

Strong Females in Shakespeare's Works

When William Shakespeare wrote his plays, he did not follow the conventional means for portraying women. *The Taming of the Shrew* and other plays were written in the late 1500s, or the early 1600s. In this period, there were many problems in society in relation to the dynamic between men and women. Society fit under the mold of a strong patriarchal system, where men were believed to be superior to women in just about every way. There was a strong ideology about the proper woman, and how she was supposed to act in accordance to her superior—her husband, or generally, any man. William Shakespeare did not believe in this ridiculous patriarchal system. At the very least, he certainly didn't adhere to it in his writings. The historical context present when he wrote his plays proves his reluctance to follow the lead from society. Knowing the historical context is key to understanding how forward-thinking Shakespeare was in writing a character such as Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*. When focusing on the strong female characters in his plays, Katherine will be at the forefront of this argument. Viola from *Twelfth Night* will also be used to supplement the character traits attributed to Katherine. Both females possess intelligence and savvy. As a character, Katherine is very outspoken, strong-willed, and shrewd in the way she adapts to the changing circumstances. In her encounters with Petruchio, she shows her mettle and her equal footing with men. She uses her savvy and intelligence to know when to put on a public performance, and when to channel her aggression to get what she wants out of her relationship with her husband—equality and respect. In this way, she is a

strong example of the type of woman Shakespeare was comfortable writing, when society was not comfortable with a strong woman.

In order to fully appreciate what Shakespeare did in writing his strong female characters, it is important to gain an understanding of the historical background of the time period. In her book *Women in the Age of Shakespeare*, Theresa Kemp addresses many of the problems of male dominated society present throughout Shakespeare's life. Misogyny ran rampant throughout society during this period. New ideologies were created, along with the same old traditional beliefs perpetuating this oppressive cycle: "Continuing along the lines of thinking initiated by Aristotle, women were seen as the negative half of a whole host of binary oppositions (e.g., body/mind; passive/active; evil/good; and passion/reason)" (Kemp 16). Kemp immediately goes on to talk of women and their position compared to men: "...seeing them as designed for purposes and uses aside from their own being but nevertheless categorically and essentially further from perfection than men" (Kemp 17).

This oppressive cycle was perpetuated by many writers (Christian writers) as they made sure women were kept from positions such as teachers or preachers. They were kept away from these positions purely on the basis of sex. They were further from perfection, so why should these positions be given to them, instead of the more suitable gender—men? There were known ideas for the "pure" woman, such as the Virgin Mary or the Madonna. There was a simple issue with this example: "Additionally, these comparatively positive depictions of women were beyond the reasonable imitation of ordinary women. Conceived without the stain of

original sin, Mary presented a figure of female purity” (Kemp 17). There were notions of what a proper or “pure” woman was supposed to be, but this wasn’t a realistic standard by which women could be held.

The history of women in medieval society is one littered with misogyny and patriarchal missteps. When Shakespeare wrote his female characters such as Katherine, he was writing in the face of many long-standing beliefs and oppressive traditions determined to perpetuate the notion of inferiority of women. This remarkable and disturbing historical context makes Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew* such a remarkable character. The skill and wit of Katherine is what Marjorie Garber speaks to in her piece *Shakespeare After All*. Garber compares Katherine to the character Christopher Sly from the play’s induction: “Like Sly, Kate is told the opposite of what she knows or believes to be true. Unlike him, she at first resists. But also unlike him, she will adapt and change as a result of the experience of the play” (64). In the induction, Christopher Sly is convinced that is he noble through the trickery of others. He does not resist this and comes off looking like a fool as a result of this acceptance.

In comparison, Katherine shows the ability to adapt to the extremely erratic behavior of Petruchio. He denies her perfectly good food when she is hungry, and he calls her well-fashioned clothes ‘filth.’ Katherine’s adaptation to this behavior is what puts her above this man—Christopher Sly: “By the end of act 4 Kate has caught on to Petruchio’s mood and is willing to call the sun the moon, and the moon the sun, according to his whim” (64). Garber speaks to the way in which Shakespeare puts Katherine up against Christopher Sly, in somewhat similar situations. Her

exceptional handling of things in comparison to the foolishness of Sly, gives insight into the intelligence and savvy of this woman. Through this process of 'taming,' Katherine and Petruchio come to the point of a mutual relationship with each other. This mutual situation is evident when the character Vincentio arrives on the scene. When Petruchio and Katherine encounter Vincentio, Petruchio acts as though this man is a woman. Katherine, in turn, embraces him as a woman. The way in which Katherine handles this moment shows the new facet of her relationship with her husband: "This marks the beginning of Petruchio and Kate's mutual collaboration; Kate acts as his accomplice and recognizes Vincentio with wit and invention" (65). This exchange takes place late in act four, and by this point in the play, there is less arguing between this married couple. The arguments have been replaced by wit and humor, and this is a testament to the adaptation from Katherine.

In a scholarly article written by Unhae Langis, she delves into the marital situation present in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Langis talks about Petruchio and his behavior towards Katherine. He measures his actions towards her, as he uses moderation and situational virtue to 'tame' her: "His ranting is not uncontrolled anger, but skillful, controlled acting towards the virtuous end: Kate emerging from behind her shield of shrew" (Langis 48). While Petruchio uses moderation in his dealings with Katherine, she must also exercise moderation in her reaction to his behavior. There is a line that she must walk carefully, in order to avoid the violence that was all too popular in this era. Katherine's reactions must be measured to gain and maintain the peace: "The frightening specter of marital violence lurking in *Taming*, as confirmed by the early modern records of battered women, suggests that

tragedy lies never afar” (Langis 46). Petruchio’s character must be given his due, as he is able to see beneath the sharp tongue and rough exterior that Katherine shows to the world: “Petruchio sees beneath Kate’s defensive shield of a sharp tongue into her true worth, and taming, transcending its offensiveness to modern sensibilities, is the process to unveil her hidden virtue” (Langis 50). Before Petruchio comes along, the reader has seen evidence of Katherine being short with others who approach her as though they are intimidated and afraid of her. Petruchio does not treat her through her reputation, as he doesn’t show any fear of her. Katherine picks up on this, and the game of cat and mouse ensues between them.

Since Petruchio treats her differently than others do, this causes Katherine to allow the game to continue to see where it leads. According to the ideology of this time, Katherine is a member of the inferior sex, and must be subservient to this man. At times, she must be the one to give in and submit to the opinion or authority of Petruchio. However, she shows just as much moderation as he does, which is a testament to her intelligence and wit. She sees that something is going on here between the two of them, and she allows it to play out. In doing so, there are times when she must put on a public performance, while she is adapting to this game where they are both in the process of mutually taming one another.

Katherine is a character that undergoes significant change throughout the play *The Taming of the Shrew*. To see evidence of this, it is important to look at Shakespeare’s own words in the play itself. Specifically, the way in which Katherine acts towards men, or suitors, undergoes a lot of change. In scene one of act one, the audience is first introduced to Katherine: “I’ faith, sir, you shall never need to fear;

I wish it is not halfway to her heart. But if it were, doubt not her care should be to comb your noddle with a three-legged stool, and paint your face, and use you like a fool" (ll. 61-65). These are lines in which Katherine is speaking to Hortensio. She mistakenly thinks Hortensio is a suitor brought before her. He replies to her and informs her that he is no such suitor, and that she will not have one until her behavior becomes gentler. Throughout the play, there is an extremely strong reputation about Katherine that she is wild, mean, and not worth the trouble of suiting, especially compared to her sister Bianca.

By the time the play progresses into its final act, Katherine's behavior is hardly recognizable compared to her threatening to use a three-legged stool on a man's head. In scene two of act five, Katherine gives her big speech: "Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee, and for thy maintenance commits his body to painful labor both by sea and land, to watch the night in storms" (ll. 150-54)... This is only a small sample from her speech, but it speaks to the transformation that she has undergone. By no means does this mean she has become completely submissive to her husband Petruchio. Instead, she is putting on a brilliant performance. She is giving a demonstration to the public that she is willing to change and adapt in order to meet the virtuous end—marriage. This change is partially brought about by the way in which Petruchio treats her differently. Katherine has been a witness to many suitors for Bianca, as her behavior is more in line with the 'proper' woman. Katherine has constantly been told that she might have suitors if she behaved more like her younger sister. At this time, Petruchio comes along and sees that there is hidden virtue underneath Katherine's

brash exterior. Through his erratic behavior, she becomes aware and accepts the fact that she must change her ways if she wants to achieve an equal, or at the very least, happy marriage.

Katherine is not the only female character written by Shakespeare that displays these strong characteristics. Viola from *Twelfth Night* also displays intelligence and savvy in her own ways. As Catherine Thomas speaks about a film's portrayal of the play, she talks about the dire straits for this woman. She uses her intelligence from a very early point in the play. As she becomes shipwrecked, she must use her wits to improve her situation: "As a shipwrecked maiden in an enemy land, orphaned from childhood and separated from her twin brother Sebastian, Viola must use her ingenuity to protect herself and establish some means for her welfare" (Thomas 307). Viola comes up with the plan to change her appearance to reflect that of a man, in order to gain an audience with the duke Orsino. She does this with the help of the ship's captain. Make no mistake, though, this is her ingenious at work in this moment. In her own patriarchal society present in the play, she has the intelligence to understand her situation. She would have little to no chance to see and speak to Orsino as herself. Simply being male increases her chances exponentially.

These two characters are only two examples of the way that William Shakespeare was not bound by the patriarchy when it came to writing characters for his plays. When he wrote female characters such as Katherine or Viola, he gave them intelligence and savvy to help even the odds when they were living in a time ripe with inequality. Viola hatches a plan to impersonate a man, in order to reach

her goal of gaining an audience with the duke Orsino. In Katherine's case, she understands her situation and realizes that she will be required to get married. Towards the beginning of *The Taming of the Shrew*, the audience immediately sees the way in which she acts towards potential suitors. However, when a different kind of man comes along, such as Petruchio, we see the game unfold. She adapts to the ever-changing situation by using her intelligence and wit to put on the appropriate performance for the current situation. An example is at the end when she delivers her famous speech. Katherine is not being submissive to Petruchio in this instance. Instead, she realizes that there is a level of kindness and respect required to make the marriage one that is functioning and healthy.

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In the plays written by William Shakespeare, he had a tendency to write female characters that were ahead of their time. Considering the historical context in which he lived and wrote, which I am exploring as well, there were many issues with the patriarchal structure of society during his lifetime. Women were considered to be inferior to men in every way imaginable. With this in mind, it demands a greater respect for the writer, that he was undeterred by society and its notions about the gender differences. The “proper” woman was thought to be one that is respectful and mindful of her superior—her husband, or men in general. Thankfully, Shakespeare didn't adhere to this ridiculous patriarchal ideology.

I want to focus in on the strong female characters in Shakespeare's writings. Specifically, Katherine goes against many of these archaic ideas and notions about proper womanly behavior. To a lesser degree, Viola from *Twelfth Night* shares a couple of these character traits with Katherine. They are both intelligent and savvy. Katherine is a woman that is extremely outspoken, strong-willed, intelligent, and shrewd in the way she adapts to her ever-changing circumstances. She proves throughout her encounters with Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, that she is equal with men. She uses her savvy and her intelligence to know when to put on a public performance, and when to channel her aggression to get what she wants out of her relationship with her husband—equality and respect.

Andresen-Thom, Martha. *Shrew-taming and other rituals of aggression: Baiting and bonding on the stage and in the wild*. *Women's Studies*. Jan. 1982. Vol. 9 Issue 2. 23p. Print.

This source discusses the manner in which Kate and Petruchio have been played by actors in renditions of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Specifically, some actresses have delivered Kate's final speech, and included a wink to Petruchio: "That wink had signaled a change from shrewish woman to shrewd wife, her goal of dominance the same as at the beginning of the play, but her tactics now more refined" (Andresen-Thom 123). In this way, Kate has learned that her poor behavior, such as bullying, is not the way for her to reach her goal, and has "shifted to deviousness." This acknowledgement through Kate's wink is not meant for Petruchio, but rather the audience to the play. It is a way that she communicates her understanding of their relationship, rather than a method of subservient nature. At the same time, Kate shows an alliance with her husband Petruchio.

At the end of the play, both Katherine and Petruchio are kneeling together. They both rise up at the same time, giving a public face to their newly formed alliance. Even though this source is discussing renditions of actors playing Kate and Petruchio in various plays, it is still credible to my position regarding the strength of Kate's character. By the end of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Kate and Petruchio are on even ground with each other privately. Society prevents their equal standing in front of the world, but Petruchio understands he has met his match. This is done

through Shakespeare's writing as Kate is transformed from a bully, to a more measured (but still strong) wife. She uses her wit and intelligence to balance the scales that were initially, strongly tipped in Petruchio's favor.

Edwards, Robert. Ziegler, Vickie. *Matrons and Marginal Women in Medieval Society*.

Great Britain. St Edmundsbury Press. 1995. 49-53. Print.

There are certain ways in which women were described throughout Shakespeare's life. While characters such as Katherine and Viola were being written in his plays, equality for women was nowhere to be found in society: "Until recently, however, the term "weaker" literally referred to a predisposition to sickness suffered by all women for no other reason than that they were born female, an accident of birth that brought with it automatic physical and mental debility" (Edwards and Ziegler 49). In the medieval times, during the time when Shakespeare wrote his plays, women were thought to truly be inferior. When someone was born as a female, they were dealt a poor hand according to society. The female body was flawed, and those stuck in its form had debilities, simply for not being male. Those in the medical field were leading the charge in concluding that women were fragile, and at much greater risk for diseases or illnesses.

This is another source that digs into the time period and the gender inequality that was rampant. Women in Shakespeare's time were not only seen as the less dominate gender. They were seen as being physically inferior. This source also talks about traits given to women (ideal traits) such as: "daintiness, sweetness,

shyness, and amiability” (Edwards and Ziegler 49). A character such as Katherine stands out in stark contrast, as she does not possess these “ideal” traits. Instead, she is outspoken, aggressive, and stubborn. She seems to undergo some changes, especially throughout the wooing from Petruchio, but Shakespeare wrote her as a strong response to the notion of what a female was supposed to be in these times. There is nothing in *The Taming of the Shrew* that plays into these traits, as far as Katherine is concerned. Her character is certainly not frail or dainty. In fact, the men in the play are terrified of her because of her reputation.

Garber, Marjorie. *Shakespeare After All*. New York. Anchor Books. 2004. 56-72. Print.

Marjorie Garber talks about the skill and wit of Kate to adapt to the continuing tests from Petruchio. She compares her to Christopher Sly from the induction: “Like Sly, Kate is told the opposite of what she knows or believes to be true. Unlike him, she at first resists. But also unlike him, she will adapt and change as a result of the experience of the play” (64). In the Induction, when the trick is set for Christopher Sly, people are trying to convince him that he is noble. While he goes along with this farce and looks like a fool, Kate adapts to her surroundings as the play continues: “By the end of act 4 Kate has caught on to Petruchio’s mood and is willing to call the sun the moon, and the moon the sun, according to his whim” (64). Through the process of Kate and Petruchio playing this game with each other, it eventually turns into a mutual situation: “This marks the beginning of Petruchio and

Kate's mutual collaboration; Kate acts as his accomplice and recognizes Vincentio with wit and invention" (65).

Garber's extensive look at this marital relationship and the changes it undergoes is similar to my own viewpoints. Garber sees Kate as being a strong-willed and intelligent woman, who uses her intelligence to find the sought after common ground with her husband. To the audience, and the other characters, it seems like Kate is being a "good wife" and giving in to the whims of Petruchio. At some point in the play, it becomes a marriage with equality present in it. It is a testament to the intelligence of Kate to adapt in the face of less than ideal circumstances. There are moments when Petruchio doesn't treat her in a great manner. At times, he does his best to prevent her from sleeping and eating. Kate uses this as an opportunity to tame him to get the marriage to the point of the mutual collaboration.

Kemp, Theresa. *Women in the Age of Shakespeare*. California. Greenwood Press. 2010. 16-24. Print.

In her book, Theresa Kemp goes into detail about the historical conditions present during Shakespeare's lifetime. Women were not only known as the binary opposites of men, but were considered the negative half of these oppositions: "Continuing along the lines of thinking initiated by Aristotle, women were seen as the negative half of a whole host of binary oppositions (e.g., body/mind, passive/active, evil/good, and passion/reason)" (Kemp 16). This is yet another

example of the negative way in which women were looked upon during the time when Shakespeare wrote plays such as *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Twelfth Night*.

This source is important to my paper as it shows the strength of Katherine, especially, and her refusal to accept this binary opposition of the sexes. This also shows the gift of Shakespeare to abandon the traditional gender roles to create female characters that are on the same level as their male counterparts. Knowing this historical context makes a character like Katherine even more remarkable. Katherine's steadfast goal is to get to that place where she and Petruchio are on the same level. She must use her shrewd personality and her wit to go on the offensive and change the behavior of Petruchio, while at the same time, adapting to society and changing her own behavior to be "more acceptable." Through this play, it is not her being tamed by her husband, but mutual taming to make the marriage work.

Langis, Unhae. *Marriage, The Violent Traverse from Two to One in **The Taming of the Shrew and Othello***. Journal of the Wooden O Symposium. 2008. Vol. 8. 45-63. Print.

Much of what works in *The Taming of the Shrew* is a testament to the moderation used by William Shakespeare in his writings. Times of a character (such as Petruchio) being mean are a "situational virtue." These moments create powerful actions and passions. In this way, Petruchio uses virtue, and moderation, to woo Kate: "His ranting is not uncontrolled anger, but skillful, controlled acting towards the virtuous end: Kate emerging from behind her shield of shrew" (Langis 48).

Gaining an understanding of the moderation used by Petruchio, it becomes clearer that Kate must be aware of her game of cat and mouse with her husband. Since men have the higher role in society, as a woman, Kate must walk that fine line in her reactions to Petruchio's behavior. Her appropriate actions are in the name of keeping the peace and preventing the threatened violence: "The frightening specter of marital violence lurking in *Taming*, as confirmed by the early modern records of battered women, suggests that tragedy lies never afar" (Langis 46).

This source will be very useful to me as it explores the ever-evolving marital relationship of Petruchio and Kate. It helps prove the point that Petruchio's game is being played with a well-matched partner (Kate). While Petruchio is allowed to be outlandish and brazen with his tactics to woo Kate, she must use her intelligence and shrewd common sense to play against the stacked deck. According to the era of Shakespeare, Kate is a part of the subservient gender. There are times when Kate must be the one to break the stalemate and submit to the authority, or opinion, of Petruchio. Moderation and timing are both critical in her quest to show her witty skill. There are also times where Kate is playing the game, while performing in front of an audience. It is a testament to Shakespeare that he wrote Kate to be this strong-willed woman who is extremely intelligent to pick and choose her spots, and knows when it is time to perform and give the people what they want to hear.

Shakespeare, William. *The Taming of the Shrew. The Taming of the Shrew: Texts and Contexts*. Editor Frances E. Dolan. Bedford Books. St. Martin's Press. New York. 1996. 41-139. Print.

The Taming of the Shrew was a play written by William Shakespeare at a time when women were not shown as Katherine was in this story. At the outset, the reader sees that she is a loud and outspoken woman. The men in this play are terrified of her and see her as being wild and quite frankly, not worth the effort of courting. Petruchio comes along and immediately sees Katherine as an opportunity. A chance to showcase his talent by way of “taming” her. As these two characters begin to have interactions with each other, it becomes evident that they make quite the pair. They both have extremely strong personalities, and this leads them to play a game with each other. Petruchio is convinced he must kill her with kindness, and break her down to tame her. Katherine shows her will and determination to adapt to the changing situation and refuses to be broken down into just another subservient wife. By the play’s end, this pair is on the same level as Katherine gives her performance of her famous last speech.

This play by Shakespeare is the central basis for my paper. Katherine is the character that will be my primary focus. Of all the female characters written by Shakespeare, that I’ve encountered, she is the most interesting. My discussion of her strengths, tough and tested will, intelligence, wit, and savvy, will begin with the lines of the play itself. From there, I will supplement it with articles and books written about the play, and the interpretations of Katherine’s character. In keeping in mind the historical context for which this play was written, it will speak even greater volumes to the genius of William Shakespeare to write a character like Katherine at

a time when the steadfast social opinion was that females were inferior to males on just about every level.

Shakespeare, William. *Twelfth Night*. *Twelfth Night: Texts and Contexts*. Editor Bruce R. Smith. Bedford/St. Martin's Press. Massachusetts. 29-110. Print.

In Shakespeare's play *Twelfth Night*, Viola is a woman that is shipwrecked. Once she is on shore, she comes up with a plan to obtain an audience with the Duke Orsino. She is immediately aware of this impossibility so long as she is the woman Viola. She must become a man if she wants a chance to speak with him or be near him. She cuts her hair, changes her look, puts on men's clothes, and is transformed into the young man Cesario. Throughout the play, Cesario spends much time with Orsino and becomes one of his closest confidants. At the same time, Olivia starts to develop feelings for Cesario. By the play's end, when it is finally revealed that Cesario is Viola, Orsino has grown so close to him/her, that he vows that he will still take Viola as his mistress (his wife).

Even though the greater focus of my paper will be on the character Katherine from *The Taming of the Shrew*, I still want to include Viola in the discussion. Her personality is not on the level of Katherine. She is closer to the "typical woman" of the era. However, Shakespeare wrote Viola as a very intelligent and resourceful character. She is the one that comes up with the plan to masquerade as a man in order to reach her goal, spending time with Orsino. It shows intelligence and an intuition to understand the social pecking order of her time. Men had so many more

opportunities and rights, strictly because they were men. She uses this unbalanced societal structure to her own advantage.

Sirluck, Katherine. "Patriarchy, Pedagogy, and the Divided Self in *The Taming of the Shrew*." *University of Toronto Quarterly*. Summer 1991. Vol. 60 Issue 4. 417-422. Print.

In this article, Sirluck talks about the complicated marital structure present in *The Taming of the Shrew*. The stipulations of the era are evident in the way that their relationship and marriage are supposed to evolve: "as Petruchio schools Kate for thinking herself a free being, free to scold, refuse, and avow the intelligence of her own senses. The lover in wooing offers to make the woman mistress of himself and all he owns" (Sirluck 419)... Sirluck continues with the situational sacrifices that Katherine is supposed to make in marriage: "but in wedding, he becomes her master, and she no longer mistress, even of herself" (Sirluck 419). If Katherine would be subservient in her new marriage, as she is "supposed to be," she would be vacating the few rights that were allowed to her in the first place. In the process of trying to tame Katherine, Petruchio must break her down and dispose of notions she may already have about her rights and liberties.

This article has value for my paper, as it shows the conventions that are broken through Katherine's character. Katherine holds on to her freedom to scold and refuse. However, she must be strategic in the way that she interacts with Petruchio, especially in front of an audience. The tradition would hold that after

getting married, Petruchio is master of Katherine. Through her own actions, I see it more as both of them taming each other. Her behavior towards Petruchio, as when she is helping to organize and clean up his home, is more than what it appears on the surface. She hasn't given in to his mastery over her, but has learned how to deal with him to affect his behavior towards the treatment she is looking for. It is Katherine's actions that steer their marriage closer to equality by the end of the play.

Thomas, Catherine. "Nunn's Sweet Transvestite: Desiring Viola in *Twelfth Night*."

Journal of Popular Culture. Apr. 2008. Vol. 41 Issue 2. 306-320. Print.

Thomas talks about Viola in *Twelfth Night* and the way in which she must use her ingenuity to accomplish her goals: "As a shipwrecked maiden in an enemy land, orphaned from childhood and separated from her twin brother Sebastian, Viola must use her ingenuity to protect herself and establish some means for her welfare" (Thomas 307). Viola comes up with this plan to dress up and pretend to be a man. In this time and this land, she would not be able to find an audience with Orsino.

Thomas looks at this film of the play in three scenarios: Shakespeare's early modern era, the setting of the film (Victorian era), and the postmodern era. Thomas argues that Nunn combines elements from each of these three contexts and explores the issues of gender bending in regards to the character Viola. Thomas argues against the points of other critics that Nunn's treatment of this play romanticizes this issue

of “gender bending” and embraces the notion of ambiguity in relationships between heterosexuals.

In Thomas’s mind, Nunn’s film is playing on the desires and their possibilities. In the face of love conquering all, we must not turn a blind eye to desire. It can be found in many different places, especially, where we do not expect to find it. This article will be beneficial to my paper as it can supplement the discussion of Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*. While Katherine will be the focus of my argument for the strong-willed and intelligent women written by Shakespeare, Viola was forced (by social conditions) to rely on her ingenuity to concoct a plan to seek an audience with Orsino. Furthermore, once she began to masquerade as a man, she was so convincing in this role that she would eventually win over Orsino by the story’s end.

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