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# Taming 10 Things I Hate About You: Shakespeare and the Teenage Film Audience

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# Taming *10 Things I Hate About You*:

Shakespeare

and the

## Teenage Film Audience

When I first paired William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* with Gil Junger's film adaptation *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999), my students' responses to the juxtaposed works of art revealed a number of fascinating and deeply rooted ideological conflicts. While more than willing to dissect the gender trouble readily observable in Shakespeare's sixteenth-century play, my students steadily resisted any serious critique of the recent film version. In fact, one young pre-med/biology major blurted out with a touch of good-natured resentment, "I just like the movie, okay?" Other students valiantly rose to defend *10 Things* and launched a number of arguments stressing the enlightened perspective on gender espoused by the film. Typical comments included: "The females in the movie were given more freedom to choose and decide for themselves," or "In this movie girls are given more power of choice . . . The film tries to even out the balance of power between men and women." And most comments of this kind ended with an evaluative statement much like the following: "I really enjoy the movie and feel they did a good job."

The students' enthusiastic responses to the film also voiced a number of striking contradictions. Although acknowledging the film's exploration of peer pressure and high school cliques, my students continually asserted for the main characters a basic level of independent subjectivity (characterized by volition or agency) entirely in contrast with the social context created by the film. The students who did recognize the film's treatment of peer pressure and socially formed identity were still at great pains to balance the peer pressure theme with the possibility of independent choice and identity. One young man wrote in a response activity:

In *10 Things I Hate About You* the genders each still are bound to roles such as in the Shakespeare version. However, they are bound to those roles with different circumstances. In the movie they are bound to their roles because the high school social order causes them to want to be "cool." In my opinion, the movie shows the relationships as "people" instead of "control." . . . The roles may still be a bit uneven [between the genders] but the relationships I believe equal this out because in the relationships they are dealt with as people not as one controlling the other.

In this student's rationalization, oddly enough, conformity becomes a choice. The characters conform because they choose to be cool, and the socially formed gender roles can be tolerated because the love relationship creates an illusion of equality. The varied responses of my students coupled with their almost uniform approbation of the film and censure of the play prompt questions that lead the critic to speculation on the nature of contemporary culture and to renewed investigation into Shakespeare's vexed early comedy. An analysis of *The Taming of the Shrew*, *10 Things I Hate About You*, and student responses to both works suggests that what students find most offensive about Shakespeare and most satisfying about *10 Things* may derive not simply from the two works' treatment of gender but from their assumptions about an even more basic concern—that of ontology and the nature of human subjectivity.<sup>1</sup>

In a discussion of Shakespeare pedagogy, Martha Tuck Rozett urges scholars to pay attention to "first readings," arguing that the novice reader's interpretation illuminates the text

and reveals the ideological positioning of students: "When first readings are held up to scrutiny, they often reveal much about the way students read selectively, making connections, forming judgments, and, in effect, creating their own version of 'the text'" (211). Clearly, Shakespeare's *Taming* and Junger's film adaptation prompted strong "first readings" in my students, readings that reveal students' interpretive mechanisms when digesting the entertainment created for their consumption. Packaged in the appealing visual language of teenage America, Junger's film glosses over the complex of gender and power dynamics that the rougher edges of Shakespeare's drama leave exposed.<sup>2</sup>

### What the Play Does

The Christopher Sly Induction to *Taming* certainly complicates the play's famously problematic treatment of gender by raising larger tensions concerning the nature of individual subjectivity, complexities symptomatic of the Renaissance cultural context.<sup>3</sup> The frame (with no equivalent in the 1999 film version) introduces the problem of identity by considering how the self takes form, posing the question: can identity be constructed and reconstructed almost exclusively through language and the articulated perceptions of other human beings?<sup>4</sup> In other words, can ontology be altered by the discourse of others? The tinker Christopher Sly wakes from a drunken stupor to be greeted as a new man, in fact, as a member of the gentry. The lord who formulates the plot asks a co-conspirator, "Would not the beggar then forget himself?" and is answered, "Believe me, lord, I think he cannot choose" (Induction.1.41-42). The pranksters voice an unstable, even ephemeral self, that, significantly, "cannot choose" but alter upon such persuasions as a clean room, fresh linen, jewels, and a good meal. Christopher Sly's own incredulity borrows from the language of subjectivity that is so much the focus of the scene: "I am Christopher Sly, call not me honor nor lordship" (Induction.2.5-6), and "Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath, by birth a pedlar, by education a card-maker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker?" (Induction.2.17-21). To shore up his sense of self and as evidence of his desperation, Christopher Sly calls upon parentage, geography, vocation, and education for confirmation of his identity. But after a bit more convincing, Sly is won over, a shift subtly emphasized by his linguistic movement from prose to poetry:

Am I a lord, and have I such a lady?  
Or do I dream? Or have I dream'd till now?  
I do not sleep: I see, I hear, I speak;  
I smell sweet savors, and I feel soft things.  
Upon my life, I am a lord indeed,  
And not a tinker, nor Christopher Sly. (Induction.2.68-73)

But is identity so malleable in reality? Can subjectivity, even being itself, alter at the fragile breath of language?<sup>5</sup> Is identity thus primarily a social construct or can the individual resist the strictures imposed by others? It is, of course, from these questions about subjectivity that the play's treatment of gender stems: is there an essential difference between male and female? What happens when a woman fails to conform to socially constituted roles for feminine identity? *Taming* pursues these questions primarily in light of socially constructed gender roles and presents some evidence for the manipulatable face of subjectivity and other contrary evidence for a more ontologically stable, essential self that cannot be bullied by others.

The play's treatment of Katherina certainly underscores the ideas introduced through Christopher Sly. The early scenes boast numerous verbal descriptions of Katherina that in many ways exceed the evidence of her actual presence on stage or her words on the page. While Katherina speaks with a quick wit, very little actual evidence exists at first to justify Gremio's epithet, "Fiend of hell," or Hortensio's "Katherine the curst."<sup>6</sup> A more violent and aggressive Katherina emerges in Act II only after her identity has been constructed through the descriptions of others and the bargains struck that will accomplish her passage from the house of the father to the house of a husband. Petruchio's method of wooing similarly

voices the drama's interest in ontology as he begins his proposals by using language to reform her nature, asking Baptista, "Pray have you not a daughter / Call'd Katherina, fair and virtuous?" (II.1.41-42), then later outlining his wooing and taming strategy:

Say that she rail, why then I'll tell her plain  
 She sings as sweetly as a nightingale;  
 Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear  
 As morning roses newly wash'd with dew. (II.1.170-80)

In this passage, Petruchio avows a faith in the power of words to transform character and thus aligns himself with the larger assumption that subjectivity depends upon a variety of social pressures.

But language does not prove enough. Petruchio must resort to more aggressive means to reshape character, and the play moves to the country house scenes that most deservedly trouble modern audiences. Borrowed from the shrew-taming tradition, the country house episode gives Petruchio a tyrannical sway over Katherina that amounts in the minds of most modern readers to abuse (Bean 66). Repeatedly students commented angrily in class about Petruchio's abuse in these episodes. Through these scenes and those that follow, Shakespeare's play proposes that character is not so easily altered; it, in fact, requires the workings of physical and emotional abuse, starvation, sleep-deprivation, and isolation.

This essentialist perception of the self finds a parallel in the famous sun/moon debate—another convention borrowed from the shrew-taming tradition (Bean 66). Katherina acquiesces to Petruchio, calling the sun the moon:

And be it moon, or sun, or what you please;  
 And if you please to call it a rush-candle,  
 Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me. (IV.5.13-15)

When Petruchio counters it is the sun, Kate again complies:

Then God be blest, it is the blessed sun,  
 But sun it is not, when you say it is not;  
 And the moon changes even as your mind.  
 What you will have it nam'd, even that it is,  
 And so it shall be so for Katherine. (IV.5.18-22)

Significantly, in both statements of acquiescence, Katherina agrees but simultaneously expresses the absurdity of the debate. Kate's qualifications—"what you please" and "when you say it is not"—link the episode once again to the Christopher Sly Induction but apply its principles in such absurdly impossible ways as to throw into doubt the entire premise for identity with which Petruchio began his wooing and with which Christopher Sly is duped.<sup>7</sup> In no way have the sun or moon changed in essence simply because Kate and Petruchio have called them by different names. And thus the play launches an alternative view on subjectivity—a position that claims the independent immutability of personhood.<sup>8</sup> Are we to conclude that humanity, like the sun and moon, cannot change regardless of how others use language to form reputation and identity?

Of course, *Taming* does not make things so simple. It manages to hold in tension these opposing notions of self until the final moments of the play, and even Kate's act of submission leaves the audience wondering about the essential truth of her gesture and whether or not Katherina plays a part. The array of unanswered questions with which Shakespeare's play leaves the reader troubles students craving certainty, and it is thus no accident that the teen-targeted film adaptation of Shakespeare's battle between the sexes offers simpler, more immediately satisfying answers to the problems of identity.

### What the Film Does

Transforming Shakespeare's Padua into upper-middle-class Seattle suburbia, *10 Things I Hate About You* works hard to soften the obvious gender inequities of the original, but in many ways silences honest and serious debate over gender in the process. Substituting a

grunge-wearing, feminist-fiction-reading, girl-band-listening Kat for the play's Kate, *10 Things* proposes an alternative explanation of its heroine's antisocial behavior. Goaded into a sexual relationship with the high school hottie, Joey Donner, Kat has angrily retreated from expected high school girl behavior into a haze of grinding music and disdain. In an effort to humanize Kat, the film's screenplay creates this back-story for her that actually only serves to underscore the quiet misogyny of the plot: girl traumatized by sex becomes frigid ice queen and requires a more satisfying sexual encounter to restore balanced personality. In contrast, Kat's younger sister revels in the vapid superficiality of high school and longs to date, but finds herself prevented by a paranoid, gynecologist father who fears dating leads to only one thing—teenage pregnancy. The young men of Padua High forge a bargain in which they will get their chances at younger sister Bianca if the well-financed Patrick, a social misfit with a mysterious past, can manage to con Kat into dating. The film boasts numerous, clever echoes of the original: for example, Cameron (Lucentio) tutors Bianca in French; Patrick's legendary character reflects the outlandish behavior of Petruchio; the physicality of Petruchio and Katherina is transformed into a playful paintball match; the prom substitutes for the Act V feast; Kat's poem replaces Katherina's famous Act V speech; and Joey Donner's wager over Bianca's virginity parallels the bet placed by Shakespeare's husbands regarding their partners' obedience.<sup>9</sup>

A handful of moments from the film demonstrate both the interpretive traps set for the teenage audience and the film's overall failure to reconfigure gender roles. Only minutes into the action, *10 Things* presents the various cliques of the high school social landscape. School newcomer Cameron James (Lucentio) receives a guided tour of campus courtesy of Michael Eckman who narrates the opening sequence for Cameron, eventually concocts the dating arrangements, and occasionally stands in for William Shakespeare himself (later even arriving at the Prom dressed as the bard). Michael and Cameron stroll through the school's courtyard taking note of the coffee addicts, the white rastas, and future MBAs. Junger's opening gesture surely points to the heavily determined and socially constructed nature of young adult identity, but the camera movement implies a possible alternative to such limits on the self. Tracking alongside Michael and Cameron, the camera follows the two, creating energy and resistance to the categories. In contrast, the cliques remain static, sitting or standing in established quadrants of the courtyard. The camera's energy aligned with Cameron suggests that the young hero can make a choice for the self, free from the strictures and stasis represented by the others. The scene at first promises to make an apt and thoughtful connection between the sixteenth-century play and contemporary society; although material culture may have altered dramatically, the individual still must negotiate desire for independent selfhood with the overwhelming pressures that make freedom nearly impossible. Unfortunately, the unambiguous alignment of Cameron with the camera's lens credits an agency that forecloses a more serious treatment of subjectivity's complexity. This early sequence thus conjures the paradoxes of subjectivity rooted in the Shakespearean original but all too quickly resorts to easier answers that sit more comfortably with the desires of the predominantly teenage film audience.

A similar pattern emerges in the film's treatment of its shrew. After the exposition has established Kat's antisocial and antifeminine behavior as well as the parameters of the dating challenge facing Patrick, the scene shifts to a club where Kat dances with abandon to a performance by her favorite band. Patrick arrives at the club on a reconnaissance mission, hoping to win the date that has eluded him thus far, and looks on with pleasure at the dancing Kat. At first viewing with an unassigned gaze, the camera rests on the image of Kat relishing her body's movement and the sounds of the music. However, the director soon reveals the insincerity of his efforts to improve upon gender constructs when Junger forces the audience to take the point of view of Patrick by focusing on his face and his response to Kat. The camera lingers on Patrick whose quietly expanding smile signals his growing interest in a now-sexualized Kat. The filming of the scene also embodies the problematics of subjectivity operating within the movie as a whole. Simultaneously Kat enjoys independent subjectivity—where only the music and her own movements matter—and dependent

selfhood—where her identity falls into the hands of Patrick who shouts over the music, complementing Kat with what is understood by the film’s language to be every bookish girl’s dream form of flattery: “I’ve never seen you look so sexy.” Here we see the reality behind the myth the film erects; for as much as it touts resistance to peer pressure, the film’s romance depends upon moments of socially constructed selfhood. The contradictions stridently voiced by *Taming* are so normalized by the film and ornamented by the vocabulary of teenage love that they slip past the audience’s notice.

Furthermore, although the film attempts a leveling between Kat and Patrick (a fact repeatedly celebrated by my students, as will be seen), the nature of Kat’s vulnerability and even humiliation consistently centers on her sexuality. These humiliations of the screenplay seem meant to parallel the embarrassing performance of Petruchio on the day of his wedding to Katherina. The film’s first shaming takes place at the keg party during which Kat performs a table dance to the surprise of the onlookers. Again, the camera hovers on the transformed Kat, viewing her from multiple angles—low, high, bird’s-eye—giving plenty of time for the audience to enjoy the display. For much of the scene Kat remains in the center of the screen, framed by the looming and enclosing figures of Patrick on the left and Joey on the right. The scene thus assures the audience that deep down, when her inhibitions are diminished by alcohol, Kat is like any other girl—happy to take praise for her position as sexualized object of desire. Once again, the scene has the potential to explore another fascinating paradox of subjectivity—as much as the individual desires freedom of self-formation, he/she fears that independence and capacity for difference when exercised by others. Should one person choose an alternative different from the group, that individual threatens the stability of an entire structure for personal value. Kat’s return to “party girl” can be seen to represent the end of her critique of teen society and her capitulation to its potent rules for behavior. However, the film’s focus on Patrick’s rescue of a semi-conscious Kat dismisses interrogation of the moment’s complexities and plays instead upon romantic sensibilities.

A similar taming occurs when a softened Kat helps rescue Patrick from detention. In this scene, Kat attempts to distract her soccer coach, the teacher monitoring detention, in front of a class populated primarily by boys. This in-class audience stands in for the predominantly male film audience and applauds Kat’s strategy. She lifts her shirt and flashes the coach while Patrick hurries to the classroom window and escapes. Like the dance at the party, this scene cuts Kat down to size by insisting upon her sexuality as prime identifying marker. In contrast, the humiliation of Patrick has almost nothing to do with his sexuality. Hijacking the school stadium’s sound system, Patrick belts out a version of Frankie Valli’s “Can’t Take My Eyes Off You” accompanied by the marching band. The comedy of his humiliation derives from the absurd efforts of the school security guards to catch Patrick while he sings, runs, and performs, skipping from bleacher to bleacher in the stands. Patrick’s romantic actions appear motivated by his desire to even out the earlier humiliation of Kat and to signal that although he did not take advantage of her proffered kiss while still under the influence, he is nonetheless interested. These scenes repeatedly demonstrate that rather than renovate Shakespeare’s play with updated and enlightened notions of self and gender, *10 Things* silences questions on both topics and assigns agency in the most traditional of ways—to the young men determining their destiny and coming of age.

### What the Audience Read

After two weeks of reading and discussing Shakespeare’s play, my students watched Junger’s adaptation and responded positively with only a few notable dissenting voices in the classroom. Most students found the reconfigured gender relationships acceptable, the considerably empowered women satisfying (especially when compared to the limited options enjoyed by Shakespeare’s Katherina and Bianca), and the male protagonists appropriately nonthreatening. Furthermore, any tinges of misogyny or gender inequity that some students may have perceived were forgiven in the face of the romance conjured between Kat and Patrick and Bianca and Cameron. Many students noted the shifting of theme toward the

teen-centered concern over peer pressure, but even as students observed this concept they simultaneously claimed independent subjectivity for the major characters.

I think the movie switches the focus somewhat away from gender issues toward society's hindrance on individuals, specifically teenage peer pressure. There still is that tension between the sexes though, the pursued (women) and the pursuers (men). Though gender relations are still much talked about and some concern is given them in modern American culture, for teenagers peer pressure is much more related to them. (sophomore biology/pre-med major)

Unlike Shakespeare's play that toys with two very different notions of the independent or dependent human subject, the film appeals to its target audience by retelling the myth of the independent subject—the young teenager capable of defying all social strictures and forging a self in complete freedom from the world. Repeatedly, student responses to the film showed them affected by the film's mythologizing of independent agency. This affinity manifested itself in desperate student attempts to reconcile the fully developed plot treatment of peer pressure with the denouement's assertion of independence.

The prompt asked for two things: 1) An evaluation of the generalizations about men and women operating in *10 Things* and, 2) A discussion of how and if the film transforms the gender questions of *Taming*. What is even more remarkable about their written responses is that in most answers, students readily catalogued the stereotypes for men and women played upon by the film, but then with very little awareness of the logical problem, would go on in the second half of the response to argue the characters were not all conforming to the stereotypes. For example, one freshman English major observed:

Kat is determined to defy the rules of her peers but in a sense she is still governed by them. *10 Things* is drastically different than *Taming* in my mind. Kat is not just an unruly witch on a rampage, but a girl who has been hurt and has vowed never to give in to peer pressure again. There is a reason for her behavior, and when that reason is understood by someone else—her sister—and when she is understood by Patrick, then she no longer has to keep up her walls, her guard. She is still tempestuous, filled with passion and opinions, but she is not a shrew, or a "heinous bitch." She never was, whereas in *Taming*, she was a shrew. We don't know why, are never given any reason, and in the end, she is subdued, hiding the shrew within, instead of defeating it.

This response embeds a series of contradictory assumptions. While the student thoughtfully observes that even as Kat defies her peers she is defined by them, the response soon turns in a direction pursued by many other class members. The back-story to Kat explains and justifies her behavior and releases her from the classification as "shrew." Notice that the student subtly shifts agency from Kat so that it is the actions of her sister and her boyfriend that prompt a change, and perhaps most interesting is this resistance of the "shrew" label. Under all her ranting, Kat never really is a "shrew"; and the understanding of others allows her to reveal that she is just like most high school girls. Similarly, a marketing student observed:

The women in *10 Things I Hate About You* are independent. They have personalities of their own. Bianca is the "girlie" girl. She says and does the "right" things. In *10 Things* she turns out fine in the end. Kat has an attitude. She is a girl who steps outside of the crowd. She doesn't let any males and their comments or actions toward her alter anything she does. In the end she doesn't change who she is, but she does make room for men again. She regains some of the trust for men that Joey made her lose. Patrick proved to her that not all men are like Joey.

Just as the student asserts considerable agency for the central women in the film, she simultaneously describes them in ways that assert socially constructed categories for identity—the "girlie" girl and the rebel. Furthermore, she posits Kat's agency in one breath and credits Patrick in the next for transforming Kat back into a "normal" female. One freshman business major's analysis of the two sisters and the stereotypes they do or do not conform to illustrates yet another way in which the film presents contradictory ideas but does so in such a sleek way that those contradictions are rarely observable by the viewer:

On the other hand, there's Kat, who with her sharp tongue insults the people around her. She doesn't fit society's stereotype of the typical (supposed to be) woman. She's harsh and brash and not calm, submissive and sweet like her younger sister. However, deep down inside she has the same wants. She wants to be married; she wants men to woo her, even though she doesn't show it. I think Kat fits society's stereotype in the sense that she wants to be won over by love.

As in the previous examples, this passage claims a form of independence for Kat, and without an acknowledgment of the contradiction, immediately places Kat within a major stereotype of feminine identity. This passage also illustrates a trend that Rozett observes—the student's tendency to read into the text his/her own assumptions about human relationships. These responses suggest that the film perpetuates the contradictory ideology of subjectivity embraced by young adults. At the same time they desire independent identity, they also long for acceptance, to feel part of a larger, socially condoned model for the self. The movie appears to allow teenagers to have it both ways.

The previous examples also highlight another trend in student analyses of the film. Repeatedly, the contradiction between independent agency and stereotypical behavior finds resolution in the love relationship. Again, the film provides an easy answer to the problems of identity that the play resists. Shakespeare's comedy leaves the question of the self as unresolved in the final moments of the play as at the outset. By contrast, the parting gestures of both Kat and Patrick—her tearful avowal of love for Patrick even when she thinks he has betrayed her and his transformation of the dating profits into a much-desired guitar for Kat—leave little room for the kind of equivocation that the play invites. A sophomore English major argued: "Kat and Patrick come to realize that both are not as hard and mean as others think they are. They move behind each other's facades to discover each other's true identities." Through love, Kat and Patrick thus find freedom from socially constructed identities and discover a true, essential self in the transformative power of love. Essentially, the film softens patriarchy by representing it in the boys whose behavior can be laughed at and excused. Furthermore, the student responses suggest an interesting conflation of the boys and the notion of love so that what could be seen as a troubling conformity to masculine desire is normalized by the concept of mutual love.<sup>10</sup>

### What Some Read

Two students out of the total thirty-five did, however, recognize the problems within the film and the ways in which it subtly reinscribes the very gender relationships so troubling to students when dramatized in *Taming*. A junior religion and English double major insisted:

While *10 Things* avoids the unpleasantness of starving the shrew into submission, it still keeps the theme of using a strong man to conform a free-spirited woman to society's norm. By manipulating her affections the men coerce Kat to change from independent chick to sappy, big-eyed typical teenager in the space of a few days. The film mindlessly proclaims the current high school mantra, which is "if you don't conform, you won't be popular."

Lastly, one sophomore English major observed:

Shakespeare's play explores gender roles, what they are, whether they are valid, and how they impact society. . . . However, in *10 Things I Hate About You*. . . gender roles are set up and played into, rather than deconstructed and examined. . . . Stereotypes that are presented are meant to be accepted and laughed at. The audience is meant to find humor in the gender roles. For example, the sexual jokes that are so prevalent throughout brought hearty chuckles from the classroom.

That only two students directly observed the ways in which the film manipulates its audience to embrace longstanding stereotypes of gender declares the success of the film in addressing its target audience. Ultimately, by treating the gender question and the broader question of identity in ways that promote laughter and discourage thoughtful questions, the film fails to achieve the status of its Renaissance source.



While *The Taming of the Shrew* provokes debate regarding subjectivity and gender identity, *10 Things* launches a compelling fantasy that speaks the desire of American teenagers to forge independent selfhood. The interplay of Shakespearean text and film adaptation generates interpretive and pedagogical problems worth pursuing. The works open to larger questions of how to encourage students to become more critical consumers of popular culture—to resist the pleasing simplicity of sham certainty and learn to abide with comfort in the world of unending ambiguity so masterfully demonstrated by Shakespeare's plays.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to my students who generously granted permission for the use of their written work.

<sup>2</sup> As Barbara Hodgdon has observed, "whether male or female, *Shrew*'s spectators remain conscious not just of power's unavoidable role in sex, gender, and representation but also of how oscillating gender identities may, on occasion, unfix that power and jostle it loose" (541). Junger's film effectively silences this interpretive possibility in an effort to make the play appeal to a mass teenage movie-going market.

<sup>3</sup> The inconclusiveness of the well-known and extensive critical debate over subjectivity in Renaissance England also reflects the era's ambivalencies on the matter. Stephen Greenblatt's influential *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* denies the existence of the autonomous human agent and stresses that the Renaissance concept of self consisted of a relentlessly public and deliberately fashioned persona:

I perceived that fashioning oneself and being fashioned by cultural institutions—family, religion, state—were inseparably intertwined. In all my texts and documents, there were, so far as I could tell, no moments of pure, unfettered subjectivity; indeed, the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society. Whenever I focused sharply upon a moment of apparently autonomous self-fashioning, I found not an epiphany of identity freely chosen but a cultural artifact. (256)

Francis Barker and Catherine Belsey advance the point, insisting that the subject as agent could not exist until the apparatus of bourgeois capitalism was in place at the end of the seventeenth century. However, David Aers, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Lee Patterson contest that the public role alone did not shape the early modern subject and that the existence of an inward self was an assumption central to the newly formed rhetoric of Protestantism. Maus proposes focusing on Renaissance selfhood as a variety of paradoxes (similar to those present in *Taming*) that, although seemingly contradictory, are "less self-canceling than symbiotically related or mutually constitutive" (28-29). In specific reference to Shakespearean characters, Alan Sinfield likewise seeks a moderate position: "Some Shakespearean *dramatis personae* are written so as to suggest, not just an intermittent, gestural, and problematic subjectivity, but a continuous or developing interiority or consciousness" (62). The ongoing debate concerning levels of individual agency plays out within *Taming* and is first elucidated by the Induction.

<sup>4</sup> Tita French Baumlin confirms that the Induction "serves as an introduction to . . . themes of identity and transformation through language" (251).

<sup>5</sup> Hodgdon argues similarly that the Induction "teaches that there is no such thing as a discrete sexed or classed identity. Such identifications, *Shrew*'s frame insists, are themselves constructed in fluid relation to fictional 'others'" (540).

<sup>6</sup> Coppelia Kahn confirms a disparity between Kate's actual behavior on stage and the descriptions of her given by others, particularly noting that in contrast to the traditional shrew who would be known for her "scolding tongue," "Kate is given only twelve lines in her entrance scene, only five of which allude to physical violence" (107).

<sup>7</sup> Carol Thomas Neely contends that in this passage "Kate mocks his [Petruccio's] madness, elaborates upon instead of resisting his declarations, and insists on her own untransformable identity by naming her 'Katherine' instead of 'Kate,' Petruccio's name for her" (30). Similarly, Kahn asserts that Katherine's capitulation in this scene "reassures him [Petruccio] that she will give him obedience if that is what he must have, but it also warns him that she, in turn, must retain her intellectual freedom" (113).

<sup>8</sup> Neely argues, in fact, that while "the play explores the arbitrariness, variety, and fluidity of roles . . . *Taming* demonstrates that stable identity can persist beneath radical transformations of role" (28).

<sup>9</sup> Despite the intriguing parallels between play and screenplay, scholars have been slow to examine the Junger film. In a recent essay on nudity in film adaptations of Shakespearean drama, Celia Daileader admits she chose not to include *10 Things* in her survey because she "could not decide whether it was feminist deconstruction . . . or simply bowdlerization" (197). Nonetheless, the film's sheer popular appeal demands consideration as a reflection of contemporary tastes and as an interesting interaction with Shakespeare's text.

<sup>10</sup> I am indebted to my student assistant Erica Y. Lehmann for this insight.

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