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Cinematic Interpretations of Katharina in William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*

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University Honors Thesis:

Cinematic Interpretations of
Katharina in William Shakespeare's
The Taming of the Shrew

Nicole K. Kirkham
Dr. Mary-Ellen Lamb, Advisor
Fall 1999

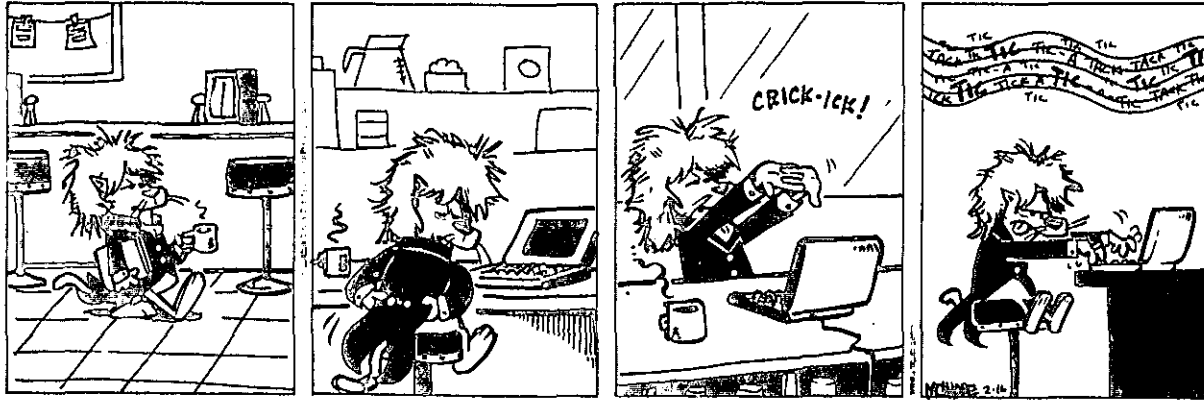
William Shakespeare



The Taming of the Shrew

In Loving Memory of My Only Kate

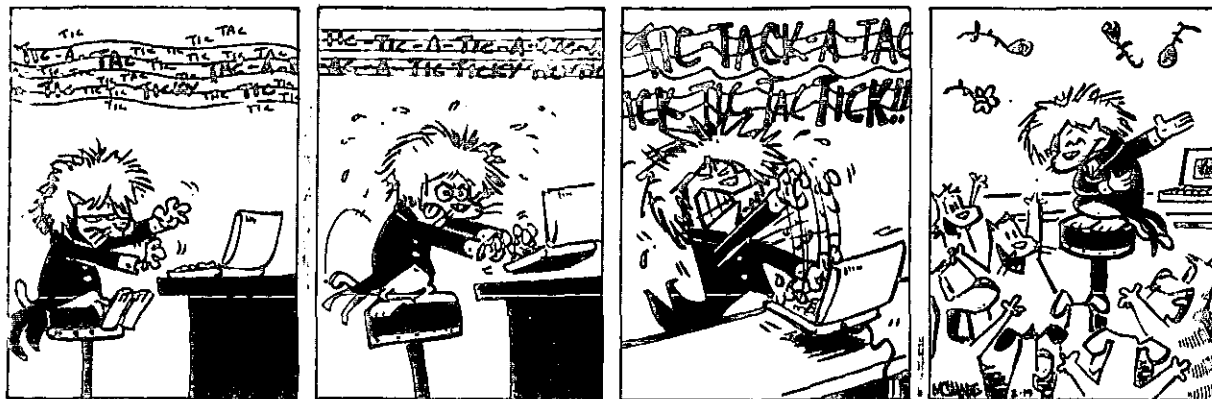
CITIZEN DOG By Mark O'Hare



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William Shakespeare, arguably the greatest English writer of all time, wrote with a masterful skill of characterization. He created characters that go far and above most in their depth of personality. In his plays, Shakespeare was able to create small universes that the reader has the privilege of observing. This meticulous attention to detail draws me to wonder why so very little is known of Katharina in *The Taming of The Shrew*. Katharina is a central character in the plot, but Shakespeare does not specifically introduce Katharina to his audience with nearly the same artful touch that he does with other characters.

Katharina is an extremely complex character, created by the master of multiple and hidden meanings. Her complexity lies not necessarily in what Shakespeare has written about her, but instead in what Shakespeare allows his reader to assume about Katharina. For this reason, the cinematic interpretations of Katharina can vary significantly based on the ideas of the producers or directors. *Kiss Me Kate* and *10 Things I Hate About You* provide two different pictures of the character of Katharina and her anger based on the time in which the textual interpretation was made rather than the original intent of the text. Both films seem to lack a real understanding of the Katharina character, by herself or by others, although *10 Things* does provide a great deal of justification for the Katharina character's anger and attitude. Both interpretations seem plausible because it is easy for a critical reader to stretch the limits of their own textual reading for Katharina because so much of her character sketch is left to the reader.

Indeed, the reader's perspective of Katharina is shaped, primarily, by the first impression that the reader gets of Katharina, which is neither violent nor shrewish.

Katharina is introduced in the text by asking her father "I pray you, sir, is it your will/To make a stale of me amongst these mates? (1.1.57-8). How interesting that the reader's impressions of Katharina are based on the public ridicule that shames her as opposed to the kind of personality that she might possess. This may very well be a device used by Shakespeare to show how easily perceptions can be shaped, whether factually true or not, based on public opinion. This treatment of Katharina continues throughout the first scene of Act One by various members of the town of Padua. One might consider that Katharina could be at the very end of her rope, feeling that she has nothing to lose in acting out the stereotype that has been placed upon her. If that is the way that she can get attention from the people, then she will do so to try to replace the attention that is lacking towards Katharina from her father. Conversely, one might consider that Katharina is a mean spirited person who deserves all of the negative responses from the townspeople.

The only thing that the reader knows for sure is that Shakespeare does not specifically introduce us to the character of Katharina beyond the reputation that she holds. Shakespeare does not give any reasons or explanations for that reputation, but allows the reader to assume that Katharina is a shrew who should be tamed. By allowing and encouraging the reader to come to this conclusion, the idea that Katharina is a shrew will be more firmly placed in the minds of the readers since the readers have "discovered" this fact for themselves, or so Shakespeare lets them think.

Isn't it possible that when a character such as Katharina is somewhat cold to others, she could be acted as protecting herself from the hurt that she has no doubt suffered at the hands of people turning on her? From this interpretation, if she is hard on

people, then they will not want to get close and they cannot hurt her if they are not close. The conversation between Katharina and Petruchio in Act 2, scene 1 seems to be a match of equal intellects. I contend that when Katharina says “Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing./ They call me Katharine that do talk of me” (2.1.183-4), she is not only retaliating against Petruchio simplifying her name, but also working to guard herself against any future hurt that she might incur from this man.

Act 3 scene 2 provides another characterization perspective for Katharina. After Tranio tells Katharina that Petruchio means well despite his actions, Katharina says, “Would Katharine had never seen him though!” (3.2.26) before she exits weeping. One possible meaning for this is that Katharina is so very unhappy that she has to marry Petruchio that she weeps and wishes that she had never seen him. Another possibility is that Katharina actually did get some hope up that she would marry him and move onto a better life, but he was ditching her at the marriage alter. After he has hurt her in this manner, she then goes about treating Petruchio just as badly as she seems to treat every other person in the town who thinks ill of her. This would account for her change of attitude after Petruchio does appear. In either case, these small characterizations of Katharina provide varying perspectives on her person. To say the least, her true characterization is very much in doubt.

In an interesting account, Hodgdon cites three textual examples when Petruchio is more of a shrew than Katharina, but the reader cannot think of Petruchio as a shrew because the term shrew is inherently female (540). If the reader is made to think that Katharina is the shrew who must be tamed, then how should the reader respond to

Petruchio and his shrewish behavior? It could be argued that this course of events puts the characterization of Petruchio in question, but it does not. Petruchio is a man who is embraced by his fellow man, even Baptista, Katharina's father. Petruchio's behavior casts more doubt or ambiguity on the characterization of Katharina. If he displays some of the qualities from the role that she is supposed to be playing, then what role is she playing? By Petruchio's shrewish behavior, Katharina's position is further muddled.

Coppelia Kahn also discusses the nature of being a shrew as relates to the character of Petruchio. Kahn writes, "The hallmark of a shrew is her scolding tongue and loud raucous voice- a verbal violence befitting woman, since her limbs are traditionally weak" (92). In an account by account comparison of Katharina and Petruchio, Kahn points out, Petruchio's violence and loudness far outweigh and overshadow those of Katharina save the fact that Petruchio is a man. Katharina strikes out verbally against men after she has been provoked or intimidated based on her status as a female (93). She does not sit idly by as a man degrades her or her position. Since we know very little about Katharina, the reader cannot be sure if she has always reacted in this manner or if she just got sick of the male-dominated behavior and decided to strike back in the only way possible for a woman at that time, verbally.

Linda Boose pays particular attention to Katharina's much talked about final speech, "an address targeted at some presumptive Everywoman" (180), where Katharina lectures on what it is to be a good wife. It is hard to say who the character of Katharina is at that pivotal point. One idea is that Katharina has broken down the barriers between the shrew- and good-wife in a manner that makes her just like her sister (180). Another idea

is that Katharina is getting the last laugh because she is feeding her audience what they want to hear, but what she does not at all agree with. It is plausible to see Katharina manipulating the situation to suit her own needs. In a way, this is not completely dissimilar to the actions of the townsmen gossiping wildly about Katharina without specific, verbalized proof. A third interpretive possibility is to see Katharina as a former shrew who, by the hands of her husband, has overcome her evil womanly ways in order to be the “good wife”, who responds only to the wishes and will of her husband who she is completely devoted to.

There are many interpretations of Katharina’s final speech. The way that the reader understands the final speech depends on the reader’s perceptions of Katharina throughout the play. The reason that there is so much interpretive leeway in the end is because Shakespeare never tells the reader what to think or how to feel about Katharina. For many readers, it seems to me, it is not until the very end of the play until they realize that they have been working off of their own assumptions rather than any fact given by Shakespeare. While the reader may have been laughing about Petruchio’s treatment of Katharina or his overall sense of personal instability, the reader should, at the end of the work, realize that Katharina has once again slipped between the cracks of understanding. First the townspeople and now the reader of the play has judged Katharina, probably unfairly. So, this woman will go on living in a society that will probably never understand her because they will never move beyond what they think they know about her to find out who she really is. This speaks volumes for the assumed and real roles of the female.

Coppelia Kahn offers some very interesting critical perspectives on the nature of the characterization of Katharina and Petruchio. Kahn argues that “Shakespeare molds her (Katharina) to the needs of farce” (88) based on Katharina’s reactions to the ever-changing will of Petruchio. In this way, Katharina is not even her own character, but a literary device used to characterize Petruchio and effectively produce farce. Katharina could have been anyone with any level of anger because “this play satirizes not woman herself in the person of the shrew, but *male attitudes toward women*” (89). The focus of Kahn’s essay is clearly on the character of Petruchio and his central dominance in Shakespeare’s plot and not on the character of Katharina. By looking closer at Petruchio, we gain another perspective of Katharina who continues to be evaluated based on the dominant male figures that surround her.

Kahn contends that “It is Kate’s submission to him which makes Petruchio a man, finally and indisputably” (100)”. Reflecting on how Katharina’s “submission” may or may not be authentic, this speaks very poorly for the superficial character of Petruchio, and the male-dominated society that he seems to represent. Along these lines, Kahn presents that the absurdities revolving around Petruchio, insisting that Katharina declare that the sun is really the moon and vice versa, works to say that he is right just because he is a man, whether or not he is factually right or wrong (100). If the reader accepts this as true, then Katharina has a great deal more control than a cursory reading of the text might indicate. The stereotypical meek female role that Katharina seemingly displays at the end of the play, while well and good on a superficial level, is not at all the reality that Shakespeare creates under closer observation and interpretation. Katharina holds the

power and control to the manliness, a superior quality, of Petruchio. This is contrary to the surface interpretation of the text and the societal ideals of the time that promoted the point that women are the weaker gender who should, by their very nature, be subservient to their husbands.

Obviously, there is a great deal to be said, or rather that cannot be said with any degree of certainty, about the character of Katharina in *The Taming of the Shrew* based on Shakespeare's text. When a director decides to make a movie from the text, he or she needs to make some crucial decisions about how they are going to portray Katharina. A director might take their interpretation from the time that the movie is made, the director's personal views on the subject, the societal views of the time, or any number of other factors. The way that the director interprets the play colors the way that the audience appreciates the work. The character of Katharina, because Shakespeare leaves her so open to various interpretations, is changed and augmented through the eyes of the director. The purpose of this paper is to look at two directors' cinematic visions of the character of Katharina and her interactions with the other characters in the production.

In the 1950's, a woman most likely would have been considered to be angry if she challenged the status quo and actively tried to pursue some sort of change. In this way, an angry woman can be seen as the prototype for a feminist. The anger of Katharina is shown in *Kiss Me Kate* through the actions of both the Katharina and Lilli characters. Lilli is angry about a failed marriage and her station in life as a retiring actress. Lilli is angry because she still answers to Fred, even when he uses and manipulates her. The manipulation and Lilli's on stage revenge, of sorts, can be seen through the

characterization of Katharina. Katharina is played from a perspective that no one in the theatre or film audience could possibly understand because they do not know the whole story.

I think that this is a critical point in reflecting on the anger of Katharina in Shakespeare's text: No one can really understand Katharina because no one has really gotten to know her well enough to know the whole story. One cannot fairly be expected to fit into societal expectations if those expectations are not introduced in a logical and effective manner. If no one has taken the time to understand Katharina, then why would she try to mold to the societal norms, which have no doubt been dictated to her as fact because no one could take the time to talk to her. Katharina continually challenges the threshold of acceptance regarding her behavior because she can.

I wonder why the audience must think of Shakespeare's textual Katharina as the character in the "wrong" because of her problems fitting in with the societal norms which we are to consider to be right or just. Katharina does not follow blindly or quietly, as a woman of the time would. Katharina does not obey what the male model says just because he is male, but looks to find her own truth in situations. Does she challenge the threshold of acceptance because of her problems or because of the anger that she associates with them? I contend that she challenges audiences of all kinds because she will not fade away into nothingness when confronted with thoughts, ideas, or situations, such as a bad marital match, that she does not approve of or condone. This is very similar to the way in which Lilli reacts to Fred's challenge, of sorts, to play the Katharina character in his theatrical production. I contend that the character of Lilli, just like the

character of Katharina that she plays, cannot walk away from confrontation as was expected of a woman of her time. Couldn't we just as easily see Petruchio as being an immature and stupid man who wants his way merely for the sake of wanting things his way? This also seems like a societal problem that should challenge the audience to consider his motives and their rather inappropriate nature. Even in the 1950's, with a popular television show entitled "Father Knows Best," the idea of a man doing whatever he wants based on his whims, should have seemed somewhat far-fetched to the film and theatre audiences. Fred manipulates Lilli into playing the Katharina role while still telling Lois that she will be able to have the role. Fred plays both sides of the fence in order to reach his optimum personal gain. What's more, Lilli and Lois not only let him get away with it, but contribute to his power by playing the game. Fred seems to be in this venture for financial gain and the best way for him to do that is to get his ex-wife to play the lead female role of Katharina. Couldn't we just as easily portray Petruchio as being a money-hungry slovenly brute who marries Katharina just for the financial gain? What kind of a man marries a woman for money as opposed to establishing himself in a work environment and earning money to bring home to provide for his family? Certainly, this is not the picture of the type of man who exudes the confidence that Petruchio and Fred do in *Kiss Me Kate*. Both Lilli and Katharina are angry because of the double standards that are not only established, but stoically maintained by the societal norms that surround them. Everyone including Lilli who is supposed to be playing the part of Katharina, throughout the movie *Kiss Me Kate* misunderstands Katharina. Everyone has ulterior motives and the character of Katharina is once again thrown to the

side. For this reason, the character of Katharina, as performed by Lilli is very angry throughout the work.

Sidney's 1953 *Kiss Me Kate* was a musical that showed both the onstage and off-stage lives of the Petruchio/Fred and Katharina/Lilli characters. From the very beginning of the movie, Fred is portrayed as a man who needs control by manipulating Lilli through psychological games without particular reservations. This is especially interesting when the film audience can consider the text where Petruchio played psychological games with Katharina in order to exert his control. Petruchio left Katharina without food and he made her lie to him outright about the time of day in order to make Petruchio feel as if he had tamed his wife into subservient submission. Fred wants Lilli to play the part of Katharina in his upcoming production and he pulls out all the stops to woo her. While Petruchio uses physical limitations to manipulate Katharina in the text, Fred uses emotional manipulation to coax Lilli into playing the role of Katharina. Fred has prepared a presentation that Lilli cannot refuse by playing a romantic song with pictures of Lilli's glory days on stage prominently displayed on the piano. Fred finally reels Lilli into the role by showing her pictures of the gowns that the Katharina character would wear, but Fred says that Lois will look fine in them. This is not unlike the textual Petruchio example where Petruchio refuses to let Katharina have the beautiful gown to show her that he is her boss and to drive home the message to her that anything that Petruchio says goes. Lilli comes into the situation angry for reasons that are not specifically spelled out to the audience. We know that there was a divorce after Fred and Lilli had been partners on and off-stage for many successful years. Cole Porter sits at the

piano and, based on Fred's suggestion, plays the love song, "So in Love With You Am I," for Fred and Lilli to sing through together. At first Lilli has a vacant look and attitude about her singing, but before long their eyes lock and Lilli opens up her voice to Fred. This change is drastic and significant. It almost seems as if Lilli, through her voice, is also opening her soul to Fred again through this song, and becoming less angry. It may be seen as a renewal or admittance to the love that these two share that made Lilli so angry to have lost it. As Fred sings, Lilli looks at the pictures on his piano of Fred and Lilli in various performances and the film audience can almost see her losing her anger in the place of love and admiration not necessarily for Fred, but for what they had shared together. From this point, flirtation and a close physical proximity ensue to the point that at the end of the song, the film audience expects to see them kiss. Instead of a kiss, there is a knock on the door as Miss Lois Lane, Fred's new girlfriend, arrives to audition for the part of Bianca, which does not at all fit Lois' persona. To me, this sequence of scenes is in extremely important in acknowledging and appreciating the anger of Lilli. The film audience begins to see Lilli trusting Fred again and following her heart, but the presence of Lois reminds Lilli that Fred is a manipulator and that she has fallen prey to his games. This may be related to Katharina's textual interpretations as well because it seems very plausible that, in the past, Katharina may have gotten her hopes up based on a man only to have them squashed by his insensitivity. When someone has been hurt, it is often difficult to readily trust again. This lack of trust could certainly be interpreted as anger towards the world in general, especially if the cause of her hurt was someone like her father who had a great deal of influence in the community. Since Lilli is playing the role

of Katharina, it is imperative for the audience to have some appreciation for the various forms of anger that Lilli brings to the role, as Lilli's anger influences Katharina's portrayal. Although her anger does not need any sort of justification, Sidney gives some reasoning by showing the underlying true love that Lilli still feels for Fred and his manipulation of the situation. Lilli, once she starts singing, is portrayed as a woman who is still madly in love with her ex-husband. At the same time, the film audience already knows that Fred has chosen that song specifically because he knows that Lilli is a pushover for sentiment. Fred takes advantage of Lilli in one of the worst ways possible, emotionally. The arrival of Lois snaps Lilli out of whatever Fred-induced trance she may have been in and re-opens her eyes to the foulness of Fred's abuse. Lilli's anger follows, stronger than ever, and the audience has an understanding of why Lilli is angry. This foreshadows the manipulation that Sidney's Petruchio uses on Katharina to try to achieve his end. It works to establish a specific correlation between the characters of Fred and Petruchio as they treat women.

Sidney's direction of this particular sentiment is furthered by the original portrayal of the Bianca character, Lois Lane. Lilli gets more and more angry as she sees the new type of woman that Fred is involved with. Lois is a dancer at the Copa. She auditions for the part of Bianca singing "Too Darn Hot," a song that, like Lois' bright pink seductive clothing, is just not in keeping with the Shakespearean text. Lois' lack of depth is seen, especially, as she dances in front of the mirror. Clearly, Lois is just a body. It seems extremely logical for this to upset Lilli because the man that she loves is now with someone who is clearly inferior to Lilli in any and every way that could be

construed as important. It hurts any woman to see the man that she loves with someone else, but Lilli sees Fred with someone who, by her very presence, undermines the sanctity of the relationship that Fred and Lilli had as husband and wife. Lilli is made jealous by the presence and actions of Lois. Lilli, in retrospect, sees that she was blinded by love to Fred's true behavior and that he is not the person that she thought that he was. This makes Lilli, a strong woman in her own right, angry. This does not seem to apply to a textual reading of Katharina unless you read Katharina as being extremely jealous of Bianca and her popularity. It does not seem, from the text, that Katharina ever had any suitors who might choose other women to make her jealous.

Lilli hesitates to take the part of Katharina, but after she is basically challenged and manipulated by Fred to do it, she accepts. She seems to accept to prove to Fred that she is the best actress and to keep Lois from getting the part. This is an angry response to Fred's moving on to dating Lois, who is portrayed as a less than wonderful actress. This is not completely separated from the critical notion that Shakespeare's Katharina never really submits to Petruchio in the manner that he thinks that she does, but that Katharina is just playing Petruchio's game in order to reach an end. For Shakespeare's Katharina, I might suggest that her end is a change in the public opinion of her for the better. It seems that this is the only concrete thing that can change Katharina's public life for the better. Whether or not Shakespeare's Katharina cares what others think of her, they still have some impact on her because of their rumors or gossiping. Shakespeare's Katharina cannot avoid the talk of the townspeople, but she can make it less harmful to her. For Lilli, it seems that her end is to make a mockery of Fred and to show him that she is far

superior to Lois or anyone else that Fred might end up with by means of her professional advancement. This conflict of interests between Lilli and the character that she is supposed to play comes through in the movie production. It seems a great deal easier for the film audience to focus on Lilli rather than Katharina because Lilli has a hard time staying with the Katharina character. Lilli does not seem devoted to the role, but more interested in what she may gain as a result of the role. It seems that Shakespeare's Katharina also has a great deal to gain from playing a part, that of an obedient wife. The reader gets the distinct impression that Katharina's life would be comfortable and even possibly fulfilling if she can convince Petruchio that she is an ideal wife. Shakespeare's Katharina is already married to Petruchio, so she may as well make the best of her situation and play the role that will provide her with the most significant gain in the end.

Sidney's production does not show only Fred and Lilli manipulating each other, but also Sidney manipulating the feelings of the film audience. Lois and her real boyfriend, Bill Graham, who is also in the cast, help Lilli in making Fred look like a fool. Bill and Lois are both using Fred in order to further their careers: The user, Fred, is being used. As the action turns back to Fred and Lilli, the film audience sees them arguing from windows about Lilli calling Fred a louse rather solidly. Lilli slams her window angrily as she screams louse again. Fred comes over into Lilli's dressing room to confront her and he is met with a gift from Lilli to mark the first anniversary of their divorce, the cork from their first bottle of champagne. Her anger from just a few moments before seems to disappear when they reminisce about their first years together by dancing a waltz from their first show. They end up at the same window that had been

previously slammed with admiration in their eyes for each other before they start trying to outdo each other with dancing and singing. This represents Fred and Lilli's struggle for stage-actor attention which represents a form of Petruchio and Katharina's struggle for control and dominance on stage. Fred dips Lilli while they are still dancing, which Sidney filmed using the reflection from a mirror. This seems especially poignant considering the portrayal of Lois in her mirror earlier. Fred and Lilli, as seen through the mirror, show an "another" quality, the loss of which could very understandably make Lilli angry. Sidney directed this to make the reflection look as if the two kiss, but after the false kiss, Sidney spans out in order to catch the real kiss which is full of passion. The real kiss is not something that can be seen through the mirror, it is too true. At the same time that all of this is going on, Lilli also knows that Fred is with someone else and that he has repeatedly manipulated her to reach his end. So, while this scene and the kiss seem to be true, the film audience is left wondering what is the truth of the situation and from who's perspective. Additionally, the film audience is left to wonder how they would react to Lilli's situation and whether or not Lilli's anger is justified or adequate.

From this point, it becomes difficult to differentiate the anger of Lilli from the anger of Katharina, the motivations of Fred from the motivations of Petruchio. It seems that the Lilli and Katharina characters have become one. The film audience sees Lilli looking out her closed window. The camera then spans to the object of her gaze, the marquis sign for the production. As Sidney directs the camera back to Lilli, it seems that she is no longer Lilli, but has transformed into the role of Katharina. It seems that her anger and, indeed, her entire personality are ready to take on the new role. Similarly, the

next time that the film audience sees Fred, he is very physically changed with a goatee and brightly colored clothing that constitute his change into Petruchio. Sidney, in his direction, executed this intertwining of plots masterfully so that the film audience has a hard time interpreting one without thinking about the other. The two plots are not separate entities.

After the play begins and the plot is somewhat established by the speech of Baptista, Petruchio picks at his goatee in a very stereotypical evil manner saying that he was born to tame a shrew. This seems parallel to the games and trickery exhibited by Fred earlier in order to get Lilli to take the part of Katharina. Additionally, Petruchio sings with great pride to the whole city: "I come to wife it wealthfully in Padua. If wealthfully, then happily in Padua." In this way, Petruchio negates any sense of individual importance that Katharina might have. Petruchio sings this with a spotlight on him and everyone else blacked out. At the end of the song, a crowd has gathered on stage and cheers in agreement. He puts her down in front of her city, which would have been everyone that she had any real contact with. This is a little different from the text because in the text Petruchio need not insult Katharina in front of anyone. Katharina's reputation is damaged enough without any words from Petruchio. When faced with the film situation, it seems to me that she had two options: either take it to heart and stay quiet or speak out angrily at this terrible injustice being done to her. Of course, Katharina chose the latter just as the film audience would have expected Lilli to take, which further illustrates that Lilli acts more as herself than in character. The most interesting aspect of this scene is the way that Petruchio sings with a spotlight and everyone else is blacked

out. This could be Sidney's direction showing how self-centered Petruchio really is and that no one else mattered, or this could be an attempt by Sidney to undermine the confidence level that is most often exhibited by Petruchio. In the latter way, Petruchio would be a more kindred spirit to Fred because they would both talk the talk, but concurrently be afraid to really show it. In either case, Petruchio's actions make Katharina angry because he is just another person who does not at all know her, nor plan to get to know her, and he wants to run her life.

While playing Katharina, Lilli sends Fred, who is playing Petruchio, amorous gazes based on Lilli's idea that Fred gave her flowers before the show began as he always used to. The theatre audience does not have the same opportunity as the film audience has to see that the under-lying sense of love stems from the Fred and Lilli relationship as opposed to the Katharina and Petruchio relationship. Fred's butler, Paul, misdelivered the flowers just before the show began. The flowers were supposed to go to Lois, but Paul gave them to Lilli. Lilli was so touched that despite the fact that she did not have time to read the card at that moment, because they had to be on stage, she put it into her dress to save for later. Lilli cannot let Fred know that she still wants to be with him for the sake of her pride, but her anger disappeared to be replaced by schoolgirl lust when she held the card. She puts forth a very tough exterior act, but on the inside she is still madly in love with Fred.

Lilli becomes Katharina again as she reads the card from Petruchio. Petruchio sings a love song to Katharina as she is on a balcony with the bouquet of flowers. The scene is very reminiscent of the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* in appearance.

While Petruchio is singing, Lilli breaks character and takes a moment to read the card that came with the flowers. Of course, the card was not meant for or addressing her. This continues to show the underlying jealousy motif throughout the movie. Fred sees Lilli going for the card and he also breaks character, while continuing to sing, to try to convince Lilli not to read the card. Lilli becomes absolutely furious because Fred has, once again, been caught in the middle of his half-trues and dishonesty.

At this point, Katharina and Lilli are one character who is extremely angry with the Fred and Petruchio personas that are also represented on stage. Her anger is apparent to everyone as she begins to ad lib. Katharina throws the flowers and rips up the note, throwing the pieces at Petruchio. Fred, out of character, reminds Lilli that they are on stage, but that character is no longer Lilli. The Katharina in the character will not allow Fred to speak to her at all. She kicks the flowers at his chest as he talks about Katharina as his Kate. She bites his finger when he points at her. The stage has become reality for Lilli. She elbows him with his waspish sting comment, which is followed by a slap across his face when the point is brought up that a wasp wears its sting in its tail. After this abuse, Fred grabs Lilli/Katharina by the arm and threatens to “cuff” her. Fred says, on stage, “Miss Vanessi, keep it up and I will give you the paddling of your life.” Lilli responds by incredulously saying, “No you wouldn’t dare.” Fred replies “No?” with a look of insanity in his eyes that I can only compare to the now famous face of Jack Nicholson from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. Straightaway, Lilli, as Katharina, is over Fred’s, as Petruchio, knee being spanked for the entire audience to see.

The controversial spanking scene is important in many ways to understanding to anger displayed by Katharina. The first aspect of this relates to the humiliation associated with being spanked, publicly or privately. Spanking is something that is done to an ill-behaving child, not something that one adult would do to another. Petruchio continually degrades Katharina on a social level by making it clear that he is the authority, but now he has taken to representing his power of control in a physical manner. This is easy to relate to the text, as Petruchio denies Katharina basic sustenance and makes her say that his opinion is correct, no matter how ridiculous it may seem. Petruchio needs to have full power of all the control regarding Katharina. In order to feel like he has control over Katharina, Petruchio has lowered Katharina to the role of subject.

An extremely important perspective, perhaps the most important, is that of the audience in determining the level of controversy associated with this scene. Earlier in the movie, the film audience learned from the potential theatre going audience that the Fred and Lilli relationship was the main reason that people were going to see the production. Potential theatre audience members wanted to see the once dynamic duo back together again. In this sense, one might see the spanking scene as Fred and Lilli having a little fun with the piece, not completely unlike the way that many actors will make small changes during the last night of a show without telling anyone. One might argue that Lilli is very obviously not enjoying herself during the spanking, but reflecting on the physical abuse that she gave to Fred just moments before, the audience could very well just roll with the spanking as they seem to do.

Indeed, Sidney seems to have been very careful with his direction of this aspect of the musical. Throughout the piece, the film audience has caught small sections of laughter from the theatre audience, but at the point of the spanking scene, Sidney turns the camera so that the film audience sees the back of Fred and Lilli as well as the theatre audience. This cinematic perspective is a stepping stone of sorts to the full audience view, which Sidney uses to show that the theatre audience is laughing and enjoying the spanking scene. This audience reaction is imperative for this scene to be seen as farce by the film audience, otherwise the film audience might interpret the spanking as malicious towards Lilli.

Sidney deliberately spanned out to the theatre to provide the film audience with a model of behavior to follow. The theatre audience is dressed in tuxedos and evening gowns which leads the film audience to see the theatre audience as an elevated group of people in class evaluations. Historically, the theatre audience is a little more upper class than the film audience because the theatre was more restrictively expensive than going to the movies. This theatre audience very definitely sees this scene as farce, according to Sidney's direction, because the film audience automatically focuses on one particular man sitting in the front row on the far left who is laughing so hard that he is slapping his knee. A quick gaze across the rest of the equally male and female audience shows more well dressed people doing the same thing. As the curtain comes down for the end of the act, the audience applauds wildly because they have been amused.

As the characters leave the stage, as Fred and Lilli, Fred says "I couldn't teach you manners as a wife, but by heavens I'll teach you manners as an actress." Lilli's

response to this is to say “Not in this production you won’t” and she slaps him across the face. This scene shows the anger and the on-stage humiliation that both of the characters had just suffered at the hands of the other. It also raises the question to me of whether or not Fred was an accomplished actor by himself or if he needed the name and personality of Lilli to be sought-after. This idea was hinted at earlier in the film when Lilli and Fred were reminiscing about their beginnings in the theatre. If Fred does need Lilli, then that represents another layer of tension present between Fred and Lilli that transfers over to the Petruchio and Katharina relationship. Both characters lost control of some part of the previous scene, and it seems that these words are their attempts to not only gain some control of the situation, but to gain all control. It seems that the Katharina character from the text is very happy to exhibit her own sort of control over everything. Petruchio has his own issues which lead him to exert total control over Katharina. Both characters are extremists and neither seems like one to compromise. In this way, their battle for control is hard-fought and absolute.

This battle for dominance threatens to set the relationship of Lilli and Fred spinning out of control. Lilli decides to leave the production and “go where no one will ever find (her)- Texas.” Her anger has gotten the best of her and this seems to be a last ditch effort to cause problems for Fred. The audience did not come to see an under-study play the part of Katharina, they came to see Fred and Lilli on the stage again together. Unlike any textual interpretation given by Shakespeare, Sidney’s Fred needs Lilli. Without Lilli playing the role of Katharina, the audience would be upset and poor reviews would squander any chance that Fred may have had for making significant profit

off of the production. Fred is flustered because the intermission is almost over and Lilli is still intent on leaving when the Mafia men come calling on Fred again for money. Fred lies to them and tells them that it was his IOU, but that he cannot repay it if Lilli does not finish out the show. This is similar to Shakespeare's Petruchio's manipulation or guidance of thought of Baptista. In order to get Shakespeare's Katharina and her money, Petruchio must first get past Baptista, which he will do in any capacity necessary. Both Sidney's Fred and Shakespeare's Petruchio use any means possible to minimize the control of their respective female characters. The Mafia men then put the pressure on Lilli to continue by gunpoint. Fred just smiles and goes about his lines, which just makes Lilli more angry. Shakespeare's Katharina had to be upset that her father would agree to let a slovenly brute such as Petruchio marry his daughter. Baptista had to have some indication that Petruchio was after money and not love, but Baptista did not care enough to stop the wedding. For Katharina to see how little her happiness means to her father gives her reason to be more angry at the society around her that has pushed both her existence and the perception of her by others to where they are now. No matter how close to losing his mind Fred is internally, he never allows Lilli to see that what she is doing is especially bothering him. This follows the idea that Fred is really just acting the part that he wants to play instead of truly being the self-confident and accomplished actor that he pretends to be. I believe that this lack of honesty with himself and the world around him is one of the things that makes Lilli angry about Fred.

As Shakespeare's Katharina and Petruchio take the stage again, the camera starts at the back of the theatre and goes across the heads of the audience in order to zoom in on

the action. This was most likely done by Sidney to remind the film audience of the last theatre audience reaction to the spanking scene, as some time has passed cinematically. The new scene is the wedding scene in which Lilli continually tries to get away. Fred stops her with his whip and with the help of the Mafia men. The audience sees this as the Fred and Lilli relationship, but it is really most representative of the Petruchio and Katharina relationship. Both the film and theatre audiences can interpret the production as farce if the Fred and Lilli relationship is the one that is focused on. The presence of the Mafia men provides more farce to lighten the impact of the serious issues that the Katharina character is forced to accept from her controlling and dominating husband. It seems that the importance of Katharina's plight gets lost among the theater and film audiences' laughter. Lilli is getting more and more angry because she cannot get away and she has a strong dislike for Fred at the moment, but Katharina would be furious with Petruchio's treatment of her because of the same societal and social expectations that seem to continually condemn her. Just as society judges Katharina, Petruchio might also be judged and ostracized for his improper actions.

Shakespeare's Petruchio puts Katharina on the donkey to carry off to his house, with the aid of the Mafia men. Katharina is upset about her condition on a donkey, but Lilli is furious enough to repeatedly break character to remind Fred that he has spanked her so hard that it is impossible for her to sit on the donkey. On the whole, the Mafia men are present in the musical to promote the film audience's idea of farce present in the production. The Mafia men play cards behind a screen that falls and have a great deal of

trouble on the walking sidewalk. They execute physical comedy very well, which proves to make the whole production seem a little more light-hearted.

The film ends with Petruchio once again by himself on stage. He ends with a soliloquy, speaking directly to the audience while gesturing with a banana. The first impressions of Petruchio with the banana indicate either a phallic nature or the impression that either Petruchio or the theatre audience is representative of monkeys. He challenges the audience by saying “he that knows better how now to tame a shrew let him speak.” At no response, Petruchio throws the banana into the theatre audience. This could be interpreted in one of two ways. Either Petruchio is saying that he has tamed the shrew so well that no other could possibly compare or he is admitting that he did not do such a wonderful job, but that he does not know how else he might have done it more effectively. In either case, both the theatre and film audience is left thinking that this is an upbeat ending based on the comedy associated with the throwing of the banana into the camera and the antics of the Mafia men. The audience should be wondering about Katharina who was not fed or especially cared for by Petruchio because she would not obey his will. The whole of the production and direction has left the audience without any reason or particular motivation to consider Katharina, and so she is forgotten about yet again. She continues to be misunderstood by a faction of people that, perceivably, think that they know her, but really have no idea. The film audience may feel good about themselves and the musical, but they should feel almost betrayed with the way that their thoughts were molded and shaped by the games of Petruchio and the direction of Sidney.

The movie *10 Things I Hate About You* is a cinematic interpretation of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* unlike any other. *10 Things* is a modern adaptation of the work, produced in 1998 by MTV, where the Katharina character is given multiple justifications for her anger. This is a great division from the text, where very little is really known about the Katharina character. While not everything is known about the *10 Things* Katharina, the truth of her past does come out to change the way that her sister, at least, sees her. Additionally, her father has a chance to explain himself and his reactions to Katharina, which changes her perception of the situation drastically. Indeed, the feel-good teen hit, *10 Things I Hate About You*, gives a lot of reasons for Kat's anger as opposed to merely presenting her as an angry woman.

A point not to be overlooked regarding this movie is that it is an MTV production. While this may not seem extremely pertinent to the interpretation of the text, this gives the audience an opportunity to consider the base of the interpretation of the text. MTV is what I can only term an addiction to many young people. MTV used to be a television station where music videos were played all day. These days, MTV not only plays some music videos, but also has sensational shows, like *Real World*. MTV knows their youthful audience and MTV has targeted what their audience might want out of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. It is interesting to consider that the movie was not made for the adult audience, but for the younger audience that MTV targets.

The movie starts with very upbeat music with the production staff's names being drawn in vibrant colors in a rather disorderly fashion. From the start, this movie has a vastly different feel from *Kiss Me Kate*. By beginning the movie this way, the director

has specifically tied the movie to this time and the cultural and societal limitations of being a teenager in this time. I use the word limitation because, while a teenager may think that they know all about how the world works, the truth of situation is that they do not know everything beyond the halls of high school, much less within the school. This seems to be a universal sentiment that a majority of high school aged students think that they understand the inner workings of the world. The happy introductory music is interrupted when Katharina drives up beside the trendy blue Volkswagen convertible playing the music to blare the music from her beater red car with a white hood.

The song that Katharina is playing starts with the verse: "I don't give a damn about my reputation. I never was one to improve my situation." What a superb way to introduce this character into the movie! It seems highly debatable whether or not Katharina (from the text and from *Kiss Me Kate*) cared at all about her reputation. I contend that every person cares somewhat about his or her reputation. If the textual Katharina hadn't cared a little about her reputation, then maybe it wouldn't have upset her so much that Petruchio looked so shabby for his wedding and that he arrived late. If Katharina from *Kiss Me Kate* had not cared about her reputation, then Lilli might never have taken the role of Katharina from Fred in the first place. Kat, from *10 Things*, turns out being no different than these characters, but it is important for her to give the impression that she does not care. There seems to be a significant discrepancy between the appearance that Kat gives and the reality of her situation. The film audience finds out that the reality of Kat's situation is that her mother has left them and that Kat made a poor decision relating to popularity and Joey Donner just after her mother left. The central

focus to the problem is that the mother has left and Kat feels somewhat responsible, although these words are never spoken from her mouth. It seems that Kat is extremely emotional when it comes to discussing her mom and that Kat tends to avoid close relationships for fear of getting hurt again, as the departure of her mother no doubt hurt.

The film audience is quickly introduced to Cameron, the new guy in town who falls madly in love with Bianca from the first moment that he lays eyes on her. While on a tour of Padua High School, Michael, Cameron's guide, points out the different groups of people that are present on campus. Some of these groups are the beautiful people, the coffee kids, the Marley fans, the cowboys, and the future MBAs. This seems to be a culturally significant point in the interpretation of the work. In the textual version, it seemed that Katharina only had to deal with the males figures of the town since they were the only ones that had any right to voice their opinions. In *Kiss Me Kate*, the main faction that Katharina had to deal with was the theatre audience, where men and women alike would watch and comment (visually) on the show. In *10 Things*, the character of Kat, as well as every other teenage American, has to deal with all different factions of people who may or may not ever make any attempt to get to know her. As Cameron takes his tour of the campus, the film audience gets the feeling that it may be hard for Cam to fit in because of the pre-assigned groups of cliques. These are the same cliques that Kat must deal with.

After some of the only Shakespearean words said authentically in the work, "I burn, I pine, I perish," the action turns back to Kat in English class. These lines are notable to mention, though, because they allow the film audience to reflect on the type of

love the Shakespeare has created in his sonnets or some of his plays. I have found that the typical high school student, especially female, that I have dealt with in a classroom situation remembers Shakespeare's interpretations of love rather than plot summary.

Kat's first spoken words, about wanting to read Plath rather than Hemingway, strike the listener as words that come from within, but may not have any particular business being spoken at that particular point in time. I find Kat's point of contention, the lack of female writers in the high school curriculum, interesting, but I have to believe that there was a more appropriate way to handle the matter. Kat has to make her point in grand style, citing the "oppressive patriarchal values that dictate our educational system." If we reflect on Shakespeare's text, this raises an interesting question about the text: Does Katharina really have it all that bad being the middle to upper class daughter of Baptista? The inflection that the movie gives says no, that Katharina does not really have it all that bad and, as a result, she should back off a bit on her angry behavior. Kat comes across as being angry in this scene and the beginning of the movie, but why so? It seems that the reason revolves around the point that she made her argument so fervently and without question that she did not leave room for any other opinion or ideas on the matter. Ms. Priddy, the school guidance counselor further supports this idea, as she tells Kat that she has a reputation as a "heinous bitch" and that "maybe (Kat) should work on that."

Clearly, Kat's lack of any real discretion in her vocalization is what has gathered her the reputation that she has. So, MTV, as producers, has given their audience a means by which to understand the anger that can easily be seen in Kat based on the filming.

More so than in Shakespeare's text, *10 Things* focuses on the impact and influence of the Bianca character. Bianca is not established as a smart character by any stretch, but actually as more of a beautiful girl who applies herself only to popularity. This seems universally accepted of Bianca except from Cameron who tells Michael that there is more to Bianca than anyone thinks. Cameron is convinced that he can find something more in Bianca and is willing to do anything to make a relationship happen between them. This is unlike the other suitors to Bianca, as Joey Donner is completely self-absorbed and treats women as if wooing them were merely a game. Of course, Bianca, in her pursuit for popularity and a sense of peer acceptance, shuns Cameron and obsesses over Joey.

The first, and only, mention of the word shrew as relates to Katharina comes as the students are leaving the high school parking lot. Michael cuts off Kat, on his motorcycle, and she yells an insult to him. He calls her a shrew under his breath just before he goes hurdling down a large grassy hill on his motorcycle. He is out of control and heading for the football field. This provides comedy, for sure, but it also allows the audience to reflect on the type of character who judges Kat as being a shrew: her high school peer. The audience's opinions and ideals should be turned on their heads as the character who had been both Cameron's and the audience's guide through Padua high school proves himself to be completely unworthy of the respect that we so readily gave him. Above all else, the audience must be reminded that all of the characters, with the exceptions of parents and school faculty, are high school students.

A major force in the movie is the character of the father and his influence on his children, Bianca and Katharina. The father enters the movie with the line “Hello Katharina, make anyone cry today?” She responds with “Sadly, no” just before her father can greet Bianca with the more traditional paternal admiration and love, “hello precious.” This seems to show a different sort of value placed on each of the daughters by the father. While he may be having a good time with Kat, after she has heard all day at school that she is a mean person, hearing it at home has to make her more angry. This seems especially true when countered with her father’s treatment of Bianca. The father has a house rule that neither of the girls is to date until graduation. Kat seems ok with the rule, but Bianca is upset. Bianca throws a tantrum, of sorts, and her father changes the rule by saying “Bianca can date when *she* does.” This not only provides more tension between the two sisters, but also goes to show how the father figure seems to appreciate Bianca more. It seems fair to assume that Bianca has been displeased with this rule for a while, probably pestering her father for a long time. Her Father took the pressure off of himself and put it on his daughter Kat. It is inevitable that Bianca will bother Kat about dating so that Bianca can date, but their father does not have to hear it anymore. This seems to be an extremely selfish move on the father’s part. Also, the father uses Bianca’s name, but uses “*she*” while pointing at Kat. While this provides a little suspense, it might make the audience consider or reflect upon why the father is so much happier with Bianca. How can he show Bianca so much love and, without really denying Kat anything, make her seem so insignificant?

Bianca takes on a much more significant role in *10 Things* than in Shakespeare's text, despite the similar situation of using men rather openly. In the text, Bianca is little more than a name and a reputation to which Katharina can be compared. In *10 Things*, Bianca takes on a very important and necessary character. Without the Bianca character in the movie, the audience would not be able to see the evolution of the Kat character. Bianca takes what she can get, as far as dating goes, and tells Cameron, who is very obviously lusty after Bianca, that Bianca can date when Kat does. The obvious textual parallel is that Shakespeare's Bianca could not get married until Katharina had been married off. In both situations there is tension from Bianca towards Katharina for seemingly holding Bianca back. Cameron falls right into Bianca's trap and he is roped into trying to find a date for Kat. The Cameron character closely resembles Shakespeare's Lucentio as they both took on teaching unfamiliar skills in order to get closer to their respective Bianca characters. Bianca cannot even remember his name from minute to minute, but she bats her eyelashes and touches Cameron's arm to reach her end: finding a date for her mutant sister Kat. While Cameron, with Michael's help, seems to make a real attempt at finding someone for Kat, he fails miserably. While wallowing in his failure, Cameron sees Patrick Verona in science class violently stabbing the dissection frog with his own knife, lighting his cigarette from the gas outlet, and using his hand to play with the gas fire. Clearly, as Cameron decides that Verona would be a good candidate for Kat, Cameron has abandoned the notion to find a nice or good guy for Kat in place of finding a guy for Kat. This seems to mirror both the text version and *Kiss Me Kate* with their characterizations of Petruchio as someone who cared very little about

the person of Katharina, but cared for the monetary goods that she could provide for him. Cameron and Michael try to approach Verona on their own about dating Kat, but Verona drills a hole through Cameron's French book (which he is using to tutor Bianca with despite his lack of any French abilities). Cameron and Michael decide that they need a financial backer to persuade Verona, so Michael talks to Joey.

Throughout this part of the movie, the audience learns about some of the rumors that are flying about Verona. This is somewhat parallel to the reputation that Kat has among her peers, and just like Kat's, Verona's reputation is far-fetched but completely believed by his peers. The reasons given later in the movie for Verona's reputation are simple and straightforward, but since his peers perceive him as a scary person, they have constructed their own versions of truth. While Verona must know what others say and think about him, he does not care about their opinions and allows them to continue thinking whatever they want of him. He seems content as long as his peers do not bother him. It seems plausible to consider that Kat took the same approach to ignoring comments about her as long as she was left alone. It could be argued that Kat involved herself too much in school to really want to be left alone, with the soccer team and her active participation in the only class that the audience sees her in, English. She seems to be a character in conflict, not knowing who she wants to be or how she wants to be that person. Moreover, she is not given any opportunities to explore various possibilities of personality without fear of failure or other consequence.

It seems that everyone is in their various relationships and personal dealings merely for their own personal gains. No one has acted selflessly or without ulterior

motives. This seems to be very cohesive with Shakespeare's text, where everyone acts for his or her own personal advancement rather than considering his or her fellow man. Joey and Verona strike a financial deal for Verona to take out Kat, but it will not be all that easy. Kat does not even give Verona the time of day. Just because Verona shows interest in Kat does not mean that she will reciprocate and she does not. Cameron and Michael are watching their plan unfold into disaster when they decide that they will have to go behind enemy lines to find out personal information about Kat that they can give to Verona so that he can convince her to go out with him. The situation has gone from bad to worse from the perspective of Kat, but she cannot even see it. At first, Kat was being used for monetary gain, which is bad enough, but now she is being manipulated into wanting to date the manipulator, Verona. Bianca is the means by which Cameron gets the information about Kat by going through her room, which Bianca admits is "very private."

10 Things gives many more reasons and justifications for Kat's anger than the text or *Kiss Me Kate*. Another justification from the movie revolves around the mother character that is not present. Neither the text nor the movie addresses the missing character, but the movie does so in a way to give the audience some other understanding for Kat's bitterness. Bianca is shown wearing some pearls. Kat asks about them, seemingly knowing that they belonged to their mother. Bianca responds "it's not like she's coming back" while telling Kat that their father had found them in a drawer and given them to Bianca because they looked good on her. Kat responds with "trust me, they don't." It is impossible to understand what kind of mother figure the girls had, but

the film leads the audience to believe that Kat felt very strongly about her mother and that they had a bond that is lacking in all of the other relationships that we see with Kat. Kat says that she was very upset by their mother's leaving. Kat probably resents that the person who she trusted most, her mother, left without her. Maybe she feels abandoned and shelters herself against any further hurt by not letting anyone get close to her. This alone seems reason for Kat to act the way that she does, with her aggression towards others and her outward lack of caring about the way that others see her, but this is not the only justification that is given in the movie.

Kat and Verona find in each other a non-hostile or judgmental environment. The next scene of the movie shows Kat at the record store getting some cds. Verona is waiting for her as she exits the store. After a brief discussion where Kat continues to blow him off, Kat is ready to leave. Kat and Verona agree that they are not afraid of each other, as most people are. This may stem from them not judging others as they are judged, on blind faith, or not caring enough to be concerned. In any case, Kat and Verona find in each other a quality that they do not see in other people. This is an aspect of the movie that differs significantly from the text where Petruchio is just in it for the reward. Kat is in her car, ready to back up, when Joey parks his new Camaro behind her. She comments to him about moving his car before she rams his car. Verona stands back laughing, as Kat laughs in her car, while Joey screams like a child over the damage done to his car. At this point, the audience begins to see, in Kat and Verona, two people who might enjoy each other's company rather than a guy who has been paid to date a girl.

Kat's father seems quite displeased that she has damaged another vehicle, citing that his "insurance doesn't cover pms." Kat listens to her father yell for a bit before asking him "aren't you punishing me because mom left?" This question, and the angry tone in which it is said, lends weight to the justification that Kat is angry because her mom has left, and that Kat feels responsible for her mother's departure. Maybe Kat was the only family member that the mother figure connected with, but even the mother's relationship with Kat was not enough to keep the mother in the home situation. More than anything, Kat feels that her father thinks that Kat is responsible for the mother leaving. What a burden that would be on anyone's shoulders. This is a burden that, although not mentioned in the text, could be a plausible reason for some of Katharina's anger as well as the absence of a maternal character.

Verona continues to maintain that he is just in this game for the cash. It seems to be a game for everyone who knows what is going on, which only excludes Kat. This seems unusually cruel to Kat. She is starting to open her heart up again after it has been stomped on repeatedly and any number of people could tell her that she is being used for other's gains, but they don't. They don't do it because they don't feel that they have to. They don't do it because they don't feel accountable to anyone but themselves. If any one of the characters involved were to think about the possible reactions to their actions, they would surely discover that someone, most obviously Kat, is going to get hurt in the worst and most public of ways. Everyone else is involved in the manipulation but her. I can see how this might pertain to the text as well. It is possible to see that Katharina has

been left out of events or occasions because of her reputation or her father's wishes, based on what Bianca says of course.

Cameron and Michael convince Verona that he must change himself in order to get Kat to date him, for their own individual gains. In Verona's manipulation on Kat, he seems to quit smoking and he goes to Club Skunk, where he swore that he would never go, in order to be seen by Kat while she watches her favorite band. She does see him and makes a comment about his following her. He asks her to let him enjoy the music and drops another of her favorite band's names, which he has attained from Cameron, before walking away. This piques Kat's interests and so she follows him. This does not follow the characterization of Kat that the audience has been encouraged to understand. Kat should have walked away or realized that she was being manipulated, but she falls into the trap which leads me to believe that she really wants to be wanted, appreciated, or loved. Swept up by the moment, she neither agrees nor disagrees to go with Verona to Bogey Lowenstein's Future MBA gathering turned keg party, an act of revenge by Michael who was ousted by Bogey and the group.

A definite point to be made in the movie is the importance of being true to yourself and your personal convictions as opposed to following the crowd or doing what someone else wants you do to. For the most part, Kat is true to herself, but the scene of Bogey's party allows the audience to see how much of herself Kat is willing to put on the line for her sister. On the night of the party, Bianca and her friend Chastity try to sneak out of the house. Her father catches them and reminds Bianca that she cannot go out unless Kat goes out. Bianca pleads with Kat to "be normal and for one night forget you

are wretched and be my sister.” Kat reluctantly agrees to make an appearance at the party, whether out of compassion for Bianca, wanting to see Verona, or a combination of the two. At this point, Kat is seen as a character who is willing to compromise in order to help someone else. Kat’s façade of being a non-caring individual continues to crumble. At the party, Verona follows Kat and Kat tries to watch Bianca, which leads me to believe that Kat’s going to the party was more out of compassion than her own personal gain possibilities. In this way, Kat separates herself from all of the other characters in the movie because she does something selflessly, despite her reputation and the way that she is perceived by others. Joey approaches Kat by saying “looking nice pussy cat.” He says this to push Kat’s buttons and make her more angry because Kat does not want Bianca to be involved with Joey. Kat pulls out of her assumed character in this scene in order to trail Bianca and to look out for her. Kat responds to Joey with a fervent “stay away from my sister.” Kat tries to pull Bianca away from Joey to tell her something, but Bianca just is not interested in being at all associated with Kat. As Bianca stomps off to be with Joey, Kat starts slamming drinks. This is completely out of character for Kat. She falls to take the low road: when all else fails, start drinking heavily. She makes a choice not to care about her specific standards and lets the will of majority dictate her actions. Verona tries to dissuade Kat, but she continues to drink to the point that she is ill. Verona tells both Kat and Cameron to do what they want to do, rather than what others want them to do. While decent advice, this is not at all what Verona practices. He seems more slimy for telling them what he may well believe, but he is not following.

Verona does seem genuinely concerned when Kat is on the brink of consciousness and as he drives Kat home he tells her that everyone else may think that Bianca is so wonderful, but that she is really “without.” It is unclear what Verona means by without other than to speculate that Bianca is without Kat’s sense of self. Kat says that Verona isn’t as vile as she thought that he was before she is denied a kiss. She is pretty embarrassed about the whole night and comes back the next day angrier than ever, but the audience is left wondering whether we have seen a change in Verona for the better. Maybe he is starting to understand what he is doing and how his actions will effect Kat, who he might just be falling for. I also think that it is possible to see the Verona and Kat characters as the two characters in the movie who have an idea of how rough the real world can be. Cameron takes Bianca home after she sees what a self-obsessed jerk Joey is. Cameron tells Bianca how she has used him and how wrong that is. He seems completely angry and ready to forget her when she kisses him and everything is made better. Verona, in denying Kat the kiss, might be admitting that he does not want to use or manipulate Kat anymore. Furthermore, he might be saying that he wants more out of the relationship than the surface understanding of a kiss can provide. Verona might be agreeing with Kat that everything cannot be forgiven with a kiss. If this is the way that the audience is to understand the change of motivations from Verona, then this is completely contrary to the view of Petruchio from the text or from Kiss Me Kate. This seems to be an evolution, through Verona, of the Petruchio character from someone who cared only about the reward to someone who begins to care about Kat. This interpretation would be far and above more acceptable to the modern-day audience

because this turns the story more into a romance. The games are still underfoot, but Verona has changed many of the rules without telling anyone else so that he might be able to both make things right with Kat and get away with what he has already done to Kat. Verona regretfully takes more money from Joey, although not completely willingly, to take Kat to the prom.

It is Verona's attitude and manipulation that changes the feel of the movie.

Getting Kat to agree to go to the prom will be no small feat for him, so he pulls out all the stops by bribing the band and making a fool of himself to "settle the score." This differs from the text because in the text the character Katharina does not have any choice in her mate, so Petruchio need not impress or woo her. Verona is faced with asking Kat to the prom, the philosophy of which she openly hates as shown by her ripping down prom posters throughout the movie. Verona needs to think more about his plan of attack in order to have everything work out for him. The key remains that Verona is working for his own gains. The audience that the MTV producers targeted, young teens, might take this change in Verona's attitude and actions as a sign that he is truly falling in love with Kat. I think that there is a point in the film where Verona does actually find himself in love with Kat, without any rewards or recognition, but I think that point is the final scene in the movie at Kat's car when Verona gives her the guitar that she has been dreaming about. It may seem that Verona is falling for Kat with his gazes and somewhat adoring looks, but I contend that this is just the character of Verona. He is not a doer, but an observer. As an observer, he watches Kat and everyone else.

The producers go on to try to convince the audience that Verona is being true to his feelings for Kat as opposed to going after his own gains. After Kat has broken Verona out of detention, they play paint ball. During the game, the movie music plays the catch phrase "I'm surprised that you've never been told before that you're lovely, and you're perfect, and that somebody wants you." As the music plays, Kat and Verona are having a great time which leads into a fun yet passionate kiss between the two. It seems to me that this could be taken in one of two ways. Verona could be making an incredibly wonderful stand to say that he wants a more significant involvement with Kat. More likely, considering the bribery, Verona and the movie producers are leading the audience to think that they are acting on the best interests of Kat. The audience should find themselves feeling very happy for Kat and her newfound love. The audience might be excited that Kat has finally found someone who can understand who she is and where she wants to go. I wonder if Verona is that much different from Petruchio, though, and if Verona's motives are purely driven.

What drives Kat? It seems much easier to find all of the things that do not motivate her, but there is one standout thing that always changes her opinions: the will of her sister Bianca. This comes out very clearly as Bianca and Kat discuss the prom. Bianca has been asked to go by Joey and Kat is against that idea. Kat then shares with Bianca the valid reasons why Kat has adopted her "do something for your own reasons, not someone else's" attitude. While Kat thought that she was protecting Bianca from Joey and the evils that Kat had fallen to, Bianca feels that Kat is not letting her live her own life and make her own mistakes. The sisters separate, angrily, for the camera to

watch Kat looking out of her window out to a tire swing, where Kat reflects on her vision of a much younger, innocent Bianca on the swing. The audience is left to wonder what Kat is thinking or why she is thinking that way. In any case, this is not completely dissimilar to the jealousy that the textual reader understands of the Bianca and Katharina relationship. Kat as the protector, almost the second mother figure, is a very interesting reading by the producers of the movie.

10 Things' characterization of Bianca differs greatly from Shakespeare's characterization. The next scene shows Kat walking out the door, nonchalantly saying "Bye Dad, going to the prom." As the door closes, her father laughs, but quickly realizes that Kat is gone. As he makes it to the door, he greets a completely speechless Cam at the door to pick-up Bianca. This is a very interesting turn of events for the characterization of Bianca. It seems that she has learned something from Kat's talk about Joey or her own experiences. Bianca is with the nice guy, Cameron, who is different from everyone else that Bianca had previously associated herself with. Cameron lacks the popularity that Bianca demanded from those around her in the beginning of the movie. The audience has to consider that this is a step based, largely, on Kat's influence, which gives Kat the ultimate justification for all of her actions: to save someone else, her sister, from making the same mistakes that she has and to protect her from hurt as much as possible.

Kat's anger is further validated at the prom when Verona's betrayal becomes clear to Kat and the rest of the prom-goers. Kat arrives at the prom and meets Verona. She immediately apologizes for questioning Verona's motives. He lets her apologize and

they head to the dance floor. He knows that what he has done is wrong, but he still does not admit to it. It seems that maybe he thought that he could get away with not telling Kat. By not being honest with Kat, it seems that Verona does not respect her or the prospects of his love for her enough to be truthful. Another option is that Verona is just waiting for a more opportune moment to tell Kat of the bribery. In this case, Verona would feel very strongly for Kat and not want to jeopardize any future relationship by being bluntly honest at the prom.

The choice is taken from Verona by Joey who is quite angry because Bianca went to the prom with Cam instead of Joey. Kat hears about the bribery from the mouth of the person who she seems to detest the most: Joey. The person who she has opened herself and her emotions to betrays her. She trusted Verona, and more than that, she started to really like Verona in a romantic sense. Kat flees the scene, and she does not have the chance to watch Bianca punch out Joey three times: "that's for making my date bleed, that's for my sister, and that's for me." Indeed, the Bianca of the movie does not turn out like she began. She evolves into a caring individual who seems to begin to appreciate what her sister has done for her as opposed to how little everyone else has done for her. The prom scene is left by Bianca admiringly watching her sister walk away from Verona despite his attempts to get her to stay.

The final significant piece of the puzzle, that gives Kat justification for her anger but is not found in the text, is inserted by Kat's father on the porch the next day as the two reflect on the activities of the prom. Kat tells her father that Bianca beat up a guy at the prom. Her father, understandably, is surprised and a little aghast. Kat responds to her

father's response by asking him if he is upset that Kat rubbed off on Bianca. Her father's response is a significant one. He explains how he is impressed that Bianca is becoming more independent, like her sister Kat. The father explains how "fathers don't like to admit when daughters become capable of running their own lives, it means (the father) has become a spectator." Bianca still lets the father play the game, but Kat has had him on the bench for years. The father feels like Kat has pulled away from him and any protection that he may be able to offer because she can handle herself. So, the father focuses on the assistance that he can still provide to Bianca. This appears to be neglectful towards Kat, but after the explanation, the audience understands why the father has been, seemingly less nurturing to Kat than to Bianca. In the father's mind, he has been doing everything that he thought that Kat would allow him to do as a father. Unlike the Baptista character from the text, the movie father character is having a very hard time letting Kat go, to an East coast college as opposed to a marriage. The movie father wants to regain some of his parental involvement of days past. The textual reader does not get this impression from Baptista, as he puts Katharina in a position where she almost certainly will not find marital bliss.

The final scene of the movie remains a bit of a puzzlement to me. I am not sure why Kat acts the way that she does in sharing her feelings about Verona despite her hurt. One explanation that I can offer is that this scene shows, without a doubt, an evolution of the character of Kat from someone who did not trust anyone, was misunderstood by everyone, and thought that she was incapable of loving after the loss of her mother to someone who has the confidence to step out from the safety of her reputation to take a

stand and tell her world that she is not who she has appeared to be. She has been used and betrayed by Verona, but her heart makes her open herself to everything that she had previously guarded against. This is her evolution: the ability to follow her heart and truly do what she wants to do. There is an evolution in her list of ten things that she hates about Verona as well. Kat starts out by declaring “I hate the way you talk to me.” She explains the tenth thing by saying, “But, mostly I hate the way that I don’t hate you- not even close, not even a little bit, not even at all.” This leaves the audience wondering if Kat has ever really hated anyone or if she has just been so afraid of being hurt that she has separated herself from any possible hurtful relationships.

As the camera spans out to show Seattle, the band plays on the roof of the school. They sing a song with the refrain “I need you to need me... I want you to want me...I love you to love me...I’m begging you to beg me.” Kat has seemed to be such a strong character throughout the movie as well as in the text, but maybe this is just a façade and all she desires is for someone to take some interest in her. Verona does not seem to be the best of characters, based on his manipulation, but he is enough to give Kat hope in interpersonal relationships again. Maybe now that she has been positively shown her worth as a person by her father, Bianca, and Verona, Kat can truly start to believe in herself as she has been leading people to believe that she always has.

I had lofty goals to determine a singular character sketch for Katharina. I had hoped to crawl into the mind of Shakespeare, somehow, and get a true glimpse of the character. After extensive study it seems all too clear that the character sketch of Katharina is actually more of a lack of any concrete characterization. The beauty of the

character is that she is a sort of Everywoman in every sense. Every reader will interpret her differently, basing their ideas on the reader's own background and cultural ideals, yet Katharina's plight of trying to find herself is not unlike any other person's personal journey to self. By opening the character of Katharina to the ideals of the reader or observer, Shakespeare has made Katharina forever timeless and with constant application to various cultural places and times. Katharina will never be concretely or absolutely understood because this would be contrary to the complex character that Shakespeare created in order for each reader to find themselves within.

The self is continually redefined through personal circumstance and cultural changes. Different readers will define themselves differently and discover different things about themselves through *The Taming of the Shrew*. Indeed, the same reader can uncover different elements of self by reading the text at different points in his or her life. At one point in a reader's life, Katharina might represent an advocate for individual rights and liberties while at another point Katharina might be representative of a victim. We must evaluate ourselves and the impact or meaning of the text of a culturally rotating basis. As the society around the reader changes, so does that society's concept of who an angry woman is and how she should be approached. Readers will forever be able to find themselves through the character of Katharina in William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.

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