

Shakespeare through Performance 2006-2007

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Shakespeare on film:

ANALYSIS OF FILM ADAPTATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS.

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When we first faced the hard decision of choosing a subject for our paper, we started by thinking about those things that have made Shakespeare a universal author. His themes, his characters, his plots... all of them are easily understood by contemporary readers or audience. Not many authors from four centuries ago can be read and enjoyed almost as if they had written their texts yesterday, and none of them has been adapted as many times as the author from Stratford-upon-Avon.

Following that line of thought we realised the enormous amount of film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. As this course deals with the concept of performance, we finally agreed that it would be interesting to study several of those adaptations. Cinema is probably the most important cultural manifestation of the 20th century and it is a direct offspring of theatre. Watching these film-versions of Shakespeare's works is in some way like assisting to a performance filtered by current ideas and tendencies. Some of them are faithful but some of them definitely are not, even though all of them serve to prove that Shakespeare's literature is alive today.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to compare some of those adaptations from Shakespeare's comedies with the original texts. We will pay special attention to the differences and similarities, trying to compile the changes that each director has made to the plot, the structure, the language, the characters... and at the same time, we will try to explain the reasons that are behind those changes.

The first of our comparisons is an analysis of Kenneth Branagh's adaptation of the play "*Much Ado About Nothing*", which was produced in 1993. The film made use of well-known actors such as Kenneth Branagh, Emma Thompson, Denzel Washington, Keanu Reeves or Michael Keaton. It deals with two young lovers, Hero and Claudio who are to be married in one week; wedding which is intended to break up by Don John who conspires against Hero accusing her of infidelity. Meanwhile, Don Pedro tries to

set a “lover’s trap” for Benedick and Beatrice, both characters who stand out as sceptic, arrogant and who proclaim will never become “fools for love”.

William Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing* is set in Messina, an island of Sicily, whilst the Kenneth Branagh’s film version is set in Villa Vignamaggio, Chianti, a region of Tuscany (rather than a city). Both settings convey Shakespeare’s intention of escapism in that they are placed in a foreign country in order to create the sensation that the problems within the text were also foreign to Elizabethan society. However, the film’s first scene portrays a bucolic image in which Beatrice is reading a song, accompanied by a guitar, amidst a field near Leonato’s house, while sitting in a tree eating grapes. A messenger announces the approach of Don Pedro of Aragon, which creates an excitement amongst the people in the villa who rush up to bathe and dress themselves up for the occasion. The arrival of Don Pedro and his men is performed with glorious music and a powerful imaginary which sets the mood of victory and power; whilst in the text his arrival is merely announced and this bucolic scene is absent.

Concerning structure, Shakespeare’s play follows the classical unities of place (one single location), time (brevity of events) and action (one main story with subplots). As the comedy it is, it deals with the struggle of young lovers overcoming problems and confusions which are gradually resolved with a happy ending. One of the differences which makes Branagh’s version more light-hearted than Shakespeare’s is that the director minimizes the tragic aspects of the play. This is emphasized by the fact that he focuses less on Hero and Claudio’s relationship and therefore less sadness and uncertainty exists to contrast the happy ending.

At the time the film was produced cinema was a business and having famous people enabled the director attracting a massive audience. This leads Kenneth Branagh to choose well-known actors such as: Emma Thompson as Beatrice, Denzel Washington

as Don Pedro of Aragon, Keanu Reeves as Don John, Michael Keaton as Dogberry and he himself as Benedick. One is surprised when Branagh chooses Denzel Washington, a coloured person, as Don Pedro of Aragon, which may reinforce the escapism in the setting: having a black-skinned character makes the audience feel the play's location is remote.

Cinema opens up new possibilities when compared to theatre, and as Shakespeare is a playwright who does not specify concrete stage directions, (rather he avoids doing so), this gives complete freedom for Branagh to perform and interpret *Much Ado About Nothing* with subtle differences. The camera allows Branagh to show the audience his understanding of the events, especially when it comes to a character's reaction to a given comment, and feeling free to communicate a message not given within Shakespeare's lines through actors' gestures and movements. For example, the scene in which Beatrice listens that Benedick loves her may be ambiguous in the initial text, but through focusing on facial expressions and the tone of her speech, Branagh's version implies that she is delighted with the idea.

Casting is important when adapting Shakespeare's plays, but most importantly, the director's own will of portraying a character is indispensable to one's interpretation. Shakespeare's portrait of some characters in the text is different from Branagh's representation of them, and to prove this, we are going to analyse the most important differences found in the characters of Claudio, Dogberry and Don John.

Firstly, Claudio in the film is seen as an emotional and sensitive character. His voice shakes when he is refusing Hero in their wedding and he is unable to speak when he discovers Hero alive, being capable only of kissing her hand. In the text, Claudio is portrayed as a heroic and brave man, proud of his victorious actions in war and there's a

hint to superficiality in that economic reasons prevail in their marriage, while in the film these are omitted.

Secondly, Dogberry is portrayed as loony and mad in Branagh's version, pretending to ride a horse and using malapropisms, whilst in Shakespeare's version he appears to be slow-witted, ignorant and stupid.

The third important character is Don John, who is represented as a villain in the film. Whilst Shakespeare relied on portraying Don John through his words (i.e. with language as his only tool), making a verbal sensuality, Branagh is allowed to use visual effects, including gloomy music and a dark atmosphere. Whilst almost the whole film is placed outdoors, Branagh places Don John in the underworld, in the wine cellar. His setting emphasizes his bad intentions: whilst the other characters are enjoying the masked ball outdoors, Don John is seen running through an underworld corridor laughing fiendishly. Kenneth Branagh links Don John's bad intentions with darkness and obscurity in the villa and he is portrayed as moving around torch-lighted and sinister places, which help him to create a determinate image; a jealous and despicable villain inhabiting an underground world of evil and malevolence.

Furthermore, one must take into account that *Much Ado About Nothing* had to be shaped into a popular film, and although Branagh's adaptation seems loyal to the text, it is true he omits on the one hand, phrases which are purely ornate language, mainly to speed the action of the film and possibly because they could be incomprehensible for today's general public, and on the other hand, phrases which could sound offensive to contemporary audience. Two examples of offensive statements made by Benedick are "*If I do not love her, I am a Jew*" or else "*I'll hold my mind were she an Ethiope*".

Branagh's Messina is different from the play's text, yet the general message of the play remains unchangeable as Shakespeare had the quality of being everlasting and

contemporary for his time. His adaptation to cinema has had the need of making the film more versatile and more entertaining for general public, as well as more dynamic and profitable. In order to do so, Kenneth Branagh made use of technologies and conventions which theatre lacked, making a product which is completely open to all public. The film gives an ordinary person the chance to get some insight into Shakespeare's text, yet we must keep in mind that certain subtleties were incorporated and many omitted and therefore, we must be aware that our sensory system can be conditioned by a more "image based world" rather than that Shakespeare truly cared of: a world based on words.

Followingly, we are going to analyse the play "*Midsummer Night's Dream*" by William Shakespeare and its adaptation to cinema by Michael Hoffman in 1999 with the following starring: Kevin Kline as Bottom (the weaver); Michelle Pfeiffer as Titania (Queen of the Fairies); Rupert Everett as Oberon (King of the Fairies); Stanley Tucci as Puck (or Robin Goodfellow); Calista Flockhart as Helena (in love with Demetrius); Anna Friel as Hermia (daughter to Egeus and in love with Lysander); Christian Bale as Demetrius (in love with Hermia); Dominic West as Lysander (in love with Hermia); David Strathairne as Theseus (Duke of Athens) and Sophie Marceau as Hippolyta (Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus). It is a comedy about two couples in love with the wrong partners and how during a summer night all their love problems find a solution thanks to the King of the Fairies.

The historical and temporary context is not given in the film, because the play was written in 1595 whereas the film is based in the 19th century; we know this due to a new invention that appears in the film version which was introduced in this century: the bicycle. We can also find a different feature in the way they are dressed, since the clothes in the film are more like we use nowadays. Another thing is that in the play

there are some mythological creatures, as Hyppolita who is the Queen of the Amazons but in the film she is not.

The language used in the movie is faithful to the verse written by Shakespeare although a lot of puns disappear in the film and are replaced by images which increase the moments of humour, with gestures that in the present time we know, such as sticking one's tongue out.

On the other hand the Shakespeare's text has not a prologue that introduces us into the story, while the movie shows two sentences which say:

“The village of Monte Athena in Italy at the turn of the 19th century.

Necklines are high. Parents are rigid. Marriage is seldom a matter of love.

“The good news: The bustle is in its decline, allowing for the meteoric rise of that newfangled creation, the bicycle”.

The play starts with the scene taking place in Theseus' bedroom, whereas the film shows the entire mansion, its gardens, its kitchen with all the servants preparing the wedding of Theseus with Hippolyta, in a word, a scene showing us Theseus' richness. We can differentiate without problem the changes in the acts, i.e we were reading the play while we were watching the film, and we were able to easily see the divisions between the five acts. Followingly, we are going to explain the differences and similarities between the play and Hoffman's film, act by act:

ACT I:

Enough dialogue from the text is rejected and in its place it appears a conversation between Hermia and Theseus where she admits that she prefers to die

instead of living without Lysander. The introduction of the character of Helena is very different from

the play, because she appears with a bicycle in Theseus' garden, instead of the portrayal of the dialogue between her and Hermia that we see at the text. In the film the lovers kiss each other at every moment, but in the play Hermia seems to be too pure to kiss a man. The comedians in the play seem to be poor people; one expects to see a person with elementary clothes, but in the film one can see people with suits, ties and other formal items, as if they belong to a higher class.

The director has introduced a new character: Bottom's wife, who appears when he returns home after preparing Pyramus and Thisby's comedy. As far as we know Bottom is a single man when we read the play because Shakespeare never talks about his wife.

ACT II:

There is a play on images, instead of the dialogue that Shakespeare uses to describe the scenes, in the film we can see these scenes without hearing the words: the Fairies use magic and invisible movement (a character is in a place and immediately it appears in another), Titania's child is blue (Shakespeare never said the colour of his skin) and then Oberon says with signs to Puck that he must leave the scene. In the film there is a fountain from where it emerges Medusa. The play is a world of fantasy since the beginning, but the film needs images to immerse us in this kind of world.

In the play Shakespeare says that the characters go on pilgrimage (they are walking around the forest) but in the film the characters ride bicycles. In the film Puck rides a tortoise and then he steals the bicycle from Lysander. In the text Puck says he is the fastest in the world, it seems to be a satire in the film because a tortoise is the lowest

animal. Stealing the bicycle he demonstrates that it does not matter how he moves, he can use a turtle or a bicycle or just his feet than he will always be the fastest creature.

ACT III:

In the film the characters smoke but not in the play. In the text Bottom treats the five Fairies as men, but in the film these Fairies are women. In the play we do not know about the genre of the Fairies. In the play Titania flirts with Bottom but they never have sexual contact, whereas in the film we can see both of them naked in Titania's bed. Nowadays we are used to see sexual images but at Shakespeare's time it seems to be unusual.

In the film Hermia fights against Helena while in the text they only have words. In the Shakespeare's text Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius and Helena fall asleep due to their tiredness when Puck makes them follow him running, but in the film it seems that the magical atmosphere makes the characters feel tired until they fall asleep.

ACT IV:

After supposing in the play that Bottom and Titania have had sexual contact, he starts to ask for food to the Fairies, he tries to order them as if he was their King, however in the film the sex is explicit and he does not try to be the leader, there is an omission of the original text. When Theseus and Hippolyta arrives in the forest they find Helena, Hermia, Demetrius and Lysander lying together, but in the film they are naked, something that Shakespeare never says.

When Bottom falls from the bed in the film he finds Titania's ring and this makes him doubt about if he has had a dream or it was reality. In the play when he wakes up he leaves the forest without finding a ring. There is an important similarity

between the play and the film, it is the pun: "*Bottom's dream because it hath no bottom*". It appears in both cases. This time the director is actually very faithful to the text.

ACT V:

In the film when Theseus and Lysander toast the wedding, Hermia's father leaves the scene very angry, whereas in the play we do not know this action. In the text there is a prologue to the interlude (Pyramus and Thisbe's comedy), but in the film this prologue is a little introduction made by the Wall. In the play while the actors are performing the interlude, the audience is gossiping about the way they are carrying out the play. In the film the audience is impressed and it says nothing and the performance is not interrupted.

Another similitude between the play and the film is the way it ends with the conclusion made by Puck (a monologue). In spite of the last words we hear in the film are the same we read in the text, the last image we watch in the film is the comedians being drunk and celebrating they have performed a truly notable performance.

Our next comparative deals with the play *Love's Labour's Lost*, written around 1595, and the film adaptation of the same name directed by Kenneth Branagh in 2000 and starred by Alessandro Nivola, Alicia Silverstone, Nathan Lane, Emily Mortimer, Natasha McElhone and, of course, Kenneth Branagh, among others.

The most surprising part of this adaptation is that the director decided to transform Shakespeare's play into a musical comedy that develops just before the start of the Second World War. The songs included in *Love's Labour's Lost* are (or were) well-known melodies from the 1930s performed by singers such as Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Desmond Carter or Dorothy Field.

Historical and temporal context in Shakespeare's play is not really clear. The historical data offered by the author does not correspond to reality so it is of little (if any) help. In fact, the only king of Navarre under the name of Ferdinand was Ferdinand the Catholic (1511). We can probably assume that the story was settled during Shakespeare's time. The adaptation, as we said before, takes the action to the 1940s, just before the war. It sure is a long leap but it is fully justified by the intention of making a musical comedy. The best examples of that genre were made around the 40s and 50s.

The main plot is the same both in the play and in the film: Ferdinand, King of Navarre and three friends decide to give up women and other carnal pleasures to dedicate themselves to academic studies during three years. The problem is that the Princess of France and three of her ladies have an appointment with the King and, inevitably, each one of the lords falls in love with one of the ladies. They try to hide it from their friends but everything is finally revealed. Unfortunately, the death of the King of France prevents the play from getting a happy ending. There are records of a sequel titled *Love's Labour's Won* in which probably everything ended as it is supposed to end in a comedy, but it has been lost.

Although the story is basically the same, there are important changes in the film version. Some dialogues and even entire scenes appear in different positions inside the general structure. Also, the secondary plot concerning the relationship of the Spanish noble Don Armado with the humble Jaquenetta has less importance than in the original play. This is probably done to get a better cohesion and to make the story advance faster. We cannot forget that many scenes have been substituted partially or completely by a musical show. Sometimes the result is quite good and some other we have the feeling of having lost something important, as in the scene in which the lords disguise

themselves and have an interesting and funny dialogue with the ladies. In the film all that conversation has been changed for just a masked dance.

Apart from this, there are some changes and details worth mentioning. For instance, the film includes some summaries of what is happening in the form of a black and white informative report typical of the first years of the television. And, more important, in the film we *do* get a happy ending in which all the characters finally meet after the war. There are also some other minor changes, like Holofernes being a woman (Holofernia) instead of a man and her suspiciously close relationship with Sir Nathaniel (a priest in the film). We can also find some scenes and elements that pay homage to classic films like *Casablanca* (the famous scene of the airport), Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire musicals, or the Marx Brothers.

Don Adriano de Armado, even though he is just a secondary character, carries a great deal of the humoristic weight of the adaptation, as he does in the play. The actor Timothy Spall uses a funny accent that tries to imitate how English is spoken by Spanish people. Apart from that, his moves, expressions, clothing and general interpretation are really laughable and match pretty well the description that Shakespeare made of him in his play (Act V, Scene I):

“**HOLOFERNES.** *Novi hominem tanquam te.* His humour is lofty, his discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his eye ambitious, his gait majestic, and his general behaviour vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical. He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it.

NATHANIEL. A most singular and choice epithet.

HOLOFERNES. He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument. I abhor ... such rackers of orthography, as to speak "dout" fine, when he should say "doubt"; "det" when he should pronounce "debt";—d, e, b, t, not d, e, t. He clepeth a calf "cauf"; half, "hauf"; neighbour vocatur "nebour"; "neigh" abbreviated "ne"...".

There is not a real adaptation in language in spite of the temporal change. The vocabulary and structure used are practically the same as in the original play, but there is a great amount of reduction. Sometimes, only the first one or two lines of what one character says in the play appear in the movie. It goes without saying that the fact that dialogues are shorter makes the film much more agile (and probably much more commercial). It is a way of making it easier to enjoy by nowadays' audience. We could say the same about the typical falls, stumbles and sometimes ridicule performances. They are there to make people laugh and to substitute many of the puns, double meanings and plays on words that have been lost in the reduction.

The use of musical numbers could be interpreted also as an adaptation of narrative language. The songs match perfectly with the mood of the film and there are some pretty good moments concerning them. One of them would be when the four men sing "Cheek to cheek" and imagine they are dancing with their love-interests. Another one is when the four couples sing "They can't take that away from me" at the end of the film. And finally we can see a funny number in which Don Adriano de Armado sings and dances the song "I get a kick out of you".

First of all, we must bear in mind that *Love's Labour's Lost* is probably one of Shakespeare's most language-based plays. It was represented for members of the Court, who had a higher cultural level, and most of its humour is in the intellectual dialogues. Of course, not all of this made it to the film, but Branagh's work is still a faithful

adaptation. Yes, it is true that it is a musical, but the original play is too light-hearted to make a “serious” film out of it, and the plot is just too simple and naïve for it to be interesting to the general public today. The decision of transforming it into a musical is probably a wise one, and the changes in the historical time and situation are only logical steps after that first decision. All in all, we can say that Branagh made a really good adaptation (as always) of a difficult comedy.

Franco Zeffirelli’s adaptation of William Shakespeare’s “*The Taming of the Shrew*” is a fresh version of the classic comedy, highlighted by performances by Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. Instead of simply filming a play, Zeffirelli turned Shakespeare’s text into a lively, cinematic movie, with sweeping sets and cinematography. Set in Padua, Italy in the late 1500s, the story concerns the shy Bianca and the mean-spirited Katarina, the two daughters of a rich merchant named Baptista. Though Bianca is being courted by a number of young men, Baptista announces that she may not marry until Katarina is wed. None of the men in town are willing to marry Katarina, so Bianca remains unwed, even as more suitors, such as Lucentio, a student who begins working as a tutor in the Hordern household just so he can be near Bianca, line up to wed the maiden. No man approaches Katarina until Petruchio, a wanderer who arrived in Padua just to find a rich wife, falls in love with her. After an intense, occasionally furious, courtship, Katarina eventually agrees to marry him, and they move to Petruchio’s shoddy house, which is located outside the city. Following the wedding, Lucentio reveals that he is not a student, but instead the son of one of the most respected men in town. Lucentio gets permission to marry Bianca and a mild-mannered Katarina shows up at the wedding, giving advice to her sister on how to be a good wife.

“The Taming of the Shrew” focuses on courtship and marriage, but, unlike most of them, it devotes a great deal of attention to married life after the wedding. The other comedies usually conclude with the wedding ceremony itself.

Although *“The Taming of the Shrew”* filmed in 1966 has the same plot, characters and settings that the play wrote by Shakespeare, we can find some differences:

- We don't find in the film the prologue in which the story gets form about Cristobal Sly being deceived by a Lord and their servants.
- The film opens with a street carnival that captures all the excitement of the first day at university where Lucentio sees Bianca and follows her to her house. In the book Lucentio and Tranio are talking and Bianca and her family arrive where they are talking. Neither in the book Shakespeare makes reference about a woman liked by Tranio during the parade.
- When Hortensio and Gremio, the suitors, talk about finding a man for Katarina in the book they are at Bianca's house and in the film they are walking so a man can pass in front of them and say “I don't do it even for a cave plenty of gold”
- When Petruchio arrives at Hortensio's house, in the film, he sleeps there and in the morning some servants give him water with flowers. In the book Hortensio and Petruchio go to Katarina's house after a brief talk and who receives water with flowers is Cristobal Sly, the drunken fellow who the Lord is misleading.
- In the book, when Petruchio is talking about his most fierce fights (referring about more fierce than a woman) they haven't arrive at Katarina's house and in the film they are at the door so they (and we) can hear and see Katarina following and arguing with Bianca.

- In the film there is a scene lived in first person by Petruchio and Baptista and in the book is Hortensio who explains it to them (about being kick by Katarina when he tried to teach her some music)
- When Petruchio is courting Katarina in the film is seen as a sunny persecution through every room in the house but in the book is very short and quickly
- Bianca's wedding with Lucentio is fixed before Petruchio and Katarina go away in the book but in the film they have the news when they are at Petruchio's "castle"
- On Katarina's wedding day Petruchio arrives late in both but in the film he arrives at the church and in the book he arrives at Katarina's house
- During the wedding Petruchio's behaviour is awful in both but in the book is more explicit and cruel than in the film.
- When they go to Petruchio's house in the film Katarina is riding an ass and in the book all of them ride a horse. Moreover, in the book both Kata and Petruchio fall down of the horse but in the film is only Katarina who falls down.
- When they arrive at Petruchio's house, in the film, is very dirty and any servant has done anything but in the book Grumio goes before them to make sure everything is prepared.
- In the book Petruchio explains why he is performing in that way (to tame her) but in the film not.
- In the book we can read how Lucentio and Bianca are kissing each other and Tranio and Hortensio can see them. Even we can read how they don't want to marry her anymore and Hortensio says he will marry a widow he knows is behind him. In the film we can't see explicit love between them nor anything of this occurred.

- In the book Hortensio visits Petruchio and Katarina but in the film that doesn't occur
- In the book even Grumio lies to Katarina and makes fun of her saying he's going to give her some food but in the film there's no mention of it.
- When Petruchio breaks Katarina's dress for Bianca's wedding day in the film is much more aggressive than in the book but less long.
- When they are going back to Padua in the film is because Bianca's marriage but in the book is only to see Baptista. They even think Bianca maybe is already married
- At the end when men make bets in the film is during the feast because Bianca's marriage but in the book it isn't because Bianca even was sleeping and the shouts wake her up. To conclude, at the end of the story when they are proving the obedience of the women in the book Petruchio orders Katarina to step her hat but in the film not.

Besides, talking about other works based on *The Taming of the Shrew*, we can talk about *10 Things I Hate about you*, whose title is a twist on *The Taming of the Shrew*. *10 Things I Hate about you* is produced in 1999, directed by Gil Junger and performed by Heath Ledger and Julia Stiles among others. It is an American romantic comedy film, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* set in a modern American high school.

The plot starts when Cameron falls in love with Bianca Stratford, a beautiful sophomore student on his first day at Padua High. However, Cameron is faced with the problem of Bianca being forbidden to date, due to a family rule set by her strict father, an obstetrician paranoid about Bianca getting pregnant. Cameron is told that Bianca can date when her older sister Katarina, or "Kat" does as well, a rule the elder Stratford

engineers because he knows that no one is willing to date Katarina, a cynical nonconformist known as a terror in her school. Not willing to give up, Cameron, along with his newfound best friend Michael Eckman, search the entire school, and come across what seems to be the perfect date for Kat - the mysterious Patrick Verona, who has a reputation for having done hideous and criminal acts. Patrick has no interest in Katarina, but Michael devises a plan to have another student, Joey Donner, pay Patrick to take Katarina out. Joey, a self-centered model with money, makes a bet with a friend that he could bed Bianca, and, in order to get closer to her, pays Patrick to go out with Katarina so he may date Bianca, not knowing that Cameron is attempting to date her as well. During his faux courtship of Kat, she and Patrick form a genuine rapport, and fall in love. Meanwhile, Bianca falls in love with Cameron. Eckman too gains the heart of Katarina's best friend, Mandella after the two discover a mutual infatuation with Shakespeare. Kat eventually discovers that Patrick was paid to take her out, forcing their relationship to fall apart. Meanwhile, Joey discovers Cameron's attempt to court Bianca, and physically attacks him, which earns Joey the ire of Bianca, who responds by knocking Joey unconscious herself. Kat writes a poem the next day in school, listing the "ten things" she hates about Patrick, the last one being merely an admission that she doesn't really hate him at all, in spite of what has transpired. As a gesture of apology, Patrick buys Kat a guitar with the money Joey paid him so she can start up her own band. This cements their relationship once again, and the film ends with their love very much alive.

To sum up, *10 Things I Hate about you* contains many relatively subtle references to Shakespeare's works. Careful comparison of *Taming of the Shrew* and *10 Things I Hate about You* reveals some similarities, mostly in character names and general plot ideas. For instance, the two sisters in *The Taming of the Shrew* are named

Katherina and Bianca, while the two sisters in *10 Things I Hate about you* are named Katarina and Bianca. Katarina and Bianca's last name is Stratford, making reference to Stratford-upon-Avon, the English town known worldwide as the birthplace of Shakespeare. Katarina's suitor in Shakespeare's play is Petruchio of Verona becoming Patrick Verona in *10 Things I Hate about you*. In *10 Things I Hate about you*, the high school is named Padua, the city in which Shakespeare's play is set. Comparison of the two works will also reveal similar plot ideas. For instance, Shakespeare's Lucentio wishes to wed Bianca but cannot until her older sister Katarina is married. Knowing that Bianca cannot enter into any relationships, he poses as a tutor in order to become closer to Bianca, much as in *10 Things I Hate about you* where Cameron takes up French to tutor Bianca. While still posing as Bianca's tutor, Lucentio confers with a somewhat wild character, Petruchio. Like Patrick, he is an out-of-towner and little is known about him. Petruchio agrees to marry Katherina simply for the dowry that comes along with her, allowing Lucentio to pursue Bianca—just as Patrick agreed to date Kat for the money offered to him by Joey. In both the source and the adaptation, despite the initial monetary reasons the couples formed, both partners genuinely fall in love. Compared to most other teen comedies of its time, the characters of *10 Things* are unusually verbose, regardless of the cliques to which they belong, which is much in keeping with the styling of Shakespeare. At several points the characters also either directly quote Shakespeare or allude to his style of writing in their own speech, typically for comedic value.

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