“Bard boom”¹ – Films based on William Shakespeare’s plays

Modernised Shakespeare

Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet* (1996)

The genre of the high school film and the classics


*She’s All That* (1999) – Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*


Shakespearean high school films

*10 Things I Hate About You* (1999) – *The Taming of the Shrew*

→ a box-office success²

*O* (2001) – *Othello*

*Get Over It* (2001) – *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

*She’s the Man* (2006) – *Twelfth Night*

*High School Musical* (2006) – loosely based on *Romeo and Juliet*³

**The Taming of the Shrew**

The most misogynistic of Shakespeare’s plays

Heavily criticised since the age of Shakespeare⁴

Quote 1: Bernard Shaw, *Shaw on Shakespeare* 180

“No man with any decency of feeling can sit it out in the company of a woman without being extremely ashamed of the lord-of-creation moral implied in the wager and the speech put into the woman’s own mouth.”

→ Shaw wrote *Pygmalion*.⁵

Why was *10 Things I Hate About You* so successful?

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¹ Kroll used the word “bard boom” in 1999, and Welsh also used the same word in 2000.
² According to Rosenthal, this film earned 63 million dollars worldwide in 2000 (142-43). On the box office, see also IMDb.
³ According to Roberts et al., the creators of *High School Musical* had *Romeo and Juliet* in mind when they made the film. Critics, such as Goff and Teeman, also state that this film is a modern version of *Romeo and Juliet*.
⁴ Shakespeare’s contemporary playwright, John Fletcher, wrote *The Woman’s Prize, or The Tamer Tamed*, a sequel to *The Taming of the Shrew*, which is satirical and sympathetic to women. On modern criticisms against the play, see Chambers; Berek; Garner; and Krims.
⁵ On the influence of *The Taming of the Shrew on Pygmalion*, see Pederson.
The Taming of the Shrew and 10 Things I Hate About You

The characters in The Taming of the Shrew – Times New Roman

The characters in 10 Things I Hate About You – (Ariel)

Padua (Padua High School)

Baptista Minola (Dr. Stratford) The father of the sisters

Katherina (Kat) Bianca (Bianca) (Joey)

The “shrew” The heroine’s younger sister Bianca’s suitors

Petruchio (Patrick Verona) Lucentio (Cameron) Tranio (Michael)

The heroine’s lover Bianca’s lover The helper of Bianca’s lover

The story of The Taming of the Shrew

The Taming of the Shrew is a typical metatheatrical play. In this play, Christopher Sly, a drunken tinker, is tricked into believing that he is a nobleman and made to watch a play about a shrewish woman. This play within play is The Taming of the Shrew.

Baptista Minola, a rich man in the city of Padua, has two daughters. The elder sister Katherina is a bitter-tongued “shrew” hated by everyone, and the younger sister Bianca is loved by everyone because of her beauty and gentility. Since Baptista insists that Bianca should not marry before Katherina finds her husband, Bianca’s suitors ask Petruchio, a young man from Verona, to woo Katherina. Petruchio aggressively courts Katherina, forces her to marry him, and finally “tames” her. Among the suitors of Bianca, Lucentio outwits Baptista and the other suitors, and he marries her. In the last scene, Petruchio, Lucentio, and their friend Hortensio make a bet on their wives’ obedience, and it turns out that Katherina is the most obedient wife of the three. Katherina makes a speech on marital love, and preaches to the other two wives to be always obedient to their husbands.

The story of 10 Things I Hate About You

Director: Gil Junger

Screenplay: Karen McCullah Lutz and Kirsten Smith (the screenplay team of She’s the Man and Legally Blonde)
Dr. Stratford (Larry Miller), a widower living near Seattle, is a strict and protective father of two daughters attending Padua High School. The elder sister Kat (Julia Stiles) is the least popular girl in Padua High School and indifferent to dating, while the younger sister Bianca (Larisa Oleynik) is the most popular girl. The Stratford sisters cannot get along with each other. Dr. Stratford, worried about his daughters, establishes a rule that Bianca can date only if Kat goes out with boys. Joey (Andrew Keegan) and Cameron (Joseph Gordon-Levitt), the boys who like Bianca, bribe a bad boy, Patrick Verona (Heath Ledger), into asking Kat out. Patrick aggressively courts Kat, and finally they fall in love with each other. Joey and Cameron woo Bianca, and at first Bianca inclines to Joey, the most popular boy in Padua High School. It turns out, however, that Joey was once engaged in a romantic relationship with Kat, but they broke up because he treated her cruelly. Bianca strikes Joey and chooses Cameron. Kat and Bianca are reconciled, and Kat and Patrick start a rock band.

○Katherine and Kat

A social outcast
Secretly wanting a good man’s love behind the facade of a man-hater
• Katherina in The Taming of the Shrew
Renaissance England – unmarried women’s vulnerable social status

Quote 2: “Iwis it[marriage] is not half way to her [Katherina’s] heart.”
Quote 3: “Of all thy suitors here I charge [thee] to tell / Whom thou lov’st best” (II. i. 8-9).
Quote 4:

KATHERINA. She [Bianca] is your treasure, she must have a husband,
I must dance barefoot on her wedding-day,
And for your [Baptista’s] love to her lead apes in hell.
Talk not to me, I will go sit and weep,
Till I can find occasion of revenge.

BAPTISTA. Was ever gentleman thus griev’d as I? (II. i. 32-37)

6 For example, according to Thomas Edgar’s 1632 The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights, section 3, “All of them[women] are understood either married or to bée married” (6).
7 The Taming of the Shrew, I. i. 62. Quotations from Shakespeare refer to The Riverside Shakespeare, 2nd ed.
→ Katherina’s interest in marriage
Respectable gentlemanship – proper marriage

Quote 5: “Katherine the curst! / A title for a maid of all titles the worst” (I. ii. 129-30)
→ Katherina as an outsider

· Kat in *10 Things I Hate About You*
Padua High School – a hierarchical society based on a patriarchal order
Cliquies in U.S. high schools

Quote 6, the definition of the clique:
“[W]ell-defined, densely connected networks of peers who are tied to each other by positive sentiment” (Hallinan and Smith 898).

Popularity – attractiveness toward the opposite-sex students

Cliquies in Padua High School

Jocks (popular athletes) → “Basic Beautiful People,” Joey
Queen bees (beautiful and influential girls)
→ “Don’t Even Think About It’ Group,” Bianca
Wannabes, sidekicks, pleasers (queen bee’s friends) → Chastity
Geeks or Nerds (“otaku” in Japanese)
→ “Audio-visual Geeks,” Michael, Cameron
Slackers (easygoing, often marijuana-loving students) → “White Rastas”
Preps – sophisticated and high-achieving students → “Future MBAs”
Brains – high-achieving students
Other cliques in Padua High School – “Coffee Kids,” “Cowboys”

※ Outcasts  Bad boys and bad girls → Patrick
Floaters → Kat

The animosity between the hierarchical cliques, bullying
The Columbine High School Massacre
High school films and TV dramas – the feud between the cliques

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8 See Adler, Kless and Adler; and Dion and Berscheid. See also Graham, ch. 1, “Why Nerds Are Unpopular?”
9 See HASEGAWA and YAMAZAKI. On queen bees, wannabes and sidekicks, see also Wiseman.
10 On the Columbine High School Massacre, see Brown. According to IMDb, *10 Things I Hate About You* was released on March 31, 1999. The Columbine High School Massacre occurred on April 20, 1999.
11 On the cliques in high school films and TV dramas, see De Vaney and Murray.
Kat – “heinous bitch” in Padua High School, a social outsider

Quote 7: Kat on love and sex
“I swore I’d never do anything just because everyone else was doing it.”

→ Against the heterosexual order of Padua High School
Kat’s secret interest in love

○ Petruchio and Patrick
  • Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*
    A young bachelor troubled by his unstable social status
    Gregory Doran: A coming-of-age tale of Petruchio, a social outsider
    (KOBAYASHI 305-11).

    Quote 8: “at home, / Where small experience grows” (I. ii. 52).

The importance of marriage for men in Renaissance England\(^{12}\)

    Quote 9: “I have thrust myself into this maze, / Happily to wive and thrive as best I may” (I. ii. 55-56).
    Quote 10: “I will not sleep, Hortensio, till I see her” (103).

Petruchio does not mind if Katherina is a shrew (I. ii. 65-76; 93-96).

→ Petruchio wants to achieve recognition as a respectable man by finding a wife.

• Patrick in *10 Things I Hate About You*
  A “bad boy,” an outsider in Padua High School
  A “pretty” guy → recognition from others

\(^{12}\) Thomas Smith, in his 1583 *De Republica Anglorum*, says, “commonly wee doe not call any a yeoman till he be married, and have children” (32). See also Rackin 148.
The difference between the original and the adaptation

Emphasis on the social reintegration of outsiders through love

The Taming of the Shrew

Katherina’s speech on a wife’s obedience (V.ii.)

The scene of social reintegration

Katherina earns the admiration of Lucentio (V. ii. 183).

The couple are recognised as respectable adults in society.

→Too sexist for modern audiences, eliminated in 10 Things I Hate About You

10 Things I Hate About You

Focusing more on how Kat and Patrick begin interacting with other students, and how they are accepted by society

The eccentric courtship – cheered by the other students

The prom – a very “heterosexual” event

→Their reintegration into Padua High School

A rock band – cooperation

The conservative plot of the social reintegration

Peter Matthews’s criticism (56)

The social background which made 10 Things I Hate About You successful

10 Things I Hate About You was released just before the Columbine High School Massacre.

The interest of young American audiences

Quote 11: Richard Burt’s criticism

“Patrick merely saves her [Kat] from her potentially Sylvia Plath-like self-destructive impulses” (213).

→Love connects the outsiders to society and teaches them how to avoid self-destruction in 10 Things I Hate About You

From the violent, misogynistic story of Taming of the Shrew to the story of reconciliation of 10 Things I Hate About You

→The film’s box office success
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