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journal or publication title	SHIRON(試論)
volume	47
page range	1-20
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10097/56528">http://hdl.handle.net/10097/56528</a>

# Motivated Scolding? A Study of Kate's Shrewishness in William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*

Tomoe Komine

## 1. Introduction

The common theme in early modern 'shrew' plays was that of female unruliness, demonstrated in a woman's denial of domesticity and her participation in the public sphere. Such threatening aspects of the 'shrew' had long been feared in European society and, both in historical descriptions and in literal narratives, domestication through punishment was the advocated solution. Kate in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* has long been regarded as the iconic model of a shrew; her acts and words reveal signs of a traditional scold, but by the end of the play she is conventionally restricted physically and verbally, puzzling audiences and readers. Such transformation is considered as signifying patriarchal success in her overall domestication, but is the taming of Kate, the shrew, the only dramatic purpose? If so, why are Kate's scolding and subordination exaggerated, making the audience feel uncomfortable? Regarding Kate's taming and subordination as patriarchal good fortune may be a limited interpretation of Shakespeare's original intent. It is unlikely that the Bard created a scold merely for her to be tamed and shamed in public. Since various critical approaches tend to result in dichotomisation, it seems necessary to find a disparate reading of the construction of Kate's shrewishness and its dramatic role. This paper focuses on the theatrical function of materialising the traditional ideology of 'shrewishness,' and publicly exposing Kate's shrewishness and subordination. While making a statement about the early modern cultural oppression of women, it also serves to emphasise Kate's willingness to become an object of the 'male gaze,' whereby she uses her body as a medium to

reflect society, showing the relationship between the theatre and the audience with regards to the power relationship between the gazer and the gazed upon. I shall examine Kate's motivated shrewishness with reference to exemplary scolds in medieval literature who offer a satirical textual reading and a negotiating point in their exaggerated revelation of scolding and ambivalence. I shall also show how Kate's expanded or dilated rhetoric functions as a metaphor for motivated publicised shrewishness, representing punishment, female craftiness, and an analogy to the contemporary situation of a 'shrew' ideology, the purpose of which I shall trace in the rhetorical tradition and its link to the topics of gender and property.

## **2. Rules of Public and Private Civility, and Public Punishment**

In England between 1560 and 1640, 'interpersonal dispute,' including sexual misconduct and marital problems, increased, and an 'epidemic of scolding' (Underdown 116-136) was especially prominent. According to John Webster Spargo, early modern legal documents, including court records, describe a shrew as one who disturbs public peace, and punishments for such a 'crime' are described in a 1675 legal summary of the nature of a scold:

A Scold in a legal sense is a troublesome and angry woman, who by her brawling and wrangling amongst her Neighbours, doth break the publick Peace, and beget, cherish and increase publick Discord. And for this she is to be presented and punished in a Leet, by being put in the Cucking or Ducking-stole, or Tumbrel, an Engine appointed for that purpose, which is in the fashion of a Chair; and herein she is to sit, and to be let down in the water over head and ears three or four times, so that no part of her be above the water, diving or ducking down, though against her will, as Ducks do under the water. (122)

Research into parliamentary records, ecclesiastical court records, witchcraft trials and other accounts verifies that the early modern English public was especially anxious about dominant and unruly women, including scolds, wantons and witches, all of which troubled society with their inappropriate behaviour. The increase of 'interpersonal dispute' reflects a tightening of official control of social behaviour—for example, as Louis B. Wright indicates, in 1547 the city

of London forbade women 'to meet together to babble and talk' and ordered husbands to 'keep their wives in their houses' (467). Control was thus based on precarious gendering, spacing and demarcation; as Aristotelian writings identify women with the 'oikos' rather than the 'polis,' the sphere of politics, peace within the household and the stability of the state were concentric, with indistinct lines of demarcation. In Sir John Harrington's treatise, *The Prayse of Private Life*, he notes the dichotomy between the private and the public and idealises private life<sup>1</sup> as non-political. According to Jürgen Habermas, comparison of spaces<sup>2</sup> is often a metaphor for differences between the household and the state. It is an equivocal ancient topos in literature that a woman who crosses the distinction between oikos and polis both physically and verbally is accused of being a shrew and becomes a target for punishment.

A scold or shrew was a prototype figure of an unruly woman with an uncontrolled emotion and 'tongue.' Woman's excessive talkativeness, often signified by the imagery of a tongue and representing complaints and unruliness, was often associated with sexually 'open' space or availability that would bring disorder to the patriarchal society. It was a verbal rebellion against patriarchy and both woman and tongue had to be controlled and enclosed within their proper place. Thus, a scornful or a 'wayward woman' (Klein 279), whose behaviour, as Ruth Kelso describes is without adherence 'to the very human pattern prescribed for men; fidelity, truth, common sense, courage, generosity as well as fortitude, prudence and intelligence' (279-280), required control.

Such control took various forms, including restriction of physical, psychological and verbal freedom within and without the household, as well as punishment. Jacques Revel argues that 'the sixteenth century was a time of intense effort to control social intercourse through rules of civility ... Behavior was judged by the group. The rules of civility were in one sense a technique for limiting or even negating private life' (167). In other words, the domestic problem of an unruly female was judged and handled according to the rules of civility, often through punishment. As Revel argues, if the power of ideology affects the private sphere, then social rules may politicise the private. Since a woman was figuratively seen as a domestic resource that was capable of erring, unruly behaviour was a crime against social order that required mastery by a good husband and punishment by ritual humiliation. The Book of Homilies allowed punishments of scolds, which were often targeted at publicly controlling women's speech:

And, because this vice [of contention] is so much hurtful to the society of a commonwealth, in all well ordered cities these common brawlers and scolders be punished, with a notable kind of pain, as to be set on the cucking stool, pillory, or such like.... If we have forsaken the devil, let us use no more devilish tongues. (154)

Public punishment is always accompanied by the feeling of shame. This public shame was a powerful social instrument for controlling women. According to Norbert Elias, shame 'is fear of social degradation or, more generally, of other people's gestures of superiority' (292); it is a social tool that can turn constraint into self-restraint and advance the civilising process. Kurt Riezler examines public shame and distinguishes between 'pudeur' (shame felt before an act) and 'honte' (shame felt afterwards) (227). Public punishment would be successful if the accused experienced honte and internalised pudeur, which would make it possible to bring her to obedience. In other words, public punishment of an ambiguous being of a shrew would materialise her and visualise an interesting character on stage. Lynda Boose especially notices a Dionysian element in the carnivalesque display of scold punishment. Though I do not intend to depend on new historicist methodology, Boose's historical reading of scolds or shrews in relation to early modern English gender and culture is influential in my later arguments.

The punishment of sexually unruly women also reflected public anxiety. Many conduct books and manuals warned women how perilous sexual misconduct was, and many were punished by being called names such as 'wantons' (Skelton 20) or 'the tempter' (Nashe 30-35). Other punishments included traditional 'charivari' or 'skimmety,' wife-beating (Underdown 120) and usage of shaming devices such as the cucking stool and scold's bridle, by which she was publicly displayed, shamed and tamed. Orthodox punishments such as parading an accused scold through town in a cart or dunking her in water actually provided a carnival for onlookers, exposing the woman's body as an object of male gaze. Punishing instruments, such as the cucking stool or scold's bridle, may denote contemporary silencing metaphors, materially indicating the nature of early modern gender and cultural relations. In other words, such shaming rituals and devices may be considered as an instrument to reconstruct unruly women's history, politicising women's silence.

### 3. Theatre and Audience

Kate's calculated and dilated shrewish rhetoric, which I shall examine later, shows that she is conscious of the relationship between the underlying rhetoric, behaviour and audience reaction. If the metaphorical *theatrum mundi*, as in *As You Like It*,—'All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players' (2.7.138-39)—is exemplified by the theatre, then the theatre reflects the world of the audience by holding a mirror up to nature. Kate's shrewishness and silencing may also reflect society's and women's emotional complexity and ambiguity, as well as that of the theatre audience who are watching her throughout her taming process. Although it may be historically inaccurate to equate the early modern spectacularisation of punishment with controlling of scolds to the male gaze, it cannot be denied that early modern punishments were in fact carried out by exposing an accused person to the watcher's eye. Therefore, the Renaissance society's imposition of control by the beholders who watched public punishment may actually be in parallel with the exposure of the shrew on stage, whose actions are meta-theatrically viewed both on and off stage. The power relationship between the watcher and the watched is significant in explaining the theatrical relationship between the punished shrew and the audience who watches her. Moreover, the theatre, while showing Kate's transformation, also makes evident how the audience (including the actors on stage and audience off stage) prefers to see Kate's ambiguity. The theatre embodies the audience's desire to behold a shrew along with the pleasure, fascination or anxiety that it feels as a result of the threat that she represents (Mackenzie 3); that is, the audience's expectations or shame construct and control the shrew's performance on stage.<sup>3</sup>

Patricia Parker applies the concept of 'male gaze' to early modern texts, and Coppélia Kahn, in her discussion of Lucrece, argues that a woman may be controlled by a 'scopic economy.' If female speech is overpowered by the 'male gaze,' then power relationships may inform *The Shrew*, where Kate may be controlled by the 'gazer' during both her scolding and her subordination. In other words, the theatre becomes a locus of social control that uses Kate as the mediator in a complex relationship with the subject and the object. However, it seems that the microcosmic sphere under scrutiny is not only overpowered by the macrocosmic gaze but also takes advantage of the 'gazing' power; that is to say, Kate's language makes it conspicuous that she

is aware of the audience's expectations and responses as well as the power relationships between the stage and the audience. Thus, while paying respect to these established critical methodologies but avoiding strict gender dichotomies and monolithic readings, it seems necessary to confront the play sceptically in order to explain Kate's motivated shrewishness.

While her shrewishness and subjugation represent the rules of civility, they also arouse the audience's emotions, and it may be suggested that a scold anticipates the effect of publicised punishment and 'gazes' in the audience's reaction. Then, the irony will be that the more Kate's scolding tongue expands, the stronger her taming becomes, thus increasing the audience's voyeuristic enjoyment as well as their overall sense of shame, all the while blurring the power relationship between the watcher and the watched. Therefore, juxtaposed against public power, it is not only Kate who is shamed but also the audience, mostly due to the extremely public nature of Kate's taming process and display. Kate's contradictory and disquieting subordination exacerbates the strangeness of the conclusion, which provokes anxiety among men and leaves the audience uncomfortable. The 'pudeur' felt by Kate is internalised as 'honte,' distressing especially the male audience in the theatre, as *Saturday Review* of 6th November, 1897, records George Bernard Shaw's reaction to the play:<sup>4</sup> 'No man with any decency of feeling can sit it out in the company of a woman without being extremely ashamed of the lord-of-creation moral implied in the wager and the speech put into the woman's own mouth' (Wilson 198). Kate's private space is overpowered by the macrocosmic sphere, consequently silencing her and eliminating her scolding behaviour. A woman's silence garners pity and iconifies her image, and it seems that Kate, by materialising an unstable shrew image, plays the role the audience expects, all the while aware of its uses and effects. For patriarchy, the possibility that the portrayal of scolding and control on stage may evoke the audience's expectations and participation is threatening. In other words, it negates the distinction between the polis and oikos that hold people in their 'proper' place. The creation of guilt or self-blame among the male audience may not be convenient for patriarchy, but Kate challenges this social ideology by taking advantage of such effect. She emphasises the need to present her taming in a public, carnival-like atmosphere, publicising her shaming process and consequence in order to reflect gender/power relations. Her intentions are most apparent in her rhetoric, which is expansive but well-controlled. Thus, it seems the

play is opened to view and politicised. Through her prostration at the play's end, Kate reconstructs the iconography of the male-female, or theatre-audience relationship, creating discomfort among the entire audience as well as providing enjoyment of watching a scold on stage.

#### 4. Motivated Scolding and Subordination

In early modern England, while humanists encouraged women in the educational promotion of literature, they were also concerned with rhetorical amplification and refuted excessive speech. Patricia Parker, in her *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property*, argues that ambivalences in Renaissance literary cultures are acknowledged by the female figures who embody corpulence and volubility and cause textual deferrals. Parker's analysis embodies ecclesiastical economy, where she associates the figure of Rehab in the Old Testament with dilation, expansion and deferral, used as a figure for the space and time of language, discourse and history before a Master's return. Dilation is thus associated with figures of the feminine, referring to the danger of expansion or female excess. It becomes the male task, therefore, to overcome this dilated body of the text, or bring the dilated 'matter' to a point. I suggest it is analogous to an expansion of an unstable ideology of shrewishness that had long been exposed to people's imagination, consequently going out of social control in early modern society. Avoiding Aristotelian or Lacanian understanding of woman as an 'infertile' being or 'lack,' and instead noticing abundance and productivity in Kate's well-calculated rhetoric, her awareness of her own language—what Parker calls the 'fat' rhetoric—is conspicuous. Her 'fat' rhetoric is a sign of the threatening power of fertile femaleness to generate more language; it is an excessive textual talkativeness which needs to be ruled.

Taking note of Parker's analysis, it may be noted that many of the conventional scold figures are associated with an image of expanded tongue as a metaphor. Kate and her model shrews, including Geoffrey Chaucer's Alisoun in 'The Wife of Bath's Tale' and the French medieval writer Christine de Pizan, who are often noted as exemplary scolds, are also known for their rhetorical 'copia.' As Yvonne Yaw claims that part of literature's impact is made through the order of presentation and by cumulative effect (318-332), scolds with dilated rhetoric were popular literary characters that had been repeatedly reconstructed in literary history.



One stereotypical characteristic that Kate seems to have inherited from her predecessors' frames of mind and sensibilities is an excessive attack on authority. For example, Chaucer's Alisoun, who claims to 'speke of wo that is in marriage,' and complains 'Oh the monotonous meanness of his lust ... / It's the injustice ... he is so unjust,' makes her unruliness against authority most clear by citing famous historical names: she begins her story by questioning the teachings of influential Bible characters, such as Solomon, the Apostle, Abraham and Jacob, and infuriates the audience by further alluding to the epistle of *Jerome*, which refers to a spiritual ideal of marriage. Then, speaking of her five marriages, she quotes from Solomon and asks how many times the Scriptures allow one to marry:

Lo, heere the wise kyng, daun Salomon:  
 I trowe he hadde wyves mo than oon.  
 As wolde God it were leveful unto me  
 To be refreshed half so ofte as he! (35-38)

She also verbalises her intention by claiming that she chooses her own state and speaks through her own experience, rather than being authorised by teachings. A similar narrative is cited by Christine de Pizan, who is said to be the first woman writer to attack misogynist writings of her time. In the *The Book of the City of Ladies*, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, or *The Book of the Three Virtues*, and her participation in the literary debate, the *Querelle du Roman de la Rose*,<sup>5</sup> she rejects misogyny and attacks philosophers, poets and orators who unanimously view women as possessors of vice. In *L'Epistre au Dieu d'Amours* and *Le Dit de la Rose*, Pizan accuses Jean de Meun of immorality and falsity and advocates the significance of maintaining a woman's reputation. Jean de Meun's *Le Roman de la Rose* was a popular French medieval allegorical poem which was controversial for many centuries. It is a continuation of Guillaume de Lorris's *Le Roman de la Rose*, a political satire on monastery, celibacy, nobility, women and marriage.<sup>6</sup> The continuing popularity of *Le Roman* shows that Pizan was preposterously challenging an influential piece of writing that symbolised literary power.

Following her preceding scolds, Shakespeare's Kate too stands out against those in power—including her own father, the Paduans and Petruchio—and acts out the roles expected of her as a shrew. She speaks aggressively towards the Paduans, and argues stubbornly with

Baptista: 'Why, and I trust I may go too, may I not? / What, shall I be appointed hours as though, belike, / I knew not what to take and what to leave? Ha!' (1.1.102-4). Kate shows clear signs of bitterness when her father appears to favour Bianca:

What, will you not suffer me? Nay, now I see  
She is your treasure, ...

.....  
Talk not to me! I will go sit and weep  
Till I can find occasion of revenge. (2.1.31-36)

Moreover, after her marriage, when Petruchio has become her master, she continues to resist him: 'The door is open, sir, there lies your way' (3.2.199). Furthermore, just as the word 'revenge' indicates, her language even suggests her physical violence—'It is best put finger in the eye, and she knew why' (1.1.58, 78)—actually physically binding Bianca and striking Petruchio and Hortensio. Kate says, 'My tongue will tell the anger of my heart' (4.3.77); if her tongue is an instrument to express her emotions, then her body politic and body rhetoric may be associated metaphors, where her increasing frustration is expressed in her dilated rhetoric. Kate's rhetorical practices relate to the potentially threatening excess of language and allowing social control. Her 'fat' rhetoric is a sign of the threatening power of fertile femaleness to generate more language; it is an excessive textual garrulity which needs to be disciplined.

However, what makes Kate's case unique and perhaps more emphatic is that the Paduans also use the power of dilation of language, as a result of which knowledge of Kate's shrewishness is widespread, shared, exchanged and taken for granted, just as a shrew figure was experiencing in early modern society. In fact, in act 1, scene 1, she speaks only 11 of the 243 lines; that is, most of the information on her shrewishness is prescribed to the audience by the Paduans, and in the play she simply repeats and expands her already imposed image. For example, Baptista's and the Paduans' language seems all too deliberately stereotypical in imposing the impact of difference between Kate's shrewishness and Bianca's chastity, confirming the traditional images of a model scold and chaste woman, contributing to the myth-making process. Hortensio associates 'scold' with 'tongue,' describing Kate as '[r]enowned in Padua for her scolding tongue' (1.2.96), and announces this as a fault: 'Her only fault—and that is faults enough—

/ Is that she is intolerable curst, / And shrewd and forward so beyond all measure' (1.2.84-86). It is mainly left to Gremio to link Kate's shrewishness to an image of a devil: 'You may go to the devil's dam!'; 'A husband? A devil!'; 'I say a devil. Think'st thou, Hortensio, though her father be very rich, any man is so very a fool to be married to hell?'. The application of metaphors such as 'devil' and 'tongue' is already a way of taking power over Kate since it interprets her in a conventional way and suggests an intention to master her. When Baptista first appears on stage and mentions the name of 'Katherina,' Gremio's first reaction is 'To cart her rather!' (1.1.105, 118, 120-1, 55), inferring a historical act by which prostitutes were punished.

Expansion of knowledge and exchange of information may be analogous to the act of merchandising that is a materialistic image underlying the text. Kate is the object of 'merchandising'—traded over to Petruchio, for whose purpose deprives Kate of food and sleep, and determines his authority: '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....' (3.2.218-21). For the eventual biblical purpose of 'increase and multiply,' Kate must be inventoried with her body as a metaphorical text. While Bianca undergoes inventories of 'coral lips' and 'breath' (165-6), with her chastity obviously meeting the inspection standards, shrewish Kate must be 'opened up' to the public, her wayward 'mouth' substituted for the massive dowry, in order to 'sell' her well. Thus, throughout the play, materialistic expansion and exchange within the blazon tradition takes literal form in the revelation of Kate's shrewishness in many forms and stages, emphasising the effects of rhetorical extension.

Expansion of knowledge among male characters embodies the shaming process for women, and Kate and her preceding scolds take such opportunity to spectacularise their punishment processes, as a result of which they manage to draw public attention and impose anxiety among the audience. For example, Alisoun makes her complaint clear—'no womman of no clerk is preyed' (D 706)<sup>7</sup>—but her revelation of faults of a scold is too obvious and would certainly be noticed. Christine de Pizan was brutally attacked by contemporary writers who criticised her views and acts, and the arguments between her and the other writers turned out into a literary quarrel especially between 1401-2. While the dispute made her notorious among male writers, it also helped to establish her reputation as a female writer who asserted herself in the male-dominated literary realm, interfering

with the writers' male *polis*, determined to continue writing in her own style—'Nothing gives one so much authority as one's own experience' (124).<sup>8</sup> It seems these women show empirically that the publicising of shaming process is only meaningful when their frustrations and counterarguments are expressed and noticed by the public.

Ways of mastering a female body could also be associated with controlling the body of the text. Kate takes advantage of her copious figure to play out the culture's fear of female unruliness and movement away from their 'proper' place, and to impose this anxiety among the audience. Her awareness is clear in her rhetorical mastering: her shrewish rhetoric and behaviour are so well-calculated and expansive that they are clearly noticed by the public, liable for public defamation and punishment, as if to conform to the historical scold image and thus please the audience. For example, she says, 'I must dance barefoot on her [Bianca's] wedding day' (2.1.33), knowing it would certainly draw public interest and attention. Moreover, she explains how she is shamed through the public display of Petruchio's absence on their wedding day:

No shame but mine...

.....

Now must the world point at poor Katherine  
And say, 'Lo, there is mad Petruchio's wife  
If it would please him come and marry her!' (3.2.8-20)

Petruchio's act most obviously shows Kate as an object of ridicule and even leads her to disreputability. In fact, historically, this was a serious issue for women which they must avoid,<sup>9</sup> but Kate emphasises her own dishonour, theatricalising her own shame. Thus, Kate's self-abnegation rhetoric, publicising her self-deposition from society, would need much determination and intent. Furthermore, Kate asks Baptista whether it is his will to 'make a stale of me amongst these mates,' but since Baptista does not reply she is probably addressing people around her, including the audience. In her preceding speech, she uses the third person singular ('she'), embodying objectivity and subjectivity in a complex manner:

Iwis 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. (1.1.62-65)

It is not clear what is meant by 'three-legged stool,' but it may signify a means of punishment—the illustrations in T. N. Brushfield's<sup>10</sup> 'On Obsolete Punishments, With particular reference to those of Cheshire' shows a ducking stool with three legs, rather than four, which is designed to duck a woman in water. The ambivalent subject and object in Kate's speech means the audience may feel they are being addressed.

Kate's rhetoric also discloses that she is conscious of the theatrical space and motivated by audience attention. Her dialogue is logical and shows no signs of any lack of reason, and she learns to align herself with Petruchio, who often attempts to defer the narrative. Even in her first encounter with Petruchio, the dialogue takes the form of a well-considered verse; they pun and play on words that indicate different meanings:

PETRUCHIO: 'Should be'! Should – buzz!

KATHERINA: Well tane, and like a buzzard.

.....

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

KATHERINA: In his tongue.

PETRUCHIO: Whose tongue? (2.1.207-217)

Just as the Paduans spread the knowledge of Kate's shrewishness, Kate also uses the power of contagion to publicise her own self. Kate is aware that her image is expanded, spread out, and translated. In her dialogue with Petruchio, she reacts to his usage of 'move' and for an instant breaks the iambic pentameter, but then continues to play on the word and insinuates punishment:

KATHERINA: 'Moved' – in good time! Let him that moved you  
hither

Remove you hence. I knew you at the first  
You were a movable.

PETRUCHIO: Why, what's a movable?

KATHERINA: A joint stool.

PETRUCHIO: Thou hast hit it. Come sit on me. (2.1.191-4)

The term 'move' may indicate the metaphor of an ancient scold who was moved out of her house into public for punishment, and carried around town in a cucking stool. It shows Kate is conscious of her tongue publicising her own scolding; therefore, the temperament and transformation of the scold are always publicised. It is notable, therefore, that throughout the play, Kate speaks with clear intention, attentive to her own space and rhetoric and its probable effect on the theatre and audience.

### 5. Rhetorical Harmonisation

While it is exciting for the audience to watch a scold on stage, one of the confusions in the play is that Kate does not always remain a shrew, since she subordinates herself to Petruchio and patriarchy in the final scene. Critical differences may be constructed around the tendency to consider Kate as either a winner or a loser—but, bearing in mind the cases of 'The Wife of Bath's Tale' and Christine de Pizan, both of which show the necessity of antiphrasis, Kate's rhetorical changes may also indicate that she has learned to negotiate with Petruchio.

Although Kate and Petruchio seem to speak opposite languages, in fact their words bear similarities and will gradually be brought closer to each other. One of the most obvious similar forms used is antonym—this is often utilised by Petruchio, while it also indicates Kate's overall emotional state. Petruchio, after bidding with Baptista over the dowry, 'bargains' with Kate herself, including many antonyms:

For thou art pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous,  
But slow in speech, yet sweet as springtime flowers.  
Thou canst not frown, thou canst not look askance,  
Nor bite the lip as angry wenches will,  
Nor hast thou pleasure to be cross in talk,  
But thou with mildness entertain'st thy wooers,  
With gentle conference, soft and affable. (2.1.235-241)

He employs a Petrarchan comparison of Kate with Diana, calls her 'sweet' and 'beauty,' and as if to answer his own question—'Why does the world report that Kate doth limp?'—he includes a counterargument in his speech. Furthermore, his following statement is well-constructed, edited and reasoned:

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,  
 For she's not forward, but modest as the dove;  
 She is not hot, but temperate as the morn;  
 For patience she will prove a second Grissel,  
 And Roman Lucrece for her chastity.  
 And, to conclude, we have 'greed so well together  
 That upon Sunday is the wedding day. (2.1.279-287)

We notice that Petruchio is also fascinated by his own speech—his imagination swells with image of Kate hanging about his 'neck,' kissing him, and 'protesting oath on oath.' Kate immediately notices the structure of his language: 'Where did you study all this goodly speech?' (2.1.252). At the same time, Petruchio's contradiction or 'crossing' continues in act 4, where he calls the sun the moon and Kate is invited to cross and join in expanding its image, 'And be it moon or sun or what you please' (4.5.11). Kate gradually learns to cooperate with Petruchio to become in harmony with him in both speech form and content. After their wedding, she pleads with Petruchio to stay until dinner and reveals her intention to compromise by completing the verse lines that Petruchio starts:

PETRUCHIO: It may not be.  
 KATHERINA: Let me entreat you.  
 PETRUCHIO: It cannot be.  
 KATHERINA: Let me entreat you.  
 PETRUCHIO: I am content.  
 KATHERINA: Are you content to stay? (3.2.189-191)

Although she later bursts out, in fierce anger and rejection, 'I see a woman may be made a fool / If she had not a spirit to resist' (3.2.209-210), she no longer speaks after this in this scene and exits with Petruchio. Soon, she learns to accord with Petruchio by anticipating his probable reactions, again completing and rhyming with his verse:

PETRUCHIO: I say it is the moon.  
 KATHERINA: I know it is the moon.  
 PETRUCHIO: Nay then you lie, it is the blessed sun.  
 KATHERINA: Then God be blessed, 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 Katherine. (4.5.16-22)

When they meet Vincentio on their way back to Padua, Kate does exactly what Petruchio had done to her during wooing: 'Young budding virgin, fair and fresh and sweet' (4.5.36)—imitating Petruchio's rhetorical structures as an indication that she is probably beginning to accept him. Transformation in Kate's emotional tendencies becomes more evident as her language becomes more direct. When Petruchio does not appear on their wedding day, she does not wish that the crowd had not seen her, but rather exclaims 'Would Katherine had never seen him though!' (3.2.26), probably indicating that she has already been contaminated with love through words and eyes.

Kate's emotional tendency towards Petruchio is further evident in act 5. Despite much scolding, her usage of verse has been constant but defiant towards Petruchio, but towards the end of act 5, scene 1, the metrical foot becomes shorter—creating a bouncy image—and she finally kisses him and awkwardly completes his rhyme:

PETRUCHIO: Why then, let's home again.  
 [To Grumio] Come, sirrah, let's away.  
 KATHERINA: Nay, I will give thee a kiss.  
 [She kisses him.]  
 Now pray thee, love, stay. (5.1.120-3)

As soon as Kate appears to have become domesticated, new problems arise, again publicly, in the behaviour of Bianca and the widow, providing a new target of attention for the audience.

Kate's final speech contradicts her previous words and deeds, and is often the centre of critical arguments:

I am ashamed that women are so simple  
 To offer war where they should kneel for peace,  
 Or seek for rule, supremacy and sway,  
 When they are bound to serve, love and obey...  
 Come, come, you froward and unable worms,  
 My mind hath been as big as one of yours,  
 My heart as great, my reason haply more,  
 To bandy word for word and frown for frown.



But now I see our lances are but straws,  
 Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare,  
 That seeming to be most which we indeed least are. (5.2.161-64)

Kate's ordered rhetoric is now the copy of conduct books, well-tamed and feminised, and many may feel uncomfortable with her rhetorically exaggerated 'proper'-ness. However, in this there are many contradictions and uncertain moments, in addition to the fact that the shrew concept had never been concrete anyway. For example, she is assumed to be addressing women but even this is uncertain since there is no sense of subjectivity: 'I' and 'you' and 'we' are positioned ambiguously, and the lack of subjectivity makes the audience wonder whether Kate is being truthful or merely acting out her required role as a 'chaste' wife. We are already aware of the significance of antiphrasis in Christine de Pizan's self-contradictory views, where she interferes with the *polis* through writing but at the same time criticises wayward women severely: she attacks women who go on pilgrimages for other than religious reasons, who go 'to get away from the town in order to go somewhere to play about or kick up her heels in some merry company,' calling it merely 'sin and wickedness.' She insists, in *The Book of the Three Virtues*, that women should not 'gad about town, they have no need to go from church to church, for "God is everywhere"' (152, 168). In *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Pizan advises women not to be wrathful, but 'reserved' (25). Furthermore, she emphasises the importance of the division of labour according to gender, maintaining that the specific tasks performed by men and women are based on the fact that God ordained men and women with different qualities and attributes (29), also reminding us of Kate's words. Pizan alludes to the danger of moving too far beyond a woman's own spheres of life: 'it's not necessary for the public good for women to go around doing what men are supposed to do' (57-58).

These views echo contemporary conduct books and marriage treatises, and Pizan's act of writing contradicts her espoused views. However, a sceptical reading may enable us to read her text differently: what Pizan has achieved is to show the absurdity of a lasting debate between the sexes<sup>11</sup> and powers, raising shameful emotions among readers and writers. Moments reflecting Pizan's unexplained self-contradiction are conspicuous in Kate's speech, and however the audience interprets Kate's subordination, they may now see themselves more objectively. Going back to Kate's final speech, therefore, the

addition of a sense of ambiguity or uncertainty is another way of drawing audience attention. Kate may be publicised as evidence of the success of mastery or still as a motivated shrew. Whichever way she is seen, Kate's condition is again a matter of audience 'inventory,' raising embarrassment among them for repeated 'battle' between the sexes and powers as well as voyeuristic enjoyment, and she continues to play with the rhetorical display that theatricalises her.

## 6. Conclusion

The social ideology that embodies the rule of civility, and which affects the dynamic relationship between the public and the private, may dominate Kate's decisions with regard to her enactments of scolding and subordination, as is evident in her excessive rhetoric. However, an ironic reading of her rhetoric also reveals her intention to materialise the shrew-figure and expose her own shaming process. At the same time, she captures the overall involvement of the viewers; that is, the audience brings expectations to the play and the stage reflects what the audience wishes to see. Aware of the rhetorical effects, theatrical power and the audience's desires, Kate turns the exhibition of her taming into a spectacle and encourages audience participation in the publicising of her shaming and taming, therefore sharing the responsibility for creating and punishing a scold. At the same time, just as historical punishments were intended to shame and silence scolds, Kate's claim can only manifest itself through scolding and visible acts, and the heterodoxy invites viewers to comprehend the reality of the power relations generated by the social rules and roles. Eventually, Kate's scolding negates spatial distinctions and threatens members of the audience. However, it is unlikely that the dramatist intends to deny the 'rules of civility' by overturning power politics, and by the play's end, Kate is conveniently enclosed and domesticated precisely when the audience feels that it is time for her to return to a familial place. There is no public overthrow of the relationship between the tamer and the tamed. The tamed remains tamed, at least in public.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Idealisation of the private life includes religious contemplation, solitude and the country, whereas public life involves politics, business and the city.

<sup>2</sup> The distinction between public and private spaces during the Renaissance was unclear. In principle, a private space simply meant a walled-in area, while public areas were those outside of that space.

<sup>3</sup> In George Mackenzie's treatise, *A Moral Essay, Preferring Solitude to Publick Employment*, the public is depicted by the theatre, while a social metaphor is employed to depict the private space:

The world is a Comedy, where every man acts that part which providence hath assigned him; and as it is esteemed more noble to look on then to act, so really, I know no securer box, from which to behold it, then a safe solitude, and it is easier to feel then to express the pleasure which may be taken in standing aloof, and in contemplating the reelings of the multitude, the excentric motions of great men. (Mackenzie 3)

<sup>4</sup> Despite the fact that the productions of Granville-Barker, Irving, and Tree that Shaw saw may have exaggerated the effects, Shaw is known for his contribution in his comments as a man of the theatre. (Siegel 129)

<sup>5</sup> Pizan wrote *The Book of the City of Ladies* between 1404 and 1405, and *The Book of the Three Virtues*, also known as *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* in 1405, her sequel to *The City of Ladies*.

<sup>6</sup> Due to the everlasting popularity of *Le Roman de la Rose*, Meun added to the original, exposing in his portion women's vices and deception through satirical fabliaux.

<sup>7</sup> The Clerk also agrees that 'clerkes preise wommen but a lite' (E 935-38).

<sup>8</sup> See also *The Book of the City of Ladies* 8-9; *La Querelle de la Rose: Letters and Documents* 53, 143.

<sup>9</sup> The topic is also dealt with by Shakespeare in *Much Ado About Nothing*, where Hero is jilted by Claudio on their wedding day, her stained reputation leaving her only the choice of 'death.'

<sup>10</sup> T. N. Brushfield was a member of the Chester Archaeological Society in the County of Chester.

<sup>11</sup> Pizan concludes her arguments by explaining the moral meaning of the debate over the *Roman de la Rose* in the early fifteenth century: 'You understand the book in one way, and I quite the opposite'. Also, 'I don't know why we are debating these questions so fully, for I do not believe that we will be able to change each other's opinions'. See *La Querelle de la Rose: Letters and Documents* 125, 140.

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