding that her shrewishness cannot compare to his greater stubbornness, she may finally receive the subconscious feminine satisfaction of knowing that he is worthy of her trustful submission. Only once she has accepted the fact that he is a match for her in every way – whether as a man or fellow shrew – can she accept his headship over her, thus freeing her from the necessity of shrewishness and releasing her as a woman.

To this effect, he orchestrates his lateness on the wedding day, fully aware of Kate's probable emotional distress at this after the subtle reassurance he had given her regarding her desirability to him at their first meeting. He dresses in ridiculous rags to make an important point – it is not clothes that make the man. Kate is marrying a real man disguised as a clown, just as Petruchio is

marrying a real woman disguised as a shrew. Kate is forced to exercise trust, whether she is aware of it or not, that Petruchio is a gentleman whatever he dresses like, just as he trusts that she is a worthwhile woman underneath her hellion exterior. As Tranio says, 'he hath some meaning in his mad attire' (3.2.134).

While his presence at the wedding redeems her from the shame of being a jilted bride and from doubting her worth as a woman, Petruchio causes Kate to doubt the wisdom of her choice. Both his appearance and his outlandish behaviour during the wedding does what it is supposed to do – it frightens the bride. Kate has reason to be seriously doubtful about her future as his wife, for he behaves like a madman. He swears that he wants her for his wife so loudly that the priest drops the book in amazement, at which Petruchio promptly hits him. He throws sops in a sparsely-bearded sexton's face with the avowal that the aforementioned beard begged for the pelting. He kisses Kate with such enthusiasm that the church rings with the exuberance of it. No wonder the bride 'trembled and shook' (3.2.167) at this unprecedented behaviour! In this way, he forcibly nulls her shrewishness with a greater and madder shrewishness of his own, the like of which Kate - and indeed all of Padua! - has never seen.

Tranio :	<i>Curster than she? Why, 'tis impossible.</i>
Gremio :	<i>Why, he's a devil, a devil, a very fiend.</i>
Tranio :	<i>Why, she's a devil, a devil, the devil's dam.</i>
Gremio :	<i>Tut, she's a lamb, a dove, a fool to him.</i>

(3.2.154-157)

When he announces his intention to leave Padua before nightfall, thus denying his new wife her wedding feast and refusing all entreaties to stay, Kate attempts thrice to exert control over him. First, she tries to persuade him, employing Bianca's soft-spoken method of dominance. Petruchio acknowledges

her gentle effort, tantalizes her with his expression of contentment that she pleads with him instead of demanding what she wants, but nevertheless, remains firm in his spoken intent.

Gremio : *Let me entreat you.*
Petruchio : *It cannot be.*
Katharina : *Let me entreat you.*
Petruchio : *I am content.*
Katharina : *Are you content to stay?*
Petruchio : *I am content you shall entreat me stay;
But yet not stay, entreat me how you can.*
(3.2.199-202)

She tests his resolution immediately, employing this time a very feminine argument – ‘Now, if you love me, stay’ (3.2.203). Petruchio ignores her, calling for his horse. Seeing that tactic fail, she employs her usual shrewish methods, determined not to forgo her wedding feast, piqued at the lack of interest her new husband displays in her newly-adopted persuasive skills, and furious at being made to look a fool at her own wedding. She refuses to go with him, declaring her intention to stay. Again, Petruchio appears to relent in his resolution, pretending to entreat *her* – ‘O Kate, content thee; prithee, be not angry.’ (3.2.215) – allowing her to think she has won. Kate takes immediate advantage of this apparent weakness.

Katharina : *I will be angry. What has thou to do?-
Father, be quiet. He shall stay my leisure.....
I see a woman may be made a fool
If she had not a spirit to resist.*
(3.2.216-217,220-221)

Her resistance is futile. Once again, Petruchio dangles victory in her face, only to yank it away at the last moment. Initially appearing to concede to her imperious command that the men go forward to the bridal dinner, he tells them

indeed to go ahead – without him and Kate. He orders her to behave herself, then makes her fully aware that she is now completely his with no ties to any other, with no protection from any other male, utterly under his legal authority and thus dependent upon his mercy for her very livelihood, much less any hope of happiness.

Petruchio : *Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret;
I will be master of what is mine own.
She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,
My household stuff, my field, my barn,
My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything;
And here she stands, touch her whoever dare.
I'll bring my action on the proudest he
That stops my way in Padua.*
(3.2.228-235)

Thus he signals the end of all other male power over her, and the beginning of his own. By chauvinistically proclaiming her as his property, Petruchio lets Kate herself see that she now belongs to him alone. In doing so, he adopts a purposely-farcical manner in which he pretends to defend her from her enemies. Ironically, though, this is exactly what he is doing. She is now under his total protection, and he rams this truth home to her, exerting his will over hers and showing himself to be impervious to her amateurish attempts to gainsay him. Despite his employment of such a theatrical style, he is in actual fact rescuing Kate by removing her from her stifling home environment and the type of men who have shaped her shrewishness by their shortsighted stupidity, and taking her to his own domain where he can rid her of her misconceived attitudes in relative privacy. He hints as much to Baptista when his haste in leaving Padua is commented upon – ‘If you knew my business,/You would entreat me rather go than stay’ (3.2.191-192) – for he has a shrewd idea of how difficult the taming of the shrew is going to be for both Kate and himself.

He does not wait till he reaches his home, however, but seizes every opportunity that presents itself to further his campaign on the journey itself.

Grumio : ...thou shouldst have heard how her horse
fell and she under her horse; thou shouldst
have heard in how miry a place, how she
was bemoiled, how he left her with the
horse upon her, how he beat me because
her horse stumbled, how she waded
through the dirt to pluck him off me, how
he swore, how she prayed that never
prayed before....

Curtis : By this reckoning, he is more shrew than
she.

(4.1.65-76)

Petruchio's tactics are now seen clearly. He puts on a show of solicitousness towards Kate – as he did through his exuberant enthusiasm during the wedding – that finds expression in ridiculously aggressive behaviour towards others. In doing so, he paints an unpleasant picture of bad behaviour adopted for good reasons. This is an important focus of his strategy, for such is the very root of Kate's shrewishness. An unusually intelligent woman irritated beyond reason by the foolishness of the people who surround her, she is unaware that her extremely hostile reactions circumvent good sense and thus render her just cause invalid. Richmond explains this vicious circle clearly:

'Unfortunately, [Kate's] legitimate sense of her own superiority to almost everyone around her blinds her to the fact that even by her own standards she is fallible. What has alienated everyone until Petruchio appears is her failure to recognize that even the most gifted man or woman may be incapable of handling truth with propriety. She is almost as obtuse as those whose shallowness she rightly censures; and the result of her forthrightness has only been to increase the frustrations that she resents.' (1971:90-91)

Petruchio now demonstrates that, while he concurs that she is essentially justified in her rebellion, her methods of displaying her anger are unacceptable.

He shows this by example - in his noble defence of her against real or imagined foes (priest, father and servant), and his solicitude for her well-being, his reactive behaviour exceeds the bounds of good sense. This is the message he is subtly aiming to get across. And so he gives Kate an exaggerated version of herself for a husband.

Kate, however, is unaware of his strategy. Nevertheless, in the face of Petruchio's deliberately excessive shrewishness, her true nature begins to assert itself. She shows temperance instead of temper, and endures her husband's manic behaviour with strength of character. She pushes the horse off herself, wades through the mire to rescue the servant from his master, and counters his swearing with prayer. Despite being very cold, dirty and tired, she knows that she must do everything in her power to see them safely home. If her value as a woman was ever in question, it is amply proven by the quality of her response to unexpected hardship and difficulty.

Petruchio projects his shrew-like image even more upon arrival at his house. He rails and swears at his servants, loudly commanding attention and food. He kicks one, and strikes another who accidentally spills some water. Again, Kate's true nature shows itself as she tries to placate his unreasonable aggression - 'Patience, I pray you, 'twas a fault unwilling' (4.1.144). She is unaware that this is all an elaborate show for her benefit. Indeed, she has no real proof that she has not married a madman, for she cannot yet see the message behind his actions. Even so, it is clear that her shrewish habit is already slipping off in the presence of a greater shrewishness. With Petruchio, she has to be the voice of sense and good behaviour, for he is a much worse shrew than she!

When Petruchio finds fault with the meat, saying that it is burnt and then throwing all the food at the servants – really to prevent her from satisfying her hunger – she again tries to reason with him and soothe his unwarranted temper. He responds by insisting that the meat is burnt, and because roast meat is said to produce ill temper and ‘engender choler’, it would be better that they both fasted since both of them were already choleric, and thus already prone to ill temper (4.1.154-165). By saying this, he likens himself to her, hinting strongly that he too is a shrew like her, bringing home to her the uncomfortable fact of her unpleasantness to others by exposing her to *his* unpleasantness towards others. He uses anger to subdue anger in her, and uses his shrewishness to eliminate hers. Although Kate herself is either oblivious to his scheme or just awakening to it, the audience is made fully cognizant of Petruchio’s ploy.

Nathaniel :	<i>Peter, didst ever see the like?</i>
Peter :	<i>He kills her in her own humor.</i>
	(4.1.167-168)

(ii) The Face in the Mirror

Before her husband’s advent into her life, Kate has never had to be on the receiving end of her own aggressive and unpleasant ways. Although she has been a victim of an unjust society, she has compounded its effect by allowing her once-justifiable anger to create a barrier of habitual bad temper that denies her any chance of finding a resolution to it. Her shrewishness, initially a necessary defence, has become her stumbling block by ingraining itself into the core of her being and robbing her of peace. Her anger has become a weapon against herself

as well as the rest of the world because it is not tempered with patience or good sense. Instead of choosing her battles wisely, she lashes out at anyone and everyone, thus paradoxically cancelling out any good that may come of her rebellion by undermining her own credibility.

Petruchio's ruthless mimicking of her angry impatience is designed to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of shrewishness to invite anything but disgust in return, no matter what its initial justification. As Maurer remarks, Kate is now being treated with an outlandish version of 'the same selfish, childish behaviour she herself has precipitated for years' (2001:48). In essence, by exaggerating her attitude in himself, he is holding a mirror up to her face, daring her to look into it and face herself and the reality of her habit. His behaviour invites unfavourable comment from her, and so concurrently, her own behaviour should elicit the same opinion from herself if she were to regard it with any degree of objectivity. Given her native intelligence, Kate cannot remain oblivious for long to the familiarity of the face in the mirror, for it is modelled upon her own.

Being the honest and completely straightforward person that she is, Kate does not at once understand him and his subtlety. Yet, she is uncomfortably aware that she does not like the idea of being like him. She is emotionally vulnerable from the incidents that preceded as well as succeeded a stressful wedding. She is exhausted and starving, having lost every bid for control that she has attempted to gain over him, and she is also frightened. Cruel as it may seem, this is exactly the state of affairs which Petruchio has masterminded into being. It is his intention to use that fear and uncertainty to gain her respect and her eventual trust.

Concurrently, instead of consummating the marriage in her bedchamber on her wedding night, he 'rails and swears and rates' while lecturing her on self-restraint, while she, 'poor soul,/Knows not which way to stand, to look, to speak,/And sits as one new risen from a dream'(4.1.172-174). Nevertheless, amidst his mad behaviour and her stunned anxiety, the ruthless gentleman shows his true colours – despite his studied infliction of rough discipline upon her and his apparent disregard of her mental confusion and physical discomfort, he does not demand her sexual submission although he has the power to do so from both a legal and social standpoint. Indeed, brutally wresting conjugal rights from an unwilling bride is not even remotely conceivable of such an honourable man as Petruchio. He appears well aware of the difference between legal right and moral wrong, and he makes it clear to Kate that she has his protection, even from himself. It is not his aim to irreparably hurt or alienate her, but to gentle her wildness with a strength employed in tenderness.

With this aim in mind, his intentional withholding of intimacy on the first night of marriage holds various important implications, the main one being of course that physical intimacy must be preceded by psychological intimacy in order to be truly meaningful. Petruchio and Kate must therefore voluntarily shed their respective disguises to reveal their naked selves to each other as man and woman instead of madman and shrew. In order for that to happen, Kate must choose to overthrow her shrewism. According to West, the play's poetic pattern employs the starvation training as a theatrical symbol for appetite denied, echoing this idea in sexual abstinence. 'Instead of raping his bride, Petruchio teases her by deliberately postponing the consummation of their marriage. ... Tantalized with the possibility of a satisfied appetite, sleep, and the wifely garb

emblematic of full-blown womanliness, Kate must learn to behave in a way that will allow the sexual act to take place properly', thus making the marriage truly valid (1974:71).

Certainly, Petruchio does not inflict any privations upon her that he has withheld from himself. Hunger, exhaustion, sleeplessness – all these he inflicts also upon himself in her service. His course of action is unmistakably precise.

Petruchio : *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-gorged,
For then she never looks upon her lure. ...
She ate no meat today, nor none shall eat.
Last night she slept not, nor tonight she shall not. ...
Ay, and amid this hurly I intend
That all is done in reverent care of her.
(4.1.176-192)*

(iii) The Allegory of the Hawk

The method which Petruchio employs as a means to tame his shrew is a relatively simple psychological technique used to tame and teach any intelligent wild animal. While being loosely based on the concept of behaviourism insofar as the desired responses are induced by a system of reward and punishment, the hawk's final acceptance of its master is based on trust and nothing else. Therefore, the man must first curb the essential wildness of the creature's nature by reducing its aptitude to rebellion. This is done in the most expedient manner – the refusal of food or rest until the creature surrenders, after which it is fed small amounts by the hand of its master and allowed to sleep. Its first few flights are controlled by tying the hawk's leg to its master's forearm so that it cannot escape.

The man must convince the hawk that it has a better life with him than it does in the wild. Once trust has been established between the hawk and its master, however, it is allowed to fly without restraints. It is only then that the true extent of the loyalty between the hawk and its master can be accurately established, for a mistreated or unhappy bird is most unlikely to return to the hand of its owner if afforded the chance to escape. Morris draws attention to the fact that although the taming process may be long and exhausting, 'when successfully completed, it sets up a close and special relationship between the falconer and his bird which makes them an efficient hunting team' (1981:125). It is Petruchio's intention to create the bond of partnership between himself and Kate, something that is impossible to achieve without her initial surrender to him.

By denying her both food and sleep until she bends her will to his, Petruchio bypasses all the strong defences he knows Kate can put up if she were in top physical form, and speeds up her learning process through the deprivation of the body. Also, he is not talking about the denial of food and sleep alone, but of other essentials. If he were to immediately give her all the true honour, love and comfort due to her as his wife - or in other words, to 'full-gorge' her - before she concedes honest defeat, she would never truly see that he is worthy of her full respect and trust, and she would never fully give up her shrewish habit. She would never 'look upon her lure' (4.1.180). By putting her in a difficult situation and by then offering her a reprieve from it, he puts her in a position to see that she can trust him if she will only take the risk. To that aim he arrived late at a wedding he fully intended to go through with, and to that aim he keeps her hungry and awake, in fairness neither eating nor sleeping himself.

All this he intends to do 'in reverent care of her' (4.1.192). While this generally refers to his tactic of pretending to be solicitous about Kate's well-being while carrying out his plan, there is, however, a double meaning to the phrase that points toward his inherent goal. This 'hurly' – not just throwing the bedclothes around and shouting nonsense, but the upheaval of the entire taming process – is really done for Kate's own lasting happiness. He is taking 'reverent care of her' by opening her eyes to the harsh reality of her shrewishness and the way it is preventing her from achieving fulfillment in life. He intends that she too will profit from this gruelling exercise by gaining not only a sense of self-worth as a woman but also himself as an ally instead of an enemy at the end of her resistance.

Due to the guilelessness of her character, Kate struggles to make sense of her predicament. When she tries to get some food from Grumio, the old servant has no intention of going against his master's command, but toys with her by suggesting different foods and promptly withdrawing each suggestion because it might be 'too choleric' for her – this is a valuable hint, but she rightly takes exception to his poking fun at her, and thus fails to catch the idea in her baffled fury. She feels lost and humiliated – 'Sorrow on thee and all the pack of you,/That triumph thus upon my misery!' (4.3.33-34). She is so upset that the whole plan is in danger of backfiring, but again Petruchio has anticipated her breaking point, and immediately comes in with food for her that he has prepared himself. First eliciting her reluctant thanks – he teaches her to be gracious even in the face of righteous anger – he allows her to take the edge off her hunger, but prevents her from satisfying it by telling Hortensio to eat most of it.

(iv) The Symbolism of Clothing

*'Do not let your adornment be merely outward
- arranging the hair, wearing gold or putting on fine apparel -
rather let it be the hidden person of the heart,
with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit,
which is very precious in the sight of God.'*
(1 Peter 3:3-4)

Clothes play a very important part in *The Taming of the Shrew* as an allegory to the shrewish behaviour of Kate and the merry madness of Petruchio, which are both assumed as a mantle to disguise the real person underneath. Shrewishness is unbecoming to either man or woman, whatever its original purpose, and by displaying an image of himself dressed in her defensive cloak, he challenges her to let it fall. Ironically, Kate's shrew-like 'habit' has really become a habit with her, one that only can be shed when her immature way of dealing with her anger can be transformed by right perspective and the ability to compromise. The advantage of a powerful ally, of course, serves to speed up the process but Kate is as yet still somewhat blind to her husband's catalytic role in her change.

When Petruchio arrives at his wedding dressed in a rag-tag assembly of clothes, he significantly justifies his attire as inconsequential to the verity of his person – 'To me she's married, not unto my clothes' (3.2.117) – establishing the all-important message that the intrinsic worth of a person is far more important than outward appearance. Not only does it hint at disguise, thus coupling Kate's unconscious disguise with his own deliberate mask, but it is also a subtle indication on his part of a real insight into the functional logistics of Kate's shrewism. As Tillyard observes, 'his outrageous clothes at the wedding are an

emblem that proclaims: these are to my true self what your own shrewishness is to your true self; and each as well as the other can change the assumed self for the true one' (1966:81).

Clothes are also a tool by which Petruchio communicates the futility of rich attire without a corresponding beauty of attitude, gaining this leverage by appealing to her natural vanities as a woman. By bringing in the tailor and haberdasher with the garments that he has ordered to be prepared for her, he indicates his willingness to provide Kate with luxuries befitting her station. However, it is necessary to first demonstrate to her that she herself does not merit the title of lady, much less the clothes that go with it, if she continues in her bad behaviour. Thus, professing to want only the best for her, he finds fault with both cap and gown. Once more, Kate shows evidence of her feminine heart by coveting the pretty clothes and trying to explain to Petruchio in her honest way that they are in the forefront of fashion. She really thinks that he is unaware of this, not realizing that it was he who specified the make and material of each. She learns otherwise almost immediately when Petruchio soberly tells her that she does not deserve the clothes of a lady if she does not have the demeanour of one. Her successive outburst unwittingly uncovers the deepest feelings of her heart and shows the audience why she has become a shrew – if she were to conceal her anger with silence, her heart would break at the injustice and disappointment she has had to cope with.

Katharina : *...This doth fit the time,
And gentlewomen wear such caps as these.*
Petruchio : *When you are gentle, you shall have one too,
And not till then.*
Hortensio [Aside] : *That will not be in haste.*
Katharina : *Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak,
And speak I will. I am no child, no babe.
Your betters have endured me say my mind,*

*And if you cannot, best you stop your ears.
My tongue will tell the anger of my heart,
Or else my heart, concealing it, will break,
And rather than it shall, I will be free
Even to the uttermost, as I please, in words.*
(4.3.69-80)

She truthfully exposes the sincerity of her actions with pride and courage, stating her aim to continue in that sincerity for her own sake. It is significant that in response to this, all Petruchio says is 'Why, thou sayst true' (4.3.81) before abruptly changing the subject and referring once more to the cap. This not only hints at a wish to save her embarrassment – for Hortensio and the haberdasher are present – but his lack of surprise shows that he is well aware of her feelings and even sympathizes with her, for she is in the right. What he does not condone is shrewishness as a method of rebellion, for it is self-destructive, habit-forming and intolerant. Instead of using her anger constructively, she has all but destroyed her credibility in the eyes of the world. Anything she says or feels, however valid, has no value because of the folly of her presentation. In essence, he is trying to teach her a more effective social stance than throwing temper tantrums.

As well, according to Hibbard, he is forcing her to see 'the value of that order and decency for which she previously had no use' (1968:21). Indeed, by denying her the social amenities which form a practical demonstration of a husband's love, Kate has been put into the role of defender of the system she has always flouted, and the voice of good sense and decorum in the face of Petruchio's excessively unorthodox behaviour. Thus he teaches her that no human perspective is absolute, a brilliant stroke in Petruchio's plan, for Kate is forced to reevaluate her philosophical monism that there is only one truth which consequently invalidates all disagreement with her view of life (Richmond 1971:91). By opening her eyes to the other side of the coin, he introduces her to a

novel concept in her headstrong rebellion – the idea that she may be slightly mistaken in her world-concept.

While Kate's resentment at what she feels is a childish method of disciplining her into silence is justified, she does not realize that he is not trying to silence her but instead trying to induce her to trust him enough to drop her prickly, defensive attitude and take him as her loyal ally. His strength and the authority of his manhood can give her the satisfaction she craves. He alone is man enough to be worthy of her respect. Therefore, in the security of his protection and regard, she can – if she will – adopt a gentle and quiet spirit without forgoing intelligence, independence or the individual spice of her fiery personality.

Nonplussed by his apparent insouciance, Kate sulkily says that she will have that cap or no other, and of course, gets nothing, for the haberdasher is ushered out. When the same thing happens with the gown, she asks him forthrightly if he means to make a puppet of her (4.3.103). He responds flippantly, but after that, he changes his tactics to be less subtle and more clear, for he realizes that she does not see what he is trying to communicate, not for lack of intelligence but for a sheer honesty of spirit that cannot dissemble nor comprehend dissembling. Consequently, he tells her that they will set out for her father's house in the simple garments that they are already wearing. Using salient examples, he reinforces the fact that beauty of character is far more important than trappings for the body. Therefore, while a beautiful character can shine through poor clothing, it is unseemly that an unbeautiful attitude should be decked in rich garments. It is this point that Petruchio is aiming to get across to Kate.

(v) Games in Trust

As mentioned before, trust is one of the most important issues addressed in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Once having set out upon the journey, Petruchio purposely tests Kate by appearing to make an obvious mistake in the time of day, predicting an unlikely time for their arrival at Padua. She at once corrects his error, still accustomed to men of lesser intellectual powers than herself, not realizing that Petruchio, as before, is not in need of correction. What he needs is for her to show faith in his intellect and character, and throw her lot in with his no matter how lacking in judgement he may seem to be whilst trusting in the wisdom of his purpose. Thus, with her swift correction, she betrays the fact that she still does not trust him enough to know that he is not stupid and that he has a good reason for appearing foolish. He tells her clearly this time.

Petruchio : *Look what I speak, or do, or think to do,
 You are still crossing it. —*
 (4.3.188-189)

He deliberately provokes her again on the journey to Padua by saying that the moon shines brightly in broad daylight. She unthinkingly falls into the trap again, correcting him almost absently, not stopping to think that of course he knows it is the sun! Faced with what seems to be her stubbornness against trusting him implicitly, he speaks his will clearly, threatening to turn the horses and head right back to Verona if she still refuses to join forces with him. On the

heels of this pronouncement, Hortensio unwittingly gives Kate the key to the puzzle that has been baffling her literally-inclined mind.

Petruchio : *Good Lord, how bright and goodly shines the moon!*
Katharina : *The moon? The sun. It is not moonlight now.*
Petruchio : *I say it is the moon that shines so bright.*
Katharina : *I know it is the sun that shines so bright.*
Petruchio : *Now, by my mother's son, and that's myself,*
 It shall be moon, or star, or what I list,.....
 Evermore crossed and crossed, nothing but crossed!
Hortensio [To Katharina] : *Say as he says, or we shall never go.*
 (4.5.2-11)

Suddenly she sees what Petruchio has required of her all this time. All the chips fall into place, and clever Kate at last sees his point with a clarity she immediately concedes. Unable and unwilling to resist him any longer, she voluntarily gives her obedient trust to him. All this while, he had wanted her to 'say as he says', to present a united front against the world, to find solace and solidarity in their oneness, and to trust the quality of his intellect and character without outward proof, just as he trusts her. With characteristic courage, Kate makes that commitment the minute she finally realizes the purposeful method behind his seemingly erratic behaviour, and she does so with all the generosity of her nature.

Katharina : *Forward, I pray, since we have come so far,*
 And be it moon, or sun, or what you please;
 An if you please to call it a rush candle,
 Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me.
 (4.5.12-15)

Immediately, he tests her new resolve, and she does not disappoint him, for Kate has learned the rules of the game.

Petruchio : *I say it is the moon.*
Katharina : *I know it is the moon.*

Petruchio : *Nay, then you lie. It is the blessed sun.*
 Katharina : *Then, God be blest, it is the blessed sun.*
 But sun it is not when you say it is not,
 And the moon changes even as your mind.
 What you will have it named, even that it is,
 And so it shall be so for Katharine.
 (4.5.16-22)

Nevertheless, despite this proof of her capitulation, Petruchio seems unsure whether she has done so because she has finally understood that he is worthy of her trust or whether he has tired her out to the point where she does not want to offer him further resistance. Hortensio's enthusiastic 'Petruchio, go thy ways, the field is won' (4.5.23) is greeted with an ambivalent 'Well, forward, forward, thus the bowl should run,/And not unluckily against the bias' (4.5.24-25) – which basically means that progress is being made, but also implies that the true goal has not been reached. It is not his intention that Kate should mindlessly pander to his will without a true belief in his intrinsic worth as a man. He is not foolish enough or egotistical enough to require outward submission without inward concurrence.

When Vincentio, Lucentio's aged father, crosses their path by coincidence, Petruchio seizes this opportunity to test the extent of Kate's resolution. He addresses the old man as a young girl, seeking Kate's collaborative agreement, and this she affords, gamely playing by the rules she has so newly assimilated. Although new to the idea of game-playing – obvious by the small glitch of 'Whither away, or where is thy abode?' which hints at a nervous lack of ideas after 'Young budding virgin, fair and fresh and sweet' (4.5.37, 36) – she rallies her wits together and excels at the game, commenting on the joy of the aforesaid virgin's parents and her future bedfellow. At this evidence of her willing participation in his false scenario or 'supposes', Petruchio

demonstrates that he is not crazy, not mad and not foolish by immediately describing the old man as he really is, showing Kate that he has really always been aware of reality but has pretended otherwise for reasons of policy. His 'Why, how now, Kate? I hope thou art not mad' (4.5.41) is a distinct allusion to her own probable thoughts regarding his past behaviour, and thus a subtle reassurance that her fears for his sense and sanity are groundless. She follows his lead by apologizing to Vincentio for her 'mistaking eyes', blaming it on the sun which has so bedazzled her that everything she looks at 'seemeth green' (4.5.44-46), thereby hinting at a once-mistaken view now supplanted by a fresh new vision of him (with a mischievous reference to the earlier altercation about the sun!).

Thereafter, Petruchio doffs his mad-clown mask at once, rewarding her tentative trust with ready evidence of his worthiness to be trusted, henceforward speaking politely and sensibly to Vincentio. He invites the old man to join them and updates him on recent events concerning his son. This provides Kate with further proof, if it were needed, that the whole mad-husband routine she has been subjected to was indeed a false representation of an extremely intelligent and resourceful man who deliberately concocted the scheme to teach her both temperance and trust². Petruchio, however, is not at all confident that he has succeeded in truly gaining her respect. When she wants to see the conclusion to the mad fracas on the street by Lucentio's house, he asks her to kiss him before they follow the rest of the crowd, seeking proxemic reassurance of her regard for him as well as further proof of her readiness to flout convention in his favour.

² It is doubtful whether Kate would have given her wholehearted response to Petruchio's taming had she been aware earlier on of his strategy. Given her stubbornness, it is perhaps a good thing that she only succeeded in deciphering his tactics after she had gained a healthy respect for the man himself!

Thus, Kate doffs her shrewish cloak once and for all in tandem with the shedding of her husband's own disguise, for both facades are now unnecessary. Petruchio has achieved his objective of ridding his wife of her anger by proving himself more than worthy of her love and respect. She, on the other hand, has learned the joy of gaining a kindred spirit and a loyal ally who is more than capable of fulfilling her every need as a woman. True selves are revealed to one another, mutual delight expressed, and the consummation of the marriage imminent. Well-content, Petruchio escorts his wife onward to Lucentio's house.

(vi) The White Knight Behind the Clown's Mask

Although Petruchio has won the trust, respect and love of his shrew by the judicious employment of various disciplinary tactics, it must be stressed that he has conscientiously undermined the essential basis of her shrewishness by negating the need for her just anger. In other words, by his practical demonstration of true nobility, exceptional intelligence and *bona fide* manliness, he proves worthy of Kate by the sheer merit of *who he is*. He is an ideal man disguised behind a mask, just as Kate is an ideal woman behind an insufferable attitude adopted for defensive protection.

Petruchio's highhanded course of action draws its success not only from its keen perception of human nature and sensitive manipulation of events, but from the magnetism and power of the man himself. It is the man who succeeds, not merely his carefully-plotted sequence of training sessions. It is his non-negotiable masculinity which continually provokes a correspondingly positive

female response from Kate. He is a *real* man as opposed to the counterfeit males and arrogant fops which populate her experience of the world. And he wants a real woman to walk at his side. As Greer says, '[he] wants her spirit and her energy because he wants a wife worth keeping. He tames her like he might a hawk or a high-mettled horse, and she rewards him with strong sexual love and fierce loyalty' (1971:209). Thus, instead of clipping her wings by his taming, Petruchio affords Kate true freedom to explore her womanhood in all its glory.

In the hands of a lesser man, the same methods would arouse nothing but contemptuous fury, and rightly so³. Of course, this in itself is a moot point since the conception of such tactics coupled with such delicacy of execution would be completely out of the depth of any but the most intelligent and the most audacious, which effectively lets off the entire male cast apart from Petruchio.

Thus the stage is set for the dramatic culmination of the taming of the shrew.

³ The mind boggles at the probable repercussions if the likes of Hortensio or Lucentio were to attempt to tame Kate *ala* Petruchio!