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A cognitive approach to characterization: Katherina in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*

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Abstract

In this article, I argue that literary characterization can be fruitfully approached by drawing upon theories developed within social cognition to explain the perception of real-life people. I demonstrate how this approach can explain the construction of Katherina, the protagonist in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. Specifically, I introduce notions from cognitive theories of knowledge (especially schema theory), and impression formation. Using these, I describe (1) the role of prior knowledge in forming an impression of a character, and (2) how various types of impression are formed. Prior to my analysis of Katherina, I outline the kind of shrew schema the Elizabethans might have had knowledge of. Then, in my analysis I argue that the textual evidence in the first part of the play is largely consistent with this schema, and thus Katherina at this stage is largely a schema-based character. However, I show that as the play progresses a number of changes create the conditions for a more complex and personalized character. As a consequence of this analysis, I claim that Katherina is not, as some critics have argued, simply a shrew, or an inconsistent character, or a typical character of a farce.

Keywords: *characterization*; *gender*; *impression formation*; *schema theory*; *Shakespeare*; *social cognition*; *stereotypes*; The Taming of the Shrew

1 Introduction

Given the importance of characters in discussions of literary works, by both the lay person and the professional, one might suppose that the study of characterization would have attracted much attention. However, as Chatman points out, 'it is remarkable how little has been said about the theory of character in literary history and criticism' (1978: 107) (see also van Peer, 1989: 9). Moreover, most recent research on characterization has dwelt on prose fiction. In two special journal issues on literary character (*Poetics Today*, 1986, and *Style*, 1990), only one article addressed the issue of character in drama. One of my aims in this article is to show how theories from social and cognitive psychology can be applied to literary texts, and more particularly play texts, in order to explain how characterization works. An assumption behind this aim is that discussing characters in terms of psychological theories developed for real-life people is a valid enterprise. This is contrary to the thinking of early structuralist and semiotic critics, who argued that character has a purely textual existence (e.g. Weinsheimer, 1979; see also Chatman, 1972; Culler, 1975: 230–8). More recently, however, stylisticians have accepted the idea that we bring our real-world

knowledge of people to bear when we interpret fictional characters (e.g. Emmott, 1997: 58; Toolan, 1988: 92). In fact, recent structuralist critics have also acknowledged that this is an issue in need of investigation. Margolin (1989), in an article on 'state of the art' structuralist approaches to character, notes scholars' dissatisfaction with 'rather reductive, functionally oriented schemes of character' (1989: 10), and adds:

> Plainly speaking, I suspect that the scholars who expressed the dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs feel, like Wallace Martin, that 'our sense that [many] fictional characters are uncannily similar to people is not something to be dismissed or ridiculed, but a crucial feature of narration that requires explanation' (Martin, 1986: 120).
>
> (Margolin, 1989: 10)

This is not to say, of course, that our comprehension of characters proceeds in exactly the same way as our comprehension of people. Indeed, I shall point out some key differences. My main analysis focuses on Katherina, the protagonist in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, who has been the subject of fierce literary critical debate. I aim to engage in this debate by showing how the psychological theories I introduce can be used to shed light on the characterization of Katherina and to support or refute particular literary interpretations. I begin with a brief overview of the literary criticism concerning Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew*; then I introduce the psychological theories; and finally I present my analysis of Katherina.[1]

2 Literary criticism and Shakespeare's Katherina

The Taming of the Shrew has received less critical attention than most of Shakespeare's plays. In some critical works, even those on Shakespeare's comedies (e.g. Bradbury and Palmer, 1972; Evans, 1985), it is almost ignored. Similarly, several studies of Shakespeare's characters barely mention it (e.g. Kirschbaum, 1962; Newman, 1985; Palmer, 1962). Admittedly, it is not one of Shakespeare's more complex plays. In terms of characterization, there are relatively few characters, little psychological trauma in any character and, as I shall demonstrate, a relatively clear delineation of character. However, literary critics and producers of the play seem to have been troubled by the characterization of the protagonist, Katherina. In particular, there has been controversy over the extent to which Katherina is a 'shrew': an evil ill-tempered woman. Charlton is adamant that she is a shrew: 'curst and shrewd and froward' (1938: 97). Tillyard suggests that there is evidence for and against, but rather oddly concludes that, because of this, Shakespeare's play 'remains in its chief outlines not quite consistent, not completely realised or worked out' (1965: 80). Dash argues that she is not a shrew, but 'an alert, creative intelligence, rational and able to develop an idea with skill' (1981: 58–9).

The other issues which critics have addressed also concern Katherina's characterization. A particular controversy revolves around whether *The Taming of the Shrew* is a farce or a comedy. Heilman argues that it is a farce, because the characters, including Katherina, lack 'the physical, emotional, intellectual, and moral sensitivity that we think of as "normal"' (1972: 324). Abrams (1988) and Tillyard (1965) suggest that the play is farce in parts. Coghill (1950) and Bean (1980) see it as a comedy, and view Katherina as more complex than a character of farce. Another issue that has attracted attention is whether or to what extent Katherina is transformed during the course of the play. Is she 'tamed', and if so, in what way? Critics have focused on Katherina's final so-called 'obedience' speech, where she declares to the other women that 'Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper' (V.ii.147). Hazlitt (1906: 239) argues that Katherina's self-will is subdued by Petruchio's greater self-will: at the end of the play we are left with a pitiable broken woman. In contrast, Kahn (1977) and Dash (1981), taking feminist lines, argue that Katherina remains unbroken. In order to sustain this interpretation, they take the 'obedience' speech to be ironic. Other commentators (e.g. Morris, 1981; Tillyard, 1965) have opted for what might be seen as the compromise interpretation: Katherina finally recognizes the game Petruchio has been playing and joins him in it. The irony of the 'obedience' speech lies in the context: the audience knows that Katherina and Petruchio have made their peace, but the other characters do not. As Janet Suzman put it, 'That hyperbolic speech at the end of the play, reviled by feminists, can now become Kate playing, in public, the exact game she has been taught in private' (quoted in Cook, 1990: 29).

Many critics have focused on the 'obedience' speech almost to the exclusion of other parts of the play. My analysis is designed to fill this gap. A key event in the play is the first meeting between Katherina and Petruchio, which occurs in Act II, Scene i. This event represents an important structural turning-point in Katherina's characterization and is the fulcrum of my analysis. Before this event, I will show how Katherina appears to be a prototypical shrew. After this event, I shall argue that a number of changes create the conditions for a richer, more personalized impression of Katherina, which is not at all consistent with the argument that she is simply a shrew or a typical character of farce.[2]

3 An approach to characterization

In this section, I shall outline some psychological theories developed to explain the perception of people in real life and attempt to describe (1) the role of prior knowledge in the impression of a person and (2) how various types of impression are formed. I shall draw heavily upon work in social cognition. Note that in social cognition the term 'social' is generally used to mean 'relating to people'. Where appropriate, I shall also relate my discussion to fictional character.

3.1 Prior knowledge: social categories, social schemata and cognitive stereotypes

My aims here are (a) to propose three broad groupings for the social categories which people use in their perception of others, (b) to suggest how these categories form the basis for complex sets of beliefs about people or, in other words, social schemata, and (c) to relate social schemata to the notion of stereotype.

   People frequently perceive others as members of social groups rather than as individuals. These groups are assumed to provide the basis for cognitive categories. Such categories are viewed as having prototype-like structures (see, in particular, Cantor and Mischel, 1979). They consist of a typical or central member, the prototype. Category members can be ranged on a continuum of prototypicality according to their similarity to the prototype. On the basis of existing work on social cognition (e.g. Cantor and Mischel, 1979; Fiske and Taylor, 1984; van Dijk, 1987, 1988; Wyer and Srull, 1984), I suggest that social categories include three broad groupings, defined by the kind of information that constitute them.

Person categories: These include knowledge about people's preferences and interests (e.g. likes Chinese food), habits (e.g. late for appointments), traits (e.g. extrovert) and goals (e.g. to seduce somebody). These might be seen as quite idiosyncratic features, but note that they can be the basis of groups (e.g. people who are shy, people who are disorganized). Preferences, habits and traits tend to be cross-situational tendencies, whereas goals tend to be powerful predictors of a person's behaviour in a particular setting (Fiske and Taylor, 1984: 150).
Social role categories: These include knowledge about people's social functions. They include kinship roles (e.g. parents, grandparents), occupational roles (e.g. doctor, shop assistant), and relational roles (e.g. friends, partners, lovers, colleagues). A particular characteristic of many roles is that they are fluid: one can rapidly move from one role to another, combine multiple roles, or even create them. Holyoak and Gordon (1984: 50) argue for the psychological primacy of role categories (i.e. knowledge of a person's social role places one in a particularly strong position to make inferences about other aspects of the person).
Group membership categories: These include knowledge about social groups: sex, race, class, age, nationality, religion, and so on. Some theorists (e.g. Brewer, 1988; Fiske and Neuberg, 1990) have argued that a small number of categories, notably, sex, race and age, are used relatively automatically and universally in perception, and so they have termed these categories 'primitive' categories.

   With regard to fictional characters, we would need to consider yet another group of categories, which we might label 'dramatic role'. For example, if in a Western a character does a series of good deeds, you might infer that that character is the 'hero', and, knowing this dramatic role, you may infer such things as 'this character is unlikely to be killed'. The notion of 'dramatic role' can be related to work on 'actant roles', notably by Propp (1968) and Greimas (1966). Actant roles aim to capture the functions of characters in plots (e.g. villain, helper,

sought-for person, hero and false hero). The concern is not with the individuality of a character, but with the universal roles that underlie narratives and plays. This concern with the generic is, as we shall see, also at the heart of schema theory. Indeed, some scholars (Mandler and Johnson, 1977; Rumelhart, 1975; Thorndyke, 1977) have attempted to describe the global structures of stories in terms of schema theory, and state that they are building on Propp's (1968) work (e.g. Rumelhart, 1975: 235).

Precisely which category is activated when one perceives someone depends on a number of factors. Researchers (e.g. Fiske and Taylor, 1984: 175–6; Zebrowitz, 1990: 50) have argued that cognitive structures which have been recently activated and/or frequently activated are more accessible, and thus more likely to spring to mind. Fiske and Taylor (1984: 176) also suggest that observational purpose (e.g. whether someone is empathizing, trying to predict behaviour, trying to recreate someone's perspective) and the situational context may influence which categories are activated (e.g. seeing somebody on a running-track is much more likely to activate an athlete category than seeing that person at a desk).

Generally, when a category is activated so too is the network of which it is a part.[3] It is this network that I shall describe as a 'social schema'. In a nutshell, 'a *schema* is a structured cluster of concepts; usually, it involves generic knowledge and may be used to represent events, sequences of events, precepts, situations, relations, and even objects' (Eysenck and Keane, 1990: 275). To this list we can add people.[4] Schemata are higher-order cognitive structures each consisting of a particular configuration of variables or slots that are prototypically associated with a range of concepts or sub-schemata (see, for example, Rumelhart, 1984). For instance, one might categorize someone as male or female, a matter of biological sex, but one would also activate the sex-linked associations that constitute one's gender schema, a social cognitive construct, and one would use that schema to process further information.

> Gender-schematic processing in particular thus involves spontaneously sorting attributes and behaviors into masculine and feminine categories or 'equivalence classes', regardless of their differences on a variety of dimensions unrelated to gender, for example, spontaneously placing items like 'tender' and 'nightingale' into a feminine category and items like 'assertive' and 'eagle' into a masculine category.
>
> (Bem, 1983: 604)

It is particularly important to note that our social schemata include links across the three category groupings outlined above. Thus, in the quotation from Bem above, a female gender schema might include a link to a trait such as 'tender', and a male gender schema might include a link to a trait such as 'assertive' (see also Ashmore, 1981, on 'sex stereotypes'). Note that some of these links form evaluative beliefs (i.e. may be considered positive or negative features). Such evaluations constitute what van Dijk (1987, 1988) refers to as 'attitude schemata', and provide a link to the notion of ideologies. Of course, there is no argument

here that everybody has exactly the same social schemata, though given the fact that particular groups share social situations within particular cultures, one might expect strong similarities amongst the schemata of individuals within those groups. I will return to this point and to ideologies in section 4.1.

My discussion of social schemata relates to the research on stereotypes within social cognition. Andersen et al. (1990: 192) define stereotypes as 'highly organised social categories that have the properties of schemata'. Taylor et al. (1978) argue that stereotyping has its basis in normal cognitive processes such as categorization: it is a way of structuring and managing potentially overwhelming input data. They suggest that 'stereotypes can be thought of as attributes that are tagged to category labels (e.g. race, sex) and imputed to individuals as a function of their being placed in that category' (Taylor et al., 1978: 792). This is how I have been describing the relationship between categories and social schemata above. A stereotype is a set of beliefs which is 'stored in memory as a cognitive structure and can then influence subsequent perceptions of and behaviors toward that group and its members' (Hamilton and Sherman, 1994: 15). It can be viewed as an abstract group schema having central tendency beliefs or attributes characterizing a group 'as a whole' or 'on average' (Hamilton and Sherman, 1994: 31). A newly encountered person is categorized according to their similarity to the central beliefs (e.g. Cantor and Mischel, 1979). Finally, it is worth noting that the schema-like structure of stereotypes can explain their durability. Schemata guide perception toward schema-relevant information, and often toward schema-consistent information, since disconfirming or incongruent information requires more effort to process than congruent information (though if that effort is made, the information may be well remembered) (e.g. Fiske and Taylor, 1984: 149; Hamilton and Sherman, 1994: 33–7; Taylor et al., 1978). Clearly, if schemata bias perception toward schema-consistent information, then that operates as a self-perpetuating bias for the stereotype. In this article, I shall refer to stereotypes as social schemata, because this makes clear my view that stereotypes have a particular cognitive structure – they are not simply a loose collection of beliefs.

3.2 Impression formation

The idea that people simplify the complexities of the world by interpreting the specific in terms of the general has been described as the 'most fundamental idea suggested by schema research' (Fiske and Taylor, 1984: 141). However, people are not totally constrained by conceptually driven or top-down processes. There are times when the emphasis may be on data-driven or bottom-up processes, which lead to a rather different kind of impression. The aim of this section is to consider the different types of impression and, in particular, the processing decisions that lie behind them.

In person perception, two basic alternatives, which may be viewed as the opposite ends of a scale, can be distinguished: (1) sometimes a category may

indeed suffice, and (2) sometimes we may form an impression more on the basis of information about a particular individual than any category. The first alternative involves a greater emphasis on top-down processing and results in a 'category-based' impression. The second alternative involves a greater emphasis on bottom-up processing and results in a 'person-based' or 'attribute-based' impression: the impression is made up of the individual attributes of the target person. To exemplify, my impressions of Italians were largely based on my category knowledge (containing such information as 'Italians are passionate', 'Italians eat pasta', 'Italians have dark hair'). However, over the last few years I have interacted with a number of specific Italians: I have met Italians who do not seem particularly passionate, I have had dinner with Italians who have eaten many other dishes apart from pasta, and I have seen quite a number of fair-headed Italians. My impressions of these Italians are based more on their specific attributes. Category-based and person-based impressions have very different characteristics: categorization entails simplification and, as a consequence, a category-based impression loses much of the richness, complexity and personalization of detail that a person-based impression has. To fully appreciate the differences between category-based and person-based impressions, one needs to consider the different kinds of processing that lie behind these impression types.

Fiske and Neuberg (1990) propose a continuum model of impression formation, with category-based processes dominating one end of the continuum and person-based processes dominating the other. Category-based processes are posited to take priority over person-based processes. Progression towards person-based processes depends on:

1. *Motivational factors*. If the individual is 'minimally interesting or personally relevant enough' (Fiske and Neuberg, 1990: 4), attention is given to other information, thereby enabling progression down the continuum. As we move down this processing continuum, more and more cognitive effort is required, and thus we need to be motivated to expend that effort.
2. *The configuration of information received*. If information is not easily categorized, then alternative processes along the continuum may be used.

Fiske and Neuberg (1990) identify four stages on the continuum from category-based to person-based:

1. Upon encountering somebody, the first stage of perception consists of an *initial categorization*.
2. If the information fits the initial categorization, then *confirmatory categorization* occurs.
3. If the information does not fit the initial categorization, but it is categorizable (by accessing, for example, a new category or subcategory), then *recategorization* occurs (e.g. from teacher to secondary school teacher to secondary school maths teacher).

4.   If the information does not fit any particular category, then *piecemeal
      integration* occurs; in other words, the person's attributes are averaged or
      added up in order to form an impression.

Finally, it should be noted that although progression down the continuum is
essentially one-way, it is possible to loop back up to the beginning of the three
processes (i.e. 2, 3 and 4 above), if we decide that further assessment is required.

   Turning to literary characterization, I would claim that impression formation
can provide a basis for understanding E.M. Forster's distinction between 'flat'
and 'round' characters. Forster defines flat characters as 'humours', 'types' or
'caricatures' (1987: 73). 'In their purest form, they are constructed round a single
idea or quality; when there is more than one factor in them, we get the beginning
of the curve towards the round' (Forster, 1987: 73). Round characters are defined
by implication: those who are not flat are round. According to Forster, 'The test of
a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it
never surprises, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is flat pretending to be round'
(1987: 81). This distinction between flat and round characters broadly
corresponds with the distinction between category-based and person-based
impressions. Although Forster's definitions for flat and round characters are
rather slippery, it is clear from them and from subsequent work on Forster's
distinctions (notably Harvey, 1966, and Hochman, 1985) that three dimensions
are involved: (1) whether the character is simple or complex, (2) whether the
character is static or changes, and (3) whether the character 'surprises' the reader
or not. The problem is understanding exactly what is meant by these dimensions.
However, we can begin to solve these problems if we relate the dimensions to
Fiske and Neuberg's model. The substance of the simple/complex dimension
becomes clearer: the attributes and features of a flat character are organized
according to a preformed category or schema to form a category-based
impression; the attributes and features of a round character combine to form a
person-based impression. The staticism/change dimension can be explained: a
categorized character implies no change; the piecemeal integration of a
personalized character implies change. And the 'surprise' dimension also follows:
the confirmatory categorization of a character means being satisfied that a current
schema adequately accounts for the information you have about that character,
whereas piecemeal integration means that a character will not fit an existing
schema and is thus 'surprising'.

4 Analysis of Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew*

4.1 The shrew schema

For an Elizabethan audience, would the title of the play have activated a schema
for a particular type of person – a shrew schema? In my view, it is highly likely
that most people would at least have *known of* a shrew schema and what

constituted some of its central features. However, different groups would have had different attitudes associated with this schema, or, in van Dijk's (1987, 1988) terms, different attitude schemata. These attitudes would have influenced the way the schema was employed in the interpretation and production of social discourse, which in turn would influence the development of the schema. Here I am introducing a distinction between social categories (e.g. those of the three broad groupings outlined in section 3.1) and the underlying similarities in attitude shared by a social group towards a set of social categories, which collectively constitute an ideology and could be labelled, for example, 'conservative', 'racist' or 'sexist' (see van Dijk, e.g. 1988, 1990, for this conceptualization of ideology). For example, I may have some knowledge of the social category comprising 'male sexists'. My attitude towards this social cognition is oppositional, and I share this attitude with others. This shared attitude is a manifestation of a shared 'anti-sexist' ideology. The reason for introducing this distinction is that in the Early Modern English period it is clear that the shrew schema was part of the dominant, patriarchal ideology. This is not to say that there were no resistant voices to conceptions of women produced and sustained by this ideology (see, for example, the pamphlets by women writers in Shepherd, 1985), although there was 'no very definite sense of a female alternative' (Shepherd, 1985: 23; see also Krontiris, 1992: 18–19). Note, incidentally, that in order for any writer to resist the establishment's shrew schema, they would have to have had knowledge of it.

What might have been the features of the shrew schema? According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), the word 'shrew' originally referred to any animal of the genus Sorex (resembling mice but having a long sharp snout). Superstitions about the shrew developed, so that it came to be seen as wicked and evil. By the 13th century these associations were transferred to men so that it was also used to mean 'a wicked, evil-disposed, or malignant man' (OED: Sb.1.a.). By the end of the 14th century, it was often used to refer to the devil (OED: Sb.1.b). During the medieval period the word was also applied to women. One of the earliest of such usages is in Chaucer's Epilogue to *The Merchant's Tale* (c. 1386): 'But of hir tonge a lobbyng shrewe is she'. In this context it meant 'a woman given to railing or scolding' (OED: Sb.3.a). This was apparently the dominant meaning in Shakespeare's time. Of course, one cannot rely purely on what a historical, literary-based dictionary has to say about one word, in order to describe the shrew schema. At the end of the 16th century, the notion of a 'shrew' overlapped considerably with the notion of a 'scold', and to a lesser extent with a 'wanton' and a 'witch'.[5] In Table 1, I have reconstructed what might have been the dominant Elizabethan shrew schema, drawing upon evidence in the OED, Shepherd (1985), Mills (1991) and, more particularly, de Bruyn (1979).[6] De Bruyn (1979), which is in fact a much used source for Mills (1991), examines stereotypes of women in the 16th century, drawing upon an array of evidence from poems, plays, treatises, legends, sermons, diaries, jests, tales and ballards. Needless to say, there can be no claim that statements about women in such evidence reflected what was happening in the actual lives of women; indeed,

many historians agree that there was a gap between theory and practice (see Krontiris, 1992: 7–8).

Table 1 Schematic elements in an Elizabethan shrew schema

Person	*Habit*	Talkative
	Goal	To cause evil or harm
	Trait	Ill-tempered, assertive, disobedient, jealous, cruel, aggressive
Social role	*Supernatural*	The devil's mistress (i.e. controller)
	Marital	Wife
Group membership	*Gender*	Female

The connection with hell, the shrew's presumed source of power, needs some comment. According to de Bruyn (1979), ancient legends and sagas had related the shrew to Lilith, who in rabbinical mythology was Adam's first wife and the person who led him astray. In these legends, Lilith was made the mother of the demons. In the literature of the Early Modern English period, the Devil himself is frequently shown to be unable to cope with the shrew, and even is compared quite favourably with her (for many examples, see de Bruyn, 1979: 139–47). De Bruyn (1979: 138) suggests a reason for this characterization: '[For man] to be ruled by a woman showed up his own weakness, it meant loss of freedom, and this may well have been the reason why a shrew … was depicted as a devilish creature, the worst evil on earth'. The situation of man being ruled by a woman was exploited in 16th-century literature, so that 'the shrew grew to be a stock figure for laughter and amusement' (de Bruyn, 1979: 138). Here is the dramatic role (see section 3.1) of the fictional shrew, who functions to subdue a male character (normally a husband), and thereby to amuse the audience.[7]

For a 20th-century audience, two issues need to be addressed. First, does the word 'shrew' in the title of the play function as a trigger for a schema relating to a particular kind of woman? In the *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary* (1987), the second sense, after that concerning the animal, is stated thus: 'If you refer to a woman as a shrew, you mean that she is very bad-tempered or mean; an offensive use', and illustrated with an example, 'He found himself married to a vulgar shrew'.[8] In the British National Corpus (approximately 100 million words of British English from the late 1980s and early 1990s), of the 73 instances of the word 'shrew', 45 refer to the animal, 16 to women, 11 to Shakespeare's play, and 1 is a proper name. Collocations, where the word refers to women, include: 'shrill shallow shrew', 'shrilled the shrew' and 'nagging shrew'. All 21 instances of 'shrewish' refer to women, and collocations include: 'shrewish and ill-tempered' and 'shrewish tongue'. So, although the word is clearly rare, one might suppose that there is at least some knowledge of the word 'shrew' used to refer to a particular kind of woman.

Second, is a contemporary audience likely to possess a schema for the particular type of woman that corresponds to my description of the dominant Elizabethan shrew schema (see Table 1)? Given the cultural and social changes that have occurred over the last 400 years, it is improbable that the audience today will have knowledge of this exact schema, and thus may arrive at different interpretative conclusions. Bartlett's (1995) experiment on the North American Indian folktale *The War of the Ghosts* revealed that British informants tended to reconstruct the story in terms of their own cultural schemata. For example, canoes, which were presumably rather less familiar to Bartlett's informants of the early 20th century, became boats (Bartlett, 1995: 128). In particular, the secularization of society means that a relationship with the devil is now unlikely to constitute part of a conception of any person. This is not to say, however, that today nobody has a schema which is similar. Some of the collocations mentioned above ('shrill', 'nagging', 'ill-tempered') suggest features that were likely to have been part of the dominant Elizabethan shrew schema. Stereotypes of the nagging woman have proved durable, in spite of the fact that competing ideologies have evolved and such stereotypes are now abhorred by many and acknowledged as highly offensive. It is quite possible that some features, which may have constituted part of the dominant Elizabethan shrew schema, now constitute part of other conceptions of women. For example, it is likely that for many Elizabethans Katherina's challenge to her father's authority would have been perceived as disorderly and disrespectful behaviour (thus prototypically shrewish behaviour), and would probably have triggered the shrew schema. For some members of a modern audience, such behaviour may seem to be a spirited rebellion against an unfair and repressive patriarchal system, and trigger quite different social schemata.

My analysis which follows will concentrate on the dominant Elizabethan shrew schema, and address the issue of whether or not Katherina possesses the kind of personality that fits this schema. This is, after all, the central issue in the play. It is important to note that my analysis concentrates on what I have described as the dominant Elizabethan perspective. Thus references to the shrew schema are references to the Elizabethan schema as it appears in Table 1. My use of the term 'shrewish' to describe particular behaviour should be understood as meaning 'consistent with the Elizabethan shrew schema'. References to an audience are references to an Elizabethan audience which had knowledge of that schema.

4.2 First impressions: instantiating the shrew schema

The first woman encountered in the play is Katherina interacting with her father, Baptista. A cohesive interpretative pattern emerges in the following passage to the effect that Katherina is shrewish.

Baptista   Gentlemen, importune me no further,
                For how I firmly am resolv'd you know;
                That is, not to bestow my youngest daughter

> Before I have a husband for the elder.
> If either of you both love Katherina,
> Because I know you well, and love you well,
> Leave shall you have to court her at your pleasure.

Gremio   To cart her rather. She's too rough for me.
           There, there, Hortensio, will you any wife?

Katherina I pray you, sir, is it your will
           To make a stale of me amongst these mates?

Hortensio Mates, maid! How mean you that? No mates for you
           Unless you were of gentler, milder mould.

Katherina I' faith, sir, you shall never need to fear;
           Iwis it is not half-way to her heart;
           But if it were, doubt not her care should be
           To comb your noddle with a three-legg'd stool,
           And paint your face, and use you like a fool.

                                              (I.i.48–65)[9]

Gremio's reaction to Baptista's permission to court Katherina is foregrounded. An assumption made in granting permission is that the hearer wants to do what you permit (see 'The Permit Group' of speech act verbs in Wierzbicka, 1987: 109–25). Gremio, however, clearly wants nothing to do with Katherina. This is highlighted by his pun on court/cart. The phonological parallelism reinforces the semantic contrast – from romantic courtship to the punishment of bawds or whores by carting them through the streets. Gremio's low opinion of Katherina is made more explicit in his following sentence, 'She's too rough for me'. Hortensio's attitude towards Katherina is the same. The evidence so far of Katherina's shrewish behaviour is indirect, in that it comes from other characters, but there is some consensus among them. Furthermore, Katherina herself provides us with evidence. Her first utterance, though apparently deferential ('I pray you, sir'), questions her father's will. In her second, she asserts that if she were married, she would beat her husband's head with a stool, scratch his face and use him as if he were a fool. Clearly, her behaviour and purported intentions are unusual. These utterances, if taken at face value, might lead to an inference that she is disrespectful, violent and malicious.

So far, the configuration of information about Katherina neatly fits the shrew schema, though there are some mitigating factors: Baptista has granted permission to two fools to court her, and so it may not seem entirely unreasonable that she should question his will.

4.3 Character context: the role of Bianca

The characterization of Bianca plays an important role in how Katherina is perceived. Lucentio is the first to comment on Bianca, and in doing so points up the contrast with Katherina: 'But in the other's silence do I see / Maid's mild

behaviour and sobriety' (I.i.70–1). Lucentio's inference about Bianca here seems to be based on an assumption about the correlation between volume of speech and personality. In the period of the play, there was a schematic association between women who spoke little or no speech and the characteristics of being demure and submissive, and conversely, an association between women who spoke a lot and the characteristics of being headstrong, rebellious and quarrelsome, or, in other words, shrewish.[10]

Bianca has a single turn in Act I, the effect of which is likely to reinforce the impression of Katherina's shrewishness. Her response to her father's instruction to go indoors contrasts with Katherina's earlier refusal to do so:

> Bianca   Sister, content you in my discontent.
>   Sir, to your pleasure humbly I subscribe;
>   My books and instruments shall be my company,
>   On them to look, and practise by myself.
>
>   (I.i.80–3)

Not only does she comply, but she also emphasizes her deference to her father. This is achieved through the adverb 'humbly', which is syntactically foregrounded through its unusual positioning before the subject of the sentence.[11] Furthermore, Bianca highlights the unpleasant nature of her father's wishes: 'My books and instruments shall be my company / On them to look, and practise by myself' (I.i.82–3). She will be in solitary confinement. One might argue here that Bianca justifies why Katherina refuses to obey her father (i.e. the unpleasant nature of the request explains why one might refuse to comply with it). However, what is perhaps the more salient issue here is the contrast: the fact that Bianca, unlike Katherina, complies despite the discomfort. Bianca's ploy seems to be to invite the inference that she is a 'good' daughter, respectful and obedient even in the face of hardship. As perhaps her name suggests, she is the Elizabethan establishment's ideal of the obedient and submissive woman, a patient Griselda.[12]

The general effect of Bianca on the Elizabethan audience's perception of Katherina is likely to be one of foregrounding Katherina's behaviour by contrast and enhancing a category-based impression of her as a shrew.

4.4 Inferring shrewish characteristics

In Act I Katherina's behaviour has already begun to form a pattern suggesting her shrewishness. This pattern is strengthened by two events that occur in Act II before Katherina meets Petruchio (II.i.182).

At the beginning of Act II, we learn that Katherina has tied Bianca up and is interrogating her in order to find out which suitor she loves best.

> Bianca   Good sister, wrong me not, nor wrong yourself,
>   To make a bondmaid and a slave of me –
>   That I disdain; but for these other gawds,

> Unbind my hands, I'll pull them off myself,
> Yea, all my raiment, to my petticoat;
> Or what you will command me will I do,
> So well I know my duty to my elders.

Katherina   Of all thy suitors here I charge thee tell
             Whom thou lov'st best. See thou dissemble not.

Bianca   Believe me, sister, of all the men alive
             I never yet beheld that special face
             Which I could fancy more than any other.

Katherina   Minion, thou liest. Is't not Hortensio?

<div align="right">(II.i.1–13)</div>

The politeness and impoliteness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Culpeper, 1996) used by the two characters contrast and have implications for the way they might be perceived. Bianca at least pays lip service to politeness. In addressing Katherina as 'Good sister', she is positively polite in expressing approval and in using an in-group marker. She is also deferential: 'what you will command me will I do'. On the other hand, Katherina uses an explicit performative command (i.e. the force of the utterance is named), 'I charge thee tell/ Whom thou lov'st best'. Thomas (1995: 48) notes that people often avoid using an explicit performative, because 'in many circumstances it seems to imply an unequal power relationship or a particular set of rights on the part of the speaker'. However, Bianca did license Katherina to command her, and so one cannot assume that Katherina is simply exerting power (though one may wonder whether Bianca's license would extend to the revelation of personal information). In her next turn, Katherina is positively impolite: she attacks Bianca's positive face with an abusive, condescending term of address ('Minion') and through her assertion that Bianca is lying. One might also note that Bianca uses the 'you' form of the second person pronoun, whereas Katherina uses the 'thou' form. The usage of these variants in this period is very complex, but Katherina's use of 'thou' in this context may carry a hint of condescension, whereas Bianca's use of 'you' is consistent with her appearance of respectfulness to her elder sister. Finally and importantly, this interaction ends with Katherina striking Bianca.

The second event is not actually witnessed by the audience, though the physical results are revealed. According to the stage direction, Hortensio enters *with his head broke* (II.i.141). Katherina apparently had broken a lute over his head and called him names.

Whilst there are some mitigating factors, tying up somebody and breaking an instrument on somebody's head are strikingly unreasonable behaviours. Moreover, Katherina acts in a similar way to different stimuli: she treats Baptista, Bianca and Hortensio in the same way. The importance of this behavioural pattern is that it allows us to infer that the cause of her behaviour lies not in external phenomena but in her personality; in other words, it allows us to infer that she is dispositionally aggressive, a shrewish characteristic.

4.5 Characterization through other characters

An important aspect of characterization is what other characters say about a particular character. In the first third of the play (i.e. before II.i.182), the audience gains little information about Katherina on the basis of her own conversation or behaviour. She is on stage for only 93 lines and speaks only 219 words – 4 percent of the total number of words spoken. The bulk of the evidence comes from what other characters say about her. Almost all the descriptive terms used for Katherina by Hortensio, Gremio, Tranio, Grumio and Baptista are negative evaluations:

> *Hortensio*: shrewd ill-favour'd (I.ii.57); ... intolerably curst, / And shrewd, and froward, so beyond all measure (I.ii.87–8); curst Katherine (I.ii.181). *Gremio*: She's too rough for me (I.i.55); fiend of hell (I.i.88); hell (I.i.125); with a most impatient devilish spirit (I.i.151); wildcat (I.ii.193). *Tranio*: stark mad or wonderful froward (I.i.69); so curst and shrewd (I.i.180). *Grumio*: Katherine the curst (I.ii.127); *Baptista*: hilding of a devilish spirit (II.i.26).

Clearly, the views of these characters form a strong consensus. This is particularly evident in the lexical repetition. Crucially, all of these evaluations fit the prototypical features of the shrew schema (note, for example, the lexical items referring in some way to hell).[13]

I have earlier demonstrated that the behaviour of Katherina and Bianca suggests a contrast between them. This contrast is reinforced by evidence inferred from what other characters say about them. As with Katherina, in constructing Bianca's character we rely largely upon what the other characters say. All the descriptive terms used for her by Lucentio, Baptista, Hortensio, Gremio and Tranio are positive evaluations:

> *Lucentio*: But in the other's silence do I see / Maid's mild behaviour and sobriety (I.i.70–1); Minerva (I.i.84); young modest girl (I.i.156); O yes, I saw sweet beauty in her face, / Such as the daughter of Agenor had. (I.i.167–8); Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her (I.i.176). *Baptista*: good Bianca (I.i.76). *Hortensio*: Sweet Bianca! (I.i.139); beautiful Bianca (I.ii.117); fair Bianca (I.ii.172). *Gremio*: Sweet Bianca (I.i.110); Fair Bianca (I.i.165). *Tranio*: fair Bianca (I.ii.241); The one as famous for her scolding tongue / As is the other for beauteous modesty (I.ii.250–1); Bianca, fair and virtuous (II.i.91).

As is the case with Katherina, the views of these characters form a consensus. Moreover, all these evaluations refer to aspects of the Elizabethan establishment's ideal of the 'good woman', the diametric opposite of the shrew schema. In particular, note that the evaluations mix or even fuse visible, concrete aspects with abstract (consider 'beauteous modesty'). This was part of the establishment's conception of a 'good woman', whereby 'woman's sobriety and reticence in dress and behaviour, her surrender to her husband's wishes, her perfect self-control in difficult situations, all these were only the visible counterparts of her inward state of mind' (de Bruyn, 1979: 23).[14]

What the other characters say is likely to have the effect of hardening the structural opposition between Katherina and Bianca. The two sisters contrast in terms of dominant Elizabethan social schemata: Katherina exhibits disruptive behaviour and is said to have an ill-tempered personality (she fits the shrew schema); Bianca exhibits compliant behaviour and is said to have a pleasant personality and be physically attractive (she fits the patriarchal conception of the 'good woman').

4.6 Character context: Petruchio replaces Bianca

After Petruchio's meeting with Katherina (II.i.182–317),[15] the point I identified as the key structural turning-point, Katherina and Bianca do not appear on the stage together until the fifth act, and even here they do not address each other individually. Bianca is detached from Katherina: she no longer plays an important role in influencing the perception of Katherina. More importantly, Bianca undergoes a radical change of character, giving rise to a cohesive pattern of information that clashes with a 'good woman' conception.

The very next time we hear Bianca speaking to Lucentio and Hortensio she is being assertive:

> Bianca   Why, gentlemen, you do me double wrong
>   To strive for that which resteth in my choice.
>   I am no breeching scholar in the schools,
>   I'll not be tied to hours nor 'pointed times,
>   But learn my lessons as I please myself.
>   And to cut off all strife: here sit we down.
>   Take you your instrument, play you the whiles;
>   His lecture will be done ere you have tun'd.
>
>   (III.i.16–23)

Bianca's challenge to Lucentio's and Hortensio's authority in organizing her time is reminiscent of Katherina's earlier challenge to Baptista's authority. Furthermore, her exercise of power is apparent in her use of direct commands, each formulated with an imperative (*sit*, *take*, and *play*), to organize Lucentio and Hortensio.

Later in the play, Petruchio reveals that Bianca has married Lucentio. This is foregrounded behaviour: Bianca has married Lucentio behind her father's back, going against the expectations associated with the obedient daughter. This is further evidence of her lack of respect for authority and her secretiveness. In the final scene of the play, Bianca fails the obedience test in refusing to appear when she is summoned by her husband.

Clearly, an Elizabethan impression of Bianca based on conformity to the establishment's ideal of a daughter and a 'good woman' becomes untenable. This, however, does not necessarily result in a more complex characterization of

Bianca. In the first third of the play, all the evidence supports her categorization as the social ideal; in the remainder of the play, all the evidence supports her categorization as a shrew. This contradiction can be resolved by simply *recategorizing* her as a shrew. Her earlier goodliness can be construed as further evidence of her duplicity. An important ramification of Bianca's character change is that it may help to further destabilize a shrew-based impression of Katherina.

Petruchio becomes the most important part of Katherina's human context. After their first meeting, he appears whenever Katherina does and also interacts with her. His behaviour after the first encounter with Katherina *appears* to reinforce his hot-headedness and craziness, and, in addition, to suggest that he is disorderly and rebellious. He is late for his wedding and produces no excuse. Moreover, he turns up in inappropriate dress for a wedding. During the wedding service, he swears loudly at the Priest, 'by gogs-wouns' (III.ii.156), and cuffs him, causing him to fall down. After the ceremony, he kisses Katherina, leaving the church echoing with a 'clamorous smack' (III.ii.174). The fact that Petruchio's behaviour is utterly inappropriate, and as a consequence unexpected, is made clear in Gremio's description of the celebratory drink: it is more suited to a sailor's 'carousing' (II.ii.167). When Petruchio and Katherina next appear (IV.i.104), having arrived at Petruchio's house, the audience is again exposed to Petruchio's wild behaviour. He calls his servants names and he is physically violent: he strikes two servants and throws dishes and food at them. This behaviour is unwarranted, since there are no mitigating factors: there is nothing the servants do that could justify such behaviour. The cause of it seems, at this point, to lie in Petruchio's personality. However, later, Petruchio informs the audience in a soliloquy (IV.i.175–98) that all his behaviour is in fact a ploy to 'tame' Katherina.

The particular issue I want to address with regard to Petruchio's behaviour is its likely effect on the Elizabethan audience's perception of Katherina. Petruchio produces a series of behaviours that are prototypically shrewish. He has no respect for order, he is domineering, he is aggressive, both verbally and physically, and he is loud. Curtis's comment on Petruchio's behaviour reflects this: 'By this reckoning he is more shrew than she' (IV.i.74). No longer is Katherina contrasted in the heavenly light of Bianca, but in the hellfire of Petruchio. As a result, in the remainder of the play there is likely to be a strong bias toward perceiving Katherina as less shrewish.

4.7 Characterization through other characters: a reversal

An important ramification of Bianca's character change is that it casts doubt on the credibility of characterization by other characters. The way Lucentio, Baptista, Hortensio, Gremio and Tranio described Bianca was clearly wrong. This may lead the audience to doubt their accuracy about Katherina. The actual contribution made to the characterization of Katherina by other characters in the final two-thirds of the play is much reduced in importance compared with the first third.

There are fewer cues (clustering in certain scenes) and they do not exhibit the same kind of strong consensus. Nevertheless, they are evidence that the other characters' conceptions of Katherina have changed. There is now more of a mixture of positive and negative descriptive terms (the ratio of positive to negative being 3 to 4), and this may encourage the audience to change from a shrew-based impression of Katherina.

> *Tranio*: good Katherine (III.ii.21); she's a devil, a devil, the devil's dam (III.ii.151). *Gremio*: she's a lamb, a dove, a fool to him (III.ii.152).[16] *Bianca*: mad (III.ii.240). *Curtis*: Poor soul (IV.i.168). *Baptista*: a shrew of thy impatient humour (III.ii.29); the veriest shrew of all (V.ii.64).

Petruchio's positive descriptions in the final two-thirds of the play – 'lovely' (III.ii.88), 'sweet' (III.ii.231), 'bonny' (III.ii.223), 'sweet' (IV.i.143), 'sweeting' (IV.iii.36) – could be seen as part of his shrewish act: a sarcastic impoliteness strategy designed to provoke Katherina. However, his reference to Katherina as a 'gentlewoman' (IV.v.61) is particularly significant. Two scenes earlier (IV.iii.70–2), he denies Katherina the right to have the cap of a 'gentlewoman' on the basis that she is not 'gentle' ('When you are gentle, you shall have one too' [IV.iii.71]). Several meanings could be suggested in the use of this word: that she does not have the character appropriate to one of noble birth (OED: adj.3.a); that she is not courteous or polite (OED: adj.3.c); that she does not have a mild disposition (OED: adj.8). Clearly, he now thinks Katherina has some of these qualities and, clearly, if she has these qualities, she cannot be thought a shrew.

4.8 Katherina's behaviour

After Katherina's and Petruchio's first meeting, Katherina next appears waiting for Petruchio to turn up for the wedding. Baptista's sympathy for her predicament is evident from his reaction to Katherina's departure from the stage in tears:

> Baptista   Go, girl, I cannot blame thee now to weep,
>   For such an injury would vex a saint;
>   Much more a shrew of thy impatient humour.
>
>   (III.ii.27–9)

These are not the tears of anger and frustration which we saw earlier (II.i.35–6), but the legitimate tears of suffering. This is another facet that is inconsistent with the shrew schema. Shrews, as far as the ideology of the establishment is concerned, are prototypically despised and disliked: they do not attract sympathy.

In Gremio's report of the wedding ceremony he comments on Katherina's physical behaviour: she 'trembled and shook' (III.ii.163). Such body movements are strongly associated with fear. This is further information that seems inconsistent with the shrew schema. When Katherina and Petruchio reappear, Katherina's first words, addressed to Petruchio, are polite: 'Let me entreat you' (III.ii.196). She uses the negative politeness strategy of giving deference. This

strategy assumes the superior power of the addressee. This is the first time in the play that Katherina appears to acknowledge a social order and place herself in an inferior position. It is unusual behaviour for Katherina – a deviation from her own norm – and, on the face of it, it is inconsistent with the relative power predicted by the shrew schema. This pattern of behaviour is reinforced later in the play when Katherina goes out of her way to help Petruchio's servants. However, Katherina exhibits different behaviour when Petruchio insists that they must forgo the wedding feast. She refuses to comply and asserts her own authority: 'I will be angry; what hast thou to do? / Father, be quiet; he shall stay my leisure' (III.ii.212–13). She uses the modal 'will' to express her own desire.[17] Her rhetorical question 'what hast thou to do?' strongly asserts that Baptista has no right to interfere. This attacks his negative face. Her command 'be quiet' is a clear example of bald on-record impoliteness. It is obviously too direct in this context, bearing in mind Baptista's status. Katherina's behaviour here (defiance of authority, verbal aggression and anger) is prototypically shrewish, although one should note that the fact that Petruchio's behaviour is unreasonable is likely to exert some influence as a mitigating factor.

The audience thus receives contrasting information about Katherina at this point in the play. Here there is no simple change from one schema to another, as with Bianca, but a move down the continuum towards piecemeal integration. This move is supported by the presence of motivational factors. Katherina is a central and interesting figure: it is worth the audience investing cognitive effort in attending to her character. In addition, she may have elicited some sympathy from the audience, and this affective factor may increase the amount of attention she gains. In the following parts of the play, this contrasting mixture of information is continued.

4.9 Katherina and the run-up to the 'obedience' speech (V.ii.137–80)

On the journey to Baptista's house, Petruchio presents Katherina with stark alternatives: she either agrees with him that the sun is the moon and they continue to her father's house in order to join in festivities, or she disagrees with him and they turn back to Petruchio's house. As she is in a less powerful position, Katherina has little choice but to give in, if she wants to go to her father's house. As Hortensio points out, 'Say as he says, or we shall never go' (IV.v.11). The form of her capitulation is significant:

> Katherina   Forward, I pray, since we have come so far,
>   And be it moon, or sun, or what you please;
>   And if you please to call it a rush-candle,
>   Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me.

> (IV.v.12–15)

The speech act of promising is couched as an explicit performative. Furthermore, six lines later she reiterates the promise: 'What you will have it nam'd, even that

it is, / And so it shall be so for Katherine' (IV.v.21–2). It should be noted that in each promise Katherina uses the modal *shall*. In Early Modern English *shall* was more widely used to express obligation than it is today (e.g. Görlach, 1991: 114), and it is perhaps this which made it particularly forceful when used to promise or predict a future act.[18]

Because Katherina makes a promise to do whatever Petruchio commands, does this mean that she has undergone some dramatic change of character from shrew to obedient woman? The fact that Petruchio extracted the promise from her by virtue of his superior power is a factor which conflicts with the inference of obedience. However, it is significant that she makes the promise so forcefully: more forcefully than is strictly necessary. It is also significant that she keeps the promise over time, in fact for the rest of the play. Furthermore, in the first scene of Act V she kisses Petruchio, in spite of the fact that he presents her with a way of avoiding a kiss, and also addresses him with a term of endearment: 'love' (V.i.33). This may be evidence that her attitude towards Petruchio has changed.[19]

Is Katherina then a case for recategorization like Bianca, only from shrew to obedient woman rather than the other way round? This is what some critics (e.g. Hazlitt, 1906) have argued for. However, there are two objections to this. First, there is no obvious means of explaining away her earlier shrewish behaviours. This is unlike the case with Bianca where, it may be remembered, one can simply reassess her earlier behaviour as further evidence of duplicity. Second, as I stated earlier, Katherina never relinquishes all shrew-like behaviour. And again this is unlike Bianca, who relinquishes all obedient behaviour. Can one then argue, as some critics have done (e.g. Charlton, 1938; Tillyard, 1965), that the characterization of Katherina is simply inconsistent? There are two objections to this. First, there are reasons why an audience might attempt piecemeal integration. Not only does the audience have a configuration of information that is likely to be inconsistent with any schema, but there are also motivational factors present which justify the expenditure of cognitive effort. Apart from emotive factors such as sympathy, Katherina presents an intriguing puzzle that will not go away. Bianca, in contrast, after the point where one might recategorize her as a shrew, recedes into the background of the play. Katherina remains centrally involved in the play. For example, in the final act of the play, Bianca has 10 lines of dialogue, whereas Katherina has 55. Second, it is during the final scene of the play that the audience may see how the apparently inconsistent facets of Katherina's character can be integrated.

As I pointed out in section 2, my main aim in this article is to focus on parts of the play other than the 'obedience' speech. However, I will offer some brief remarks on the 'obedience' speech here. An important aspect of the final scene of the play, where we hear the famous 'obedience' speech, is the fact that Petruchio licenses Katherina to engage in behaviours that appear to be consistent with the shrew schema. When Bianca and the widow disobey the summonses of their husbands, Katherina is sent to get them and licensed, if they refuse to come, to 'Swinge ... them soundly forth unto their husbands' (V.ii.104). Petruchio licenses

Katherina to 'tell' (V.ii.130) Bianca and the widow about the duty they owe their husbands. Significantly, the widow objects specifically to this speech act: 'We will have no telling' (V.ii.132). Katherina is also given the opportunity to speak at length. She has the longest turn in the play, extending to 364 words. These behaviours – using physical violence, strongly asserting a particular state of affairs and hogging conversational space – are, on the face of it, prototypically shrewish behaviours. However, they are licensed and used, from the Elizabethan establishment's perspective, for socially approved purposes. It is also worth noting that Petruchio enables Katherina to gain the revenge on Bianca which she sought earlier in the play (II.i.36). Bianca has to submit to a 'telling-off' from Katherina. Not surprisingly, Katherina emphasizes the obedience owed to a husband, because this highlights Bianca's faults.

My general argument then is that Katherina has had not to suppress aspects of her behaviour, but to adapt them to new contexts. Petruchio provides her with opportunities where she can legitimately, from the Elizabethan establishment's point of view, unleash the more spirited side of her personality. In effect, Katherina's 'shrewish' behaviour is now context-sensitive and not merely general, the mode of behaviour of a category-based character. For example, whereas a character based on the shrew schema will exercise power over all, Katherina now accepts the superior power of some, but wields power over others. She is a 'personalized' or round character, based on piecemeal integration.

5 Conclusion

In this article I have outlined an interdisciplinary approach to characterization, which draws in particular upon theories from social and cognitive psychology. This approach attempts to explain how characters are constructed in the interaction between readers and play texts. It goes beyond pragmatic analyses of plays, which hitherto have been used within stylistics to account for characterization in plays (see, for example, Culpeper et al., 1998; Herman, 1995). For example, these pragmatic analyses do not explain what a coherent impression of character might be, or the ways in which a character impression might change. I have demonstrated how my approach works in relation to Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Here, my method was to focus on the text and, within the constraints of the theories I introduced, to generate hypotheses about the construction of character, hypotheses which account for the available textual evidence in a systematic and parsimonious way. In addition, I have shown how my cognitive approach to characterization accommodates and accounts for various characterization concepts postulated in literary theory, in particular the notion of flat and round characters.

My analysis, focusing on an Elizabethan perspective, has demonstrated that Katherina is not a character of farce. She is not a flat character, a caricature, or lacking in 'the physical, emotional, intellectual, and moral sensitivity that we

think of as "normal"'' (Heilman, 1972: 324). At the end of the play, she ends up neither a broken woman nor simply a shrew. In fact, in order to sustain one of these interpretations, literary critics have had to turn a blind eye to some of her characteristics, or weakly dismiss them as 'out of character':

> [Katherina] is intolerably curst and shrewd and froward so beyond all measure, that although her extravagant bullying of her sister and of her teacher is within her physical compass, her complaint that her father is committing her to an old maid's life, and her lament that she will sit and weep until she finds some occasion of revenge, seem widely out of character. Even more disconcerting are the tears she sheds because she anticipates that Petruchio will fail her at the church, or will surely overlook some item or other of the arrangements ordained by fashionable propriety for a bourgeois wedding.
>
> (Charlton, 1938: 97)

Contrary to Tillyard (1965: 80), I would argue that Shakespeare has not simply created an inconsistent character, but created the potential for the piecemeal integration of these inconsistencies. In the final act, the audience is shown how elements of two diverse Elizabethan social schemata – the shrew schema and the contrasting concept of the socially ideal woman – may be brought together in Katherina. Shakespeare creates the conditions for a degree of 'schema refreshment' (Cook, 1994). Following Semino's (1997) partial redefinition of schema refreshment, schema refreshment may involve not only changing our schemata, as Cook (1994) argues, but also stretching or challenging them, or 'connecting normally separate schemata in unusual ways' (Semino, 1997: 251). Shakespeare created the conditions in which normally separate schemata might be connected. Indeed, this is Shakespeare's contribution to the vibrant debate at the time about the role of women in society. It might be noted that Shakespeare does not challenge the social order, but appears strongly conservative in showing the reconciliation of disparate personality elements *within* the established order. My portrayal of Katherina's characterization is entirely consistent with Belsey's (1985) discussion of the contest in art and literature over new and old meanings of the family, and hence of women, in the 16th and 17th centuries. On the one hand, there was the old view of the dynastic family, where the model woman was like the character Griselda, obedient, patient, uncomplaining and silent. This is reminiscent of the Bianca of the first third of *The Taming of the Shew*. The opposite of this model woman is the shrew schema. On the other hand, there was marriage viewed as an affective relationship, where the woman was in partnership with her husband. This is reminiscent of Katherina at the end of the play. However, this newer model is not necessarily less patriarchal: 'Patriarchy reasserts itself within the affective family. Perhaps the marriage of true minds had never implied equality for women, but only … a new kind of pliability' (1985: 177).[20] Importantly, Belsey argues that the contest between the old and the new

… momentarily unfixed the existing system of [sexual] differences, and in the gap thus produced we are able to glimpse a possible meaning, an image of a mode of being, which is not asexual, nor bisexual, but which disrupts the system of differences on which sexual stereotyping depends.

(1985: 190)

This disruption of sexual stereotyping is part of the schema refreshment which I have attributed to Katherina's characterization.

And what about the 'obedience' speech? My analysis of other parts of the play precludes both the interpretation that it is 'genuine' and that it is ironic, since the former implies that Katherina has been broken and the latter implies that she remains unbroken. Both these views are overly simplistic and do not account for other evidence in the play. However, the third interpretation, that the irony is in the context, is still viable. What I referred to as the compromise interpretation, the idea that Katherina recognizes the game Petruchio has been playing and joins him in it, is a plausible interpretation. She agrees to let him take the lead, and in return he channels the more spirited aspects of her personality into, from the Elizabethan establishment's perspective, legitimate areas, and together they play tricks on the other characters.

I make no claim that my reading of Katherina's characterization is the only one possible. I have stressed at a number of points the relativity of schemata. My claim is rather that, given a certain set of schemata, my characterization theory explains how certain interpretative conclusions come about in the interaction between the text and the reader.

Acknowledgement

Notes

1   A more comprehensive description of my approach to characterization can be found in Culpeper (forthcoming).
2   My analysis will be based on the text of the play, not a performance of it. Of course, as Short (e.g. 1998) has argued, there is a very close connection between text and performance.
3   There is some evidence to suggest that people do not always activate the full network (including attitudinal links) of which a particular category is a part, especially in conditions when they are experiencing high cognitive loads (Gilbert and Hixon, 1991).
4   The assumption behind mainstream work in social cognition is that cognitive theories such as prototype theory and schema theory, which have been largely developed in relation to non-social phenomena, can be applied to *social* information (Brewer, 1988: 4; Cantor and Mischel, 1979: 8; Fiske and Neuberg, 1990: 13; Rumelhart, 1984: 185).
5   See, for example, the entries in the dictionary of 'Womanwords' (Mills, 1991).
6   The frequency of 'shrew' in existing historical corpora (e.g. the Helsinki Corpus) is too slight to allow conclusions to be drawn. Hence, I was forced to rely on other sources.

7   De Bruyn (1979: 138) points out that the shrew-tamers 'were few and their taming had little
    effect upon future literature'.
8   This dictionary is primarily based on the first edition of the *COBUILD* corpus of English,
    compiled mainly from texts of the 1970s and 1980s, and thus in theory should reflect
    contemporary usage. However, some dictionary examples were made up, if no corpus example
    could be found, and this could be one of those rare examples.
9   All quotations from *The Taming of the Shrew* are taken from *The Arden Shakespeare*, edited by
    Morris (1981).
10 Evidence for these stereotypical associations can be found in Shepherd (1985) and de Bruyn
    (1979) (see also the references given in Newman, 1991: 53). However, it should be noted that the
    ideal of silence did not apply equally to the women of all social groups. In particular, it did not
    apply to a small courtly elite, for whom measured conversation was the ideal, rather than silence
    (Krontiris, 1992: 14–15).
11 'Humbly' occurs 61 times in Shakespeare. In 51 instances (representing 84 percent of the total) it
    occurs after the subject.
12 See, for example, Shepherd (1985: 26, 195), Belsey (1985: 172–3), Krontiris (1992: 7) and de
    Bruyn's (1979: Chapter 2) discussion of the concept of the 'good woman'.
13 Contrary to this negative pattern, Petruchio uses positive descriptive terms for Katherina
    throughout the play. However, in the first third of the play there are a number of factors which
    cast doubt on the truth of what he says. For example, Petruchio appears to be a fortune hunter:
    'Haply to wive and thrive as best I may' (I.ii.55); 'wealth is the burden of my wooing dance'
    (I.ii.67). Saying positive things about Katherina, and thereby demonstrating his love for her,
    would support his goal of obtaining Baptista's permission to marry Katherina.
14 De Bruyn (1979) does not consider sub-types of the ideal of the 'good woman', although they
    clearly existed. For example, Krontiris points out that a small elite group of courtly women had 'a
    slightly different version of feminine conduct' (1992: 14).
15 For an analysis of this first encounter, see Cooper (1981).
16 'Fool' could have a favourable sense in Shakespeare's period.
17 The volitional use of 'will', as opposed to predictive, was much more common in the Early
    Modern English period (Traugott, 1972: 116).
18 Coriolanus' comments (III.i.86–112) on Sicinius' use of 'shall' make clear the power attributed
    to that word.
19 Bean's (1980) interpretation of the play as a romantic comedy relies upon the idea that Katherina
    falls in love with Petruchio, and that this brings about her change of character.
20 See also Bean (1980) for marriage seen as both a partnership and a hierarchy.

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