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## Misogyny and Misogamy in *The Taming of the Shrew*: A Sketch of Shakespearean Productions<sup>1</sup>

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*A spaniel, a woman, and a walnut tree,  
The more they are beaten the better they be.*  
in SIMPSON, John and Jennifer SPEAKE, 1998, p. 298

### Abstract:

Thanks to the unquestionable merit of his timeless thoughts and vivid protagonists, William Shakespeare and his oeuvre were observed from various qualitative and quantitative aspects (e.g. DUSINBERRE, *Juliet*, 1975, STŘÍBRNÝ, Zdeněk, 1955, 2003, MUIR, Kenneth, 2005, etc.). Shakespeare's plays as well as sonnets were translated into innumerable languages and his plays were presented in myriad versions, from traditional performances to peculiar adaptations (e.g. Nekrosius's *Macbeth* featuring farmers, grafted fruit trees, etc). Shakespeare's plays inspired many stage and film directors. His protagonists represent archetypes of modern drama. Last but not least, selected extracts from Shakespeare's plays assume a significant position in the literary curriculum.

There have been countless remarkable Shakespearean productions in Pilsen since the Municipal Theatre was established in 1902; the recent theatrical Shakespearean interpretations include e.g. *The Taming of the Shrew* (October 2008) and *Romeo and Juliet* (April 2009). The essay thus attempts to analyze the specific aspects of *The Taming of the Shrew* performed on Pilsen stages from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, similarities and differences between the original play and these peculiar renditions will be emphasized. The essay concludes that each generation perceives the appealing magic of Shakespeare's language and timelessness of his themes through its own particular prism, allowing for a variety of distinctive (re)interpretations.

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There have been countless remarkable Shakespearean productions in Pilsen<sup>2</sup> since the Municipal theatre was established in 1902; the recent theatrical Shakespearean interpretations include e.g. *The Taming of the Shrew* (October 2008) and *Romeo and Juliet* (April 2009). This essay in this respect attempts to analyze specific aspects of *The Taming of the Shrew* performed on Pilsen stages from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and offers a comparative analysis of the productions. Furthermore, similarities and differences between the original play and these peculiar renditions will be emphasized and the sources and analogues of the play will be highlighted.

### Textual History of the Play

*The Taming of the Shrew* certainly is among Shakespeare's earliest plays dating from 1589 to 1592. Shakespearean experts (STŘÍBRNÝ, Zdeněk, 1955, p. 103, ASPINALL, Dana, 2002, p. 5, etc.) agree on the potential existence of three different *Shrew* plays around the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The oldest anonymous version of the text is preserved in the 1594 quarto under the title *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, Called a Taming of a Shrew*<sup>3</sup>. A thematically and stylistically different *The Taming of the Shrew* was published in the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays—the First Folio—in 1623. Finally, a lost *Shrew* play (so called *Ur-Shrew*) might have inspired the above-mentioned plays; however, as

2) *The first theatre building in Pilsen, constructed in 1832, was alternatively used by both Czech and German ensembles; however, the actual beginning of the Czech theatre in Pilsen dates back to Pavel Švanda's arrival in Pilsen in 1865. Besides, a separate German language theatre, The Deutches Theatre, was established in Pilsen in 1869. Unfortunately, all the German theatre archives were destroyed in May 1945, so now there is no record of the performances staged there. The exclusively Czech Municipal (Great) Theatre was opened in September 1902.*

3) *More details on A Shrew can be found e.g. in Stephen Roy Miller (1998), Dana Aspinall (2002), Brian Morris (2002), and Ann Thompson (2003, p. 1–4). Some Shakespearean scholars admit that A Shrew might have been either a pirated copy of The Shrew or its incorrect copy.*

there is no tangible evidence of the play's existence, it should be considered as a hypothesis, trying to explain the correlation between *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*. Detailed analyses of both plays show their parallels and differences and actually confirm that *A Shrew* might have originated as a romantic adaptation of Shakespeare's comedy (see below).

### Three Strands of *The Taming of the Shrew*

Structurally, *The Taming of the Shrew* consists of three "layers": the Induction, introducing Christopher Sly's episode; the subplot of Bianca and her suitors, courting her and trying to gain her favour, and the main shrew taming plot. Functioning as a frame<sup>4</sup> of the play, the Induction carries a considerable meaning and purpose: Sly's presentation and the illusive alteration of both his personal identity and his social status enables one to interpret the other plot lines as a mere fiction, a dream, or a theatre performance played only to entertain or deceive the drunken tinker Christopher Sly. Furthermore, it allows for Sly's temporary transformation into the Lord. Christopher Sly and his *madam wife* become the on-stage audience of the *Shrew* play, underlying thus its fictive and dreamy character. In this respect, Martin Hilský (2000, p. 104) discusses the power and magic of the theatrical optics that permit Sly's metamorphosis.

Taking place in the Italian Padua, the Bianca-Lucentio subplot represents a softer story line, which abounds in substitution, confusion, disguises, and smooth speech. Bianca's seemingly polished behaviour as well as her elegant and sleek suitors sharply contrast with the shrewish Katherina and her flippant tamer Petruchio, who—like Kate herself—does not mince his words. Bianca's subplot and the taming plot intertwine and enhance the *tout ensemble* of the play. While Bianca is courted by her chivalrous wooers, Petruchio marries Katherina and tames her as a hunter tames a wild bird of prey. Insisting that nothing is good enough for his Katherina and mocking to a large degree her own sauciness, he systematically fulfills his plan, not giving his wife any rest: he tortures her with hunger, does not allow her to sleep... At one moment Petruchio swears, rants, and fumes with rage only to immediately adopt a conciliatory tone, full of tender solicitude towards Katherina. Unusual as his tactics may seem, it results in Kate's transformation. Petruchio's atypical taming techniques as well as Katherina's metamorphosis are subject to a variety of interpretations, both onstage and literary; however, Kate's qualitative change stems most probably from the awareness of both her own shrewishness

4) *The Induction reminds us of George Peele's The Old Wives' Tale (circa 1590), using a similar framing technique; however, in contrast to The Taming of the Shrew, applying the frames both at the beginning and at the end of the play.*

and possibly of Petruchio's love. Eventually, despite numerous difficulties, the play heads towards three marriages, of which only one seems happy.

*Petruchio:*        *Come, Kate, we'll to bed: ---  
We three are married, but you two are sped.  
'T was I won the wager, though you hit the white;  
And being a winner, God give you good night!*  
(SHAKESPEARE, William, 1998, p. 273)

### The Shrew Tradition in Literature

The motif of disobedient women and wife-tamers has a long and prolific tradition and can be found in many national literatures. Within the context of English literature, the recalcitrant wife can be found e.g. in the apocryphal stories about Noah and his wife. In the medieval *Chester Mystery Cycle*, Noah's wife is depicted as shrewish, argumentative and rebellious, refusing to come aboard the ark and thus putting the lives of others at risk.

Quoting M.C. Bradbrook, Brian Morris (2002, p. 75) mentions a representation of the disobedient wife in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale*<sup>5</sup> and two early Renaissance plays—John Heywood's brief farce *Johan Johan*<sup>6</sup> (in print by 1533) and *Tom Tyler and his Wife* (circa 1558–1561), focusing on husband–wife relations and portraying henpecked men and their vixenish wives.

The anonymous ballad<sup>7</sup> *The Wife Wrapt in a Wether's Skin* introduces an archetype of a particular shrew tamer and his disobedient wife. The ballad begins actually *in medias res*: a man marries a shrewish upper class woman who considers housework degrading. The newly married husband subsequently decides to cure his wife of pride and arrogance by beating. However, as he does not dare to beat her directly, he kills a lamb and wraps the contrary woman in its skin; consequently, he thus thrashes not the disobedient wife, but the wether's skin. The man's unusual educational tool bears

5) *The Merchant's Tale* tells the story of an old man cheated on by his young and clever wife. Derek Albert Pearsall discusses its mock-encomium of marriage (1993, p. 195).

6) The full title of the interlude is *A Mery play betwene Johan Johan, the Husbande, Tyb his wyfe, and Sir Johan the Preest. Only three protagonists are presented in the interlude—a henpecked husband, his shrewish wife and a parish priest.*

7) In his introduction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, Stephen Roy Miller (1998, p. 12) notes that Jan Harold Brunvand analysed and summarized more than 400 folk tale versions of the ballad from 30 countries or national groups.

its fruits: the stubborn wife changes for the better (NILES, John Jacob, PEN, Ron and Bill BARSS, 2000, p. 310).

A similar motif or image of a man taming his wife can be found in the anonymous ballad *Here Begynneth a Merry Jest of Shrewde and Curste Wyfe, Lapped in Morrelles Skin, for her Good Behavyour* (circa 1550) which tells the story of a man married to a quarrelsome wife. The couple has two daughters, the elder, resembling her mother, and the younger, tender and mild. The younger daughter weds one of her numerous suitors and they disappear from the tale. The contentious daughter is courted by a sole suitor, whom she marries although her father attempts to discourage the wooer from marrying his shrewish daughter. After the wedding and the wedding reception, the newly married couple leaves the wife's natal home. The woman thus changes her place of living and marital status; however, she is not able to alter her behaviour, which becomes even worse in her new home. She abuses not only her servants, but also her husband. After one such incident, the husband goes away so that she can calm down. As his endeavour fails, the man decides to apply a more radical remedy: he orders that the old horse Morrell be killed, the skin stripped off, and the hide be salted. Then the husband lashes his shrewish wife until she starts to bleed. Thereafter, the man fastens his naked wife into Morrell's hide, threatening to keep her there for the rest of her life. Perhaps not too surprisingly, *the brine horse* therapy proves successful and the former Xanthippe changes into an obedient and submissive woman, serving her husband as well as her surprised parents at the subsequent banquet. Finally, the reformed wife delivers an emotional speech about her metamorphosis to her mother<sup>8</sup>. Brian Morris (2002, p. 71) stresses significant parallels between Shakespeare's comedy and the folk tale: both works depict two sisters, the shrewish one and the decent one; likewise, in both narratives the father tries to dissuade the suitor from marrying the shrewish daughter. Despite apparent similarities, the structure of *The Taming of the Shrew* is more complex and Shakespeare's protagonists are more vital, notably Katherina, who cannot be considered to be a mere disobedient woman and wife who deserves taming. On the contrary, she is a personality, not lacking a certain degree of independence and becoming first Petruchio's appropriate opponent and later his partner (see below).

In this context, David Underdown (1987, p. 38) remarks that late Elizabethan and Jacobean writers were fascinated by the motif of female independence<sup>9</sup> and determination; nevertheless, the authors as well as the whole society of the time still

8) More information can be found in Brian Morris (2002, p. 70–71).

9) The female protagonist from *Supposes*—Polynesta—represents, in fact, a sexual independence, choosing Erostrato, or rather Erostrato disguised as a servant, as her partner and entering into premarital sexual partnership with him (MARRAPODI, Michele and A.J. HOENSELAARS, 1998, p. 38).

succumbed to the rule of the old patriarchal order. Therefore, despite their indisputable independence, the resolute heroines were finally overpowered by the traditional male-dominated world and consequently took their traditional submissive roles. The model of a wife (seemingly) succumbing to her tamer might be found in the last scene of *The Taming of the Shrew*; however, Katherina's final words cannot be perceived only as her unconditional surrender to Petruchio (see particular stage interpretations of *The Taming of the Shrew* on Pilsen stages).

### Sources and Analogues of *The Taming of the Shrew*

Shakespeare might have drawn inspiration for the shrew-taming plot from the folk tale tradition; however, Sly's Induction was probably inspired by the tale of Abu Hasan, called *The Sleeper Awakened*, from *The Arabian Nights*. Its modified European version, depicting the tale of the lord who found a sleeping drunkard, appeared in a Latin letter written by the Spanish scholar and humanist Juan Luis Vives and published by the historian Pontus Heuterus in *Rerum Burgundicarum Libri Sex* in 1584. The story might also have been included in the lost collection of stories by Richard Edwards (SHAHEEN, Naseeb, 1999, p. 87).

The Bianca–Lucentio subplot line was most likely derived from George Gascoigne's English translation of Lodovico Ariosto's classical comedy *I Suppositi–Supposes* (performed 1566, printed 1573). *The Taming of the Shrew* shows obvious similarities with *Supposes*; nevertheless, Gascoigne's comedy, strictly respecting the idea of the three unities, takes place within one day and on one place. The initial events, fully dramatized in Shakespeare's play, are only narrated in *Supposes*: the young man Erostrato, coming from his home in Sicily to Ferrara, falls in love with the young woman Polynesta at first sight. Erostrato thereafter exchanges clothes with his servant so that he can live disguised as the servant and under his name (Dulippo) in Polynesta's father's household. Dulippo takes an active part in the trickery, disguising himself as Erostrato and pretending to court Polynesta in order to discourage and repel her suitor, the rich old Cleander. The actual action begins two years later when the young man plans to present a False Father, a travelling Sieneese merchant deluded into thinking that his life is in danger because of a political dispute, to Polynesta's father to accelerate the marriage due to the young woman's pregnancy. The plan is thwarted by Erostrato's True Father's arrival. While Shakespeare solves "the substitution of fathers" with his usual liveliness, wit and simplicity, the denouement in *Supposes* requires several other scenes (MILLER, Stephen Roy, 1998, p. 16–17). There are apparent thematic and structural parallels (e.g. master–servant substitution, love at first sight, the False Father, the True Father, the aged suitor Cleander corresponding to Gremio), but also differences between *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Supposes*. Kenneth Muir (2005, p. 19–20) therein specifies contrasts between Gascoigne and Shakespeare: unlike the pregnant Polynesta, Bianca is still a virgin, and furthermore the aged wooer in *Supposes* proves to be the servant's father. Gascoigne's heroine is courted by two suitors, one of whom only pretends to gallant her; by contrast, Shakespeare lets

Bianca be courted by three wooers and furthermore incorporates the false Latin and music teachers<sup>10</sup> into the play. Considering the similarities and differences between the two plays, it is obvious that Shakespeare developed and elaborated his protagonists to attain a real degree of vividness and plasticity.

As for the possible sources and analogues of Shakespeare's comedy, the play *A Shrew* (see above) should be discussed as well. In this respect, a striking resemblance between the titles of both plays stand out. Moreover, the names Katherina and Sly (spelled Slie) occur in both dramatic pieces. As Stephen Roy Miller observes (1998, p. 23), whoever produced *the second* variant, the playwright was not trying to camouflage his text. Both plays contain three plot strands; however, in *A Shrew*, the Slie-frame encloses the whole play: at the beginning the drunken Slie is deceived by the Lord and in a jest temporarily transformed from an ordinary man into a nobleman, who becomes an onstage audience of the *Shrew* performance and sometimes interrupts the play within the play. At the end of the *Shrew* performance, Slie wakes up and declares that *now* he knows how to tame the shrew, because he was dreaming about it all night long (THOMPSON, Ann, 2003, p. 174). The Sly-frame thus indicates and confirms the dreamy and fictional character of the actual *Shrew* play performed by the strolling actors.

The inner play contains two segments: Katherina and Ferando's taming plot and the courtship of Katherina's sisters Phylema and Emelia who are wooed by two young men, Aurelius, son of the Duke, and Polidor. Aurelius decides to court Phylema dressed up as a merchant's son while his servant Valeria at first pretends to be the Duke's son and then a music teacher trying to distract Katherina while her two sisters are courted by their lovers. In the course of events, Aurelius needs a False Father to confirm his identity and agree on the terms of marriage with Phylema's father; however his trick is complicated and later revealed by the Duke's arrival. In *A Shrew*, likewise in Shakespeare's comedy, the two inner strands are contrasted: Ferando's strange humour and pragmatic approach to the taming of Katherina are opposed with Aurelius's romantic and sentimental views.

Despite some obvious thematic and verbal parallels between both plays, *A Shrew* lacks a dramatic tension, smoothness, and stability. In contrast to *The Shrew*, the anonymous play elaborates the "patriarchal message" in a more crude, brutal and violent form (HOLDERNESS, Graham and Bryan LOUGHREY, 1992, p. 26).

### *The Taming of the Shrew* and the Status of Women in the Elizabethan Era

To fully appreciate Shakespeare's female protagonists, it is purposeful to recall the Shakespearean era, and particularly the status of 16<sup>th</sup> century women. The lives of Renaissance females were more or less controlled by the predominantly male world. Women's status

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Muir (2005, p. 20) adds that the Latin lesson is based on a scene from *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (1590).

and roles within society were thus predestined and limited by the firm grasp of the patriarchal order. On the whole, women enjoyed far less autonomy and far fewer advantages than men. As James R. Farr (qtd in RUGGIERO, Guido, 2002, p. 134) observes, during the late Renaissance, women lost legal privileges (which they once held) and their behaviour became defined by the masculine construct of honour and property<sup>11</sup>. Being oppressed economically, socially, and legally, women were supposed to fully respect and obey men, either their fathers or husbands. Not only were Elizabethan females denied property rights, but they themselves were perceived as men's possessions and commodities to be turned into profit through marriages. Bound by the patriarchal world of values, women were relegated to the realm of domestic activities or confined to convents; however, in both cases they fully depended on male authorities. Disobedient and unruly women might have been labelled as shrews, representing a threat to civil order. Severe punishments, applied to shrewish women, included e.g. the ducking stool, the bridle, slapping (see above), and carting. Old, ugly or extravagant women might have faced accusations of witchcraft<sup>12</sup>.

Quoting Thomas Platter and Thomas Middleton, Elissa B. Weaver (qtd in RUGGIERO, Guido, 2002, p. 189–194) remarks that, unlike the Italian Renaissance women, Elizabethan females enjoyed more freedom, being, for instance, allowed to walk out, be driven by coach or even visit theatre performances. In this respect, it is nevertheless important to highlight the fact that female roles in the theatre were performed by men, particularly by those with feminine features. Females apparently received far less education than men; however, under Queen Elizabeth's rule, female education assumed more importance than before. In most cases, girls received instruction at home, but education for females was also provided by elementary and dames' schools, where young ladies were prepared mainly for domestic and vocational activities. Juliet Dusinberre (1996, p. 5) adds that Elizabethan women maintained prominent positions at court.

Despite the specific socio-political climate in Elizabethan England, ruled by the extraordinary and powerful Queen Elizabeth I for forty five years, the general attitude towards women was still shaped by the patriarchal value system. In Scotland, the overall gloomy perspective on Renaissance women was to a certain degree incited by John Knox's malign opinions and discourse. In his misogynist pamphlet *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558), Knox, in accordance with the common belief of the time, argues against the rule of women. Though the reformer's treatise was evidently aimed at the three European female monarchs (i.e. Elizabeth I, Mary I, Queen of

Scots, and Catherine de Médicis), Knox's general views on contemporary women, grounded in biblical examples, emphasized subordinate and submissive position of women

#### THE DECLAMATION

*The proposition. To promote a Woman to bear rule, superiority, dominion, or empire above any realm, nation or city is:*

*Repugnant to nature.*

*Contumely to God.*

*The subversion of good order, of all equity and justice. (...)*

*Woman in her greatest perfection was made to serve and obey man, not to rule and command him. (...)*

(KNOX, John, 2004, p. 3–4; italicized by author)

The status of women would certainly deserve an in-depth analysis; however, for the purpose of this study it is necessary to focus on a correlation (if there is any) between *life* and *art*; or otherwise stated, how Shakespeare's portrayal of women in *The Taming of the Shrew* corresponds with reality. Contrary to the tragedies, where almost all heroines are overpowered by tragic fate and circumstances, the comedies allow more space for the evaluation of Shakespeare's depiction of women<sup>13</sup>. Portraying his female figures, Shakespeare does not simply conform to stereotypes, but presents a *construct* of a woman composed through various male perspectives (LOOMBA, Ania, 1989, p. 75). In Shakespeare's representations of Katherina and Bianca, patriarchal standpoints still predominate, but intertwine with more progressive views on women and their condition under the *status quo*. At the beginning of the play, both sisters are, not surprisingly, introduced through and evaluated by male prisms of view, resulting in a purely male discourse, in which misogynist elements cannot be ignored. In this simple algorithm, Bianca becomes a model of a seemingly ideal woman, characterised by her mild behaviour and sobriety (I.1.), while Katherina is portrayed as a typical shrew, too rough and stark mad (I.1.). In this respect, it is noteworthy to mention that from the inception of the play, Katherina successfully establishes her reputation as a virago, but her angry behaviour might only be a mask of her uncertainty and loneliness (see particular theatre interpretations).

In the course of Petruchio's fast courtship, marriage is depicted as a transaction (II.1.) agreed between bride's father and her suitor. However, in the process of marriage negotiation, Baptista Minolla shows at least some sympathy and compassion for

11) *The decline of the social position of 16<sup>th</sup> century women was undoubtedly affected by Puritanism and Calvinism.*

12) *More information can be found e.g. in Rex Gibson (2004, p. 27–29).*

13) *This essay does not attempt to explore critical approaches to Shakespearean drama, including feminist criticism.*

Katherina and her wishes. His brief comment on Katherina's potential unwillingness to marry Petruchio adds a new dimension to the whole marriage proceeding.

*Baptista:*            *Ay, when the special thing is well obtain'd,  
That is,—her love; for that is all in all.*  
(SHAKESPEARE, William, 1998, p. 243)

Despite this positive shift in his speech, Baptista still attaches great importance to money and patriarchal order. Likewise, Petruchio's fiery utterance, delivered after the wedding ceremony (III.2.), resounds with male dominance and superiority.

*Petruchio:*            (...) *I will be master of what is mine own:  
She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,  
My household stuff, my field, my barn,  
My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything;*  
(SHAKESPEARE, William, 1998, p. 252)

Katherina (as well as Bianca) is, however, delineated not only from a masculine point of view, but also through her own speech, reflecting her sharp-wittedness and fearlessness to oppose men. Petruchio gradually realises that a woman might be a man's equal partner. Nevertheless, it is a matter of interpretation whether Katherina's final speech is perceived as a capitulation to the patriarchal order or a display of her respect for Petruchio.

Though no unanimous decision on Shakespeare's actual or alleged misogyny can be rendered (and there are still many aspects to analyse and issues to solve), this brief discussion might be symbolically concluded by Juliet Dusinberre's words:

*Shakespeare saw men and women as equal in a world which declared them unequal. He did not divide variety of union between opposing impulses. To talk about Shakespeare's women is to talk about his men, because he refused to separate their worlds physically, intellectually, or spiritually. (...)*  
(DUSINBERRE, Juliet, 1975, p. 308)

### ***The Taming of the Shrew* on Pilsen Stages Pre-war Production (1914)**

Numerous theatrical interpretations and frequent literary criticism prove the play's increasing popularity. There have been four productions<sup>14</sup> of *The Taming of the Shrew* in Pilsen

<sup>14</sup> The essay focuses primarily on *The Taming of the Shrew* productions staged in Pilsen

since the Municipal Theatre was founded in 1902. *The Taming of the Shrew* was staged on January 2, 1914 under the direction of Miloš Nový, using Josef Václav Sládek's translation. Adopting Jaroslav Kvapil's dramaturgy, Miloš Nový eliminated Sly's Induction, which consequently shifted the overall character of the play from a harshly playful comedy enacted for Sly's amusement into a naturalistic comedy. As an anonymous theatre reviewer<sup>15</sup> observed (1914, p. 4), the elision rather did a disservice to the production.

Petruchio was given an apposite performance by Miloš Nový as an energetic man used to a roaring ocean and the thunder of cannons who could not have been intimidated by a woman, albeit one with a sharp tongue. Petruchio employed rough words to tame Katherina, but reaching his aim, he almost immediately substituted coarseness with tenderness. Petruchio thus gained his victory over Katherina due to the power and greatness of his spirit rather than by applying his male dominance. Anna Bečvářová interpreted Katherina as a vivid young woman whose shrewishness stemmed from her ill education rather than from her evil heart. In this respect, it is probable that Petruchio's roughness and Katherina's disobedience were in some degree moderated. However, Petruchio's misogyny as well as Katherina's misogamy cannot be unambiguously determined (or disproved) due to the absence of reliable data<sup>16</sup>. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that certain patriarchal views, or rather, a traditional, early 20<sup>th</sup> century family structure might have been reflected in the shrew-taming plot interpretation.

Antonín Pulda's (Grumio) comic performance recalled Šamberk's humour. Josef Fišer caricatured Gremio as an elderly dandy. Bedřich Karen's Lucentio was "youthful" and "brisk". It is noteworthy to mention that the famous Czech actor Jaroslav Vojta played the part of Hortensio.

The theatre reviewer appreciated especially the efficient stage setting and decoration, which helped to create a remarkable performance. Set design colour and lighting contributed to the farcical atmosphere and enriched the performance with style. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that Miloš Nový managed to compile the scene setting from mere fragments of scene decorations. Overall, *The Taming of the Shrew* was depicted as a successful performance, full of excitement and fresh humour.

*since 1902. However, it should not go without mention that the first Shrew production had its premiere on March 20, 1866 under the direction of Edmund Chvalovský, using Josef Jiří Kolár's translation. It was re-premiered on December 12, 1867.*

<sup>15</sup> The theatre review was unfortunately too brief, limiting itself to the description of the main protagonists' performances.

<sup>16</sup> Only one theatre review was found.

**War-time Production (1941)**

On May 31, 1941, *The Taming of the Shrew*, under the direction of Vojta Plachý-Tůma using Bohumil Štěpánek's translation, had its premiere in Pilsen. Stage design was created by Zdeněk Tůma. Unfortunately, no theatre review, except for a brief notice<sup>17</sup> on the main cast (Zdeňka Cinková as Katherina, Petruchio played by Karel Pavlík), has been preserved. Regrettably, there is no evidence as to whether the director included or eliminated Sly's Induction and no information concerning the directorial intention.

**Normalization Period Production (1970)**

On November 8, 1970, *The Taming of the Shrew*, under the direction of Svatopluk Papež and with Erik Saudek's translation, was staged. It is supposable that Svatopluk Papež directed *The Shrew* as a farce, using elements of Commedia Dell'Arte (RAK, K., 1970, p. 1). Katherina (Věra Vlčková) and Petruchio (René Přibíl) were the main concerns of the performance. Věra Vlčková portrayed Katherina as a proud, stubborn and rebellious young woman, protesting against pseudo-morality. Her angry outbursts, stemming partly from her self-pity, collided with her powerlessness to control her life and shape the world to fit to her own desires. Katherina's wrath could thus have been only a complete disguise of her sadness and longing for appreciation and love. Similarly, her verbal revolt against her father, Bianca and Petruchio might have been her peculiar response to the insincere environment surrounding her, particularly in her parental home. Katherina felt lonely and neglected when being constantly compared to her sweet, but hypocritical sister Bianca. Nevertheless, instead of being *prima facie* rebellious and shrewish (while perhaps secretly sorrowful), Katherina also showed an appropriate level of tenderness, wit, esprit and charm, and last but not least, a significant degree of sincerity.

As Petruchio, René Přibíl proved to be a versatile character as Katherina's bizarre suitor, husband, tamer and finally her knight-rescuer in *shabby* armour. Přibíl's Petruchio discovered what had been hiding under Katherina's rough manners, resembling to a certain degree his own behaviour, and fell in love with her. He presented himself as Katherina's appropriate sparring partner, both in the quantity as well as intensity of presented arguments. Following the theatre review, it can be assumed that Petruchio defeated Katherina by his humorous exaggeration and (perhaps attractive) masculine superiority rather than by means of mental and physical torture. Katherina was thus subdued, yet not humiliated. Unfortunately, the theatre review did not mention a particular interpretation of the final marriage banquet and the wager placed by Petruchio

17) The information was excerpted from the theatre column *Divadlo a umění* published in the periodical *Český deník* (see Bibliography). Three years later after the premiere of *The Taming of the Shrew*, in the autumn of 1944, all Czech theatres were closed by the Nazis.

on Katherina's newly-achieved obedience. The actual degree of Kate's domestication hence remains a mere hypothesis.

As stated above, the director gave priority to the main protagonists, Katherina and Petruchio, and put emphasis on farcical elements of the production, in which verbal battles blended with the humorously interpreted inner rebirth of both main characters. The directorial intention was supported by the functional and stylish set design created by Vladimír Heller.

***The Taming of the Shrew* in the New Millennium (2008)**

*The Taming of the Shrew* was the first Shakespearean performance in 2008. It was staged under the direction of the visiting director Juraj Deák using Jiří Josek's excellent translation. Deák's production provided a specific perspective on the battle of the sexes, elucidated by the dramaturge Irena Hamzová-Pulicarová (qtd in DVOŘÁK, Petr, 2008, online): Petruchio drills and tames his wife with unflagging ardour only to be eventually defeated by her charm. This pattern became a defining structure and driving force of the performance, resulting in a vibrant interpretation of the classic play.

Having eliminated Sly's Induction, the director elaborated the two remaining strands—the shrew taming plot and Bianca's subplot—and began directly *in medias res*. The taming of the shrew therefore became the director's primary concern (VIKTORA, Viktor, 2009, p. 31); however, Katherina's eventual transformation questioned the pseudo-angelic character of her sister Bianca who gradually turned out to be a hypocritical and spoiled child used to getting everything she wanted. The director thus implied that things (and people) are not what they seem. The deceptive nature of words, things and people gave the production its quintessence.

As stated above, the production primarily concentrated on Petruchio and Katherina. Martin Stránský portrayed Petruchio as a robust and talkative man, a tough guy, not only in words, but also in actions. He presented himself as being perfectly masculine; however, his fearless nature was touched by moments of insecurity, revealing thus his true character, which did not lack humanity. Being an excellent observer, Petruchio intuitively realised what had been hiding under Katherina's shrewishness and applied the appropriate taming methods accordingly. Irony and hyperbole became the key concepts of Petruchio's taming, which proved to be effective: Katherina recognised herself in Petruchio's exaggeration, which seemed to perfectly mirror her own behaviour. Stránský's Petruchio was a charismatic tamer from the moment he first appeared on stage. He succeeded in enforcing his decisions; however, not at the expenses of Katherina's dignity. He tamed Kate, but did not humiliate her. Martin Stránský's Petruchio was not a misogynist: he was well aware of Katherina's physical attractiveness and he really seemed to enjoy the shrew taming process, possibly in expectation of his sweet reward.

Andrea Černá's Katherina presented herself at first as a real shrew, scratching, biting and spitting like a wild cat; nevertheless, her anger and resentment evidently

stemmed from a deep feeling of injustice. Being continuously confronted with her beautiful and seemingly angelic younger sister Bianca, Katherina had to hide her vulnerability and convince others of her strength: she talked back to her father, opposed Bianca, argued with Petruchio fervently and even bit him on the hand during their courtship. She refused Petruchio's marriage proposal; however, at the same time she longed for marriage. Her impatient waiting for Petruchio's arrival before the marriage ceremony<sup>18</sup> provided enough evidence of her eager and *great* expectations.

Being a strong personality, Andrea Černá's Katherina required and deserved an equally strong partner (not like the henpecked suitors wooing her sister). She remained vital and full of energy even after Petruchio's specific taming practices. Her Kate was perhaps tamed, but not destroyed or broken. Moreover, there might have been perceived an indication of mutual attraction as well as an overtone of equality between Katherina and Petruchio.

Juraj Deák's point was clear: rather than deploying a traditional pattern of hierarchical gender values, though a certain privileged and dominating position was attributed to Petruchio, the director eventually interpreted Katherina and Petruchio as a couple showing love and respect for each other (particularly in V.2.). In the wager scene (V.2.), Katherina did not seem to act in accordance with the traditional female role, but rather as an independent woman, respecting her husband. She thus delivered her speech of wifely obedience with sincerity and love. The interpretation did not have a limiting effect on the performance. On the contrary, it allowed for a complex and sophisticated production, skilfully executed<sup>19</sup>. As well as humour in Petruchio and Katherina's verbal disputes, resembling ping-ponging shouts<sup>20</sup>, there were many comical moments, bringing warm applause from the audience, e.g. Baptista Minola's (Viktor Vrabec) speech, Lucentio (Jan Malěř) and Tranio's (Zdeněk Rohlíček) swap of clothing, etc.

David Bazuka's set design, representing either Minola's house or Petruchio's house, proved effective and functional. Tomáš Kypta's pseudo-historical costumes with oriental elements and even modern accessories<sup>21</sup> evoked the atmosphere of the Italian Padua.

Juraj Deák's *The Taming of the Shrew* was Shakespeare with real zest.

18) Katherina awaited Petruchio in her beautiful white wedding dress and was infuriated by his bizarre appearance.

19) Martin Stránský and Andrea Černá brought spirit, liveliness and ferocity to their roles as Petruchio and Katherina.

20) Petruchio and Katherina competed verbally to throw each other off balance.

21) E.g. Katherina's and Petruchio's knitted berets, Petruchio's huge extravagant wedding hat.

## Conclusion

There have been four productions of *The Taming of the Shrew* on Pilsen stages since the year 1902. In the 1914 production, the director Miloš Nový omitted the framework of the play within a play, which allowed him to interpret the shrew taming plot as a naturalistic comedy; nevertheless, according to the theatre review, the elision missed its aim. Anna Bečvářová's Katherina was an ill-mannered young woman, actually in need of Petruchio's lesson. However, in the shrew taming process, Miloš Nový's Petruchio did not display his *masculinity* through acts of violence, but rather through his wit and spirit.

Regrettably, only sketchy information was found on the 1941 wartime production, concerning primarily the production cast. With respect to the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia of the time, the media might have been preoccupied with other issues, e.g. political and military development.

The first post-war *Shrew* production took place in 1970. Under Svatopluk Papež's direction, the production resembled a farce, possibly employing Commedia dell'Arte elements. In Věra Vlčková's interpretation, Katherina represented a headstrong woman, opposing pseudo-morality<sup>22</sup>. René Přibíl's Petruchio tamed Kate by means of his humour and hyperbole.

In the 2008 *Shrew* production, the director Juraj Deák freed himself from the Sly's Induction and produced a vital and emotional comedy, bordering on farce, in which the *wild* Katherina was finally tamed, though not shamed, and Petruchio's manners became somewhat moderated. Despite his would-be strong gestures and words, Petruchio was not a misogynist. Likewise, Katherina, regardless of what she said about marriage, wished to get married in reality. Her openness constituted one of her greatest charms. Finally, a genuine interaction between Petruchio and Katherina could be observed.

None of the above mentioned productions limited Katherina to an archetypal shrewish wife, supposed to take her traditional female role and follow her husband unconditionally, regardless her own wishes and desires. Similarly, Petruchio did not represent a merciless tamer or a stereotypical patriarchal authority. Each production was, on the contrary, enriched by a specific directorial intention, allowing for an original rendition.

The aforementioned brief analysis shows that each generation perceives the appealing magic of Shakespeare's language and timelessness of his themes through its own particular prism, allowing for a variety of distinctive (re)interpretations.

22) Katherina's revolt against pseudo-morality might have reflected the normalization period atmosphere; however, there appears to be a lack of evidence supporting this hypothesis.



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**Hana Navrátilová****V hlavní nebo vedlejší roli Egypt<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract:**

*Mapping and subsequently classifying encounters with ancient Egypt, one is faced with a large task. In the Western world, where a substantial appropriation of Egypt was developing during past two centuries and Egypt was integrated into local cultural memories, one sees an almost uninterrupted track of Egyptianising forms, especially in European art. However, most art representations of this sort have a background of ideas and concepts. Egypt as a backdrop to the stories of the Bible is one such concept.*

*The renewed intensity of presence of classical antiquity in European culture from 14th century onwards did inevitably bring a renewal of Egyptian themes, given the intense presence of Egypt in the Greek and Roman worlds—presence physical, political, as well as religious and imaginary. The development from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been defined as "five centuries" of Egyptomania. It should, however, not be taken for granted that Europe and later Northern America were the only scenes who staged Egypt in one or more roles, either as meaningful, or monumental, or decorative and lustful or a mix of these. Ancient Egypt has not been lost to the cultural memory of the Islamic world either.*

*In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the reinterpretations of ancient Egypt took another turn. They were adopted, much in the way other histories have been adopted, as arguments for or against a cultural identity of modern nations. In addition, Egypt takes part in those alternative worlds which look into the future or a mythical past—it is a frequent presence in science fiction and fantasy, as a source of ideologies, concepts or visualisations.*