

Contrasting Desire:

*Shakespeare's Subversion of the Petrarchan Idealism in
10 Things I Hate About You*

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10 Things I Hate About You

- 1999, a romantic comedy directed by Gil Junger
- Kat Straford and Patrick Verona, Bianca and Cameron
- Based on Shakespeare's play *The Taming of the Shrew* (1594)
- Also → echoes of Anti-Petrarchism in Shakespeare's sonnets

The “Gaslighting” of the Shrew

- One of Shakespeare’s most controversial plays
- Petruchio and his taming of the disobedient Katherine
- Misogynist or subversive?
- “[D]ue to this genre’s [romantic comedy] emphasis on a romantic resolution, when *Taming* is adapted within its generic formula, such adaptations typically fail to provide a feminist rehabilitation of Shakespeare’s play.” (Hixon)

The Petrarchan Sonnet

- An octave and a sestet
(two quatrains and two tercets)
- Rhyme scheme: ABBA ABBBA CCD CCD
- Centered on Laura and unrequited love
- She is idealized: fair and angelic, the epitome of beauty and goodness
- Neo-Platonism

Erano i capei d'oro a l'aura sparsi

She let **her gold hair** scatter in the breeze
that twined it in **a thousand sweet knots**,
and wavering light, **beyond measure**, would burn
in **those beautiful eyes**, which are now so dim:

and it seemed to me her face wore the colour
of pity, I do not know whether false or true:
I who had the lure of love in my breast,
what wonder if I suddenly caught fire?

Her way of moving was **no mortal thing**,
but **of angelic form**: and her speech
rang **higher than a mere human voice**.

A celestial spirit, a living sun
was what I saw: and if she is not such now,
the wound's not healed, although the bow is slack.



Shakespeare's Sonnets

1–17

- Addressing a **young man**, urging him to have children to pass his beauty to future generations
- “Procreation sonnets”

18–126

- **Destructive power of time**, nothing is permanent
- Only love and poetry can counter the cruel passing of time

127–152

- To the poet's **Mistress**, the “Dark Lady”
- She is alluring, sensuous, and promiscuous
- Other topics: a love triangle, moral insight on lust, rival poet

The last two sonnets (**153** and **154**) are love allegories, based on a Greek poem about Cupid.



The Shakespearean Sonnet

- Three quatrains and a couplet
- Rhyme scheme: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG
- The Dark Lady
- A real, natural woman who is still beautiful and loved
- Anti-Petrarchism

Sonnet 130

My mistress' eyes are **nothing like the sun;**
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then **her breasts are dun;**
If hairs be wires, **black wires grow on her head.**

I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But **no such roses** see I **in her cheeks;**
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the **breath** that from my mistress **reeks.**

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That **music hath a far more pleasing sound;**
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, **treads** on the ground.

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

Anti-Petrarchism in 10 Things I Hate About You



*Cameron as the Petrarchan Lover and the “Ideal”
Bianca*



Kat Stratford as the “Dark Lady”



True Love, Devoid of Idealism



The Final Couplet



I hate the way you talk to me,
and the way you cut your hair.
I hate the way you drive my car,
I hate it when you stare.

I hate your big dumb combat boots
and the way you read my mind.
I hate you so much it makes me sick,
it even makes me rhyme.

I hate the way you're always right,
I hate it when you lie.
I hate it when you make me laugh,
even worse when you make me cry.

I hate it when you're not around,
and the fact that you didn't call.

**But mostly I hate the way I don't hate you,
not even close not even a little bit not even at all.**

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