Matthias Bauer, Angelika Zirker (Eds.)

Drama and Cultural Change

Turning Around Shakespeare

NH 630.206

Universität Tübingen
Fakultätsbibliothek Neophilologie

Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier

223/09 G
Drama and Cultural Change:
Turning Around Shakespeare
Matthias Bauer, Angelika Zirker (Eds.) -
Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2009
ISBN 978-3-86821-194-8

Umschlaggestaltung: Brigitta Düsseldorff

© WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2009
ISBN 978-3-86821-194-8

Alle Rechte vorbehalten
Nachdruck oder Vervielfältigung nur mit
ausdrücklicher Genehmigung des Verlages

WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier
Postfach 4005, 54230 Trier
Bergstraße 27, 54295 Trier
Tel. (0651) 4150, Fax 41504
Internet: http://www.wvtvier.de
E-Mail: wvt@wvtvier.de

Contents

Preface........................................................................................1

Joerg O. Fichte
The Appearance of the Commonwealth
and the People in Tudor Drama................................................5

Lothar Fietz
A Chapter in the History of Ideas and Drama:
Shakespeare's Dramatizations of the Clash of
Antithetical World-Views in the Sixteenth Century.................23

Matthias Bauer & Angelika Zirker
Kate Modern? The Taming of the Shrew
and the Trouble with Obedience.............................................49

Anne-Julia Zwierlein
Negotiating Primogeniture: Succession,
Inheritance and 'Spiritual Legitimacy'
in Shakespeare's Plays.................................................................65

Eckhard Außerlen
"The Man, who has no Masick in his Soul":
Shylock and Heroic Sentimentalism in
George Granville's Adaptation of
The Merchant of Venice...............................................................87

Norbert Lemmertz
"Of Hawks and Men": the Love-Hunt as a
Sign of Cultural Change in Shakespeare
and Cavalier Poetry....................................................................121
Preface

This collection of essays is concerned with the way in which drama both responds and contributes to cultural change. Not all of the contributions are focused on Shakespeare but most of them address the fact that, as regards the English-speaking world, Shakespeare has formed the pivot of the relationship between drama and culture for several centuries. This will perhaps appear most clearly when we consider the ways in which Shakespeare's plays have been adapted and transformed. It seems possible to read these adaptations as documentary evidence of cultural change, no matter whether the adaptation is meant to be a way of 'saving' Shakespeare for a different cultural climate, whether it is an iconoclastic attempt at showing the need for a thoroughgoing revision of the cultural assumptions on which his plays appear to be based, or whether Shakespeare's words, themes, characters and elements of action are mainly used as a kind of language helping later authors to make their own individual statements known and understood at particular cultural moments. This very process of masquerading similarity and difference by 'using' Shakespeare, however, shows that drama indicates, considers, enhances or slows down cultural change in complex ways.

Eckhard Aubelken's contribution to this volume, together with Ellen Dengel-Janic's and Johanna Roering's essay, is most immediately concerned with the use of Shakespeare in later dramatic works. In his article on George Granville's adaptation of The Merchant of Venice, Aubelken points out that to Granville, Shakespeare's play becomes a means of pursuing an aesthetic and political agenda which responds to the social and economic situation of Granville's own time. One way of doing so is to present The Merchant of Venice as the defense of a world in which trade forms a harmonious leige with aristocratic ideals of generosity in the face of a more ruthless, profit-oriented form of capitalism. In their discussion on the British-Asian film Second Generation, Dengel-Janic and Roering come to a conclusion which evinces parallels to Aubelken's: in this TV production, Shakespeare (in this case King Lear) is used to eventually advocate a notion of stability in a multi-ethnic, postmodem, economically instable context. The fact that, in this process, the quintessentially tragic action of Shakespeare's play is turned into a not entirely unsentimental story with a happy ending is perhaps no coincidence when we consider the history of post-Renaissance Shakespeare adaptations. Lars Eckstein's paper on representations of Shakespeare's Caliban in 18th and 19th-century British painting implicitly takes the notion of adaptation onto a different plane, not only because he is concerned with painting rather than the stage or the cinema but also because, by focusing on the exotic imaginary to which the Shakespearean character gave rise, Eckstein reflects on the imaginative potential of a figure that could, in a particular economic and ideological context, become a manifestation of exoticist desire.

Shakespeare, however, can be regarded as the catalyst of cultural change not only when it comes to adaptations and reconstructions of his plays or certain characters.
from reified norms with the aim of stimulating sympathetic laughter and inducing relief from real-life constraints and anxieties. Relief is further heightened by successful escapes into alternative worlds, into the realms of the marvellous, the magic, the idyllic, the chief characteristic of which is the absence of power structures based on time-honoured moral, political and economic laws. At the same time, the assignment of a privileged point of view to the audience is designed to relieve it from the anxieties felt by the characters in the plays and thus to enable it to lean back and relax.

All these strategies combined mark the distance that separated Shakespeare's early and middle comedies from both the medieval plays written in the "manner of a morall playe" and from the contemporary "Comical Satyre." His comedies reflected and reinforced the processes of pluralisation, modernization, secularization and liberation, which finally were to gather momentum in the teeth of orthodoxy.

Kate Modern?
The Taming of the Shrew and the Trouble with Obedience

Matthias Bauer & Angelika Zirker

I. A Test Case

When it comes to the question as to whether Shakespeare may speak to us today in a manner which will meet with immediate agreement or whether his voice has become estranged from listeners of the 21st century, a general answer is impossible. Too diverse are the linguistic and cultural conditions, the preferences and convictions of his potential audience today. And, for all its coherence, too diverse is the Shakespeare canon itself, ranging as it does from topical satire to tragedy, from lyrical introspection to boisterous stage business. Still, we may hope for some answer when narrowing down the initial question. Can we identify cases in which cultural changes makes it difficult or even impossible for a modern audience to appreciate what Shakespeare shows and tells us? For want of further empirical evidence, "audience" will be narrowed down too, and restricted to critical responses.

As regards a change of attitudes it seems obvious to consider the representation of successes and failures in human intercourse. We surmise that it is especially due to the manner in which Shakespeare represents some of the failures (caused, for example, by the inability to trust, as in the case of Othello or Leonato) that we can still bear and read with a sense of immediacy what his characters say and do. The striking quality of such representations may even be enhanced by our knowledge of their temporal distance. They can make us forget about the apparent need for adaptation and transformation or about "Shakespeare" having perhaps mainly become an (unread) cultural icon. Successes are more difficult to appreciate, however. Do we regard Portia's treatment of Shylock, for example, to be quite as compellingly represented as his own stubborn sense of injustice and self-pity? The case is a particularly complex one, which is why we would like to focus on an example more limited in scope and depth.

Chances are that by many of us gender roles and relationships will be considered as the field in which perhaps the most radical cultural change has taken place since the early modern period. At the same time, comedy is the genre in which those roles and relationships have always been a (or the) most prominent subject. This is why we would like to focus on one of the plays in the Shakespeare canon in which this change comes to the fore. Or, strictly speaking, the change comes to the fore when we try to understand the relationship between man and woman in that play. The play is The Taming of the Shrew, and our suggestion is that much (or perhaps even most) present-day criticism fails to respond to it on its own terms because our notion and understand-
ing of "obedience" is different from that of Shakespeare's time. But this is a somewhat sweeping statement which needs some explanation.

II. The Final Speech

The Taming of the Shrew has become notorious among critics in recent decades. One of the reasons for this is Kate's change and final submission to her husband. In her famous speech at the end of the play, Kate, at her husband's suggestion, tells the other women "[w]hat duty they do owe their lords and husbands" (5.2.132). In particular, she tells them that they "are bound to serve, lave, and obey," and as she does this in a quite energetic manner, using anaphora and pleonastic epithets, it is hard to doubt that she feels passionately about what she says. "And when she is forward, peevish, sullen, sour, / And not obedient to his honest will, / What is she but a foul contending rebel, / And graceless traitor to her loving lord?" (158-61). She goes all the way to offering, as a symbol of obedience, to place her "hands below [her] husband's foot" (178). This is indeed, or so it seems, the reverse of her former attitude. Before, she had struck Petruchio in order to "try" (2.1.217) whether he is a gentleman (for as a gentleman, he must not strike back, and he does not), and she had said "Go, fool, and whom thou keep'st command" (2.1.251). When one listens to her final speech, "tamed" seems the wrong word for Kate's changed attitude. She is by no means tame in advocating obedience where she first preached and lived rebellion.

Has Kate been successfully brainwashed by Petruchio? Is she being ironical? Or is she to be taken seriously after all?

III. Critical (Mis)Conceptions

Present-day views tend to follow mainly two leads. One group reads Kate as being ironical in her final speech. It is claimed that the "greatest irony of the play [is that it] satirizes not woman herself in the person of the shrew, but male attitudes toward women," that "the contextual irony of Kate's last speech" makes it clear "that her husband is deluded," that although Petruchio "has gained her outward compliance in the form of a public display, [...] her spirit remains mischievously free," or they think "How insufferable it would be if she and Shakespeare really meant it [the final speech]."

Others think that, with Kate's final speech, Shakespeare promotes male chauvinist and/or misogynist ideas or, whatever his own views on the subject, he simply bow(s) to the popularity of those ideas. In this view, "The values that underlie the story are obviously those of a patriarchal society, in which the desirability of male dominance is unquestioned. [...] The central joke in The Taming of the Shrew is directed against a woman. The play seems written to please a misogynist audience." Similarly, it is claimed that "the play enacts the defeat of the threat of a woman's revolt: it does so in comic form, and often with apparent good humour — thus it offers the audience the chance to revel in and reinforce their misogyny while at the same time feeling good, [...] this is a story in which one human being starves and brainwashes another, with the full approval of the community;" or that "Kate is less a character within the play than a spokesperson of a very patriarchal rhetoric." Other critics declare that "[t]he humiliation has a sexually sadistic tinge since there is always the possibility that Petruchio will rape her"; accordingly, "The Shrew [is] [...] read and performed as a piece of bluffed brutality in which a man marries a spirited woman in order to torture and humiliate her," or even as "[a] piece of sadistic pornography." This coincides with the assumption that Shakespeare "saw the most vital of all human relations either as the act of buying an animal or as the act of beating one into submission," that "Kate, for [Petruchio], is a thing [as he has] wrenched unquestioning obedience from her, [...]"

1 All quotations follow the Arden Shakespeare edition of The Taming of the Shrew, ed. Brian Morris (London: Thomson, 2002 [1962]). All further references to Shakespeare follow the most recent Arden editions.

2 Cf. Susan Daniel's use of pleonasmus, cited and translated by Lee A. Sommert, A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968) 156: "What we have here is a superfluity of words which nevertheless gives grace to the speech [... ] in the interest of either ornamentation or exaggeration."


4 Kahn 98.

5 Kahn 98.


9 Cory Schneider, "The Public, the Private, and the Shaming of the Shrew," SEU 42.2 (Spring 2002): 235-58, 236.

10 Glaser 314. See also Wayne A. Robbins about Petruchio's 'rape trick': "all the more [... make [...odynamics of power, control, and coercion, turning the other into a subversively feminine figure who is represented as a ruler, a citizen, and also, more disturbingly, a resisted"; "Petruchio's Rape Trick: The Taming of the Shrew and the Renaissance Discourse of Eroticism, " Modern Philology 92 (1994/1995) 294-327, 295.


12 Thompson 26.

she no longer has mind or will of her own," and that the animal images reflect "the subhuman status of women in society." According to these views, Petruchio does not treat Kate like a human being but rather like a thing, which is then being read as an expression of his materialism and culminates in the view that he marries her only for her dowry.

So-called defenders of the play qualify these views, arguing that Shakespeare is less chauvinistic than others, and that we have to take into account cultural change: in Shakespeare's time it was still quite customary and indeed the social norm for wives to be obedient to their husbands. At base, critics see the play as a negotiation between contending forces, focussing on the problem of patriarchy being forced to defend itself. In this context, Germaine Greer's statements about _The Taming of the Shrew_ come as a surprise. If the play really were only still in the theatre's repertoire because it "reinforces the audience's misogyny," why should one of the major feminists defend it and argue as follows:

Kate is a woman striving for her own existence in a world where she is a slave, a decency to be bid for against her sister's higher market value, so she spits out by becoming unmanageable, a scold. Bianca has found the woman's way of guile and feigned gentleness to pay better dividends [...]. Kate [...] has the uncomromising good fortune to find Petruchio who is man enough to know what he wants and how to get it. He wants her spirit and her energy because he wants a wife worth keeping [...]. The submission of a woman like Kate is genuine and exciting because she has something to lay down, her virgin pride and individuality. Bianca is the soul of submissively, married without awareness of good-will. Kate's speech at the close of the play is the greatest defence of Christian monogamy ever written. According to Greer, the marriage of Kate and Petruchio "rests upon the role of a husband as protector and friend, and it is valid because Kate has a man who is capable of being both, for Petruchio is both gentle and strong (it is a vile distortion of the play to have him strike her every") (234).

That said, although there is indeed no stage direction or any other textual reference to this effect, Petruchio is regularly presented as a violent and cruel bully in stage per-

14 Kahn 96.
16 See below, section E.
18 Guy 86.

**IV. Searching for Criteria**

Given this critical response, we may ask ourselves whether the play can actually be considered an "image of truth", image verity, at all, (as the allegedly Ciceronian) schoolbook definition of comedy had it. Obviously, we cannot even be sure that it is, as the same definition demands, an imitation of leisure (imitatio vita) and a mirror of social custom (speculum conscientiae).

Two main questions present themselves when it comes to understanding the play and, particularly, Kate's final speech. The one is, do we understand the form or kind of discourse? (This is the question that is implied when we wonder whether Kate speaks ironically, for example.) The other question, linked with the first, is: do we understand the idea?

Let us begin with this second question. We suggest, for a change, that "patriarchy in general is not the main issue of the play. Obedience, as we have seen, is central to Kate's change and to the argument of her final speech but it never appears as the obedience of one class of people (women) to another (men) but as the obedience of an individual woman to an individual man whose love she returns. Even when Kate generalizes, she addresses a particular woman, namely the widow who looks with a "threatening unkind breeze" (5.2.137) at her newly-wedded husband Hortensio.

22 Cf. Randall Martin: "The interpretations produced by [...] - re-readings may be stimulating and provocative, but may also tend to belittle the complexity and pluralism of the original cultural context," "Kastr for the Table and Kate's of the Mind: A Social Metaphor in _The Taming of the Shrew_," _English Studies in Canada_ 17.1 (March 1991): 1-20, 2.
23 The definition was to be found in "an essay attributed to Dante, 'La tragedia et comedie,' frequently printed in renaissance editions of Terence", _Medalline Donum, Endowments of Art_ (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1954) 72 and 407(#47).
Her choice is in keeping with a generally positive idea of obedience in the culture of Shakespeare's time.26 As the first words of Milton's Paradise Lost remind us, disobedience is still to be identified as the source of all evil. This change with the early enlightenment (in Milton's very own time); for Thomas Hobbes, obedience is the submission to the will of someone who is in power; it is given in exchange for protection.27 As a consequence, obedience is no longer a virtue in itself but a means to an end and, as such, becomes a rather questionable attitude when the power to which or to whom obedience is given is no longer invested with ethical authority. In contrast to earlier notions of the right to resist a tyrannical ruler,28 obedience in this view is not honoured in the breach but has lost its inherent quality. This is a gradual process, and it is not to be suggested that by the late 17th century negative meanings have entirely overcome positive notions of obedience, but certainly a change has taken place. Characteristically, the first example in the OED entry on "obedience," which clearly implies that it may be a bad thing, is from 1874,29 and a title like Thoreau's Civil Disobedience would hardly have been possible without that shift of emphasis or meaning. In fact, this is not Thoreau's original title and was only attached to the essay in 1866, seventeen years after its first publication.30

By contrast, there is (or was) a long tradition of regarding obedience as a sign of freed-om: it is the result of an autonomous decision, based on insight, to relinquish self-
his ears. Deliberate misunderstanding is the consequence; as her angry utterance is not being produced in order to be understood, Petruchio takes it to refer to the article of dress he "did bespeak" earlier (4.3.63).

The close connection between freedom and listening (i.e. obedience) pointed up in this scene has been prepared for throughout the play. From the beginning, Katherine has been shown to know how to talk and how to use "unhappy words" (2.1.139). In Act II, for example, she verbally abuses Hortensio: "... she did call me rascal fiddler / And swangling Jack, with twenty such vile terms / As had she studied to misuse me so." (2.1.158-59). And indeed, she has done exactly that. Her behaviour is contrasted with her sister's in whose "silence" Lucentio sees "Maids' mild behaviour and sobriety" (1.1.70-71). Bianca, with her silence, outwardly fulfills the expectations of an obedient woman. According to Henry Smith's Preparation to Marriage from 1591, a woman's major quality ought to be her silence, "for the ornament of a woman is silence; and therefore the Law was given to the man rather than to the woman, to shew that he should be the teacher and she the hearer" (29-30). It is this very silence that "shocks" Katherine, which is why she takes "revenge" on Bianca by striking her, although Bianca has never crossed her with a bitter word (2.1.28).

But Shakespeare does not simply present us with a morality play based on common views such as Smith's. Bianca's silence is by no means held up as a shining example to be contrasted with Kate's noisy declarations of self-will. Bianca's is a conventional silence, yet it is an attitude that she does not really believe in - as is revealed by her behaviour in the final scene, in which she is disobedient and does not follow her husband's command. Katherine, when floating her, seems to sense her dissimulation. Neither of the sisters, however, has the ability to speak or to hear in the sense of 'to listen to'. This is already made clear during Bianca's music lesson with Hortensio: he wants to teach her to hear but does not succeed; hence, she does not know how to obey.

Whereas silence is merely an external "ornament" to Bianca (of the kind by which the world is "still dective"), Katherine will eventually learn the kind of silence which is neither mute nor pretended but enables her to become her husband's partner. If there is a moral concept Shakespeare has his characters enact, it is not so much Henry Smith's

33 Henry Smith, A Preparation to Marriage, The Summe Whereof was Spoken at a Contract, and Inlarged (London: R. Field, 1591) 29-30. The biblical basis of this view is 1 Tim (2:1), cf. 1 Tim (2:1). - Suzanne W. Hall provides an overview of marriage guidebooks in Early Modern England that all stress three characteristics of women, namely their being "obedient, chaste, and silent"; Chaste, Silent, and Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475-1640 (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982) 81. Patrick Collinson, in the chapter on "The Protestant Family" of The Birthright of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988) 65-65, points out how difficult it is to get an idea of the actual relationship between the sexes from sources such as conduct books (78). In "the diaries and autobiographies of the seventeenth century [...] there is more evidence of com- fortable sharing than of what Milton called 'absolute rule'" (78).

34 The Merchant of Venice 3.2.74.

but the one outlined in 1 Peter 3, where wives are told to "be in subjection" to their husbands not because wives should become their mindless slaves but because they should be able to teach their husbands by their own conversation should their husbands become disobedient to God's law. Accordingly, Petruchio takes Kate by making her hear and not speak, or rather to speak in a different spirit: "To tame a shrew and charm her chattering tongue" (4.2.58; our emphasis). Her attitude thus changes from resisting the words of others and insisting on her own knowing better - her frame of mind up to 4.3 - to learning what conversation means, as is shown in 4.5.16-17 when Petruchio, insisting on the brightness of moonshine during daytime, says: "I say it is the moon" and her reaction is "I know it is the moon." She not only learns to hear, but also to understand. Of course she is not making a scientific statement. But she has learned that, if there is to be a loving relationship, the point is not to insist on the truth of one's own words but to listen to the words of the loving partner. This results in her obedience which she states in her final speech and which is both the effect and the foundation of her love for Petruchio.

Even before their first meeting Petruchio seems to have fallen in love with Katherine although he has only heard others speak of her. Although he is not presented with a charming picture, he is interested in her because of her shrewdness, especially after learning of her misuse of Hortensio: "I love her ten times more than cetera did" (2.1.161). In this respect their courtship differs widely from Bianca and Lucentio's: they fall in love at first sight (1.1.50-58), whereas Petruchio loves Kate because of what he hears. Hence, in their first encounter, to hear is the key term:

Pet. Good morrow, Kate, for that's your name, I hear.
Kate. Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing; They call me Katherine that do talk of me. (2.1.182-83)

Kate's change can be described as a gradual release from utter loneliness and isolation. She is, at first, as unable to love anyone as she is unloved. Among "mates", she can only imagine to be made a "stale", a laughing-stock (1.1.58). All that fills her is the "anger of [her] heart" and the only release she can imagine is giving vent to it. Thus she is not merely "shrewish" or untamed, she lives under a curse, the tyranny of her own apparent autonomy. Hortensio points this out in the second scene of the play:

Her only faith, and that is faith enough
Is that she is irresolute; And shrewed, and forward, [...]. (1.2.87-89)

This curse is only overcome when she is liberated by Petruchio. He redeems her by turning her away from her self-will, emphasised by the leitmotif of 'I please myself' (she insists on this in 3.2.207 and 210) and 'as I please' (4.3.80), to the consideration

35 Cf. 1.1.102-04, in response to her father's asking her to say: "What, shall I be appointed hour, as though, belle, I knew not what to take and what to leave?"

36 See Moritz's note for the other meaning of "stale" and "state" implied, 174658.

37 Cf. the parallel to Bianca's "I'll learn my lessons as I please myself" (3.1.19-20).
of "what you will" (4.5.21, our emphasis).\(^{38}\) In a playful, exuberant spirit she subsequently addresses old Vincentio as a "Young budding virgin" (4.5.36). She does not do this because she has become the defenceless object of Petruchio's manipulation, but because she is now free to join in his game.\(^{39}\) She has freely chosen to accept the rules offered and in doing so has overcome the loneliness of having only herself to play with. Kate thus reflects and re-enacts, in a comical, secular fashion one of the most serious religious paradoxes informing the culture of her time: she realizes that she becomes liberated in obedience, or, as the Book of Common Prayer has it (in the Collect for Peace of the Morning Prayer, a text ironically appropriate to this loving war): that she opens herself to him "whose service is perfect freedom."\(^{40}\) She does not turn Petruchio into God but, by answering his call, accepts him as his human image. In this way she becomes herself, in burlesque fashion, an image of the one who brought and achieved liberty by obedience. Implicitly, we have thus already addressed our first question about the form and kind of discourse, and whether it is to be taken seriously. We have given the answer when we pointed out the serio-comic nature of Kate's reformation: we have suggested that there is a way in which Katherine's final speech could be taken seriously without ignoring the mockery. This also means that a purely ironic reading does not work. Just imagine what kind of marriage would be the consequence if Kate did not mean what she says: let's have a marriage based on the pretence of being "obedient to his honest will"; of course, I will, in fact, only seem to be obedient, just as I know that his will cannot really be honest but is, in fact, merely the desire to subjugate me. The cynicism and, indeed, intolerable squalor of such a joke could hardly be surpassed. Granted that we are, in this play, to mind "true things by what their mock'ties be," as Shakespeare has it in Henry V (Chorus to Act 4), where does the mockery come in then?\(^{41}\)

Exaggeration and burlesque are most clearly noticeable. Kate must go all the way to offering the dramatically effective gesture of putting her hand under her husband's foot in order to show that she is as radical in her love as she was in her spite. Truth is masked by comic exaggeration. This formal principle of serio ludere\(^{42}\) is further elucidated when we look at...\(^{43}\)

V. Petruchio's Side

Petruchio's part can perhaps best be described as the performance of a mock quest. We should recall that The Taming of the Shrew was written in the early 1590s,\(^{44}\) i.e. between the publication of the first and the second three books of Spooner's famous revivallization of medieval knighthood, the Fourie Queene, and only a few years before such parodies and burlesques as Beaumont's The Knight of the Burning Pestle and Cervantes Don Qixote. Most frequently, Petruchio's self-proclaimed desire "to wife it wealthily at Padua" is believed to show that his "motive for converting Kate is mercantile."\(^{45}\) But money hardly seems to be his prime motivation, since we learn that he has crowds in his purse, "and goods at home." (1.2.56). He is convinced that he will "[i]f wealthily, then happily" be married not because he is a fortune-hunter," but because his partner should be his equal.

His actual quest is rather of a different kind. Its nature is revealed by Petruchio's alluding to a story of knighthood when he claims that he would not be deterred by the fact that his future bride is "as foul as was Florimont's love." (1.2.68). The "Tale of Florent" is to be found in Gower's Confessio Amantis of the late 14th century, where it is told as an example of the precept that "Obedience in love availeth,"\(^{46}\) and, interestingly, this example focuses on a man's obedience, not a woman's. For Florimont, "A worthy knight [...] / Chivalrous and amorous" (1408-14), finds himself in trouble; he will lose his life if he cannot answer the question "What alle wommen most desire" (1481). A "softly womanlysh figure" (1530) in the forest promises to give him the answer provided that he will marry her. He agrees and she answers the question, namely: "[i]f alle wommen lighest wolde / He soverain of mannes love" (1608-09). Florimont stays obedient to his promise, and is rewarded, upon marriage, with the transfor...

---

38 Cf. Luke 22:42: "[...] not my will, but thine, be done."

39 Cf. Dale G. Printz, "Katherina's Conversion in The Taming of the Shrew: A Theological Horizon," Renaissance 47.1 (Fall 1994): 31-46. 31: Kate's joining in a verbal game is also emphasized by Irene G. Dach: "Suddenly she understands the verbal game she has been hearing."

40 Cf. Printz 32. The Book of Common Prayer [1605] (Cambridge: CUP, 2006) 13. In the "Sacrificialization of Matrimony" the Priest says to the woman that she is supposed to "obey [...], serve [...], love and honour" her husband (The Book of Common Prayer 303).


42 ["Written at some time between August 1520 and April 1524", Brian Morris, "Introduction" 1-149, 51.]

43 Cf. Printz 32.

44 This has been stressed by Ann Jennings Cook, "Wooing and Wedding: Shakespeare's Dramatic Distortions of the Customs of His Time," Proceedings of the Comparative Literature Symposium 12 (1981): 83-100, 88, who nevertheless claims that "money matters most" (80).

motion of his bride into the most beautiful and amiable girl imaginable. This change will be a lasting one because he has indeed made her his "souverain" (1834).

Florentius's story provides a parallel to Petruchio's, who releases Kate from her spell by making her the sole object of his aspirations, and by remaining true to the task; he is similarly rewarded for his obedience to his cause by Kate's transformation. Quite economically, she is, in one person, the damsel in distress and the dragon to be overcome; and she is the queen for whom he commits his valiant deeds as he devotes his life to her. The burgerlique of course consists in the fact that this lady of his heart is, after all, a "household Kate":

For I am he am born to tame you, Kate, And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate Conformable as other household Kate. (2.1.269-71)

But something else happens in the course of Petruchio's quest: he is liberated himself. The young man, who has got everything, and travels to Padua without anything particular to do but to seek "experience" (1.2.51), comes properly to life only when he dedicates himself to winning Kate's love. When he has heard about Katharina Minola and has instantly decided to woo her, Gremio (one of the old suitors of Katherine's sister Bianca) asks him incredulously, "But will you woo this wildcat?" His immediate answer is: "Will I live?" His life has suddenly got a purpose.

It should be noted that this is not just a Herculean task, the miraculous first of a prodigy and the attempt to do the impossible, but also a deed of love. Though he wishes to marry money, the point of his wooing is "Affection's edge" (1.2.72). Petruchio "tames" Kate by loving her, and the words, in this comedy about hearing and right hearing, make us know this when we listen to them as Kate does. "I am he am born to tame you, Kate." When he says "tame," she, hitherto unloved, begins to realize that he actually means "tame." Tame, in Shakespeare's English, was pronounced [tame].

She is the one for whom he lives. No matter what the others think, however "cruel" she may be, "in company" (2.1.298), the main thing is that he can say "I choose her for myself" (2.1.295).

We also see here that obedience is a personal matter, not a matter of establishing or maintaining or doing away with a system, patrician or otherwise. And on this per-

46. Cf. Inge Lieberman, "Petruchio's Interpretation at the Princely Court," forthcoming in the Festschrift for Lotte C. E. Merivitz, Lieberman points out that Petruchio's wooing of Katharina is a paradox quest, just as patriarchy (as seen echoed by Petruchio's name) is paradoxed in this play with its abundance of (real and invented) fathers.


48. For Petruchio's self-image as Hercules, cf. 1.2.159: "Have I not in my time hauled lions rare?"


50. At the same time, "tame" is also an anagram of "mate."

51. Cf. 2.1.32-33: "And where two raging fires meet together, / They do consume the thing that feeds their fury." This principle of "similia similibus consuntur" also occurs in Burton: "I would ex- pell cloven clavo, comfort one assistant with another, idleness with idleness [...] make it antideo out of that which was the prime cause of my disease"; The anatomy of Melancholy, ed. Thomas C. Faustner, Nashua K. Kissing and Rhonda Heier, intro. J. B. Bambrough, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989) 1: 7.22-25. Angus Gowland stresses this aspect in the introduction to his study The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy: Robert Burton in Context (Cambridge: CUP, 2006) 2. In King John this occurs as "and falsehood falsehood uses" (3.1.277).


54. The condition is never a matter of doubt to him from the beginning: "... if I get your daughter's love" (2.1.119).
a fair virgin), are they fully united as lovers. Finally Kate, for Petruchio's sake, is even willing to be called a fool by her sister.55

**F. The Fellowship of Obedience**

Of course, this is a different kind of equality or mutuality between lovers from the one achieved in the later comedies, e.g. by Orlando and Rosalind. Nevertheless, each one regards the other as his and her sovereign, willing to become a fool in service to the other who is treated as king or queen. In Sidney's _Arcadia_, published in 1590, old Geros as it were puts it in a nutshell when he says that obedience and sovereignty are by no means mutually exclusive. Their co-existence or identity is, rather, the secret (and the ideal) of a happy marriage. "These fickle winters married haeve I seen," he says, "And yet find no such faults in womankide;" such faults, that is, as those have been ascribed to it. "Shrewness" in particular. "I have a wife worthy to be a Queen; / So well can she command, and yet obey, / [...]."56

In _The Taming of the Shrew_, obedience does not mark the rule of one sex over the other but is the mark of the individual man's and woman's being, and being together: "I am he am born" and "bound to serve, love, and obey" are not to be separated from each other. Only later will the full (and tragic) dimension of this concept of obedience be realized by Shakespeare: in another Katherine, in _Henry VIII_, who is in reality a Queen and who says (when love is sacrificed to politics): "I am old, my lords, / And all the fellowship I hold now with him / Is only my obedience" (3.1.120-22). It will be seen, in an even more concentrated formula, in Desdemona: "Whatever you be, I am obedient" (3.3.89). The brevity of her "you be, I am" emphasizes the "be" in "obedi- / ent"—and at the same time makes us see and hear the "dien," a word which was by no means outlandish to an English ear, for it has served as the motto of the Prince of Wales since 1346 (cf. OED): "Ich dien."

All this, let us point this out again, in _The Taming of the Shrew_ appears only in the garb of burlesque. Nevertheless, Kate's speech at the end of the play shows her to be one who obeys and yet commands. She has now become a teacher and a guide who, epilogue-like, directs her words not only to Bianca and the widow and the others on stage but to the audience as well. Now that she has learned to listen she makes us hear. The individual experience thus becomes a general one, in accordance with the nature of the stage, where the private is shown to be the prototypical: "Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, / Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee, / [...]."

---

55 "'No, what a foolish duty call you this?' (5.2.126).

Christopher Harvie is Professor Emeritus of British Studies at the University of Tübingen. Harvie studied at the University of Edinburgh, where he graduated in 1966 in History. He received his PhD from Edinburgh in 1972 for a thesis on university liberalism and democracy, 1860-1886. His publications include Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1994, first published 1977 (going into its fourth edition in 2004), The Rise of Regional Europe (1993), and A Floating Commonwealth: Politics, Culture, and Technology on Britain’s Atlantic Coast, 1660-1930 (2008). Christopher Harvie is currently a Member of the Scottish Parliament.

Norbert Lennartz is currently Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Würzburg, after teaching at the universities of Saarbrücken, Stuttgart and Hannover. His field of teaching and research covers not only a wide range of writers from Shakespeare to the early 20th century, but also includes comparative investigations of literature and art. After writing his doctoral thesis on concepts of the absurd from Byron to T.S. Eliot (1998), he has published several articles on Thomas Carew, Charles Dickens, Mary Shelley, Lord Byron, Oscar Wilde, Thomas Hardy, H. G. Wells and James Joyce. Currently, he is preparing a book on the deconstruction of eroticism and the body in 17th-century English poetry and one on the cultural history of eating in literature and the arts.

Christoph Reinhardt studied English, German and musicology in Kiel and Sunderland, GB. After teaching at the Universities of Kiel and Darmstadt, he was appointed Professor of English Literature at the University of Tübingen in 2004. He has written extensively on the theory and history of the novel (Der Sinn der fiktionalen Wirklichkeiten 1997) and on the theory and history of Romanticism (Romantische Kommunikation 2003, Engische Romantik 2008). Co-edited volumes include Systems Theory and Literature (2001), The Cultural Validity of Music in Contemporary Fiction (2006) and Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000-2008 (2008). His essays deal with literary theory and history, the cultural turn in literary studies, narratology, contemporary fiction, popular culture and reactions to 9/11, as well as, not least, popular music.

Gabriele Rippel studied English and German literature and linguistics at the Universities of Constance and Bristol, and received her PhD from Constance University in 1995 with a thesis on early modern Englishwomen’s autobiographies. After a six-year postdoctoral position (assistant professorship) at the University of Constance, she was appointed Full Professor of English Literature at the University of Göttingen in 2003, and in 2005 accepted a position as Professor of Literatures in English at the University of Bonn. Her list of publications includes two monographs: Lebensteilte (1998; on 17th century autobiographies) and Beschreibungs-Kunst (2005; on text-picture-relationships and the art of description in late 19th and 20th century Anglo-American literature). Her current research focuses on intermediality, trauma and literature, and the construction of classical antiquity in 20th- and 21st-century Anglophone literatures.

Johanna Roering is a PhD student and lecturer in the Department of American Studies at the University of Tübingen. She specializes in film and new media, with a thematic emphasis on popular culture. Her recent work has focused on the representation of war in weblogs and she has published a number of articles on this subject including “Saddam Fire’d Scads at Me: US-Americanische Mithilfs aus dem Irakkrig.” Johanna Roering is interested in many forms of subculture and popular culture, such as postcolonial and religious pulp fiction, Reggae and Medical Drams. Articles in these areas include “No One Cares About Piccadilly Circus in the Ghetto: Representations of Space in Black British Pulp Fiction,” and “I love merder when they aren’t together, i die: Television Characters Blogging.”

Ralf Schneider has been Professor of British Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Bielefeld since 2005. He has worked and published on cognitive approaches in literary studies, on literary character, and on various aspects of British literary and cultural history, including anthologies of poetry, literature and the media, and the literary and cultural repercussions of war. Current projects include the dynamics of multi-ethnic Britain, and a volume on conceptual blending and the study of narrative.

Angelika Zirker studied English, French and German at the universities of Saarbrücken, Metz and Cardiff. She currently teaches undergraduate courses at the University of Tübingen. Her research interests include Shakespeare and Victorian literature as well as children’s literature throughout all periods and the relation between literature and ethics. She is the assistant editor of Contributions: A Journal for Critical Debate. In her PhD thesis (completed in 2009) she explored aspects of language, relations and play in Lewis Carroll’s Alice books.

Anne-Julia Zwietering holds the chair of English Literature and Culture at the University of Regensburg. She wrote her doctoral thesis on Majestic Milton: British Imperial Expansion and Transformations of Paradise Lost, 1667-1837 (2001) and received