

NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY – LOUAIZE

SUBJECTHOOD, INDIVIDUALITY, AND IRONY:  
CONTINGENCIES OF SELFHOOD IN  
SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

by  
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## Introduction

My tongue will tell the anger of my heart,  
Or else my heart concealing it will break,  
And rather than it shall I will be free  
Even to the uttermost as I please in words.

*The Taming of the Shrew*, 4.3.77–80

What does William Shakespeare mean by “free”? As modeled in the words of his infamous shrew, Katherine, this term incites deviance and brings disorder to the world in which she lives, a world where people search for one common context for human lives as they cling to the concept of constructed “facts” and capitalized “truths.” Truth, according to Richard Rorty and others like Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, “cannot be out there—cannot exist independently of the human mind—because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there” (Rorty, *Contingency* 5). Rorty argues that it is through the sheer contingency of our language, our selfhood, and our community that we are able to bring the world into existence and create relative truths. His view, which is a defining feature of postmodernism, implies that the world is a plateau of alternative metaphors at our disposal, a plateau out of which diverse vocabularies and metaphors can be selected to be used as tools to pragmatically describe oneself and, in turn, to create one’s mind. Katherine’s irresistible claim for freedom by means of her “tongue” allows her to not only resist the authority of individual men, namely her father Baptista and her husband Petruccio, but also patriarchal institutions that prescribe and circumscribe what women can and cannot do. By choosing to pragmatically use the only weapon she possesses in the face of injustice, in this case misogyny, Katherine refuses to actualize Plato’s “true world” (Rorty 27)—the “world of the enlightened, the world of those who ascend to the sun, of those who understand timeless unchanging truths” (Blackburn, ch.

4)—and to speak its established language. Katherine, therefore, embodies what Rorty refers to as an “ironist”—a person who has the ability to de-divinize both the world and the self and to view the pragmatic construction of her own language as “one more vocabulary, one more human project, one person’s chosen metaphoric” (Rorty, *Contingency* 39). In light of this perspective, *The Taming of the Shrew*, in addition to other Shakespearean plays, include postmodern moments that will be explored in this thesis in an attempt to portray Shakespeare as a postmodern writer *avant-la-lettre*, for he dealt with the uncertainties of language in ways that prefigure Rorty’s irony of the constructed nature of our vocabularies as they are governed by pragmatic contingencies.

Striving to gain some control of her life and to reconstruct her individualism, Katherine subjectively uses the word “I,” a word that has become the focus of the most intense debates in cultural studies. This fundamental issue of identity, which Jacques Derrida refers to as the “question of the subject and the living ‘who’” (interview 112), has been endlessly raised by poets, writers, philosophers, and psychiatrists in general. Difficulties have been involved in charting the historical dimension of abstract terms such as *autonomy*, *individuality*, *selfhood*, *subjectivity*, and of course *personality*. Sociological theoreticians and cultural historians have found it “is not an easy task [...] because it has been tried before” (Luhmann 313). How can we then tell the story or construct a history of the self? The history of selfhood can be presented as the biography of a movement towards authenticity and individuality, a goal that can be achieved by surmounting adversity in the process. Over the centuries, people have attempted to achieve autonomy in order “to gain greater happiness, deeper fulfillment, liberation from fetters or restraints, better relations with other people, or ways to achieve power over them” (Seigel 3). The fulfillment of this cherished ideal of being the author of one’s self, or as Polonius in *Hamlet* puts in when advising his son Laertes to, above all things, “to thine own self be true”

(1.4.78), implies character-building, typically through “emancipation from external constraints like religious and political persecution, or the fetters of hidebound convention” (Porter 1). Selfhood, therefore, shapes the personal existence and relations of social creatures with those whose lives they may share.

Tracing the history of *selfhood* along the etymological chain in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one can find the prefix formation *self-* defined in the following manner:

*Self-* first appears as a living formative element about the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> cent., probably to a great extent by imitation or reminiscence of Greek compounds in *αὐτο-*. The number of *self-*compounds was greatly augmented towards the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> cent., when many new words appeared in theological and philosophical writing, some of which had apparently a restricted currency of about 50 years (e.g. 1645–1690), while a large proportion became established and have a continuous history down to the present time.

In accordance with this definition, the grammatical emergence of *self-* “as a living formative element” during the sixteenth century and its culmination during the seventeenth century suggests the period during which the modern idea of ipseity—the quality of possessing a self or an individual identity—emerged. Exploring the changing notions of selfhood from a historical perspective will inform the major part of my investigation.

Etymologically, the term *subject* comes from the Latin *subjectus*, meaning a person or thing lying below or under (from the Latin preposition *sub*). Thus, in ancient and medieval usage, the term referred to a person owing obedience to or being under control or dominion of another, specifically a government or ruler. In politics, according to Jerrold Seigel, the subject “‘lay beneath’ some constituted authority, such as a king or prince, and was therefore at least in some degree passive” (15). It was not until the seventeenth century that the term *subject* began



to have special reference to humans as conscious beings, whereby the self was regarded as “an active agent, a thinker of thoughts, doer of deeds, or bearer of properties” (Seigel 14). Although the difference is recognized in this thesis, I will denote the notion of the active subject through the use of the term *individual*, as opposed to the term *subject* that will be used to signify both overt and covert passivity and submissiveness.

The medieval period, which lasted generally from the fifth until the fourteenth century before the beginning of the Modern Age with the Renaissance, was regarded as the age of sovereignty over the subject: limited, controlled, punished bodily and morally—a docile disciplined entity whose existence was charted by Michel Foucault as being under monarchical hegemony. It is important to note that while the concept of the pre-modern might be problematic—associated with persecution and intolerance on the one hand, and thought to be a nineteenth-century European invention with a purpose to justify the underpinnings of modernity as pure rationality and progress on the other—my use of the term *pre-modern* justifies the need for periodization in this thesis to simplify the dissociation between the concepts of subjecthood (pre-modern), individuality (modern), and irony (postmodern). In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault writes that, traditionally, domination was visibly and directly exercised on the body; it was “what was seen, what was shown, and what was manifested” (187). He demonstrated this in his examination of public torture and execution as a method deployed by the sovereign to express his power—a pre-modern “mechanism of power” that viewed crime in a military schema. In other words, any sign of disobedience or rebellion against the rules and obligations that this “super-power” presented as “personal bonds” was considered an act of hostility and, therefore, had to be suppressed by exerting itself directly and visibly on the subject’s body (57)—a place “where the vengeance of the sovereign was applied, the anchoring point for a manifestation of power, an opportunity of affirming the dissymmetry

of forces” (55). This, in turn, expressed the sovereign’s omnipotence as well as the people’s unremitting subjecthood and adherence to discipline.

With the dawn of the Renaissance and the re-discovery of humanism, the subject came to be strongly marked by characteristics that defined him or her as a unique individual. This movement continued until after Shakespeare with the Age of Enlightenment and culminated in Romanticism where the “I” was the center of the creative process (Lynch and Stillinger 15) and, as with Rousseau, of the social contract. The Renaissance, a period from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century that bridged the late medieval period and the early modern age, started as a cultural movement with its own version of humanism that resulted in one of its greatest inventions: the modern individual (Porter 2–3). The name *Renaissance* was given to this period by nineteenth-century critics and historians because they associated it with “an outburst of creativity attributed to a ‘rebirth’ or revival of Latin and, especially, of Greek learning and literature” (David and Simpson 1). Alfred David and James Simpson noted in their essay “The Middle Ages to ca. 1485” that this idea of a Renaissance or rebirth “implies something dormant or lacking in the preceding era” (1). What was dormant during the medieval period is what Stephen Greenblatt, one of the most influential critics of Renaissance literature, referred to as “self-fashioning” (*Self-fashioning* 1) and what the Swiss cultural historian Jacob Burckhardt called individualism and “the discovery of man” (156). In the medieval era, according to Burckhardt, man was aware of himself only as a member of a group—a subject; this however changed in the Renaissance when “[m]an became a spiritual *individual*, and recognized himself as such” (61). Burckhardt called this new individual the “Universal Man” or “Renaissance Man”—a man he portrayed as someone “having awareness of himself,” thus giving him the “freedom to develop and create” and to exercise “his individualism in various areas of his life”

(xi). Burckhardt's contrast between the medieval period and the Renaissance substantiates the historical borderline that separates conditioned subjects and self-defining individuals.

Unlike the visual arts and architectural Renaissance in Italy, the Renaissance in England, known as humanism, came in the spiritual and intellectual orientation and displacement of medieval values (Greenblatt and Logan 488). The Renaissance rejected "the theological dogma of man as a loathsome sinner required to abase himself before God, and began to take delight in man himself, the apex of creation, the master of nature, the wonder of the world" (Porter 3). Both movements unleashed new and enormous historical, social, economic, and political forces that heightened the sense of self. The Renaissance, as indicated again by Porter, "signals the truly decisive breakthrough for individualism" (2) and radiates a new sense of "personal singularity, a fearless impulse to explore that distinctiveness" (3). In this context, and more importantly for the purposes of this study, such "distinctiveness" is not only manifested in Katherine's autonomy and subjective use of the word "I," but also in the individual rationality of three other Shakespearean characters, namely Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, as well as Romeo and Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*.

The Age of Enlightenment, an eighteenth-century philosophical movement that dominated the world of ideas after the Renaissance, came to advance ideas such as individual liberty and religious tolerance. Unlike medieval societies that "rationalized the maintenance of order in terms of Christianity and jurisprudence" (R. Smith 50) and that pictured man as an Adam "created by God with all his faculties fully implanted" (Porter 4), this modern society acknowledged the reality of individuals and favored the model of the self-made man, transforming self-centeredness (formerly a sin) into its *raison d'être*. Romanticism, a literary, artistic, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the eighteenth century, consequently followed the Enlightenment as a reaction to its aristocratic social and

political norms, to the Industrial Revolution, and to the scientific rationalization of nature. Like American Transcendentalism, Romanticism privileged emotion over reason as well as individual freedom of expression over the restraints of tradition. Romanticism, thus, elevated individualism on to an even higher plane and gave prominence to dynamic notions of consciousness (Porter 5–6). Romantic social critics complained about the alienation of the urban man and insisted that “communing with nature was the way to get back in touch with one’s self” (Porter 6) and to progress towards perfectibility. As a result, Romanticism idealized outsiders such as Bohemian artists, Byronic rebels, and social victims, and depicted each of their lives as a journey of self-discovery. While Romanticism will not be addressed later, it is important to note that, following the two consecutive periods of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, it also helped sustain the age of modernity and reinforce its individualistic and agential attributes.

Historians of Western philosophy have often identified René Descartes’ proposition *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am)—which forms the basis of his book *Discourse on Method and Meditations*—as the “point of departure from which to explore the early modern self” (R. Smith 51). Whereas this initial assumption renders the seventeenth century “the point from which rationality could serve as the foundation-stone of the self-determining individual” (Porter 3–4), the previously-discussed chronological span on the reconstruction of selfhood manifests the modern idea of the self (individuality) to have stretched from the Renaissance (early fourteenth century) until after Shakespeare with Descartes (early seventeenth century), the Enlightenment (early eighteenth century), and Romanticism (late eighteenth century).

Traditionally, as inferred by most Shakespearean critics, it is at the intersection point that conjoins the medieval period (pre-modernity) and the Renaissance (modernity) that Shakespeare stands; it is the Shakespearean era “which is the threshold of modernity” (Wilson

166). Whereas some Shakespearean studies define Shakespeare as “barbarous,” “Gothic,” and belonging to the “former Age” (Grady, “Renewing Modernity” 269), others regard him as one of the earliest participants in and critics of modernity and beyond. Nevertheless, choosing to adopt the definition of *modernity* in its classical sense—which refers to qualities or conditions that relate “to the present and recent times, as opposed to the remote past” (*OED Online*)—incarcerates Shakespeare at that particular time and prohibits him from being separated off from present concerns. Charles Baudelaire, however, who is credited with coining the term “modernity” (*modernité*) in his 1864 essay “The Painter of Modern Life,” defines modernity as “the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent” (13)—a definition which blurs that rigid opposition between old and new, this separation between pre-modernity, modernity, and postmodernity. This, in turn, entitles Shakespeare to become “a participant in long-term modernity” (Grady, “Renewing Modernity” 278), rendering him not only a transitional figure in early modern culture but also a candidate of proto-postmodernism mainly because of what can be seen as postmodern moments that, as will be demonstrated, have been adopted by some of his modern works.

The most important changes that took place during the Renaissance, according to Hugh Grady, are the construction of a capitalist economy, the development of nation-states, and the reconstruction of concepts such as of the family, privacy, and the self. All of these, he writes, “were under way in the age of Shakespeare, and they compose a cluster of issues crucial to understanding sixteenth-century contributions to modernity” (“Renewing Modernity” 273). Grady further supports and emphasizes this claim in his critical study *Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Montaigne: Power and Subjectivity from Richard II to Hamlet*, in which he recognizes Shakespeare “as a figure who has achieved his ultimate cultural centrality precisely because he was one of the first and most original enunciators of modernity and its peculiar

conception of the modern subject” (21). More important to this thesis, ideologies of individualism throughout modernity and “since the age of Shakespeare at least” have “entered subjectivity through socialization, sometimes at a very deep, identity-connected level” (Grady, *Power and Subjectivity* 22). This, in turn, highlights Shakespeare’s theorization of social and cultural transitions with respect to the self that autonomously attempts to fit into the world it has been placed in.

Amidst this historical liberation of selfhood, the power of capital and of discourses and ideologies worked to again capture this emerging individual. Various interpretations of self and society “in the constitution of identity and subjectivity” have been the highlight of discussions in poststructuralist and especially Foucauldian theory (Grady, “Renewing Modernity” 277). The traditional visible manifestation of power, according to Foucault, gradually metamorphosed as a result of the modern age which produced discourses distinctive to it—a shift that this thesis will exhibit by observing the subjecthood of all four Shakespearean characters: Shylock, Romeo, Juliet, and Katherine, and their transformation (if any) into modern individuals. In opposition to power in the pre-modern epoch, disciplinary power in the modern epoch was exercised through its invisibility and “maintain[ed] the disciplined individual in his subjection” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 187)—within a grid of knowledge and power that “*produces* specific effects rather than *repressing* individual victims” (Harris 176). In *Power/Knowledge*, Foucault observes that “the individual is not the vis-à-vis of power; it is, I believe, one of its prime effects” (98). This insidious form of advanced power is an omnipresent force that circulates impersonally through discourse rather than being owned by a dominant class, and therefore gives the individual the illusion of no longer being the direct subject of power. This force of repression is embodied in what the Marxist classics have called the state apparatus—an apparatus or tool by which the ruling class solidifies its hold on power.

In Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel's *The Communist Manifesto* and in Marx's "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," the state is explicitly apprehended as a repressive apparatus. In Marxist thought, however, social change is crucial, for it was "largely a product of contradictions within the material realms of social organization and economic production" (Harris 144). Marx argued that the feudal system during the Renaissance collapsed under the influence of its internal contradictions, which in turn gave rise to capitalism and provided people with an active role to play in bringing about change. He observed that the new individuals were free to reorient their subjectivity, to reconstruct their world, and to "make their own history," but not "as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past" (Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire" 146). In other words, such individuals were still bound to strategies and traditions of subjecthood, a collective will that had been generated within a configuration of Marx's repressive state apparatus and what Louis Althusser later called the "ideological state apparatus." Given this interpretation, the autonomous incorporation of power and its victimizing effect on modern individuals will be explored via Shylock's monologue on humanity, Romeo and Juliet's rebellion, and Katherine's perceived shrewishness.

While Foucault regards discipline as the calculated economy that "makes" individuals by regarding them "both as objects and as instruments of its exercise" (*Discipline and Punish* 170), Althusser views the construction of the self as a mixture of two kinds of state apparatuses: the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), whereby the former "function[s] massively and predominantly *by repression* (including physical repression)" while the latter does so "by ideology" (244). His particular interest, however, is in the functioning of the various ISAs that consist of a "number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized

institutions” (243) such as religious organizations, educational institutions, family, etc. These “multiple, distinct, [and] relatively autonomous” ISAs (Althusser 140), which are of major significance to my thesis, propagate ideological practices that inculcate in individuals their values, desires, intentions, judgments, and preferences, imposing on them the role and form of a subject—the role of a Jew in Shylock’s case (religion), of victimized lovers in Romeo and Juliet’s (family), and of a young “maiden-in-waiting” in Katherine’s (gender). Althusser refers to this process of ideological subjecthood as “interpellation” and claims that “ideology hails or interpellates individuals as subjects” (265). That is, by gradually imposing indirect, repetitive body tasks on individuals, a system of power is able to bend people’s behavior, crystallizing all living units “into well-organized complexes” (Adorno and Horkheimer 32).

The repressive relationship between power and knowledge that seems to have dissipated with the onset of modernity was now fed and re-constructed by repressive ideologies “that serve to blind us to this fact in order to keep us subservient to the ruling power system” (Tyson 57) by passing themselves off as natural ways of seeing the world—by “transform[ing] instituted difference into natural distinction” (Bourdieu 58). This spontaneity that is “internalized as a second nature” is reflected in Pierre Bourdieu’s *habitus*, which are practices and representations produced by each *subject* “without consciousness or will” (56). According to Bourdieu’s *The Logic of Practice*, *habitus* are “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” that are objectively regulated “without being in any way the product of obedience to rules,” and that can be “collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor” (53). That is, it is the objective production and re-production of established ideological practices that endows the individual with the property of being a self-conscious and responsible agent whose actions can be justified by his or her own thoughts and beliefs. Like Althusser,



Bourdieu implies that, paradoxically, it is the relative autonomy of these natural practices that transforms free autonomous individuals (modernity) back into subservient subjects (pre-modernity), who are confined in their own discursive webs that have constructed them and their identity.

With postmodernism, existing ideologies have been scrutinized and problematized and, as Richard Rorty, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, and other poststructuralist theorists have argued, language is a tool whereby different social and ideological constructions operate on the individual. While Foucault, Althusser, and Bourdieu see Truth as a social construct that is realized and constantly re-legitimized by respectively discipline, constructed ideologies, and culturally-specific *habitus*, Rorty believes it to be a construction that is “made rather than found” (*Contingency* 3) and is contingently restructured by the power of language. According to Rorty, the world cannot exist on its own, independently of the human mind and language, “unaided by the describing activities of human beings” (*Contingency* 5). In *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Rorty refutes the “legacy of an age,” prior to that of the Enlightenment, in which the world was believed to have been created by a “being who had a language of his own” (5). Rorty writes that the “truth is a property of linguistic entities,” not of something outside of it (7). In other words, the Truths that are projected by the fields of religion, philosophy, sociology, science, politics, and so on are de-divinized by Rorty who argues that since vocabularies are made by human beings—and are the only tools that can be used to describe truths—then truths are products of human contingencies that expire and change by natural selection based on the requirements of the time. In view of Rorty’s postmodern contingent theory, my thesis will evaluate how four Shakespearean characters either fail or succeed in de-centering the constructed truths that formulate their existence.

Power in its postmodern view—as opposed to its pre-modern view as a holistic archeology with a clear-cut center (Truth, God, Reality, etc.) that the dominated subject incessantly tries to grasp on an ascending trajectory—has descended to the level of sociocultural entities, only to become dispersed into multiple centers and islands of truths and, hence, become invisibly contingent. This new covert form of domination exercises exploitation by limiting “the opposition between rational and irrational forms of persuasion to the interior of a language game” (Rorty, *Contingency* 47). This theory, in fact, supports Althusser and Bourdieu’s interpretation of repressive ideologies and constructed everyday practices and their influence on human beings whom they believe to have lost their “capacity to nourish true freedom and individuality—as well as the ability to represent the real condition of existence” (During 31). Rorty explains that while some social entities might “try to firm up the distinction” between persuasion and force with cases such as “brainwashing...and what Marxists call ‘false consciousness’” (*Contingency* 48), ironists will use their set final vocabularies pragmatically, not as a holistic medium but as a contingent tool, to mold their own constructions.

Manipulated by the various forms of domination, which could be social, cultural, religious, political, etc., an ironist is able to recognize the rules of the game and to realize how the different contingencies effectively work together. By using the vocabularies of knowledge that are present, ironists create personalized contingencies to generate their own sets of vocabularies. This tactic of resistance is initiated by the “equipment[s]” that are abundantly instituted in language and that are used “to construct our own private vocabulary of moral deliberation” (Rorty, *Contingency* 32). In this case, users are able to actively write rather than passively read, selecting their own diversions and actualizing them secretively. Ironists are in a position called “meta-stable” because of their constant awareness of “the contingency and

fragility of their final vocabularies, and thus of their selves” (Rorty, *Contingency* 73–74). This critical attentiveness is what Rorty believes does form a liberal society, where no language is regarded as right or wrong, and where the most pragmatic vocabularies reasonably prevail.

This thesis will use the postmodern theoretical approaches mentioned above in order to provide a comprehensive discussion of the contingent movement and transformation of the idea of the Self in three Shakespearean plays, namely *The Merchant of Venice*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. It will do so by examining how four Shakespearean characters, specifically Shylock, Romeo, Juliet, and Katherine, endeavor to pragmatically use their society’s final vocabularies in order to re-describe and, in turn, re-create themselves and their own existence. While not all four characters succeed in systematically ascending the trajectory that begins at subjecthood, moves up to individuality, and culminates at irony, I will inscribe the contingency of their selfhood as positioned across the three eras of pre-modernity, modernity, and postmodernity. By so doing, my thesis will situate and analyze these characters’ self-transformation from a postmodern perspective and, because of some potential and other more substantial postmodern moments in each corresponding play, manifest Shakespeare’s prescience and proto-postmodern sensibilities.

In the first chapter of my thesis, I will show how the visible manifestation of power in the pre-modern era, which reaffirmed the sovereign’s supremacy and solidified the people’s subjecthood, took a more subtle discursive form with the start of modernity. The monarch’s discernible power was progressively incorporated within the ideological apparatus of power relations and was substituted with an omnipresent Absolute Knowledge or established Truth—God or Religion in the case of Shylock, the subjected Jew in *The Merchant of Venice*. Whereas Chapter 1 will not deal with postmodernism per se, it will illustrate how Shakespeare endows Shylock, a victim of racial intolerance and stereotypical abuse in early modern Venice, with a

great sense of selfhood and eloquence and with the determination to challenge the status quo and achieve individuality on an ascending trajectory—one that he fails to mount as his desire for revenge pulls him backwards toward subjecthood. In the second chapter, I will illustrate the modern discovery of the individual, or what has come to be recognized as the Renaissance Man, who emerged as a result of his or her rebellious dissatisfaction with the old system that regarded him or her as nothing more than a member of a general category or collective. In an attempt to escape their subjection—the institutional and ideological forces of patriarchy and the all-pervasive, disruptive nature of the Montague-Capulet feud—Romeo and Juliet adopt the necessary attitude of modernity and begin to show signs of advancement with their pragmatic and meditative use of language as they venture up the trajectory en route to individuality, and potentially to irony. Chapter 2 will trace the victimized lovers’ unremitting rebellion against the Veronese social formations and their battle with ideology’s persistent grasp that oscillates them back and forth, just below the threshold of individuality, before they ultimately choose to die and emerge together as virtual individuals beyond the discursive strictures of their official culture. Chapter 3 will tackle the third and last historical period at which this thesis culminates; that is, postmodernism: a movement that is believed to have been brought into existence by way of deconstructing hierarchal binary oppositions and, in effect, by de-centering Western philosophy and the seemingly eternal nature of Truths—in this thesis, Patriarchy in *The Taming of the Shrew*. This chapter will track the postmodern tactics of resistance that Katherine, the young “maiden-in-waiting,” develops on her way up the trajectory of the self—one along which she first achieves individuality by cunningly voicing out her resistance as a subjected woman in a patriarchal society and, subsequently, attains irony after pragmatically using the language tools at hand in order to de-center the system and contingently re-construct her own selfhood.

## Chapter 1

### *The Merchant of Venice* and the Struggle of the Pre-modern Subject

When attempting to initiate a discourse on the notion of the subject, one realizes how difficult it is to take a specific stance on—or make particular assumptions about—subjectivity; one naturally endeavors to inquire about “the subject”—the main concern of this chapter. But how is it possible for an inquirer, who is always already a subject, to do so when he or she can only discover what their initial perspective allows? While objectively searching for the more ordinary meanings of the term *subject*, I found it has a very rich and diverse history in the West, making the *subject* as referent even more undefinable. Robert Strozier illustrates the elusiveness of this subject by comparing it to “the representations called ‘optical illusions’ that appeared on matchbook covers and other cultural ephemera in the past: a set of stacked boxes or an outline of a solid geometrical figure that, when focused on long enough, turned into a stack of a larger number of boxes or turned inside out” (9–10). It is perhaps for this reason that presenting a continuous history of the subject is a complex matter. I will, therefore, highlight particular historical moments and eras—the classical and medieval periods in this chapter, to be exact—during which subjectivity becomes a fundamental issue to western thought and, in this thesis, to Shakespearean representations.

In this chapter, I begin with the notion of the subject as foundation in what is called the Sophist notion of the originating Subject—a fundamental narrative of subjectivity that took shape in the ancient Mediterranean world. This Sophist theory of subjectivity, according to Strozier, is “the ground of most of the consequent notions of the subject in Western thought” (31). There are two notions of the subject in the Sophist narrative of origins: the capital-S subject (or simply the “Subject” as referred to by Althusser) and the lower-s subject. The first notion is the Subject-as-origin or the subject as a foundation of thought, action, and reaction. In

other words, it is the *a priori*, the given, the “pre-existent platform or basis” from which culture and knowledge is produced (Strozier 10)—it is the sovereign, the master, the dominant. Second is the notion of the subject as produced by culture; that is, as a result of enculturation—this subject is the subservient novice, the dominated, the subjected. In this Subject-subject relation, it is important that the difference is always maintained: “no system questions the *a priority* of the Subject and its difference from the subject” (Strozier 28)—it is always the master versus the novice. There is, however, one method whereby a novice may instinctively become *like* the master. According to the Greek Sophists, most prominently Isocrates, in order for subjects to speak well, they must undergo an ongoing process of enculturation by which they imitate the master orator—the Subject in whom capacities for excellence are given as complete and perfect—and adapt their acquired skills to new speaking situations. Such perception is clearly implied in Isocrates’ argument that the master “must in himself set such an example of oratory that the students who have taken form under him will, from the outset, show in their speaking a degree of grace and charm not found in others” (Isocrates 17–18)—a display of bravura characteristic of Sophistry and demonstrated by Shylock in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*.

In theories that focus on the originating Subject, it is rather inevitable to find a “conjoined subject-ed” (Strozier 12), which is a continuous feature of western thought—a correlation analogous to Rorty’s enculturation (or “interpellation” as will be denoted in Chapter 2) of individuals as subjects that “presupposes the ‘existence’ of a unique and central other Subject” (Rorty 195). Since Descartes, self-reflection has entailed a split subjectivity, whereby one version of the subject possesses the gaze (or the position of Absolute Knowledge) and the other is subjected to that gaze. These two forceful versions of the subject were manifested in the historical Sophist Subject-subject relation in which the former is the foundation and the

latter is formed by conforming to the discourse of that foundation. Both polar opposites along which subjectivity is conceived derive etymologically from the same Latin verb *subicio* (“to throw under, place under, cast below”): *subjectum* (“that which is spoken of, the foundation or subject of a proposition”) is that which has already been “place[d] under” in order to serve as the foundation, and *subjectus* (as noted in the Introduction) is “an inferior, subject” that is “laying under” something prior (*Lewis and Short’s Latin-English Lexicon*). While the Sophist Subject is non-receptive—meaning it is only *subjectum* and never *subjectus*—the imitative Sophist subject may be both; that is, within and formed by an already established discourse, and at the same time outside and with “the (Subjective) potential to divert the process” (Strozier 28) by recognizing their subjection and working to change it.

From ancient times well into the modern age, the version that was most frequently used to refer to the political subject was strictly hierarchical—a visible and overt power relation between Subject and subject. This hierarchical difference, according to Strozier, is “the motive or productive force which drives the system” and must, therefore, be kept open (29–30). As mentioned earlier, all subjects (*subjectus*) possess an innate agential capacity to self-reflect, resist, and escape the system (*subjectum*). Actualizing this potential, however, is contingent upon the historical era in which the subjects lived. Before resistance was manipulatively suppressed by covert domination during the modern and postmodern eras, self-founding subjectivity was detectable by centered and hegemonic Subjects during the pre-modern era, and was openly subdued by means of corporal punishment or penal repression. Based on this visible manifestation of power relations, *subjectum* was applied to Subjects that were generically foundational, powerful, and authoritative, whereas *subjectus* pertained to those “‘brought under’ a disciplinary or cultural apparatus or ‘subjected to’ that regime” (Strozier 11).

Absolute power during the modern age of dispersed power relations is denied by Foucault for all subjects: the founding Subject, as well as subjects who might have a potential for resistance. His theories of discourse, contingent to modern societies, reinforce the theme of the “inside” and deny the position of the “outside” of power relations. When asked about an “absolutising power” and “whom and what” this power serves, Foucault answered: “It seems to me that power is ‘always already there,’ that one is never ‘outside’ it, that there are no ‘margins’ for those who break with the system to gambol in” (*Power/Knowledge* 141). According to his *History of Sexuality*, it was only after the seventeenth century that “the fact of living was no longer an inaccessible substrate that only emerged from time to time” for it passed into “knowledge’s control and power’s sphere of intervention” (142). His analysis mirrors his stance on the founding subject conveyed in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Foucault conceives this Subject as “[b]eyond time” (227), and that is because, prior to its discourse, it was unlocatable (in that it existed outside the system and exerted power from there). The Subject, however, got absorbed into knowledge and power after the classical age when power became so “co-extensive with the social body” that “spaces of primal liberty” vanished between “the meshes of the network” (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 142).

Foucault’s dismissal of the Subject and his theory of discourse which questions resistance at the social or political level of the modern age—especially at the level of the subject from the margins of the social structure (Bové 220–221)—renders others’ accusation of his monolithic determinism seemingly plausible. His indication that there is no need to focus on Subjects prior to the regime of power-knowledge, on power in subjects, or on “a binary structure with ‘dominators’ on one side and ‘dominated’ on the other” (*Power/Knowledge* 142) might give the impression that there is no Subject (*subjectum*) but rather subjects (*subjectus*). The unlocatable Subject that Foucault attempts to suppress, however, does in fact exist within



his writings—it exists in various forms, each contingent to the corresponding period in which it reigned and exercised ultimate power and authority. The first is a historical Subject that takes the form of the sovereign, in addition to the juridical Subject that takes the form of the law, the general intellectual, and so on. The notion of the historical Subject affects Foucault's conception of subjectivity and allows us to better comprehend the Subject-subject relation in his works, which will effectively be used in this chapter to scrutinize the power relations in which Shylock is caught.

In "Truth and Power," Foucault uses the sovereign as a historical precedent and claims that the sovereign, law, and prohibition "formed a system of representation of power which was extended during the subsequent era [the modern age] by theories of right" (*Power/Knowledge* 121). He observes those who exercise power (Subjects) and those who undergo it (subjects) as originating from the institution of monarchy in the medieval age. This shapes the first stage out of three stages of a historical narrative that he articulates in "Lives of Infamous Men" on the exercise of sovereign power, with the second stage occurring approximately between 1660 and 1760 (age of modernity)—a period that marks the "beginning" of political mechanism and social discourse, within which the distance and limit between Subject and subject is narrowed and the power of the sovereign is rendered arbitrary—and the third stage taking place afterwards (modernity to postmodernity)—a period whereby political power is inserted into everyday life, or as Foucault puts it: "the bringing of everyday life into discourse" (*Power, Truth, Strategy* 84). During the first stage, on which this chapter focuses, Foucault emphasizes the political aspect of power—mainly addressed in *Discipline and Punish*—that signifies the external Sovereign-subject power relation in the classical age.

In contrast to Foucault's modern conception of power as invisible, in the sense that it is neither "located at—[n]or emanating from—a given point" but is dispersed in a "cluster of

relations” (*Power/Knowledge* 198), power in the pre-modern traditional way is conceived as possessed by a free subject outside of these relations. In the first two chapters of *Discipline and Punish*, the subject during the classical era is conceived as existing prior to the Subject-subject power relation, which is sustained by the rituals of punishment. In other words, it is not only the Subject who exists “outside” that power relation, but also the subjected—at least until that “offending subject is fixed by the withering gaze of power of the sovereign” (Strozier 59). According to this tradition, which emphasizes the separation of and dissymmetry between sovereign and subject, the sovereign is evidently a prior Subject that possesses the power of the outside. This Subject is envisaged as the author of the law—a law that represents a discourse of proscription to which no ordinary subject can be external, for they are fixed by “the gaze of power and the explosion of its wrath” (*Power, Truth, Strategy* 81), fixed by the objectifying gaze of which the sovereign is solely capable.

In the pre-modern era, more specifically the classical age, the power of life and death was conditioned by the defense of the sovereign and his survival. This legitimate privilege, which separated the sovereign from his subjects and enforced the dissymmetrical perspective between them, generated a discourse of power that “engender[ed] monsters” of criminality (*Power, Truth, Strategy* 83), as Shylock himself and his one pound of flesh will be guilty of. Foucault traces the nature of this discourse back to the “ancient *patria potestas*” (paternal power) that granted the father of the Roman family “the right to ‘dispose’ of the life of his children and slaves”—the life he had given them (*History of Sexuality* 135). This absolute and unconditional way in which the power of the sovereign over his subjects was exercised diminished significantly by the classical age. Power, however, retained its direct and visible manifestation on the criminal’s body only when it came to rising up against the sovereign and transgressing his proscriptive laws. When crime attacks the law, it “attacks [the sovereign]

personally, since the law represents the will of the sovereign” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 47). As punishment, the offender or “enemy of the prince” would be put to death after enduring the political ritual of public torture or execution, which attests to and guarantees the “infinite power of the sovereign” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 50).

The power possessed by the Subject in the classical age was employed in public torture and executions—an implementation that embodies the presence of that Subject, even in his absence. Public torture, therefore, was “a practice of terror” that did not re-establish justice, but that re-activated the sovereign’s power whenever it was jeopardized; it was through the body of the offender that everyone else was made aware of the “unrestrained presence of the sovereign” (Strozier 60). In other words, the sovereign’s prerogative power to directly “dispose” of life when the crime attacked his very existence consequently resulted in the Subject’s exertion of the power of life and death over the subjected by indirectly “expos[ing] their life” (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 135). The sovereign Subject, with his power, “exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing” (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 136). Foucault depicts this juridical form of power as “a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself”—a form that was exercised as “a means of deduction” not only of bodies, but also of wealth, products, goods, services, and “seize[d] hold of life in order to suppress it (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 136). This subtraction mechanism is one that this chapter will explore and trace in one of Shakespeare’s most prominent subjects: Shylock, the Jew—a victim of religious and racial persecution inherited from and produced by pre-modern prejudice.

As previously discussed, human beings (or subjects) both contain and are contained by the hierarchic system, a system within which each subject is bound by “their definition or identity prior to their relations to power and to [other] subjects” (Strozier 62). Following the

Subject-subject power relation of the classical age, the arrangement of the social structure during the medieval period was attributed to a more abstract, “immaterial force outside of human action and control” (Krieger 10): religion. According to Norbert Wiley, the medieval era was “a complex period in the history of the self” (537) for it re-alienated Absolute Knowledge to another pre-Enlightenment Subject or “Being,” to another capitalized Truth that “sanctions and determines the extant class structure” (Krieger 10). This dependence on an external supernatural concept as the determinant of social relationships made it difficult for medieval philosophers, who “were looking ‘up’” (Wiley 537), to analyze the self and “determine in isolation the worth or stature of any individual” (Krieger 11). Unlike these philosophers who attempted to find and use contingent “cognitive tools” for their analysis, pragmatists such as William James and John Dewey “destroyed almost all confidence in any society which sought to attain goals defined *a priori*” (Sullivan 177). They, like other postmodern social theorists and critics, raised serious doubts about the “sanity” of medieval men who tied themselves to preconceived notions of humanity and, therefore, found the acceptance of other religious values problematic.

The self of the medieval period was traditionally seen as influenced by supernatural forces, rendering it highly porous and permeable to repressive ideologies generated by religion—“a tool of oppression and mental distortion” as depicted by Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud (Sullivan 177). Selfhood may be both collective and individual; however, the form that was adopted by pre-modern subjects was the group. Burckhardt summarizes this point when he describes both sides of human consciousness in the medieval age as “lay[ing] dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil... Man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family, or corporation—only through some general category” (81). The pervasive system that this chapter is mainly concerned with is religion, under which

Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* is categorized. In European history, up to the twentieth century, the medieval era stood forth as a period of religious conservatism. Power at that time originated from the "outside" by a dominant Subject, namely God, until it was eventually incorporated within the ideological apparatus of power relations. The power of that Subject then reappeared as the power of the subjected group that is "inside" the discourse but which "uses the power to gain perspective or leverage over other subjects" or groups (Strozier 62). In other words, the sovereign as an individual Subject was replaced with an omnipotent power or Truth that captured certain subjected groups (i.e., Christians) but also granted them social power to hegemonize other "under-represented or minority groups" (Skinner 220)—most notably, the marginalized Jewish minority in Europe, as will be presented in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Jewish history during the medieval period was intertwined with Jewish self-identity for it is, as Patricia Skinner writes, the "unchanging story of Jews as victims" (226). In *The State of Jewish Studies*, Ivan G. Marcus suggested that Jews "lived in a medieval setting when they were organized as a self-governing religious minority within a dominant host society that was monotheistic in religious ideology, usually either Christian or Muslim" (116). In other words, medieval Jews—such as Shylock—demonstrated their willingness to contribute to and become full citizens of the state in which they resided despite it being the dominant local power—that is, Christianity in *The Merchant of Venice*. Hence, the political or citizen subject (*subjectus*) was advocated, and the subject as *subjectum*—the Jews as "inward-looking and autonomous" (Skinner 231)—condemned. This, in turn, reinforces Jacob Marcus' characterization of the medieval period as one "of external, legislative oppression of the Jewish community" (Skinner 229) and one that "functioned as shorthand for barbaric, cruel and irrational" (Skinner 233). The view of the medieval period as an era that induced "a vicious, unenlightened, oppressive

political and social order” (Sullivan 173) and as a “period of persecution” (Skinner 230), originated at the time of Shakespeare, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as a reaction to persistent chronologies of Jewish suffering throughout the ages—a lachrymose approach to Jewish history that has been accentuated by the earlier expulsion of Jews from England.

The sovereign *Subject* of the classical age—the visible, hegemonic symbol of power who “left his mark and brought down the effects of his power” on the condemned *subject* (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 109)—did not entirely disappear into discourse during the medieval era but gradually dissipated within softer, less visible, subject-subject power relations. The sovereign became “rather the property of society, the object of a collective and useful appropriation” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 109), a *subject* that governed and was governed in the name of a Higher Power. This mechanism of subjecthood that commenced during the medieval period was seen by critics of the European Enlightenment “as a necessary stage to pass through on the way to modernity” (Skinner 232), as it was the starting point and trigger of a transition that gradually dissolved power into a system of covert domination. Prior to the modern—and later postmodern—opaque manifestation of power relations, hierarchal power in the medieval era maintained the physical and moral hegemonic approach of the classical age; this explains why medievalists find it difficult to draw a dividing line between classical antiquity and the medieval period, given that the latter “saw itself as a continuation of” the former (Skinner 223). The sovereign’s power of life and death was therefore transmuted into society’s power of prejudice, which produced the marginalization and persecution of certain socially disadvantaged groups. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare “manipulates the audience and readers into a position of historical self-awareness” (Wynne-Davies 369), in which racial and religious intolerance are fatally entwined with “the death and destruction of those who simply happen to be different” (Wynne-Davies 372); that is, the Jews.

Hierarchical communities of Elizabethan England were obsessed with rank and, according to Peter Holbrook, saw themselves “in relation to those above and below them, ‘vertical’ relations of deference and superiority being more important than ‘horizontal,’ solidaristic ones” (69). As a subject himself, Shakespeare belonged both inside and outside the dominant culture for he was both a member of the elite Elizabethan-Jacobean England and an outsider to it. The focal point of his socially ambiguous position was his career as a playwright—a profession that was barely socially acceptable, but that elevated him from “an upstart Crow” (as described by his rival playwright Robert Green in 1592) to a rich, successful gentleman. In addition, Shakespeare and his family’s religious affiliation to Catholicism at a time when Protestantism constituted the driving power of the economy and the enforcement of the law in Elizabethan England illustrates the hierarchical structures of the society in which he lived. While Catholics were marginalized towards the countryside where they hid their religious convictions within the confines of their homes, Shakespeare concealed his filial Catholic connections by placing himself among the rich Protestant side of the royal family. As a playwright and an active citizen of the city of London, Shakespeare continued to perform his plays in the Queen’s residence whilst living his life as a Catholic on the inside and as a Protestant on the outside. Shakespeare’s insider-outsider position is crucial for understanding his representation of social subordination, rendering it a mode of self-presentation, “a way of positioning his own identity as both outside (or free of) and inside the usual status hierarchy” (Holbrook 88)—as both *subjectus* and *subjectum*. Standing in the middle of this crossroad (as rich-poor and Catholic-Protestant), Shakespeare’s attitudes toward hierarchy are perceived by many of his critics as being manifold, seeing that his plays, including the comedies, “reveal a writer often treating high and low social spheres as it were from outside” (Holbrook 88). This ironic treatment of social class and religion was reinforced by Shakespeare’s need to please a

socially diverse audience, which in turn prompted him to produce comedies, as well as plays of other genres that display a range of attitudes to social subordination.

*The Merchant of Venice* explores the social mechanisms of intolerance through multiple discourses of gender, sexuality, class, race, and religion, and in so doing exposes “the ideological investment in difference for a range of audiences” (Wynne-Davies 372). While this play is intended to be a comedy of delightful sophistication for one category of the Elizabethan audience, it is at once “a vicious Christian slander against the Jews” in medieval and early modern Europe for another category constructed by its knowledge of anti-Semitism (Bloom, “An Essay” 157). By Shakespeare’s time, “the legacy of Jew hating in Western Europe was already long and bitter” (Maus 111). Interestingly, Shakespeare had probably never encountered practicing Jews for they had been forcibly expelled from England in the medieval era—more or less in 1290, three centuries before his time. This, in turn, explains why English society in the Elizabethan era has been described as “judeophobic” (Burrin 17)—a phobia that is based on the absence of Jews who, despite their physical nonexistence, have left a stereotypical mark on that society. What prompted this Jewish mass expulsion was an attitude that England, in addition to other European societies that shared its intolerance, had in common: that a “community based on consensus can indeed be impressively cohesive” (Maus 111). As in the pre-modern era, those who did not share the community’s belief system and threatened its homogeneity—in this instance, the Jews in Venice—made such consensus seem increasingly elusive and were consequently subjected to persecution by the local power. This subjection was executed mainly in the form of conversion, or expulsion in the case of “Jewish recalcitrance and tendency to dissimulate when compelled to convert” (Bloom, *The Invention* 176). Shylock’s subjecthood is therefore a creation of circumstances: he is Jewish in an early



modern setting—in a Christian community that has been molded by its knowledge of the pre-modern depictions of fiendish Jews—and thus a potential candidate for religious conversion.

Being a victim of racial abuse, Shylock is never permitted to forget he is Jewish; the Venetian-Christian society in which he lives never allows him to overlook the fact that his existence is based on nothing more than sufferance. The Venetians simply call him “the Jew,” giving him no identity other than that of a merchant who belongs to a Jewish trading nation. Historically, such nations were assembled by European trading capitals such as Rome, Prague, Amsterdam, and Venice in hope that “Jewish trading connections would boost import and export duties and help maintain peace between nations” (Kitch 192). As a town of traders, Venice was packed with foreigners of various nationalities and denominations and was, by sixteenth-century standards, “unusually tolerant of diversity” (Maus 1111). Shakespeare stresses this “evenhanded cosmopolitanism” in Act 3 (Maus 1113) when Antonio tells Solanio: “With us in Venice, if it be denied, / [w]ill much impeach the justice of the state, / [s]ince that the trade and profit of the city / [c]onsisteth of all nations” (3.3.26–31). Similar to medieval and early modern Jews who “had no homeland to call their own” (Kitch 192), Shylock is both socially as well as legally alien in Venice—no one but a subject who has been admitted to denizenship rights of residence in exchange for his mercantile services. With the gradual increase of the Jewish population in the sixteenth century, the Venetian Senate struggled to accommodate its diverse populations and as a result established the first European “ghetto,” into which “all of the city’s large Jewish community was demeaningly and squalidly crammed” (Dickson 236). Shakespeare, however, was either unaware of this fact or chose to ignore it. Regardless, Shylock was by no means locked at night and was not offered “freedom from molestation so long as [he] remained in the increasingly crowded ghetto” (Kitch 194–195). Instead of confining Shylock to the modern grid of power where disciplined individuals

(*subjectus*) are maintained in their subjection and have no access to their innate *subjectum*, Shakespeare provides him with “an interiority” which, although “does not allow him to transcend the stereotype, presents him as an actual man *alive* within it” (Bloom and Heims 7)—that is, the *potentiality* to “extricate [himself] from discursive relations” (Strozier 62) and attempt to achieve individuality.

In medieval and Renaissance drama, more significantly on the sixteenth-century English stage, Jews were unremittingly caricatured as villains. The strictures imposed by anti-Semitism demanded that Shylock be portrayed as an anti-Christian subject, who is stereotypical both in the way he looks and in the way he is treated and expected to behave in a predominantly Christian environment. Drawn according to a stereotype, Shylock was typically played as a caricature Jew with a hooked nose, claw-like hands, a bright red wig, and a “Jewish gaberdine” (3.1.108). Instead of using his name, Christian characters such as Antonio, Bassanio, Solanio, and Portia refer to Shylock as “[a]n evil soul” (1.3.95), “a villain with a smiling cheek” (1.3.96), “a goodly apple rotten at heart” (1.3.97), “the dog Jew” (2.8.14), “the devil” (3.1.17), “this cruel devil” (4.1.212), a “wolf” with a “Jewish heart” of which there is nothing “harder” (4.1.72, 78–79), “an alien” (4.1.344), and most persistently “the Jew” (all throughout the play). Thus, Shylock not only has “much in common with the figures of ultimately impotent evil that appear in the medieval Christian Mystery plays” (Gay 53), but also “works to make an ancient bogeyman come dreadfully alive” (Bloom, “An Essay” 158). Being denied his own individual identity, Shylock—like Christopher Marlowe’s Barabas in the *Jew of Malta*—“represents a type,” that is, “Jewishness” (Bloom and Heims 7): “All that Shylock and Barabas have in common is that both are supposed to be not Jews, but *the Jew*” (Bloom, *The Invention* 173). Shylock, therefore, is conceived and depicted as a type that has

been bound by racial and religious subjecthood and that has acknowledged “suff ’rance” as “the badge of all our tribe” (1.3.106).

Significantly, while Shylock might have offered the Elizabethan audience—mainly due to their lack of actual interaction with Jewish persons—an image of the Jew they were familiar with from Marlowe’s and other plays, he has very few lines that perfectly align him with the “caricature that appears in medieval Catholic superstition” (Gay 53). In the scene that introduces Shylock, he (aside to the audience for the first time) compares Antonio to “a fawning publican” and expresses his hatred towards him “for he is a Christian” who “lends out money gratis, and brings down / [t]he rate of usance here with us in Venice”; Shylock claims that he “will feed fat the ancient grudge [he] bear[s] him” if he “can catch him once upon the hip” for “[Antonio] hates [their] sacred nation” (1.3.37–44). His iniquitous words are soon followed by an ironic speech about him being used and racially abused, presenting us with a graphic image of the Christian spitting on the Jew:

You call me misbeliever, cut-throat, dog,  
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,  
And all for use of that which is mine own.  
...  
What should I say to you? Should I not say  
'Hath a dog money? Is it possible  
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' Or  
Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,  
With bated breath and whisp'ring humbleness  
Say this: 'Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last;  
You spurned me such a day; another time  
You called me dog; and for these courtesies  
I'll lend you thus much moneys'? (1.3.107–109, 116–124)

At this point, it is clear that Shylock realizes he is being mistreated and abused for being a Jew and for “offering a service which Christians have relegated to him and which they readily avail themselves” (Bloom and Heims 8). Antonio’s response about him being “as like to call thee so

again, / [t]o spit on thee again, to spurn thee too” (1.3.125–126) indicates that Shylock understands the ethos that directs Antonio’s actions—this, in turn, “casts him in a better light and Antonio in a worse light than the general attitude shown to each of them by the others in the play” (Bloom and Heims 18–19). In other words, it is after this first burst out of his eloquence and force of speech that Shylock “dwarfs his fellow characters” (Bloom, “An Essay” 151) and begins his journey up what I refer to in the Introduction as the trajectory of the self, from subjecthood towards individuality.

Similar to pre-modern stereotypical subjects, Shylock was thrown into the very heart of a period when modernity was still at its initial phase. Subjects, during that time, were given the opportunity “to change the world that is changing them, to make their way through the maelstrom and make it their own” (Berman 16). They, like Shylock, were just beginning to experience modern life and “hardly kn[e]w what [had] hit them” (Berman 17). For Shylock to employ this power granted to him—that is, to ascend the trajectory and potentially attain individuality—he must voice out his concerns and need for change and justice, as well as show strength and pragmatic persuasiveness in the language he speaks. In contrast to most Christian characters in the play whose demeanor is steered by the virtue of mercy, Shylock’s thirst for justice is quenched and sustained by the Jewish virtue of scrupulous adherence to the letter of the law. As set out in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, the Law of Moses (also known as the Mosaic Law) is considered supreme over all other sources of authority, both political and civil (Van Seters 19). It also specifies the different aspects of a Jew’s life such as what to wear and eat, as well as how to worship, conduct business, and punish crimes. Shylock’s Judaism reveals itself “not merely in his distinctive dress and his avoidance of pork, but in his trust of literal meanings, his respect for observable facts, his expectation that contracts will be rigorously enforced” (Maus 1115). This, in turn, justifies Shylock’s response to Antonio’s

antagonistic negotiations to lend him money not “[a]s to thy friends” but “rather to thine enemy” (1.3.128, 130). He offers to lend Antonio the money, and proposes “in a merry sport” that he nominate as bond “an equal pound / [of his] flesh to be cut off and taken / [i]n what part of [his] body pleaseth [him]” (2.1.141, 145–147). This “merry” bond “[i]s not so estimable, profitable neither” (2.1.162), as he points out, and is therefore offered as “a macabre reminder” of the nefarious superstitions that Christians held about medieval Jews (Gay 54)—as an anchor that moors him to the bottom of the trajectory and gradually pulls him backwards.

Blinded by the desire to take revenge rather than to possess, Shylock only reaches the verge that separates subjecthood (pre-modernity) and individuality (modernity). His failure to cross the threshold is reinforced by two of his bravura speeches against Venice—*bravura* because they highlight Shylock’s unquestionable intelligence and strength (perhaps with a touch of bravado) in the language he speaks, and *failure* because of his “diseased” spirit that is “distorted by hatred” (Bloom, *The Invention* 185) and hence hinders his crossing. At exactly the middle of the play (Act 3, scene 1), Shylock delivers a memorable and often-quoted monologue through which he attempts to elevate himself to the level of individuality by re-describing his situation and inviting the Venetians to acknowledge their enemy’s humanity:

I am a Jew. Hath not a  
Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses,  
affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the  
same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the  
same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and  
summer as a Christian is? If you prick us do we not bleed? If  
you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? (3.1.49–55)

Shylock’s speech encapsulates the perception that “fragile human bodies are the frontline soldiers of grand ideologies” (Gay 54); he eloquently reminds the Venetians that all people, regardless of their social or religious status, are humans. Like all Christians, he is also equipped with identical faculties and is, therefore, subject to experiencing the same feelings and

emotions. By so doing, Shylock presents himself as both a generic human body as well as a member of an ideological group—a subject—and, by the same token, maybe more Christian than his Christian listeners.

At this point, the audience is on the eloquent victim's side as he grasps for recognition and singularity. His grasping, however, does not last for long and is hindered by his itch for retribution:

And if you wrong us shall we not revenge? If we are like you  
in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a  
Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian  
wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian  
example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will exe-  
cute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. (3.1.56–61)

Shylock's "powerful cry from the heart against the contempt with which Antonio has regarded him" metamorphoses into an expression of "a malignant desire, the desire for revenge" (Bloom and Heims 24). Nonetheless, his mind has not only been distorted into obsession by the persecutions visited on him by Antonio alone, but by all of Christian Venice. This renders Antonio an embodiment of all of Shylock's persecutors, and his pound of flesh a bond in which he can avenge himself against them all. As a result of his vengeful averment, Shylock fails to surpass the common sense of his Venetian tormentors when he vows to "execute" the "villainy [they] teach [him]" and to "go hard but...better the instruction" (3.1.60–61). By pledging to use, even intensify, Venetian laws and "final vocabulary," he sinks back to their level of subjecthood—to where "there is only helpless passivity or a resort to force" (Rorty, *Contingency* 73); in other words, to pre-modernity. Shylock's one pound of flesh, therefore, substantiates Foucault's "monarchical law" in which corporal punishment is a "ceremonial of sovereignty [that] uses the ritual marks of the vengeance that it applies to the body of the condemned man [to Antonio's body]" (*Discipline and Punish* 130).

Subsequently, Shylock's shrewd indictment of Christian hypocrisy is repeated in the other famous speech he makes in the trial scene of Act 4. In the same logic he uses to humanize himself in his "Hath not a Jew eyes?" speech discussed above, Shylock defends his bond with Antonio, and in effect *to* Antonio, by adducing the legal right of a Christian purchaser of slaves and then "better[ing] the instruction" (3.1.61):

You have among you many a purchased slave  
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,  
You use in abject and in slavish parts  
Because you bought them. Shall I say to you  
'Let them be free, marry them to your heirs.  
Why sweat they under burdens?  
...  
You will answer  
'The slaves are ours.' So do I answer you.  
The pound of flesh which I demand of him  
Is dearly bought. 'Tis mine, and I will have it. (4.1.89–94, 96–99)

Historically, in the fifteenth century, Venetian citizens purchased African prisoners from Portuguese slave traders and used them as galley slaves (Kitch 206). However, arguing for the essential humanity of slaves and their liberation is clearly not one of Shylock's intentions. Instead, his main concern is to show how "extreme social divisions, the oppositions among classes of people, result from purchasing power" (Krieger 15). In reply to the Duke's question, "How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring none?" (4.1.87), Shylock "invoke[es] the ultimate foundation for the Venetian state economy, which is the ownership of slaves" (Bloom, *The Invention* 188). In so doing, he articulates a difficult truth that puts the "freedom of the state" of Venice at stake and underscores the failure of Christians to behave in accord with their creed that mandates universal love and mercy. His response is so preternaturally powerful that the Duke threatens to dissolve the court: "Upon my power I may dismiss this court" unless "a learnèd doctor" (Portia) enters promptly (4.1.103–104). Shylock's articulacy, once more, pulls

him up toward the threshold of individuality before he is hauled back down again to subjecthood when he reiterates his ghastly parallel, his one pound of Antonio's flesh that is enslaved to him—a bond he justifies by the logic that “Venetian slaves, like all slaves, are so many pounds of flesh, no more, no less” (Bloom, *The Invention* 189). One here wonders why Shakespeare hovers between portraying Shylock as either a model Christian or a model Jew: Is it because he himself was doubtful of the viciousness of Jews? Could it be to please an audience that endured religious instability, or could it be an attempt to tame his own ambivalence about both religions? Shakespeare's insider-outsider position, in effect, accentuates the uncertainty he lives with, a prominent feature of postmodernism that is evidently manifested in his modern works.

Shylock's unavailing attempts at selfhood epitomize the conception that ideology negates shared humanity and subsequently subordinates freedom and resistance. This notion is strongly embodied in the powerful “ideological confrontation” between Shylock and Portia—between the “Jewish Old Testament ‘revenge’” and the “Christian New Testament ‘mercy’” (Gay 55). Whereas this confrontation is played out in the bodies and words of two figures in an overarching social structure (a woman in patriarchal Venice and a Jew in Christian Venice), Portia (disguised as a man) is handed over the Duke's authority by virtue of traits that “would appear forced and improbable in any other woman” at the time of Shakespeare (A. Jameson 62). Notably, it is by “the quickness with which she perceives the legal advantage which may be taken of the circumstances; the spirit of adventure with which she engages in the masquerading, and the decision, firmness, and intelligence with which she executes her generous purpose” (A. Jameson 62) that she is rendered the sovereign's ambassador, the Christian *Subject* in whose hands the fate of the Jewish *subject* resides. In her famous “quality of mercy” speech (4.1.179), Portia tries to help Shylock transcend the logic of the Old Law of



Jewish vengeance by imagining Venetian law, or the New Law of Christian mercy, as derived from a “mercy [that] is above this sceptred sway” and “the dread and fear of kings” (4.1.187–188). Her attempt to impose Christian ideology on a non-Christian and divest him of his religious rights in the name of mercy emphasizes the ironic and cruel fact that Christians in the play do not practice what they preach. As a reaction, Shylock refuses to grant mercy to Antonio after he “whet[s]” his “knife so earnestly on the sole of his shoes (4.1.120). His insistence on the bond “enacts the logic of the Old Law that reject[s] mercy in the name of vengeance” (Kitch 206), reverting him to his “caricature role as a monster” (Gay 55) and chaining him within the pre-modern strictures of sovereignty.

By the end of the confrontation, the “triumphant majority” (now represented by Portia as *man*), who is eager to “penalize outsiders who disrupt its codes” (Davis 219), frames the defeat of Shylock’s bond. The law that Portia invokes to overpower Shylock is a previously unmentioned law that she claims is reserved for any “alien” who has plotted the death of a Venetian “citizen” (4.1.344, 346). Portia’s effortless ability to manipulate the civil law of the state consolidates the notion that “the powerful members of society [the Subject] maintain their control by sacrificing the powerless [the subjects] and calling it ‘the law’” (Gay 54). Shylock’s conversion and the persecution of his rights calls into play the pre-modern juridical form of power that is depicted by Foucault as a subtraction mechanism that acts upon the subjected—a power that is “dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, and destroying them” (*History of Sexuality* 136). The verdict, therefore, is actualized as a right of seizure: “the seizure of half of [Shylock’s] estate, and his forced conversion as a triumph of community over the destructive literalism of the law,” which in turn reaffirms his status as a “resident alien” in that Christian community (Kitch 207). Sovereign power—emancipated by religious and racial ideology—has not only subtracted Shylock’s wealth and goods, but also suppressed the one

aspect that had once marked him as a potential individual: his Jewish identity, his selfhood. Hence, the grasping subject who has been innumerably addressed as “Jew” has been subdued, and “the Jew” who has been repeatedly characterized as a dog has been defanged—overpowered not only by a pervasive, omnipotent Subject driven by ideology, but more significantly, by a member of another oppressed group, namely women as embodied in Portia: a subject who, by “her high mental powers, her decision of purpose, and her buoyancy of spirit” (A. Jameson 61), is ironically able to achieve what Shylock was unable to attain, namely, individuality.

## Chapter 2

### *Romeo and Juliet* and the Birth of the Modern Individual

The subjecthood of the self, as explored in the previous chapter, is epitomized by but not limited to underdogs and resident aliens such as Shylock. Like Shylock, Othello the Moor—also an alien without a family or a homeland to call his own—is never allowed to forget the color of his skin: Iago, his ensign, describes him as a “Barbary horse” (1.1.113) and a “Barbarian” (1.3.346–347); Roderigo, Desdemona’s jealous suitor, tauntingly refers to him as “the thick-lips” (1.1.66) and “lascivious Moor” (1.1.127). Iago and Roderigo’s crude racist insults, however, don’t exactly categorize Othello as a stereotypical victim. Unlike Shylock, who is portrayed by Bloom as “the play’s scapegoat” (*The Invention* 183) who “asserts his identity as *the Jew*, inheritor of the persecuted pride of fifteen centuries” (185), Othello does not stand for all Moors: “Othello represents Othello” (Bloom and Heims 7), a man undoubtedly tormented by the fact of his blackness, but who nonetheless rises to a higher social status and attains respectability through sheer personal virtue and valor. His representation as “both black and the hero of the piece” has engendered confusion among readers and audiences: “Shakespeare was too correct a delineator of human nature to have colored Othello black,” Mary Preston of Baltimore wrote in 1869, “Othello *was* a *white* man” (Dickson 278). Shakespeare, against the norms of his time and subsequent centuries, celebrates Othello’s grandeur by providing him not only with a well-respected position as a general employed by the Venetian state but also with the daughter of a white Venetian senator as his wife, who autonomously woos and loves Othello for the person he is regardless of his race and skin color. Endowed with unsettling, contradictory *selves*, Othello perishes in his personal struggle to harmonize his identity as a subjected underdog with his identity as an individual “top dog.” Neither a subject nor an individual, Othello allusively substantiates the transition period that

links the pre-modern era (Shylock's subjecthood) to the modern era (Romeo and Juliet's individuality)—an analogous correlation that will be further interpreted in this chapter.

At the end of the sixteenth century, political thinkers as well as literary writers began to advance problems of personal action and rhetoric within a politically and socially corrupt world. The approaches they adopted and solutions they found often utilized the notion of what is referred to as the *self*, which they “sometimes rendered as a noun, something which could be spoken of as an object for the first time” (Baldwin 345). In his book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, Greenblatt writes about Shakespeare's texts as being attempts to construct selves; that is, as literary platforms in which the self could function in various social and political spheres. Although spoken of as an object, the self is perceived as an abstraction equally elusive to other abstractions such as the individual, the mind, and society but that has a history of its own which informs and draws upon “a time in which the idea of the self became a great energizing force in politics and culture” (Howe 56). Categorized among the “numerous prefigurings of selfhood” (Howe 57), Shakespeare's productions exhibit a multiplicity of selves, each displayed as a distinct force within public life fighting its own discursive battle in contingent arenas of historical contention. After examining Shylock, who fought an ideological battle waged by tyrannical religious and racial determinants but failed to attain individuality because of the constraining limitations of the pre-modern age, this chapter will explore another version of the self as it steps into the new era of modernity dominated by a notion of individualism. This notion of the self is embodied by the two Shakespearean characters Romeo and Juliet, who emerge as individuals after fighting a more subtle ideological combat among social power relations and technologies.

Burckhardt, instead of presenting a simple contrast between the modern and pre-modern ages in his book *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, tries to grasp it as a transitional

form of society. In general terms, his conception of change centers on the idea of “a forward motion in history that is not however a simple cumulative advance” (Garner 53). Modernity, for instance, did not emerge by a process of gradual evolution. Instead of emerging from the successful institution of the medieval age, it progressed through a process of negation; that is, from institutional gaps as well as from failures of the social order. Those institutional interstices, or that which the pre-modern age lacked, made possible the emergence of modern ones by what has come to be called the “Renaissance man.” This modern discovery of the individual took place “not through any fault of his own, but rather through necessity” (Burckhardt 179); no longer satisfied with what the old system has failed to offer them, individuals perforce grope desperately (yet autonomously) for and make an effort to create a new order. By so doing, they “[break] down the legitimacy of the totality of medieval institutions” (Garner 54), tearing up into shreds the common veil that was once “woven of faith, illusion and childish prepossession”—a veil through which “the world and history was seen clad in strange hues” (Burckhardt 52). No longer a member of one group, the Renaissance man—now an individual—adopted the idea of an inner self as the core of his or her personal identity.

Human beings are thought to have experienced a divided self in the modern world, more particularly during the sixteenth century, wherein they “began to conceptualize the relation between what they saw as the interior self on the one hand and the expressions of one’s thoughts, feelings, or beliefs on the other” (Martin 1323). Like Burckhardt, Michael Y. Barilan also believes the collapse of the medieval worldview to be one essential cause for “growing anxieties about the displacement of the self” (80). Once what is rational and legal becomes an object of self-conscious scrutiny and of social conflict, the pre-modern subject or actor delegitimizes that social system, rendering him or herself a modern individual with a new sense

of ownership and agency. Rather than compliantly adopting one capitalized Truth (or *Logos*) within a medieval organic community that “internalized meaning and identity, which they found in cosmic order” (Barilan 80), the individual self-reflectively “defines a self-interest that is distinct from that of the collectivities to which he [or she] continues to belong” (Garner 50). In effect, that individual seeks meaning within the self so as to ward off perceived menaces from outside—such is the case of Romeo and Juliet who, in spite of the many drawbacks they suffer, persistently reflect upon and express their disapproval of the strictures imposed by the modern, patriarchal Capulet-Montague community (by the Christian community in Shylock’s case) in which they find themselves subjected; this marks the difference between them and Shylock, who displays early signs of failure after his first endeavor to reach individuality. With Burckhardt’s “discovery of man” (123) and “development of the individual” (52), ample evidence pointed to the formulation of a new anthropology in which emphasis was placed on self-awareness, self-consciousness, self-reflection, self-expression, and similar notions that have caused human beings to become objects of self-study and, in turn, marked the Renaissance as the first modern epoch.

Following the Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment can be hallmarked as the subsequent modern epoch—a period which signifies the likelihood of autonomy and the use of reason. “The Enlightenment,” reads the opening line of Immanuel Kant’s famous essay, “is man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity” (41). As further clarified by Kant, “immaturity”—the translation offered for the German *Unmundigkeit*, or “minority”—is the “inability to use one’s understanding without guidance from another” (41). It is, in other words, a certain state of a subject’s will that compels them to accept and succumb to someone else’s authority, and so prevents them from making personal decisions. Therefore, what Enlightenment is fundamentally about is “escape from subjection” (Spragens 118)—a man’s

*Ausgang* from his self-incurred tutelage—an exit, a way out. According to Foucault’s examination of Kant’s essay, modifying one’s state of will is necessary for anyone who wants to take advantage of this exit and escape his or her own nonage, or immaturity. In order to attain maturity (or individuality, as I use it in this thesis), such a modification entails changes that are “at once spiritual and institutional, ethical and political” (Foucault, *The Foucault Reader* 35). Following orders without thinking—“the form in which military discipline, political power, and religious authority are usually exercised”—characterizes the immature status in contrast to maturity, the status that will be reached not “when it is no longer required to obey, but when men are told: ‘Obey, and you will be able to reason as much as you like’” (Foucault, *The Foucault Reader* 36). Enlightenment, therefore, is the moment when individuals courageously put their own reason to use without subjecting themselves to any authority; it is both “a process in which men participate collectively and as an act of courage to be accomplished personally” (Foucault, *The Foucault Reader* 35): Romeo and Juliet are at once voluntary actors within the collective entourage of their families, and audacious agents of a single process; that is, of their clandestine relationship wherein they put their individuality into practice.

Kant’s modernity, as envisaged by Foucault, is not only a period in history situated on a calendar, “preceded by a more or less naïve or archaic premodernity, and followed by an enigmatic and troubling postmodernity” (Foucault, *The Foucault Reader* 39); it is an “attitude” voluntarily adopted by certain people, a task that modifies the way they think, feel, act, and behave. Foucault briefly characterizes this “attitude of modernity” (39) by discussing the poet Baudelaire’s vision of “the dandy,” which he treats as still another model for that attitude. According to Baudelaire, modernity is often characterized as “the ephemeral, the fleeting, the contingent” (13); however, it is adopting a certain attitude with respect to this movement that

defines being modern. Being modern is “not to accept oneself as one in the flux of the passing moments” (Foucault, *The Foucault Reader* 41), but to have the will “to grasp the ‘heroic’ aspect of the present moment” (40). Baudelaire refers to a person who harvests these passing moments as nothing but a fleeting curiosity, a *flâneur*, an idle strolling spectator. In opposition to that *flâneur*, whom Foucault describes as someone “satisfied to keep his eyes open, to pay attention and to build a storehouse of memories” (40), Baudelaire describes the man of modernity:

Away he goes, hurrying, searching. ...Be very sure that this man...—this solitary, gifted with an active imagination, ceaselessly journeying across the great human desert has an aim loftier than that of a mere *flâneur*, an aim more general, something other than the fugitive pleasure of circumstance. He is looking for that quality which you must allow me to call ‘modernity.’ ...He makes it his business to extract from fashion whatever element it may contain of poetry within history” (12).

This modern person, this collector of curiosities in appearance, works to transfigure the world in which he lives, not by annulling its reality but by means of “a difficult interplay between the truth of what is real and the exercise of freedom...the practice of a liberty that simultaneously respects this reality and violates it” (Foucault, *The Foucault Reader* 41).

In the vocabulary of his day, Baudelaire associates this attitude of modernity with that of *dandysme* (or dandyism). While this chapter will not delve into the specific laws adopted by this approach, it will recall Foucault’s brief description of those who submitted to its regimen: “the dandy [is someone] who makes of his body, his behavior, his feelings and passions, his very existence, a work of art” (Foucault, *The Foucault Reader* 41–42)—a definition that brings to mind not only Shylock’s emotional monologue, in which he expressively attempts to elevate himself above his Venetian offenders, but also Romeo and Juliet’s first dialogue at the Capulet



ball that takes the form of a sonnet in which they use religious language to describe their attraction, foreshadowing their unconventional, free-spirited romance:

**ROMEO**        *[touching her hand]* If I profane with my unworhiest hand  
This holy shrine, the gentler sin in this:  
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand  
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

**JULIET**        Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,  
Which mannerly devotion shows in this.  
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,  
And palm to palm, is holy palmers' kiss... (1.5.90–97)

As understood by Foucault, this peculiar modern kind of “ascetic” (*The Foucault Reader* 42) is compelled to face the task of producing himself by self-imposing “a discipline more despotic than the most terrible religions” (41), which explains Shylock’s vengeful pledge to behave more villainously than his enemies whom he describes as “Christian fools with varnished faces” (2.5.32). In consequence, Shylock struggles to escape the locked frames of social role, to liberate the modern self within, and to subsequently “invent himself” (*The Foucault Reader* 42). Baudelaire’s dandy, however, like Kant’s mature philosopher, is an artist of everyday life at grips, prototypical of both the Renaissance Man and the Enlightenment Man, with an attitude of modernity and free will—two essential prerequisites possessed by Romeo and Juliet, for the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject through a progress within and against society. This process of the construction of the self as individual is what Greenblatt refers to as self-fashioning.

The modern self, which has so far in this chapter been shown as a notion that came to form a social and moral claim, a claim that has been advanced by a newly-confident historical subject, has been viewed “not as an autonomous entity but rather as a site on which broader institutional and political forces are inscribed” (Martin 1313). The claim for “space, voice, identity,” a claim that man “is not the property of kings, lords or states,” a claim for the

“privilege of opinion, the freedom to refuse definitions imposed from without,” a claim “advanced by all who had been herded into orders and guilds” (Howe 61)—all of them, like Greenblatt’s concept of self-fashioning, seem to capture much of what is popularly believed about the Renaissance, Enlightenment, and modern life in general. Greenblatt notes that the simplest observation he, and other literary historians, could make about the sixteenth century is that “there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process” (*Self-fashioning* 2). That is, men and women of that modern epoch, akin to Baudelaire’s dandy, were often conscious of “fashioning particular selves in order to survive or advance” the society in which they resided (Martin 1314). While this observation seems to invite us “to read ‘self-fashioning’ as free, expressive self-making” (Lentricchia 235), Renaissance “self-fashioning” in fact offers a view of the self as a cultural artifact, “a historical and ideological illusion generated by the economic, social, religious, and political upheavals of the Renaissance” (Martin 1315)—forces that created the fiction of individual autonomy and rendered the human subject “remarkably unfree,” an “ideological product of the relations of power” (Greenblatt, *Self-fashioning* 256).

The Renaissance and the Enlightenment individual, whose moral order was once controlled by autonomy and reason, soon realized that these controlling mechanisms might serve others or even belong to them. Similar to the Renaissance self that lost its freedom and autonomy for it had been generated by, and therefore subjected to, the codes of culture and power, the Enlightenment self which had been “endowed with an essential nature and an independent consciousness” (Callero 117) has been proclaimed by postmodern and post-structural theorists a cultural and/or political artifact. As pithily remarked by Greenblatt, “we may say that self-fashioning occurs at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien” (*Self-fashioning* 9), that identity is achieved “at the intersection of an absolute authority and a

demonic Other” (*Self-fashioning* 76)—namely, between religion and Shylock, society and Romeo and Juliet, gender and Katherine. Strongly influenced by Foucault’s radical historicist interpretation of human subjectivity, Greenblatt, in “Invisible Bullets,” argues that subversion (the effect of self-fashioning) was encouraged by the monarchy only to contain it (65). Greenblatt puts forth this argument when analyzing power relations in Shakespearean drama: “the apparent production of subversion is...the very condition of power” (“Invisible Bullets” 65). His account of modernity, therefore, supports Foucault’s interpretation that there is no essentialist self, that the humanist subject is not “a thing-in-itself” (Martin 1316) but a product of epistemological and institutional forces.

Foucault, who confesses to be neither a structuralist nor an analytic philosopher, tried “to get out from the philosophy of the subject through a genealogy of the subject, by studying the constitution of the subject across history which had led us to the modern concept of the self” (*Hermeneutics* 22). In addition to the two techniques of production and signification, which are mainly required for studying the history of natural sciences, Foucault highlights two other major types of techniques in human societies, which he believes are essential for analyzing the genealogy of the subject in Western civilization: techniques of domination and techniques of the self. To begin with, the techniques of domination are mechanisms “which permit one to determine the conduct of individuals, to impose certain wills on them, and to submit them to certain ends or objectives” (*Hermeneutics* 24–25). These mechanisms of power result in what Foucault describes as “an objectivizing of the subject” (“Technologies of the Self” 18)—a *modus operandi* that has undergone a very profound transformation since the classical age of the West. As already illustrated in the previous chapter, the major form of power during the pre-modern ages was one of “deduction,” a subtraction mechanism enforced on Shylock that resulted in the seizure of his wealth and goods, in his religious conversion from

Jew to Christian, and thus in the suppression of his individuality. This power, according to Foucault, has been gradually replaced by one “bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them” rather than “impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them” (*History of Sexuality* 136). In other words, the overt mechanisms of domination that once automated pre-modern, hierarchical power relations has been substituted in modern society with covert methods of power that have been deployed by discursive systems of knowledge and control, such as the institutional and ideological forces of patriarchy and the Montague-Capulet feud in *Romeo and Juliet*.

When asked about power being intrinsically repressive, Foucault replied that power “should not be understood as an oppressive system coming from above and bearing down on individuals, forbidding this or that” (*Hermeneutics* 128). Power is not an institution or structure that extends from the top down and reacts on limited groups of the social body; power is omnipresent: “Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (*History of Sexuality* 93). Power must, therefore, be understood as a set of complex relations rather than an exercise of pure violence or strict coercion—complex in the sense of incorporation, for the dominant “Subject” can no longer be distinguished from the submissive “subject”; both have been equalized into a more concealed subject-subject power relation. Drawing attention to this “ideological formation” (as denoted by Althusser), which has come to replace the pre-modern law of sovereignty with a modern discursive law that “operates more and more as a norm” (*History of Sexuality* 144), is essential as it corresponds to the gradual transformation of the solid Sovereign-subject (Prince-subjects) power relation into a more opaque subject-subject (Montague-Capulet) one in *Romeo and Juliet*. This, in turn, provides both protagonists with challenging yet strategic opportunities to surreptitiously rupture

and traverse the ideological walls (built and maintained by the power of patriarchy and the feud) that confine them and to potentially achieve individuality.

The “power of the Prince,” which has been conceived by Machiavelli in terms of force relationships (*History of Sexuality* 97), is symbolized by Verona’s Prince Escalus who “in practice is an absolute monarch” (Appelbaum 265): “If ever you disturb our streets again,” he says to the Capulet and Montague street fighters, “[y]our lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace” (1.1.89–90). The feud’s disruptive power is so threatening to the Prince and his power that it instigates a death-promising condemnation from someone who is at once “the principle of law and order in his society and its principal enforcer” (Appelbaum 265–266). The power of the Prince, therefore, signifies the pre-modern mechanism of power by which “[o]ne had the right to kill those who represented a kind of biological danger to others” (*History of Sexuality* 138). This sphere of force relations is governed by a monarchical law that “cannot help but be armed, and its arm, *par excellence*, is death” to those who transgress it; a law that “always refers to the sword” (*History of Sexuality* 144). While Escalus’ words may sound strong and threatening, they are not words that an authoritative voice would utter and successfully convey to “[r]ebellious subjects” (1.1.74) living in an early modern Verona. As many critics have pointed out, Prince Escalus exemplifies the state or “the voice of authority” (Evans 8); this voice, however, is never concretized into “an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude” (Aristotle 37).

After the opening scene’s skirmish, the Prince’s attempt to address the “enemies to [the state’s] peace” (1.1.74) in order to maintain civic order fails at first: “Will they not hear?” (1.1.76). He evidently has little power and control over the feud and the violence it causes, as it takes him another twenty-one lines to get them to cooperate. Despite his best efforts and warnings, the feuding families refuse to permanently “[t]hrow [their] mistempered weapons to

the ground / [a]nd hear the sentence of [their] movèd Prince” (1.1.80–81), and instigate yet another street brawling halfway along the play. This, in turn, illustrates how his aggressive words are nothing more than “verbal ‘actions’” (Liebler 304), and his violent threats are nothing but a “speaking law” (Appelbaum 266). The Prince’s lack of authority, therefore, proclaims the death of the sovereign Subject of the classical age and the dissipation of his power that no longer has to “draw the line that separates the enemies of the sovereign from his obedient subjects” (*History of Sexuality* 144). The stability and legitimacy of the Subject’s power is undermined by the “ancient grudge” between both houses, a grudge that has decentralized Verona’s state power by bringing the Subject down to the level of the subject and dispersing coercive power into a more covert subject-subject power relation. Foucault writes: “[P]erhaps we need to go one step further, do without the persona of the Prince and decipher power mechanisms on the basis of a strategy that is immanent in force relationships” (*History of Sexuality* 97). Power, in the pre-modern sense, that once brought death and seizure into play in the field of sovereignty, now “effects distributions around the norm” (*History of Sexuality* 144)—the norm which has given the feud an all-pervasive quality, “whose everywhere-ness points to the feud’s role as the ruling ideology in Verona” (Reynolds and Segal 46). Although this omnipresent power may indicate Romeo and Juliet’s incapability to escape and may underscore their involuntary participation in maintaining the ideological boundaries demarcating their lives, my exploration points toward the lovers’ autonomous physical death as subjects that is anticipated by an “ancient grudge” (Prologue 1.3)—one that they virtually surpass, inspiring a “new mutiny” (Prologue 1.3) in Shakespearean studies.

This uncertainty brings me to Foucault’s other type of techniques which has most kept his attention; it is what he calls a “technique” or “technology of the self” and what he defines as that which “permit[s] individuals to effect by their own means...a certain number of operations

on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, and immortality” (“Technologies of the Self” 18). Resembling Greenblatt’s technique of self-fashioning and subsequent subversion, Foucault’s technology of the self, which might also be read as free and expressive self-making, offers his perspective on the self as “coerced into existence, not to become an agent but as a mechanism of control where systems of discourse work from the inside out by creating a self-regulating subject” (Callero 118). It is through this “modern play of coercion over bodies, gestures, and behaviour” that each individual is made a “case”—a case which at one and the same time constitutes “an object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 191). This case defines the individual, who is “in his very individuality” disciplined, classified, described, judged, measured, excluded, compared with others, etc. (*Discipline and Punish* 191). Subjected by these modern procedures of normalization, an individual is trained and modified not only in the obvious sense of acquiring “certain skills” but also in the sense of acquiring “certain attitudes” (“Technologies of the Self” 18). Kant and Baudelaire’s “attitude of modernity” that was once willingly adopted by ambitious, autonomous individuals has been whittled down by covert disciplinary methods constituted by and interspersed within systems of knowledge and discourse, rendering it nothing but a discursive entity. Therefore power, which “comes from below” (*History of Sexuality* 94), encases the self and entraps it within the confines of power relations, rendering it nothing but a constructed entity “within, not outside discourse” (Hall 17).

A direct consequence of power, the self is brought into existence by means of what Foucault calls “government.” Governing people is not effectuated by simply controlling a rational subject and forcing him or her to do what the “governor” or the so-called regimes of power want, as was performed in pre-modern times. For instance Shylock, as manifested in the

previous chapter, fails at the very first attempt to transgress the laws and attain individuality, after being made a case by the dominant Subject of his time (i.e., Christians), who not only discipline him and his attitude back to subjecthood but also other subjects who might have had similar intentions. Shylock's disruptive autonomous self jeopardizes the existence and authority of the Sovereign (of Christians, embodied by the judge) and thus he has to be publicly terminated as a guarantee of that Governor's infinite power. The modern self, on the contrary, is apprehended at the contact point "where the way individuals are driven by others is tied to the way they conduct themselves" (*Hermeneutics* 25–26). That is, by imposing normative disciplinary practices on the body—which will be referred to as *habitus* in the next chapter—the techniques of domination assure coercion and, therefore, serve as vehicles of power in various institutional settings through which the self is constructed and modified. Internalized, these norms take the form of moral ideology and, as Althusser indicates, "present themselves by way of an (interior) voice that interpellates me—as, precisely, a subject" (xxv). Like the self that "has no visible shape, nor does it occupy measurable space" (Howe 56), ideology is "sheer illusion, sheer dream, in other words, nothingness" (Althusser 174). But what is the self without a concrete individual to embody it and a mind to construct it? Its reality, like that of ideology, "lies outside it" for ideology's spiritual assemblage is that of the "concrete history of concrete, material individuals materially producing their existence" (Althusser 174–175). Every ideology, therefore, "functions" at the concrete level of individual "subjects"—of people in their day-to-day existence, at the level of their ideas and acts, their hesitations and doubts—a general mechanism which, like Foucault's technology of the self and Greenblatt's technique of self-fashioning, makes concrete individuals "act all by themselves" (Althusser 177). This illustrates Romeo and Juliet's modern disciplining—in comparison to Shylock's—that takes a more subtle and discursive form, it being institutionalized by the family feud that manipulates



each of its subjects' behavior. However they, as potential individuals, possess that intrinsic attitude of modernity and, therefore, have a higher chance at evading such ideological, normative disciplinary techniques and interpellations.

In his study of the self in seventeenth-century England, Michael Mascuch marked individualism a multidimensional phenomenon—"an amalgam of practices and values with no discernible center" (14). This modern approach to identity arose because of a variety of forces—social, economic, political, religious, intellectual, familial, artistic, etc.—that coincided and reinforced each other to produce it. A single account of individualism and its construction, therefore, cannot possibly represent its development for it varies across racial, ethnic, class, and gender categories. The most enduring informative analyses, as interpreted by Peter L. Callero, are often "those that link together historical shifts in the political economy, changes in particular social settings, and critical alterations in self-experience" (122)—an approach which I have adopted and have thus far attempted to apply to Shakespearean plays, to an expanse wherein Shakespeare has made "issues of interiority central to his discussion of the human situation" (Martin 1321). *Romeo and Juliet* exemplifies what Bryan Reynolds and Janna Segal call "R&Jspace," which they define as an "articulatory space" through which conflicting discourses and social performances powerfully intersect: an assemblage "of the official and/or unofficial historical, political, cultural, and social spaces" (38). It is through this discursive interface that *Romeo and Juliet* resonate in various manifestations, "ranging from emblems of romantic love, legitimaters of forbidden desire, icons of teenage angst, and, in more recent critical incarnations, subversive agents of dominant ideologies substantiated by the names they themselves are so eager to doff" (Reynolds and Segal 38). Shakespeare, therefore, functions as a conductor for the construction of his protagonists' "subjective territories" delineated by

ideological boundaries that are maintained by their society's state machinery which, in turn, works to ensure and monitor the cohesiveness of the social body to which they belong.

Unlike the Marxist theory of the state apparatus, which defines the state as a “repressive force of execution and intervention ‘at the service of the dominant classes’” (Althusser 70), Althusser's view of the state machinery is constituted by the production of power relations exercised by a combination of what he calls the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). The RSAs function primarily on “violence” and comprise the government, administration, army, police, courts, and prisons. The ISAs, nonetheless, function on “ideology” and encompass scholastic, familial, religious, political, and cultural “*institutions, organizations, and the corresponding practices*” (Althusser 77). Each an official sociopolitical conductor, ISAs assemble (consciously or unconsciously) to “consolidate ‘state power’..., manifest a concept of ‘the state’..., and produce a dominant, ‘official culture’” (Reynolds and Segal 39)—not in the image of a totalitarian state, but in the image of a heterogeneous and discursive state power. Analogously, this ideologically-driven mechanism works to formulate and implant Romeo and Juliet's subjective territories “with the appropriate culture-specific and identity-specific zones and localities, so that the subjectivity that substantiates the state machinery is shared, habitually experienced, and believed by each member of populace to be natural and its very own” (Reynolds and Segal 39). It is in the modern space within which they roam that the Veronese population, most prominently the Montagues and Capulets, experience the various ISAs that exist and are realized in the corresponding institutions and their practices. As potential individuals, however, Romeo and Juliet persistently attempt to subvert “the hierarchicalizing and homogenizing assemblages” of the Veronese organizational structure (Reynolds and Segal 40). By opposing the state machinery and threatening the stability of its ruling “official culture” and ideological

parameters, they substantiate the modern attitude of Burckhardt's self-creating Renaissance Man, Kant's mature philosopher, and Baudelaire's fashionable dandy.

Prior to my exploration of *Romeo and Juliet*, one significant observation has to be made about the significance of Shakespeare's tragic lovers being immature adolescents. Shakespeare accentuates the protagonists' extreme youth by introducing them as "the object of paternal concern" (Snyder 181), as a son and a daughter, before the audience even encounters the title characters. At the end of the play's first scene, the Montagues express their concern about their "heavy son" (1.1.130) and his secret sorrow which they fear might destroy Romeo before he ever reaches maturity. In the subsequent scene, Capulet is occupied negotiating his daughter's future—his "child" who "is yet a stranger in the world" for she "hath not seen the change of fourteen years" (1.2.8–9)—and her marriage with Paris. In contrast to Kant's "mature" modern man, Romeo and Juliet's need for paternal guidance and their compliance with external authority substantiates pre-modern "immaturity" or subjection. However, restructuring Kant's polar opposites into successive aspects on a trajectory is useful for my approach in this thesis as it scrutinizes the notion of selfhood as contingency, as a set of holistic Truths invented and developed in light of certain conditions associated with a specific perspective and historical epoch. On this developmental course, pre-modernity precedes modernity, immaturity precedes maturity, subjectivity precedes individuality—the former is separated from the latter by means of a portal, a threshold that acts as a person's *Ausgang*, one's promising way out. Marked as immature subjects, Romeo and Juliet are always already potential individuals—a level of maturity which may be attained with the appropriate "attitude of modernity."

A society, according to Costantina Safilios-Rothschild, even when modern, does not necessarily suggest that all the people residing in it are equally modern; on the contrary, "individuals may be quite modern despite the fact that the overall society is still traditional"

(18). Still at that transitional period between pre-modernity and modernity, early modern societies defensively produced covert structural constraints that blocked these potential individuals' way "to the attainment of the chosen occupational, familial or social behavioral options" particularly if they were "women, lower class persons, young, or members of an undesirable religion or nationality" (Safilios-Rothschild 18). Therefore, as young, immature adolescents with embedded modern attitudes and values, Romeo and Juliet "grope, desperately but half blindly, for an adequate vocabulary" (Berman 17) beyond the unsettling early modern society in which they live—a society in which "relations of power" are the "immediate effects of the divisions, inequalities, and disequilibriums which occur" (*History of Sexuality* 94). In line with Foucault's technology of the self and Greenblatt's technique of self-fashioning, social entities are "always being shaped into [their] ways of being and knowing by extensive social processing" (Snyder 182). However unlike adults (i.e., their parents), Romeo and Juliet, not having yet undergone "the full ideological conditioning afforded by society's institutions" (Snyder 182), make this modern process of normalization more apparent and the uneven building blocks (the dominant and submissive poles) of power relations more perceptible. Not only does their extreme youthfulness highlight the social processing they are undergoing, but it also "makes the withdrawal more possible in that the processing is not complete" (Snyder 190). As Foucault notes, there will always be some people who are "recalcitrant" in the system of relations of power, "there will always be people who will not want to accept, there will always be a point where people will revolt, resist" (*Hermeneutics* 135). Yet with time, the grip of ideology grows to be so tenacious that it becomes almost impossible to loosen. That is, the longer one is conditioned by ideology, the deeper they are withdrawn inside power, and the more difficult it becomes to resist and escape it. It is for this reason that the *young* Romeo and

Juliet are less fixed by continual conditioning than their feuding elders and less habituated to their social roles as Montague and Capulet, respectively.

Romeo and Juliet, primarily defined by their overt subordinate situation as children who are “acted on (cajoled, lectured, ordered, modeled) by the parents who in effect own them” (Snyder 182), establish Foucault’s “government” which serves as the contact point at which the techniques of domination amalgamate with those of the self—mechanisms practiced in the system of power relations: “a relationship by which one conducts the conduct of others” (*Hermeneutics* 135). Their subservience, in turn, accentuates their constructed lack of autonomy, in terms of both familial and social embeddedness of normative disciplinary techniques whereby Romeo Montague, the male, and Juliet Capulet, the female, are processed and operated in order to nourish the major constituting force in their society: the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets which, according to Coppélia Kahn, is “an extreme and peculiar expression of patriarchal society” (337). While both naturally consent to the familial ISA, Romeo’s status as male dominates (also naturally at that time) Juliet’s status as female in the social ISA. In contrast to Juliet, the feminine child, who performs all her scenes (even her most intimate ones with Romeo) within the Capulet enclave with the constant threatening interference of at least one family member or her nurse, Romeo, the masculine child, is generally spotted in the company of his friends in the “public haunt of men” (3.1.45), or the public streets, rather than with his parents in the “private place” (3.1.46) of Montague domesticity. This, on the one hand, indicates the relative freedom granted to young males as opposed to young females but, on the other hand, fails to reflect Romeo’s entrapment within the ideological walls of masculinity where “men are under pressure...to perform” (Appelbaum 268)—an observation that I will make at the end of this chapter. The regulatory performances of masculinity, as well as the oppositional performance of femininity, act as corresponding

“practices” to the controlling institution of the Montague-Capulet feud in which ideology is realized.

Prefiguring postmodern and poststructuralist themes, most significantly Althusser’s, Shakespeare exhibits in *Romeo and Juliet* a conscious concern with society’s impact on the individual by taking the feud as a metaphor for ideology. “The Renaissance,” as asserted by Jonathan Dollimore, “possessed a sophisticated concept of ideology if not the word” (17–18). Shakespeare, therefore, did not need Althusser’s terminology to feel the force and workings of ideology on the “autonomous” agent who is “formed by and in a social formation to which he is subjected” (Snyder 186). This social operation is what Althusser calls “interpellation” or “hailing”: a process through which ideology “‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way as to ‘recruit’ subjects among individuals (it recruits them all) or ‘transforms’ individuals into subjects (it transforms them all)” (190)—it is also what underscores the feud’s all-pervasiveness, an ideology from which no concrete subject of Verona’s society that we see can escape. Like other concrete Veronese subjects, Romeo and Juliet are deeply conditioned by the family division; however, their constant attempt to transcend their subjecthood makes them potential Renaissance individuals who endeavor to occupy two of Foucault’s “points of resistance” which, according to him, “are present everywhere in the power network” (*History of Sexuality* 95). Susan Snyder calls this movement beyond the feud “necessary” not only because it allows their forbidden love to emerge and evolve, but also because—similar to their extreme youthfulness—“their venture outside the circumscribing feud-ideology makes that ideology visible, as it would never be if everyone continued to operate inside its unspoken premises” (188). Foucault’s notion of resistance, however, renders the term “transcendence” misleading for the lovers’ attempted isolation; although probable, resistance as conceived by Foucault “is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (*History of Sexuality* 95). Resistance is

found where there is power, and power exists within the grid of social stratifications, and therefore the only possible way for resistance to be acquired is within the strategic field of power relations. As they strive to rise above the Veronese social formations in which they are enclosed and traverse the trajectory of the self on which they are set towards individuality, Romeo and Juliet withdraw inwards as they fall into discursive lapses initiated by ideology's tenacious grip that is inclined to tighten in moments of emotional mishaps.

Shakespeare's prescience is accentuated by his protagonists' meditations on names and their power, a preoccupation which directly points to Althusser's notion of interpellation—ideology's most basic function. According to Althusser, "ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects" even before they are born by means of their own names (192). Individuals, in terms of human beings, are never the ones who give themselves their own names and are, consequently, passively pre-determined into particular subject-positions by "the particular familial ideological configuration in which it is 'expected' once it has been conceived" (Althusser 193). It is therefore certain that Romeo and Juliet, as unborn children, will expectedly bear each of their father's name—Montague and Capulet, respectively—and so possess an identity that is irreplaceable. Their interpellative names not only marks them out as always-already subjects, but also brands them in terms of the ahistorical feuding families in which they are always-already recruited. Turbulence, however, strikes within Romeo and Juliet's subjective territories in their instant attraction to one another, which begins to gradually shift them towards their unofficial, "transversal territor[ies]" (Reynolds and Segal 39)—where subversive identities and movements are practiced. Ironically, both attended the feast with the intention to *look* on love: Romeo to "rejoice in splendour" at the "sight" of Rosaline (1.3.100–101), and Juliet to "endart mine eye" on "Paris' love" (1.3.98, 100). Yet Juliet's predisposed endeavor to "look to like, if looking liking move" (1.3.99) is unexpectedly transferred to "a

loathèd enemy” (1.5.138), a Montague, engendering a rupture in the official territory of Verona. It is when they both become “[a]like bewitched by the charms of look” (Prologue 2.5) that the infringement of their families’ prescriptions, reinforced through the ideology of the feud, is activated.

Prior to revealing their identities, the only thing that marked Romeo as an outsider to the Capulets’ feast was his mask, not his manners, not his name: they “have met unlabeled, as it were, a faceless youth and an anonymous girl at a party” (Snyder 184). However the moment each discovers the name of the other, conflict arises and heralds the answer to Juliet’s familiar “What’s in a name?” question, which they subsequently realize to be everything:

**ROMEO**        Is she a Capulet?  
                    O dear account! My life is my foe’s debt. (1.5.114–115)

**JULIET**        My only love sprung from my only hate!  
                    Too early seen unknown, and known too late! (1.5.135–136)

Nevertheless, the formation of desire or “passion,” as suggested by the Second Act’s Prologue, “lends them power” (Prologue 2.12) to *temporally* venture outside their subjective territories, beyond the gaze of power, “in a configuration fugitive to that which is dictated by the state-supportive sociopolitical conductors guiding their perceptions” (Reynolds and Segal 50). Notwithstanding the abstract, ideological walls—signified by “Verona walls” out of which “[t]here is no world” (3.3.17)—and the concrete, intra-city walls—signified by the “orchard walls” that are “high and hard to climb” (2.1.105)—which serve as social and physical separators, respectively, both lovers decide to revoke their interpellative names and defy the law of their feuding fathers. Juliet signally underestimates the power of ideology and its force when she “tries to separate Romeo’s name from his essential properties” (Snyder 184). In soliloquy, she meditates:

’Tis but thy name that is my enemy.  
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.



What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!  
What's in a name? (2.1.80 – 85)

Romeo, in response to Juliet's rebellious request to "[d]eny [his] father and refuse [his] name" (2.1.76), instantly disavows his interpellative name to which he is anchored:

My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself  
Because it is an enemy to thee.  
Had I it written, I would tear the word. (2.1.97–99)

Romeo, like Shylock in a different context, not only "doff[s]" his name for the sake of passion, but also defiantly "o'erperch[es]" the orchard wall, "[f]or stony limits cannot hold love out" (2.1.89, 108–109), before Juliet implicitly proves "Romeo" (as "Juliet") to be inseparable from his being—an indication that they shortly realize as they both struggle to resist the feud and thwart the discursive wall that is constantly reinforced by its normative value.

Juliet's attempt to separate Romeo's name from his "self" is in immediate conflict with her instinctive reference to "Romeo" and "Montague" only a few lines after her meditation (2.1.102) and with her fear that "any of [her] kinsmen" finds him there, proving this division to be difficult. By addressing Romeo using his name and then asking him to get rid of it, Juliet paradoxically shows that Romeo's name is inseparable despite her belief that "[i]t is nor hand, nor foot...nor any other part / [b]elonging to a man" (2.1.82–84). Derrida writes that Juliet "knows it: detachable and dissociable, aphoristic though it be, his name is his essence" (*Acts* 426). They both, in fact, "know this without knowing it" (Derrida, *Acts* 426); they both know that they will never be able to escape their names, that the aphorism (the separation in language—that which Juliet requests from Romeo) of the name is at once necessary for the survival of their "self" and impossible. It is impossible because the name is a capitalized Truth, an interpellation, an "[imposition] of patriarchal convention, decided by the father" (Harris

56)—one that will outlive them, for the name, as defined by Derrida, “is made to do without the life of the bearer, and is therefore always somewhat the name of someone dead” (*Postcard* 39). Juliet, regardless, still wishes that her love’s name be nothing but an arbitrary signifier, “some other name” (2.1.84) that he might be able to discard, to replace, in order to “[r]etain that dear perfection which he owes / [w]ithout that title” (2.1.88–89). By so doing, she (the name she bears) declares war on Romeo’s name, and the only way this ideological war of names will be won is by the death of the “title” bearer—of Romeo, of Juliet—without his or her name, which will survive them.

Juliet begins her venture towards individuality the second she reiterates her intention, declaring the sacrifice she is willing to make to transcend subjecthood and help her lover do the same:

Romeo, doff thy name,  
And for thy name—which is no part of thee—  
Take all myself. (2.1.89–91)

By asking Romeo to renounce his name in exchange for the whole of herself, Juliet, according to Derrida, offers Romeo “an infinite deal, what is apparently the most dissymmetrical of contracts” (*Acts* 428). From a superficial perspective, one would think of this bond as an immature commitment—one wherein the name is just a matter than can be dealt with by a mere substitution, after which Romeo gains everything he desires without losing anything essentially human. However, Juliet’s modern will and attitude unveil another perspective that is too mature for Verona’s official culture—one that triggers the Renaissance Man in Romeo. Knowing that “Romeo would not be what he is, a stranger to his name, without this name” (Derrida *Acts* 427), Juliet does not ask Romeo to simply take another proper name but “to live at last, and to live his love”; in other words, “to live *oneself* [emphasis added] truly” (Derrida, *Acts* 427). Ideally, the only rational way they can do this is “by protesting against one’s name, by

protesting one's non-identity with one's proper name" (Derrida, *Postcard* 39). Juliet, and prospectively Romeo, seek an individual identity, one that is Capulet- and Montague-free, which they first endeavor to obtain by "elud[ing] the law of the name, the familial law made for survival" (Derrida, *Acts* 427)—a tactic they know entails considerable risks.

To live as two independent individuals, as Capulet and Montague, together within the feudal confines of Verona is unattainable, for this would undoubtedly bring about their deaths. They, however, clearly express their refusal to be parted and hauled back down towards subjecthood, no matter what the consequences—death being the most prominent as implied by Juliet's warning about the orchard walls' height and the effort needed to climb them, for "the place" behind these walls is "death, considering who thou [Romeo] art" (2.1.106). Romeo's response, followed by Juliet's cooperative consensus, projects the lovers' modern will to achieve the impossible:

**ROMEO**        I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes,  
                         And but thou love me, let them find me here.  
                         My life were better ended by their hate  
                         Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love. (2.1.117–120)

By conveying their determination, both breathe life into the tenacious grip of ideology that is empowered by the name that "races toward death even more quickly than [they] do" as it "bears [them] with infinite speed toward the end" (Derrida, *Mourning* 130). This, in turn, activates two ideological wars—one on a social level, between them and their feuding families, and another on a more personal level, between their individual selves and their clinging names—both which herald their "premature death that comes to [them] in [their name], through [their name], without [it] ever being properly [their] own" (Derrida, *Mourning* 130). Nevertheless, Juliet's offer is "infinite" for a reason: she and Romeo decide to take ownership of this premature death, to gain possession of it, to make it their own property, and to fight it

using their modern maturity that ensures they die together as individuals rather than perish as labeled subjects in a patriarchal society that offers no opportunities for earthly escapes.

As previously explored, the feud exemplifies the workings of “any ideology, of Ideology itself” (Snyder 186); however, the specifics of the feud’s performance are reflected in and expressed by their historical moment. In early modern society, more specifically in the societies of Shakespeare’s plays, “masculinity is constructed as a norm” (Appelbaum 259), and order is therefore identified with “the dominance of masculine attributes” (Sinfield 134). The ethos of masculinity in *Romeo and Juliet*, as in many other Shakespearean plays, is manifested as another discursive practice (in addition to that of the family feuds) that is dominant in the interplay between warring ideologies—it is “a structure, a regime, a dominant system that is held to account” (Appelbaum 256). While constantly under pressure to perform, the men in the play cannot seem to get hold of masculinity as one single, assertive operation: Is it to valiantly “take the wall” (1.1.10–11)—to courageously assert superiority over the enemy on behalf of the fathers and in the name of honor—or to “[go] to the wall” where women, the “weakest vessels,” go (1.1.12–15)—to practice manhood as separation from the fathers and sexual union with women? As expressed by Robert Appelbaum, “the Shakespearean canon often dramatizes what appears to be a desire to escape from the regime, to overcome or run away from the snares it sets” (252). Romeo, namely, rehearses this dilemma of masculinity by first defying the “Veronese discourse of family division” that embraces “the obligation to maintain one’s honor by avenging insults,” one of the social imperatives of early modern elite culture in Western Europe (Snyder 186). He rebelliously chooses to overcome feudal patterns of violence and aggression through his attempt to go to the wall and exalt love sensitively—a threat that Alain Sinfield describes as a “disastrous slide back into the female” (134) and which Shakespeare’s characters call “effeminacy.” With regards to his subjective territory and official culture’s

ISAs, Romeo's refusal to consider his father's wishes and pause before his laws when engaging in his affair with Juliet is failure, and "failure *is* emasculation" (Appelbaum 259)—the one trait his dominant culture will never concede to male subjects.

Romeo first adopts this attribute of "effeminacy" after his first drawback, his most evident ideological lapse, when Mercutio intervenes in a feudal fight to defend Romeo's masculine name after Romeo himself (now married to Juliet) refuses to rise to Tybalt's insulting provocations. For the sake of his undisclosed love and marriage to Juliet, Romeo addresses Tybalt in an unconventional manner prior to his battle with Mercutio:

I do protest I never injured thee,  
But love thee better than thou canst devise  
Till thou shalt know the reason of my love.  
And so good Capulet—which name I tender  
As dearly as mine own—be satisfied. (3.1.63–67)

In response to the death of Mercutio, who takes up Tybalt's challenge on Romeo's behalf and is consequently slain by Tybalt, Romeo confesses:

O sweet Juliet,  
Thy beauty hath made me *effeminate* [emphasis added],  
And in my temper softened valour's steel. (3.1.108–110)

Worried about his emasculated honor and his "reputation stained / [w]ith Tybalt's slander" (3.1.106–107), Romeo is suddenly reclaimed by conventional reactions and by a style of speech tainted by revengeful villainy:

Away to heaven, respective lenity,  
And fire-eyed fury be my conduct now.  
Now, Tybalt, take the 'villain' back again  
That late thou gav'st me... (3.1.118–121)

The news of Mercutio's death "completes Romeo's total absorption into the avenger-role prescribed for him in the code of honor" (Snyder 191). His dictated role as male strongly corresponds to his interpellative identity as a Montague, both roles from which he had earlier

attempted to distance himself so carefully but which he later realizes are deeply enmeshed with his being and are, therefore, inescapable. After murdering Tybalt, his “Henceforth I never will be Romeo” (2.1.94) transforms to his desperate need to rip his name out of his body by offering to stab himself, for it is what directs his actions and defines his responses within his subjective territory: “In what vile part of this anatomy / [d]oth my name lodge?” (3.3.105–106). Romeo’s “disorderly conduct that constitutes the main action of the play” particularly marks the inescapable power of “masculinist patriarchy” (Appelbaum 265) that has secured ideology’s persistent grip after it has been fortified by the Montague-Capulet feud that “keep[s] reasserting the defining distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’” (Snyder 186).

Consequently, Romeo’s “honorable” revenge heralds Juliet’s analogous conventional repossession by ideology’s grasp after she is informed of her cousin’s murder. Like Romeo, Juliet’s speech changes as she “lapses into her feud-assigned form of subjectivity as outraged Capulet” (Snyder 191):

O serpent heart, hid with a flow’ring face!  
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?  
Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical!  
Dove-feathered raven, wolvis-ravens lamb!  
Despisèd substance of divinest show!  
Just opposite to what thou justly seem’st—  
A damnèd saint, an honourable villain. (3.2.73–79)

Her preceding desirous and graceful soliloquy, in which she longs for night to fall so that Romeo will come to her “untalked of and unseen” (3.2.7), metamorphoses into very formal, rigid lines expressing her shock at suddenly having to substitute Romeo the lover with Romeo the murderer. Juliet’s rage, however, is instantly tamed (only a few lines down) by the loyalty she owes to her husband and the name he holds:

He was not born to shame.  
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit,  
For ’tis a throne where honour may be crowned

Sole monarch of the universal earth.

O, what a beast was I to chide at him! (3.2.91–95)

Her speech not only accentuates the significance of the masculine code of honor at the time of Shakespeare, but also brings out the other specific historical face of ideology in this play: women's obligation to adapt appropriately to the married state after contracting a suitable marriage, even if it has been done for only three hours. Juliet continues:

Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?

Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name

When I, thy three-hours wife, have mangled it? (3.2.97–99)

Juliet, who apparently values Romeo's intrinsic masculinist adherence to his own clan, has transferred her loyalty to her husband's family, substituting her interpellative name as Capulet with another—a transmission that has similarly been made by Lady Capulet. Presumably not a Capulet by birth, Juliet's mother "demonstrates her own thorough conditioning as a wife" (Snyder 186) when she mourns Tybalt's death and demands for revenge: "I beg for justice, which though, Prince, must give. / Romeo slew Tybalt; Romeo must not live" (3.1.174–175). Yet in contrast to Capulet's wife, who has ardently committed herself to the family feud, Juliet has chosen to commit herself to Romeo her lover, not to a group but to an individual. Rather than allow her parents to make her a case for marriage—or precisely a decorative "cover" to the "precious book of love" that is Paris (1.3.89–90), a "gentleman of noble parentage" (3.5.179)—Juliet's autonomous decision to be a "disobedient wretch" (as labeled by her father) and choose her husband is an act of rebellion against the patriarchal order that dominates Verona's official culture.

Juliet's recent interpellation as a Montague by marriage, as well as Romeo's "womanish" tears (3.3.109) that came as a result of his disrupted masculine identity, do not fit into the family feud's "always-alreadiness." Unlike ideology, their transformation (conducted within their transversal territories) *has* a history of its own and must, therefore, be reversed.

Romeo and Juliet's ideological lapse into faithfulness to their own families of birth (into their initial subjective territories) is indicative of ideology's relentless attempt to put an end to a journey beyond its implicit constraints; that is, to maintain the hereditary enemies' subjecthood and destroy their venture towards individuality. "Verona walls" are consolidated by the feud, which in turn asserts the Veronese official culture as the only reality there is, leaving both fugitive lovers with no space of their own. With their transversal territories destroyed, the only place they are able to conceptualize for themselves outside the confines of Verona is in the afterlife, where the persistent grip of ideology cannot get hold of them. "There is no feasible way," as put by Snyder, for "individuals who try to advance beyond their ideology but cannot undo its constitutive influence" (191). In order for them to traverse that which limits and distorts them—that which gives them their stable identities as a male Montague and a female Capulet—Romeo and Juliet, respectively, choose to "defy you, stars" (5.1.24) and die. Their modern, autonomous selves refuse to live in a "world [that] is not th[eir] friend, nor the world's law" (5.1.72) and be forever re-captured by their social conditioning. Their deaths can, therefore, be seen as their final and only effective expression of rebellion: "The closest the characters come to breaching the parameters of their official culture is with their self-inflicted deaths" (Reynolds and Segal 56)—deaths that are brought about willingly: Romeo sealed his life "with a righteous kiss" (5.3.114) and Juliet hers with a "happy dagger" (5.3.169). Unlike Shylock who surrenders his individuality to the claws of ideology, Romeo and Juliet choose death over defeat in order to attain and maintain theirs. Their virtual escape, nonetheless, indicates their failure to contingently use language to de-center the capitalized Truths that frame their lives and create their own pragmatic truths and to emerge as *concrete* individuals, or postmodern "ironists" as designated by Rorty—a notion characteristic of Katherine in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.





### Chapter 3

#### *The Taming of the Shrew* and the Rise of the Postmodern Ironist

Virtual individuality, the level of selfhood attained by Romeo and Juliet in their attempt to escape the tenacious grip of ideology and overcome subjection, is concretized by Portia (in *The Merchant of Venice*) who—as briefly denoted in Chapter 1—is “individualised by qualities peculiar to herself” (A. Jameson 61). A victim of patriarchy, Portia’s subjecthood as a female entity is normalized by the society in which she lives, first and foremost by her father’s power to which her will is subjected. Portia’s will had been “curbed by the will of a dead father” (1.2.21–22) who denied her the right to choose the partner she desires as well as refuse the person she dislikes. Instead of providing his daughter with the freedom of choice and a life of freewill, he deprived her of autonomy and transferred them onto three caskets. By so doing, he bestowed life to inanimate objects and took away a major part of hers; unlike Portia, the caskets possessed the power to speak by means of the letters inside and the words on them and consequently decide her fate. By regarding Portia as impersonal, her father was able to reify her role in society and implement the concept of alienation from natural human love—a dehumanizing process in which Portia is treated as a commodity, which deprives her of the opportunity to live her life in conformity with her own species (Marx, *Alienation* 134). In order to metamorphose into an active being (an individual, as previously mentioned) and escape the taxonomic claws of society’s patriarchal ideology (perhaps temporarily), Shakespeare had to dilute ideology’s pervasiveness and so negated the position of her father by removing him from the play. Portia is, therefore, characterized as the obedient daughter of a dead father—a scheme implemented by Shakespeare in such a way as not to stop the reversed reification from taking place, or the shift from alienation to “reciprocal alienation or estrangement of private property” (Marx, “Comments”). Adopting Marx’s notion of the product being the result of the labor of its

owner, it would be analogous to regard Portia as being the result of her father's labor. Portia would then represent her fathers' "private property," which "has moved away from the owner whose product it was and has acquired a personal significance for someone whose product it is *not*" (Marx, "Comments")—this someone is Portia's Bassiano, her exit from her own nonage, a means of escape also characteristic of Juliet's Romeo and, in this chapter, of Katherine's Petruccio in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.

In his plays, Shakespeare repeatedly considers "the ramifications of the transition from feudalism [pre-modernity] to capitalism [modernity]" and cautiously celebrates "individual risk and versatility" (Harris 9) that accompany the new cultural dispensations of his time. This individual-cultural and individual-social association was recognized by Karl Marx, who was "an avid reader of Shakespeare" (Harris 3). Even though Marx, in the *Grundrisse*, never continued to discuss Shakespeare as he promised, he implicitly asserted that Shakespeare's plays are "bound up with certain forms of social development" even as "they still afford us artistic pleasure" (*The Marx-Engels Reader* 246). In other words, they reflect the economic or material conditions of their production "even if they seem to rise above them" (Harris 147). The effects of these conditions are mirrored in some Shakespearean characters' subjective experience, such as that of Shylock and Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* wherein Shakespeare "juxtaposes social relations based on similarity with social relations based on economic self-interest" (Maus 1113); of the title characters in *Romeo and Juliet* who, after their deaths, are reified as golden statues "symbolizing the profit to be gained from the production of romance, as genre and ideology, while at the same time indirectly condemning that production as a corrosive metallic veil for the machinations of state power" (Reynolds and Segal 44); and of Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*—a play that "typifies an old...principle of English law whereby a wife's person, estate, goods, and earnings become the property of the husband"

(Winter 101). From this perspective, Shakespeare has been given credit “for the imaginative prescience with which his play[s] [anticipate] the ideological strategies of contemporary capitalism” (Shershow 260). As Shakespeare’s plays and characters have been repeatedly submitted to the scrutiny of Marxist critical theory, capitalism and its immediate effects on the characters’ transformation of the self will, in this chapter, act as a bridge between Shakespeare’s modern world and the postmodern age of which he was prescient.

Although capitalism was realized as a normalized economic and political system in the later part of the eighteenth century, its dominance is believed to have been the state of the European world for hundreds of years. Capitalism, according to Jim McGuigan, “spread from its original base in Europe, through trade and in alliance with political, cultural and economic imperialism” (2)—a sixteenth-century revolutionary notion that came into conflict with traditional, pre-modern ways of life. Marked as a renaissance that inspired national pride, most prominently through international expansion, the Elizabethan era is depicted as a “golden age” in English history (Lewis 1), an age that rendered England “economically healthier, more expansive, and more optimistic under the Tudors” than at any other time (Guy 32). The sixteenth-century Reformation resulted in new intellectual, political, and religious forces that gradually supplanted the communal and spiritual values of the medieval era and marked the passage to a new form of economy. As further explained by Georges Bataille, the extreme outcomes instigated by the spirit of reformers—such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Knox—who demanded religious purity, demolished ancient traditions of the sacred world, “the world of nonproductive consumption, and handed the earth over to the men of production, to the bourgeois” (127). Whereas serious ideological and institutional tensions accompanied the religious life of modern England, consequences in its economic order only represented a beginning, the inauguration of the world of the bourgeoisie whose accomplishment is

“economic mankind” (Bataille 127)—an operation of which Shakespeare was a shrewd observer.

With the significant expansion of markets, the flourishing of international trade, and the rapid geographical and demographic expansion of cities throughout the realm, London in the mid-sixteenth century came to be characterized as “the largest and fastest-growing city not only in England but in all of Europe” (Greenblatt and Logan 487). Concurrently, the economic foundations of the agricultural system diverged, transforming feudalism (a serf-based system of labor that prevailed in medieval Europe) into capitalism. This revolutionary conversion was prompted by several factors, one of which was the enclosure of arable and common land, where peasants had traditional rights, in order to increase the opportunities of grazing sheep and exporting wool—a process that empowered landowners who, as argued by Marxist and neo-Marxist historians, appropriated public land for their private benefit and realized profit on commodity markets, “caus[ing] hardship for small tenant farmers forced off the enclosed land and, in some cases, driven into vagrancy” (Howard 161). The son of a brogger, a retailer of wool, Shakespeare as a child “was brought into contact with every level of society, with the world of business and of profit and loss” (Wood 44), all in consequence of sheep which, according to Thomas More’s *Utopia*, “have become so greedy and fierce that they devour men themselves” (18). One thinks of Michel Serres’ food chain that at one time consisted of land, sheep, and the farmer—a power relation that was soon after interrupted by noise, by a parasite, it being the landowner who decided to corrupt the chain the minute he decided to enclose the land, remove the farmer from the productive chain, and transform his land into private residence for sheep, for it “yield[ed] the finest and thus the most expensive wool” (More 18). This parasite, “who has the last word, who produces disorder and who generates a different order” (Serres 3), empowered sheep which effectively depopulated villages, leaving farmers

unemployed and poor. The consequences of this shift in economy had a strong impact on Shakespeare whose up-close observations are used to such great effect in his plays that they underscore his acumen to “[foresee] the rule of money in the advancing new world, the oppression and exploitation of masses, a world of rampant egoism and ruthless greed” (Lukács 153). The gap that was created by enclosures in sixteenth-century rural England between poor laborers and wealthy landowners reflected the spirit of an imminent capitalistic age—a zeitgeist mirrored in the contrast between Christopher Sly and the Lord in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Given the fact that Shakespeare wrote *The Taming of the Shrew* during Elizabethan times (probably in 1592 or earlier) when economic growth was at its peak in England and social stratification intensified, the play—as defined by Bortholomew, the Lord’s page, when Sly asks about the genre of the play to be performed—is “a kind of history” (Induction 2.135), “not as the doings of kings and princes, but as a ‘story’ that tells middle-class folk about themselves” (Gay 29). This comedy, therefore, is “history” that scrutinizes the traditions and structures underlying the real life of the Elizabethan audience, one that reflects Shakespeare’s community and its “own view of what it thinks about gender relations, sexuality, power, money, and other things that make the world go round” (Gay 127). The Induction, as it is called in the play, manifests the effects of social hierarchization that came as a result of agrarian capitalism in England. Sly’s description of himself as “old Sly’s son of Burton Heath, by birth a pedlar, by education a cardmaker, by transmutation a bearherd, and now by present profession a tinker” (Induction 2.17–19) authenticates the gap in wealth and education that separates him from the wealthy aristocrats (the Lord and his huntsmen), who call him a “beggar” (Induction 1.37) and use him for their evening’s sport. Once a “cardmaker” (one who makes the metal combs used to prepare wool for spinning), Sly can be said to have once had some involvement with the wool industry (Howard 161); this evokes the trick played upon him with vivid realism

and renders his subjection “to an episode of cultural and class bullying” (Gay 29) a discursive norm produced by his society’s official culture, a historical outcome of modern mechanisms of power relations. The bourgeois (at one time landowners), who appear as uninvited guests, as parasites not as predators, and interrupt Sly’s sleep, “[n]ot the prey, but the host” (Serres 7), temporarily parasite his mind and way of life, one that has been historically interfered with and abused by such “social parasitic structures” (Serres 171) that continue to eat “the same thing, the host” (Serres 7). This “eternal host,” Serres continues, “gives over and over, constantly, till he breaks, even till death, drugged, enchanted, fascinated” (7), an interpellative process corresponding to Sly’s unwilling captivation that feeds the Lord’s lust for power and control. The parasite-host power relation will be further investigated in the Katherine-Petruccio plot from a reverse perspective, whereby Katherine, the historically subjected and persecuted entity, parasites the old, established binary system and works toward creating a new one.

As indicated in Chapters 1 and 2, sovereign power is deployed in recognizable ways through identifiable individuals or visible agents of power, who are well aware of their social rank and identity. When sovereign power operates, subjects know they have been acted upon, how they have been acted upon, and by whom. Foucault contrasts this traditional display of power—what he calls “the economy of visibility”—with its modern exercise, disciplinary power (*Discipline and Punish* 187). Akin to the German Frankfurt School theoreticians Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, who denounce the modern culture industry which they believe to have resulted in the erosion of individuality and true freedom, Foucault believes “[t]he growth of a capitalist economy [to have given] rise to the specific modality of disciplinary power” (*Discipline and Punish* 221), whose operation, unlike that of sovereign power, is comprehensive, omnipresent, and diffused. The modern disciplinary society, therefore, controls its subjects not through the direct implementation of power, but through

power's invisible gaze that "maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection" by imposing a "principle of compulsory visibility" (*Discipline and Punish* 187). In other words, instead of overtly imposing its mark on its subject, disciplinary power ritualizes individual objectification and manifests its potent domination through the discreet incorporation of ideological apparatuses within a system that is beyond our reach.

The notion of power relations, which Foucault approaches from a disciplinary perspective, is addressed by Bourdieu within the context of social relations and interplay. He, like Foucault, blames the economic order for forcing "agents to resort to euphemized forms of power and violence" (130) by means of institutionalized mechanisms. Similar to Foucault's "government"—the contact point at which the self is apprehended by techniques of domination and techniques of the self—and Althusser's interpellation process that transforms individuals into subjects, Bourdieu refers to the notion of *habitus*, or socialized norms, as dispositions resulting in the "conversion of economic capital into symbolic capital, which produces relations of dependence that have an economic basis but are disguised under a veil of moral relations" (Bourdieu 123). These dispositions are constituted in a world of "already realized ends—procedures to follow, paths to take—and of objects endowed with a 'permanent teleological character'...tools or institutions" (Bourdieu 53). The objects that are inscribed in the practical world we live in include systems of education, language, practices of everyday life, methods of classification, etc.—culturally produced institutions that characterize the structures of the *habitus*, shape current individual and collective practices, and determine all subsequent experiences without the subject's consciousness or will. The invisible institutionalization of these structural systems renders their relative autonomy a result of the modern disciplinary gaze of power, a mechanism manifested by the operation of disciplinary power in social relations



that transform Sly's role as a brutish tinker into a highly civilized Lord and Katherine's role as a shrewish "maiden-in-waiting" into a *seemingly* obedient married woman.

In its representation of social hierarchy and the operations of unconscious disciplining, the Induction marks a useful point of departure for an analysis of familial hierarchy and self-conscious performance in the inner play. According to Bourdieu, the *habitus* generates all the reasonable behaviors that are possible within the limits of a particular social field and that are "likely to be positively sanctioned because they are objectively adjusted to the logic characteristic of [that] particular field, whose objective future they anticipate" (56). Bourdieu suggests an analogy between the social order and a sports game, both in which practical sense adjusted to the demands of the field is required—that which he calls, in the language of sport, a "feel for the game" (66). This phrase gives an accurate idea of the encounter between the *habitus* (or incorporated history) and a field (or objectified history), as it is produced by the experience of the game and the objective structures within which the game is played out, giving that game "a direction, an orientation, an impending outcome" (66). This objective rationality of the probable outcome that is given by "practical mastery of the specific regularities that constitute the economy of a field" (66) forms the basis of sensible practices, or *habitus*, of every subject who has the feel for the game. This theme of play comes to the fore in the Induction, in which the Lord "makes a game of costuming Christopher Sly for his rise in the social hierarchy" (Novy 269), introducing a world or field in which all "players" identify themselves by their social rank. Sly, the weakest player in the game, "falls under the harsh gaze of his social opposite" (DiGangi 90), the commanding Lord, who stands above his prostrate inferior in a stark emblem of social hierarchy. The contrast between Sly's social field in which his human form is degraded into a "monstrous beast" who lies in a drunken stupor "like a swine" (Induction 1.30) and the Lord's field "where men's physical needs are supplied with

fine clothes and delicious foods and their senses gratified with delicate fabrics, sweet smells, music, and art” (Slights 141) is undeniable. As the “real” Lord “practice[s]” (Induction 1.32) on the penniless tinker his absolute powers—changing Sly’s sense of social identity by changing his clothes and physical environment and by endowing him with new relationships—the play begins to stress the artificiality of social identity by raising the question of how much the social order is a human construction “whose validity is more like that of a game than that of divine or natural law” (Novy 265). The Induction of *The Taming of the Shrew*, therefore, does not only manifest a shift from the pre-modern display of sovereign power to the modern exercise of disciplinary power; it also lays the groundwork for and serves as Shakespeare’s prescient foundation of the postmodern approach towards the modern incorporation of repressive ideologies, which “serve to blind us to this fact in order to keep us subservient to the ruling power system” (Tyson 57) by passing themselves off as natural ways of seeing the world.

Whereas the visibility of the Lord-beggar (Sovereign-subject) power relation suggests an economy of visibility, the subject’s inability to recognize himself as such—that is, as a subject being acted upon—renders his relationship with his superior ambiguous and the power operated upon him disciplinary. The overt theatricality of the Lord’s disciplinary methods in a larger field of power and class relations, in which agents of different backgrounds and different *habitus* collide, produces indefinite results that run counter to each agent’s social and economic capital. The Lord’s ruse against Sly introduces the deceptive schemes—or “counterfeit supposes” (5.1.98)—that characterize the field in which this game is carried out as “an arbitrary social construct, an artefact whose arbitrariness and artificiality are underlined by everything that defines its autonomy” (Bourdieu 67), in this case, the theatrical deployment of material properties. The economic basis on which Shakespeare builds this class relation underscores the symbolic power, also referred to as soft power, that confirms both agents’ placement in a social

hierarchy and maintains its effect through a power relation that requires not only a dominator (the Lord) but also a dominated (Sly) who accepts his position in exchange of social, economic, and cultural capital. The deception that metamorphoses the subjected beggar into a mock wealthy lord fulfils his fantasies of aristocratic rank and affords him social gratification of “sweet clothes,” “rings put upon his fingers,” “[a] most delicious banquet by his bed,” and “brave attendants near him when he wakes” (Induction, 1.34–36). The Lord’s use of such misleading possessions ensures Sly’s entry into the game and initiates the process of enculturation, or learned civility. Caught in between two extremes, on the Lord’s playground, the tinker begins to doubt his own identity, to “forget himself” (Induction, 1.37), and for a moment becomes the lord he is supposed to be: “Upon my life, I am a lord indeed, / [a]nd not a tinker, nor Christopher Sly” (Induction 2.70–71). However, his lack of incorporated *habitus*, of wealth and education, required to make this arbitrary field work, in addition to the little time spent on this operation (at least the time during which the audience is exposed to that plot), do not allow his complete interpellation as lord to take place. In Bourdieu’s words, “the long dialectical process...through which the various fields provide themselves with agents equipped with the *habitus* needed to make them work, is to the learning of a game very much as the acquisition of the mother tongue is to the learning of a foreign language” (67). Therefore, Sly’s attempt to acquire the foreign aristocratic language necessary for the analogous field to function and his failure to fittingly do so (as he continues to respond as a beggar throughout this short process of enculturation) accentuates the cultural embeddedness of economic and political practices that are fortified by the firm establishment of *habitus*.

In the huntsmen’s momentary field, in the Induction, the Lord and his fellow leisured aristocrats succeed in using Sly for their evening’s sport by making him “feel for the game” and, consequently, “get so ‘carried away by the game’ that [he] forget[s] it is ‘only a game’”

(Bourdieu 67). In other words, the dominant winning team get so close in making the dominated succumb and “forget himself” (Induction, 1.37), as they render his old self a dream he would “be loath to fall into...again” (Induction 2.122) before his absolute certainty overcomes his absolute doubt and he wakes up to go back to his real life as a beggar. By contrast, in Padua’s social field, where the play’s game is carried out—where Katherine and her social position as a shrewish woman are located—one “does not embark on the game by a conscious act, one is born into the game, with the game” (Bourdieu 67). A product of a long, slow process of autonomization, Padua’s official culture historically reflects the social facts of the patriarchal ideology in Elizabethan England, whose function (like any other holistic center) was not only to organize the structure but to “make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit...the play of structure” (Derrida, *Writing and Difference* 352); that is, to solidify the play of binary oppositions by attempting to exclude its opposite; namely, the working class man in the Induction and the female in the play. According to Karen Newman, Patriarchalism, a phallogocentric political theory that defended the concept of absolute power for the monarchy and emphasized the absolute right of the king as the paternal head of state in early modern England, was not a “given” but “a dominant trope through which social relations were perceived, a strategy whereby power was embodied and institutionalized” (*Fashioning Femininity* 17–18). This modern ideological mechanism of power, nonetheless, is destabilized to some extent in the Lord-beggar plot and more prominently in the Katherine-Petrucchio plot, an impairment that I believe is illustrative of an “event” with the exterior form of a rupture that occurred in the history of modernity which, according to post-structural criticism, separated the metaphysical age and the modern age and consequently brought postmodernism into existence.

Meaning in the West, according to Derrida, is defined in terms of binary oppositions—a “violent hierarchy” where “one of the two terms governs the other” (*Positions* 41)—and it is

the deconstruction of such binary oppositions, not their simple reversal, that defines the postmodern, apolitical movement. After the occurrence of that chink, of that radical “break or *coupure*” as expressed by Fredric Jameson (1), the center was no longer perceived as the only fixed locus to our understanding of existence but was replaced by a functional nonlocus, by a play of an infinite number of vantage points from which we can view this understanding. This was the moment when language became our “ground of being” or the “foundation from which our experience and knowledge of the world are generated” (Tyson 255), the moment when language invaded the system and transformed everything into a discourse. By deconstructing or de-centering Western philosophy, Derrida shows how the “absence of the transcendental signified [or central Truth, as will be attended to later in the chapter] extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely” (*Writing and Difference* 354), as it generates boundless personalized mini narratives and, consequently, semiotic chaos. In the Induction, Sly’s ability to attain aristocratic supremacy through the transformative power of theatricality, even if only temporarily, distracts the Lord from “maintaining the ideologically naturalized household order that displays his elite status” (DiGangi 91) and, in turn, threatens to de-center the seemingly eternal nature of patriarchal power. However, his incapability to take advantage of his simulated superiority, to acquire his opposite’s language, and to master the play of signification re-legitimizes the Lord’s power as the privileged binary concept and ensures the suppression of threatening signifiers that float beyond the Lord-beggar intervals. In opposition, Katherine’s powerful “annexation of the traditionally male domain of discourse” (Newman, “Renaissance Family Politics” 93) distances the audience from that dominant system by exposing its contradictions, undermining the ideology about women that is presented by the Katherine-Petrucchio plot. Katherine creates a rupture in the male-female dichotomy in which *man*, according to the method of logocentrism, occupied a position of dominance in that binary

system, as it was privileged by Western unconsciousness over *woman*. After so doing, Katherine becomes a marginalized entity belonging to the postmodern age, which F. Jameson describes as “empirical, chaotic, and heterogeneous” (1). Katherine deconstructs “the ways in which the two members of the opposition are not completely opposite, the ways in which they overlap or share some things in common” (Tyson 254). As a result, the central term (male) is subverted so that the marginalized term (female) can temporarily become central and destabilize—maybe even overthrow—the hierarchy. Notably, what differentiates both plots is that Sly disappears as “lord” after two scenes of the Induction, when the Lord decides he must restore his patriarchal sovereignty, the fixed locus he occupies, and solidify this play of binary opposites by excluding his opposite from the field and sending him back to his life as a subjected beggar. However, Katherine keeps talking, seemingly as a victimized wife but surreptitiously as a postmodern rebel.

Recent post-structural Shakespearean scholarship has stressed the extent to which Shakespeare’s comedies are every bit as political as his histories, for they illustrate Shakespeare’s appreciation that politics is a “labyrinthine world with no fixed signposts” (P. Smith 19); a world of social instability, where disguise and transformation instances “invite reflection on the possibilities for change both in people’s behavior and social circumstances” (Howards 160); a place that “abounds in the mystery of language and identity” (P. Smith 20) with statements like poor Sly’s “Upon my life, I am a lord indeed, / [a]nd not a tinker, nor Christopher Sly” (Induction 2.70–71) or Katherine’s “But sun it is not when you say it is not, / [a]nd the moon changes even as your mind” (4.6.20–21); a “world of uncertainty and bewilderment” into which the audience is taken (P. Smith 19); a world where characters are transformed into something they are not, where men disguise as women and women as men (at a time when the parts of female characters are played by teenage boys), and where servants

become masters and masters slaves. This world of “supposes,” as referred to by Cecil Seronsy, is one not only of mere mechanical “substitutions” of characters for one another by means of temporary outward disguise (15), such as in the case of Bianca’s suitors, but also of more subtle suppositions or assumptions adopted by Petruccio as a guiding principle for his role as “shrew tamer” and most importantly by Katherine as a pragmatic tactic in subverting social norms and the natural course of patriarchal power relations. This approach, one in which the text is rendered “perpetually self-destabilising,” has been taken up by critics “who wish to identify a postmodern Shakespeare” (Ward 112) and is one that this chapter adopts and endeavors to manifest in Katherine’s movement away from her original overt rebellion as shrew toward more subtle postmodern tactics of resistance, whereby she skillfully re-defines and destabilizes the male-female dichotomy by occupying a “third space,” by embodying a “third man” with a third dimension, an identity characteristic of Serres’ parasite (238). Katherine’s ability to implement playful, manipulative mechanisms in order to create an individual, an element of interference, in the midst of the collective and disrupt the transcendental center that weaves the “we” renders her, in Rortian terminology, an ironist.

Two of the gender assignments that were held by a common formulation of marital roles around the second half of the sixteenth century dictate the following: “The dutie of the man is, to bee skilfull in talke: and of the wife, to boast of silence” and “The dutie of the husband, is to bee Lord of all: and of the wife, to give account of all” (Orlin 187). Drawing special attention to these two notions in particular establishes the historical fact regarding all forms of public and domestic authority in Elizabethan England that were vested in men and heralds the tensions generated by loquacious women who neglect them. The fear of women rebelling against their traditional subservient role in patriarchal culture was widespread during the period from 1560 until the English Civil War (1642–1651): “The period was fraught with

anxiety about rebellious women” (Newman, “Renaissance Family Politics” 90–91). With the modern discovery of the individual, women as subjected entities in a patriarchal world revolted, creating what many historians have recognized as a “crisis of order” (Newman, “Renaissance Family Politics” 90). According to David Underdown’s account, women’s rebellion was through language; he observes that “women who were poor, social outcasts, widows or otherwise lacking in the protection of a family...were the most offenders” (120) in their use of words. In early modern times, a strong-willed woman was apt to be labeled as disorderly, a *shrew* who was “garrulous, domineering, and intractable” (Brown 1). Even if her “crime” involved nothing more than garrulousness, a shrew was physically punished and publically shamed for such offences by, for instance, being “put in a scold’s collar or ridden in a cart accompanied by a rough musical procession of villagers banging pots and pans” (Newman, “Renaissance Family Politics” 91) or by being fixed with “a torturous harness that fitted around a woman’s head with a metal bit that went into her mouth and prevented her from speaking” (Howard 164)—any kind of corporeal punishment that would tame a shrewish wife and hinder her talkativeness, in fear that it may “threaten and even disrupt reigning ideologies enforcing female subjection” (Brown 3). By contrast, the ideal wife was chaste, silent, and obedient.

Shakespeare wastes no time in establishing who the “shrew” of his play’s title is; he does that in the first scene where he presents Katherine’s public perception as sharp-tongued and “too rough” (1.1.53) for her initial suitors, Hortensio and Gremio, who insist on having mates “of gentler, milder mould” (1.1.60). Most men in the play, including her father Baptista, constantly remark how much Katherine’s behavior diverges from the norm and from Padua’s official patriarchal culture, characterizing her as a “stark mad” wench (1.1.69) in contrast to her sister Bianca in whose “silence” they see a “[m]aid’s mild behaviour and sobriety” (1.1.70–71). The two suitors value a mild disposition in a wife and thus prefer the submissive Bianca, who



readily yields to her father's will: "Sir, to your pleasure humbly I subscribe" (1.1.81), to the fiery Katherine—as would most men in Shakespeare's society whose conventional expectations, regarding women's role in marriage, indicate that a woman is bound to sacrifice her individuality in submission to her husband (next in succession to paternal authority) and, in turn, applaud "the sheeplike patience of a Bianca" (Brown 1). Because of her eccentric temperament, Katherine can be observed as a parasite that disrupts this two-dimensional signal between landowner and sheep, father and daughter, man and woman, Subject and subject, and threatens to upset the then-accepted order, in which the wife sacrifices her own will and submits to her husband's authority. That sacrifice seems to be intolerable to Katherine and, as a result, drives her to vocally and forthrightly defend her individuality, independence, and sense of self: "What, / shall I be appointed hours, as though belike I knew not what / to take and what to leave? Ha!" (1.1.102–104), replied Katherine as she disobeys her father who authoritatively ordered her to stay. The parasitic noise she produces "upsets the game" and "temporarily stops the system, makes it oscillate indefinitely"; its primary aim, as theorized by Serres, is to "[give] rise to a new system, an order that is more complex than the simple chain" (14), an order that consists of superior men, inferior women, and herself on the outside. Her rebellious rage can, therefore, be interpreted as a modern self-defensive tactic—one that comes as a reaction against a dominant patriarchal culture in which she struggles to be acknowledged as a person, rather than be treated as a pet or reified as a salable commodity in the marriage market.

Akin to Portia's reified role as the private property of a father who has deprived his daughter of freewill by transferring it onto caskets that hold her fate in marriage, Katherine and Bianca (like most women at that time) also suffer from their fathers' infliction of power upon their own will, for they both embody "a treasure the exchange of which assures patriarchal hegemony"—a mediating third term between father and husband (Newman, "Renaissance

Family Politics” 94). The consequence of their reification, like that of Portia’s objectification, is associated with silence, a state that ensured a woman’s place in the marriage market. This is made clear in the second scene when Katherine fights with and questions Bianca about her suitors, revealing the obvious relationship between Bianca’s compliance and her success with men, even with her father who always rejects Katherine and favors his obedient daughter. In that scene, Baptista links Katherine with the devil after he enters and sees his Bianca tied up and harassed—“For shame, thou hilding [worthless creature] of a devilish spirit” (2.1.26)—before he defensively underscores Bianca’s silence—“When did she cross thee with a bitter word?” (2.1.28). Hearing that, Katherine threatens to “be revenge’d” because of her sister’s “silence” (2.1.29) which, according to Newman, has “insured Bianca’s place in the male economy of desire and exchange” (“Renaissance Family Politics” 93):

What, will you not suffer me? Nay, now I see  
She is your treasure, she must have a husband.  
I must dance barefoot on her wedding day,  
And for your love to her lead apes in hell. (2.1.31–34)

Here, Katherine’s lines identify Bianca as an object of desire and possession, or as Hortensio calls her, “my treasure,” “the jewel of my life” (1.2.113–114), equating her personal worth with her father’s economic status. Baptista, who is known by Bianca’s suitors to be “very rich” (1.1.122), explains even more explicitly that “the human deeds he cares about are the deeds to land and property” (Slights 146):

‘Tis deeds must win the prize, and he of both  
That can assure my daughter greatest dower  
Shall have my Bianca’s love. (2.2.334–335)

Bianca’s natural silence and her instinctive disciplined behavior are, therefore, forms of *habitus* that guarantee her father’s love and, in turn, define her value on the marriage market, creating additional moral power relations of dependence representative of Padua’s official patriarchal

culture—a symbolic order that disguises its subjects’ economic motives and establishes the values and mores of an avaricious society.

At this point in the play, Bianca, like Sly, is caught and acted upon in a game of artificial social relations (accentuated by her father’s love and her suitors’ physical disguises as affluent scholars)—a superstructure that reflects the economic system underlying the patriarchal social field on which that game is practiced. The most prominent difference, however, is the fact that Bianca was born into the game, rendering the process of enculturation or interpellation slower than that of Sly and the power operated upon her even more disciplinary and opaque. The constant reinforcement of this process by her *habitus* ensures her admission and makes her “feel” for it and her incorporation into the constructed symbolic order more natural and, therefore, more gratifying and effective. Katherine, on the other hand, although also a native member in this same social field, “suspend[s] the commitment to the game that is implied in the feel for the game in order to reduce the world, and the actions performed in it, to absurdity, and to bring up questions about the meaning of the world and existence which people never ask when they are caught up in the game” (Bourdieu 66–67). Unlike Sly and Bianca, Katherine realizes that the symbolic order within which she—and other women—is confined as a subjected binary entity is “only a game,” a human construction that she autonomously decides to challenge by explicitly expressing herself using a “foreign language” rather than her society’s “mother tongue” (Bourdieu 67). Her “refusal to assume her proper place within the symbolic order of things” (Korda 118) and to master her world’s common code allows her to fulfill the first of the following three conditions which, according to Rorty, are essential for being an ironist:

- (1) She has radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses...;
- (2) she realizes that argument phrased in her present vocabulary can neither

underwrite nor dissolve these doubts; (3) ...she does not think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others, that it is in touch with a power not herself. (73)

Markedly, this first condition has been also realized by the three other major Shakespearean subjects that have been identified as potential individuals in this thesis (that is, Shylock, Romeo, and Juliet), for they have all expressed their dissatisfaction with their society's final vocabulary and in effect attempted to challenge it at some point in each corresponding play. The other two conditions will be addressed and further discussed later in this chapter.

What distinguishes Katherine is what appears to others as her unequivocal verbal fretting, actually her "linguistic protest" that is directed against "the role in patriarchal culture to which women are assigned, that of wife and object of exchange in the circulation of male desire" (Newman, *Fashioning Femininity* 39–40). The shrew's parasitic protest renders her figure a threat to the symbolic order of language—for linguistic freedom at that time was an index of identity and power which was confined to males—and turns her into a reified "unsalable commodity" (Korda 115). As pointed out by Joel Fineman, Katherine's linguistic excess underscores the way in which language always "carries with it a kind of surplus semiotic baggage, an excess of significance, whose looming, even if unspoken, presence cannot be kept quiet" (128), and Katherine did not keep quiet. Instead, through her independent appropriation of discourse, she makes it clear that "she will resist all attempts to make her anything other than what she thinks she is" (Seronsy 20); she refuses to allow any "argument phrased in her [official culture's final vocabulary]" to "dissolve" her skepticism (Rorty 73) and, by so doing, achieves individuality and fulfills Rorty's second condition as a potential ironist—one that is also realized by both Romeo and Juliet, who insist on being together regardless of the feud to which their families are committed, in contrast to Shylock who pledges to use and intensify Venetian laws and as a result loses his individuality. Katherine's autonomous claim,

therefore, poses a threat of semantic surplus, engenders a feeling of agitation in the characters around her, and in turn leads to a series of “‘fretful’ verbal confusions” with “the men who are her master[s]” (Fineman 127). The following excerpt, for instance, refers to Hortensio’s recount of Katherine’s unhappy lute lesson:

**BAPTISTA** Why then, thou canst not break her to the lute?  
**HORTENSIO** Why no, for she hath broke the lute to me.  
I did but tell her she mistook her frets...  
‘Frets, call you these?’ quoth she, ‘I’ll fume with them.’  
And with that word she struck me on the head. (2.1.145–147, 150–151)

Katherine refuses to play by the book, to use the well-positioned symmetrical frets and learn the established notes dictated by her instructor, to study the constructed language of music; she chooses to break the lute instead of being broken to it, to replace the instrument’s frets with her own verbal frettings, assuming her own proper position within the symbolic order of things. Her excessive consumption of meaning, therefore, renders her an unvendible commodity and alienates her from the marriage market. Her position as an estranged individual rather than an incorporated subject is that of an active (not passive) object of exchange, seeing that it is precisely “her *unvendibility* as a commodity on the marriage market that creates the dramatic dilemma to be solved by the taming narrative” (Korda 116). Katherine’s refusal to be yet another object, therefore, diverges from “traditional accounts of the commodification of or traffic in women” that illustrate women as “passive objects of exchange circulating between men” (Korda 118), and portrays Katherine as a potential ironist whose emerging role is that of a pragmatic manipulator of her status in a society defined by self-subsistent facts and capitalized Truths.

According to Rorty, and of course to mainstream deconstruction theory, the world is divided into two sorts of people: those who cling to the notion of “an order beyond time and change” which both “determines the point of human existence and establishes a hierarchy of

responsibilities” (xv) structured by “sentence-shaped chunks called ‘facts’” that exclude human mental states, and those who reject such an order and claim that sentences or facts are “elements of human languages” and that “human languages are human creations” (5). The former (or “nonintellectuals” as described by Rorty) attempt to make sense of the notion of a “nonhuman language” and thus capitalize the word “Truth” (similar to Derrida’s center, locus, or transcendental signified), favoring one arm of a binary opposition over the other and treating it as something “identical either with God or with the world as God’s project,” as something “great” that “will prevail” (Rorty 5). They—like Christians, Jews, Montagues, Capulets, Baptista(s), and Bianca(s)—live up to the convictions to which they are already committed “by the public, shared vocabulary [they] use in daily life” (Rorty vx); in other words, they insist on speaking the old meta-language and have no intention of changing that. In contrast, the latter (or “ironist intellectuals”) pragmatically “de-divinize the world” by dropping the notion of languages as representations and using vocabularies as tools to cope and deal with that world instead. Anti-representationalists, therefore, accept the argument that “since truth is a property of sentences, since sentences are dependent for their existence upon vocabularies, and since vocabularies are made by human beings, so are truths” (Rorty 21). Pragmatists like Katherine destabilize language by using old vocabularies to construct new ones in an attempt to “re-create themselves...to become a new person, one whom [they] as yet lack words to describe” as they believe “that we need not speak only the language of the tribe, that we may find our own words, that we have a responsibility to ourselves to find them” (Rorty xiv). Katherine, who is “trying to use the new language, to literalize the new metaphors,” regards those who cling to the old language of patriarchalism as “irrational”—as “victims of passion, prejudice, superstition, the dead hand of the past, and so on” (Rorty 48). She “see[s] a woman may be made a fool / [i]f she had not a spirit to resist” (3.3.91–92).

Katherine, like Romeo and Juliet, illustrates her circumvention of her socially defined role by defying ideology and *habitus* and, sequentially, attaining individuality. Through her perceived shrewishness, she “voices an irresistible imperative: women should resist” (Harris 107) and succeeds in her explicit manifestation of her worry “that the process of socialization which turned her into a human being by giving her a language may have given her the wrong language, and so turned her into the wrong kind of human being” (Rorty 75). What differentiates her, however, is her constant awareness of the contingency and fragility of any final vocabulary, and thus of herself as a constructed entity. While Romeo and Juliet, for instance, refuse to allow ideology to underwrite their doubts in their society’s final vocabulary, they end up replacing this current set of words with another holistic center, with that of “Love,” and consequently end their lives in the attempt to preserve this stronger power that unites them. Katherine, conversely, does not think of her vocabulary as a capitalized Truth, one that is “in touch with a power not herself” (Rorty 73) and that is beyond the dynamic instability of language. She gradually begins to realize the third and last condition to becoming an ironist as she, with the development of the plot, finds herself unable to see any set of vocabularies—not even her own—as one “universal metavocabulary” but, like poststructuralists, simply embraces the inescapability of contingency and of the ambiguities of language and plays “the new off against the old” (Rorty 73). By opposing common sense and the final vocabulary to which those around her are habituated, Katherine and her new metaphors—“the new language game which the radicals, the youth, or the avant-garde are playing”—are viewed as “a matter of ‘fashion’ or ‘the need to rebel’ or ‘decadence’” (Rorty 48), as a threat to the symbolic order of things that must be tamed:

**GREMIO**        Why will you mew [confine (like a falcon)] her up,  
                         Signor Baptista, for this fiend of hell,  
                         And make her bear the penance of her tongue? (1.1.87–89)

Gremio, as most other men in the play, questions Katherine's shrewish tongue or "new way of speaking" and requests that it be treated "beneath the level of conversation"—a matter that Rorty believes is usually "turned over to psychologists or, if necessary, the police" (48). In Katherine's case, Baptista turns her over neither to a psychologist nor to a police officer, but to Petruccio, "the quintessential abuser" (Detmer 284), whose enthusiasm for courting and taming Katherine is driven by his overt will to marry for money and by his interest in competing in both public and private displays of machismo—both underscoring the play's exploration of marriage as an economic activity and of patriarchal hegemony, respectively.

As previously mentioned, Katherine's linguistic "fretting" at the start of the play is depicted as an impediment to her official commodification on the marriage market, a situation adjusted after Petruccio's arrival to Padua and his explicit announcement of his intention of finding a bride "rich enough to be Petruccio's wife" (1.1.64) in exchange for money or surplus capital—be she "as foul as was Florentius' love, / [a]s old as Sibyl, and as curst and shrewd / [a]s Socrates' Xanthippe or a worse" (1.1.66–68)—for "wealth is burden [chief theme] of my wooing dance": "I come to wive it wealthily in Padua; / [i]f wealthily, then happily in Padua" (1.1.65, 72–73). Grumio further intensifies Petruccio's materialism when he remarks that for enough money, Petruccio would marry "a puppet," a clothing ornament, or a toothless "old trot" with "as many diseases as two-and-fifty horses"; all because "nothing comes amiss so money comes withal" (1.1.76–78). Unlike Hortensio, who "would not wed her for a mine of gold" because of her "shrewd and froward" nature (1.1.88, 86), Petruccio will for the sake of capital (half of Baptista's lands and twenty thousand crowns) "board her though she chide as loud / [a]s thunder when the clouds in autumn crack" (1.1.91–92). As more characters continue to warn Petruccio about the irrationality of Katherine's new insubordinate metaphors, he begins to view wedding her as more of a challenge that feeds his masculinity than a profitable



opportunity. He proclaims that getting married to “curst Katherine” (1.2.178) and taming “a woman’s tongue” (1.2.201) could not possibly be worse than hearing “lions roar” or the sea “[r]age like an angry boar” or “great ordnance in the field” (1.2.195–198)—a challenge deemed heroic for it is compared to the impossible tasks of “great Hercules” (1.2.53). This here reminds us of men in *Romeo and Juliet*’s patriarchal Verona, who use their machismo in form of physical strength to “thrust” women (them being the “weaker vessels”) “to the wall” (1.1.14–15) as a sign of overt dominance, representative of sovereign power. However, what differentiates Petruccio, the shrew-tamer, is his decision to “fight his battle with the shrew ‘in verbal kind’” (Korda 116), using a subtler mechanism that symbolizes the modern disciplinary gaze of power, which shapes the subject’s *habitus* and correspondingly determines her place within the symbolic order of things—a role to which Katherine actively adapts and skillfully learns to manipulate using more advanced, postmodern tactics of resistance.

Whereas Shakespeare developed *The Taming of the Shrew* from shrew- and wife-taming standard tales that adopted physical and public punishment as methods of discipline in pre-modern and early modern periods, his play “participates in a cultural tradition that accepts coercive bonding and oppression as long as they are free of physical violence” (Detmer 289). Physical exploitation of shrewish wives was authorized by a patriarchal culture and was, therefore, highly regarded as a “natural” method for dominating the household; this was before modern communities and ideological institutions intervened and limited the use of violence, before the mechanisms of power were adjusted so that they “frame the everyday lives of individuals,” before this “adaptation and refinement of the machinery” came to “[place] under surveillance their everyday behaviour, their identity, their activity, their apparently unimportant gestures” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 77), before replacing overt sovereign power with covert disciplinary power. By choosing to participate in a battle of words and wit, Petruccio

employs nonviolent coercive behavior that situates his method of taming “as a new and improved kind of dominance” because of the way its representation “coincides with the beginning of a modern reform model, a model that, by locating violence only in physical injury, denies the inherent violence of domination itself” (Detmer 274).

By making dominance more subtle, the dominant’s power is brought down to the level of the dominated, rendering the patriarchal Subject-subject power relation that defines Petruccio and Katherine less eccentric and more “gentle.” Reformers at the time of Shakespeare were not interested in improving women’s situation and, therefore, did not advocate gender equality; they were mainly concerned about *improving* men’s ability to subordinate using strategies other than physical violence, provided that women remain subjected and obedient: “Things are also best done when the will is allured, rather than the body compelled... [I]f obedience comes not from the heart, can it last long?” (Whately 162). By choosing to use “his rope-tricks” and to “throw a figure in [Katherine’s] face”—in reference to rhetorical feats and a figure of speech, respectively—and so “disfigure her with it” (1.2.107–109), Petruccio illustrates the reformers’ argument that authorizes the husband’s rule by “policy” instead of by violence, “not because it was humane but because it was more effective” (Dolan 14). Before his first interaction with Katherine, Petruccio announces in a soliloquy his disciplinary policy, his plan of maneuvering Katherine’s will with his use of language, “by playing a calculated game of supposes” and rhetorical contradictions (Seronsy 20):

Say that she rail, why then I’ll tell her plain  
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale.  
Say that she frown, I’ll say she looks as clear  
As morning roses newly washed with dew.  
Say she be mute and will not speak a word,  
Then I’ll commend her volubility,  
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence. (2.1.168–174)

By so doing, Petruccio affirms his rhetorical sway over her and establishes “a shifting semantic field” (Hutcheon 325) on which they first engage in a battle of wits, building pun upon pun, hyperbole upon hyperbole, metaphor upon metaphor.

While Petruccio’s soft disciplinary method might “point to a conception which makes rhetoric a matter of power, control, and coercion, turning the rhetor into a decidedly masculine figure who is represented as a ruler, a civilizer” (Rebhorn 295), Katherine’s linguistic playfulness and irony allow her to respond eloquently to his sarcasm and double-entendres, confronting his patriarchal whimsy and openly criticizing the patriarchal system of wooing and marriage. Katherine, a “female character who is a master of the field of discourse,” unexpectedly finds that Petruccio “is able to engage with [her] in ways that the other characters cannot” (Hutcheon 318, 325) because his rhetoric is similar to her own in puns and wordplay: “Where did you study all this goodly speech?” she inquires (2.1.255) after he presents her with unflattering reports he has heard of her—“rough, and coy, and sullen” (2.1.236)—and what he has *supposedly* found in her—“pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous, . . . soft, and affable” (2.1.238, 244). By supposing qualities in Katherine that no one else ever suspects and bringing them into realization, even if he did not truly mean them, Petruccio helps Katherine appreciate the force of the claim that “truth is a mobile army of metaphors” and is, therefore, made rather than found (Rorty 28). At this point, one might suspect Petruccio is a potential ironist for he is also a “person who uses words as they have never before been used” (Rorty 28), similar to Shylock’s “Hath not a Jew eyes?” speech and Romeo and Juliet’s “What’s in a name?” dialogue, in which they all use metaphors in an attempt to re-describe *their* situations and identities as subjects. However, while Petruccio succeeds in using enough metaphors to de-divinize the Truth about Katherine being a shrew, “For she’s not froward, but modest as the dove / She is not hot, but temperate as the morn” (2.1.285–286), he fails to “appreciate [his]

*own* [emphasis added] contingency” and to, “by [his] own sheer strength,” break out “of one perspective, one metaphoric, into another” (Rorty 28). That “one” perspective is defined by his official culture, which imposes on its subjects their discursive identities by instituting and internalizing Truths that generate self-inflicted discipline and *habitus*. Therefore, Petruccio’s failure to cunningly elude ideology’s firm grip renders the above-made supposition (about him being a potential ironist) implausible. Living in a patriarchal society, it being his official culture, Petruccio is by “nature” a dominant male, a Subject whose main intention is the acquirement of power in terms of gender superiority, machismo, and materialism—final vocabularies that he is unable to substitute, for he (unlike Katherine) “insist[s] that there is really only one true lading-list, one true description of the human situation, one universal context of our lives” (Rorty 28). His insistence is evident in the reiteration of his intention (even after his destabilizing conversation with Katherine) to forcefully shape her identity so that it conforms to social norms and expectations, in exchange for the dowry offered by her own father:

And therefore setting all this chat aside,  
Thus in plain terms: your father hath consented  
That you shall be my wife, your dowry ’greed on,  
And will you, nill you, I will marry you.  
...  
Thou must be married to no man but me,  
For I am he am born to tame you, Kate,  
And bring you from a wild Kate [a pun on wildcat] to a Kate  
Conformable as other household Kates. (2.1.260–263, 267–270)

Petruccio’s shifting metaphors followed by his explicit declaration that reaffirms his primary objective not only set the terms for and foreshadow the nature of their future power relationship, but also give grounds for Katherine’s sudden and unanticipated lapse into silence.

Katherine, as a subjected woman, lives during the same historical epoch, in the same patriarchal society, and is exposed to the same incorporated set of norms as does Petruccio and all the other characters in the play. Her femininity, like Petruccio's masculinity, is constructed as a norm with a specific set of *habitus* that internalizes, by unconscious assimilation, accepted attitudes and behavior so that they become part of her nature. However unlike other women, such as Bianca, whose incorporated lack of autonomy generate their passive performance, Katherine possesses the conscious need "to demonstrate that [she] is not a copy or replica as merely a special form of an unconscious need everyone has" (Rorty 43). All her life she shunned that "blind impress which chance has given [her]" and attempted to "make a self for [her]self" by forthrightly using shrewish terms that her society refuses to listen to (Rorty 43)—an overt strategy that resulted in her being put off by most men and in her consequent alienation from that society. It is interesting to note that it was not until Petruccio and his indefatigable nature came into play that she decides to "come to terms with [that] blind impress" by adopting a more subtle tactic, one by which she covertly "redefine[s]" her social status "in terms which are, if only marginally, [her] own" (Rorty 43). Regardless of his intentions, Petruccio does not reject Katherine like her other suitors do and, in fact, gives her no other choice except to marry him. Now convinced that open resistance will not pay, she decides that this might be her one and only chance to escape her father's taxonomy and maybe take on a new social role and pragmatically integrate herself into her surroundings. Akin to Portia's Bassanio, "[t]he amiable ruffian Petruchio is actually an ideal—that is to say an overdetermined—choice for Kate in her quest to free herself from a household situation far more maddening than Petruchio's antic zaniness" (Bloom, "An Essay" 157). Just as Petruccio uses Katherine for the achievement of his personal objectives, she uses him as one of the tools at hand—as her promising way out, her covert *Ausgang*.

By adopting silence as a tactic to remove herself from one physical context—wherein she represented nothing more than an unvendible commodity that “lay fretting” with irritation while in her father’s possession (2.1.320) as she was deteriorating in value—and transpose into another more valuable and socially acceptable support system, where her *self* now symbolizes a lot more worth than it used to, Katherine “transform[s] [herself] into a unit of meaning” recognizable by her dominant sociocultural economy (de Certeau 149):

**PETRUCCIO** She is my goods, my chattels. She is my house,  
My household-stuff, my field, my barn,  
My horse, my ox, my anything,  
And here she stands, touch her whoever dare. (3.3.101–104)

Just like Shylock as “Jew,” Romeo as “Montague,” and Juliet as “Capulet,” Katherine, who was branded “with a red-hot iron with the mark of the Name [as ‘shrew,’ ‘witch,’ ‘devil,’ or ‘intolerable curst’] and of the Law [which denied shrews for they could not be tagged with a price in transactions]” and who was consequently turned “into a symbol of the Other, something *said, called, named*” (de Certeau 140), needed a way out. She, who was not even protected by her own father, had “to make do with what [she has]” in order to “[get] around the rules of a constraining space” (de Certeau 18) that openly exposed her to the gaze of power. Even if her “quiet” has been translated into her father and Petruccio’s “gain” (2.1.322), it has granted her an official position within the societal field that she had been denied access to. Now a product of the patriarchal apparatus, Katherine is in the eyes of the powerful another submissive copy, nothing more than Petruccio’s “anything”—a replica that, unlike any other, acknowledges and appropriates contingency through her manipulation and consumption of raw materials that have been pre-defined by law, pre-structured by the agent’s past, and are therefore “appropriated chances” set by the “power relations of the present” (Bourdieu 64). By

so doing, Katherine autonomously takes part in and plays this power game in order to make her future a reality.

According to Michel de Certeau, a “strategy” is actualized when “a subject of will and power” (Petruccio) succeeds in being “isolated from an ‘environment’” and assumes a place that “serve[s] as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it” (xix). Conversely, a “tactic” is adopted by a subject (Katherine) who does not distinguish herself as an Other or “the other as a visible totality”; a tactic “insinuates itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance” (de Certeau xix). Petruccio’s strategy—“the calculus of force-relationships” (de Certeau xix)—becomes possible straight after marriage; after Katherine is officially (in matrimonial law) reified as his “anything” and is hustled away from her own wedding feast; after he claims her as his property and storms away towards his private house in Mantua, the only place or “base” at his private disposal where his strategy “can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances” (de Certeau xix)—this is where he plans to secludedly bend his subject to his will. In a hurry to exert his disciplinary power and implement his strategy, Petruccio threatens whoever “stops [his] way in Padua” (3.3.106) including Katherine, who already begins to show signs of doubt in the tools and tactic she has chosen to subvert her official culture—a postmodern attitude that places her in the position which Jean-Paul Sartre called “meta-stable,” wherein an ironist renounces “the attempt to formulate criteria of choice between final vocabularies” (Rorty 73). Should she tenderly try to convince her husband to stay (“Now, if you love me, stay” (3.3.77))? Should she stand up for her values and refuse to “be gone till I please myself,” overtly expressing how women must have “a spirit to resist” (3.3.83–92)? Or should she adhere to her initial tactic of silence and leave? Katherine, for the moment, decides to keep quiet and comply with Petruccio’s strategic

plan seeing that this was neither the right time nor the right place for shifting tactics. A tactic, as phrased by de Certeau, “depends on time” as it is “always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized ‘on the wing’” (xix), and this was not yet the right opportunity for her to seize.

After Katherine’s abduction or “mock rescue” (Detmer 286), they both arrive at Petruccio’s private residence, where he announces in soliloquy his falcon-taming scheme that involves acts of hierarchy and coercion on the one hand and kindness and provision on the other:

Thus have I politicly begun my reign,  
And ’tis my hope to end successfully.  
My falcon now is sharp and passing empty,  
And till she stoop she must not be full-gorged,  
For then she never looks upon her lure.

...

She ate no meat today, nor none shall eat.  
Last night she slept not, nor tonight she shall not.  
As with the meat, some underserved fault  
I’ll find about the making of the bed,

...

This is a way to kill a wife with kindness,  
And thus I’ll curb her mad and headstrong humour. (4.1.168–172, 177–180, 188–189)

By isolating Katherine from those who could intervene on her behalf and depriving her of food, clothing, and sleep “under name of perfect love” (4.3.12), Petruccio illustrates the modern disciplinary gaze of power that controls the subject through the covert implementation of power. His use of both the words “politicly” and “reign” in one sentence exhibits the amalgamation of both the pre-modern display of sovereign power and the modern exercise of disciplinary power—a combination that dramatizes how oppression under the guise of non-physical violence and benevolence (after the ideological incorporation of physical violence within the system of power) justifies Petruccio’s taming “policy,” him being the dominant entity in this power relation, for he gains the audience as well as the other characters’ sympathy



and support. By attempting to rule “politically” (that is, cunningly or with careful calculation), Petruccio means to “kill [his] wife with kindness” (4.1.188) and thus “confirms his control of her [new] environment” (Detmer 286). Comprehending Petruccio’s chauvinistic strategy, Katherine voices her strongest bid for individuality and linguistic freedom before she substitutes her fluctuating silent-rebellious tactic with a more effusively compliant, yet subtle and pragmatic, tactic.

In response to Petruccio’s systematic destruction of her will, when he tries to dispose of the cap the tailor has made for her, Katherine openly expresses her vital need to speak in one last eloquent speech wherein her sense of self and autonomy are still perceptible:

Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak,  
And speak I will. I am no child, no babe.  
Your betters have endured me say my mind,  
And if you cannot, best you stop your ears.  
My tongue will tell the anger of my heart,  
Or else my heart concealing it will break,  
And rather than it shall I will be free  
Even to the uttermost as I please in words. (4.3.73–80)

This speech, which has already been referenced in the Introduction of this thesis, accentuates Katherine’s individuality and heralds her long speech at the very end of the play when her self-development culminates and she is granted the title of ironist (a speech that will be discussed toward the end of this chapter). At the time being, questioning “whether [her] use of tools is inefficient” rather than worrying about her beliefs (her different sets of vocabularies) being contradictory is still in process (Rorty 12). Petruccio does “stop [his] ears” and pretends to hear in her words merely a comment on a cap: “Why, thou sayst true. It is a paltry cap...I love thee well in that thou lik’st it not” (4.3.81–83). While Katherine may be free in words, her words fall upon deaf ears; she now finds that the tool she thought she might be able to better use on this new outlying battlefield—that is, Petruccio’s house, far away from her society’s official

field on which she fought scores of intolerable loquacious battles—is inefficient. Her outspoken use of language in an attempt to resist and be heard as an individual is denied by Petruccio and undermined by his covert performances of absolute power and control mitigated by compassion. In recognition of Katherine’s submission to his authority after her fruitless efforts “to cross” him, Petruccio “kindly” offers her a temporary escape from her seclusion “[t]o feast and sport us at [her] father’s house” (4.4.177) but threatens to withdraw that offer if she does not approve of his unreasonable interpretation of the present time being seven, after she “dare[s] assure [him]” that “’tis almost two” (4.4.183):

It shall be seven ere I go to horse.  
Look what I speak, or do, or think to do,  
You are still crossing it. Sirs, let’t alone.  
I will not go today, and ere I do  
It shall be what o’clock I say it is. (4.4.185–189)

Shakespeare does not state whether Katherine seconds his perverse claim; however, the audience soon learns (two scenes later) that they, accompanied by Hortensio, embark on this journey back to Padua, indicating she has complied. This time, nonetheless, her “intellectual synthesis” of all that she has experienced so far “takes the form...not of a discourse, but of the decision itself, the act and manner in which the opportunity is ‘seized’”; Katherine does not speak, but autonomously *decides* to “manipulate events in order to turn them into ‘opportunities’” (de Certeau xix). The opportunity she seizes is one she’s been given by her husband: leaving the environment where he can uninterruptedly put his strategic disciplinary model into practice.

Unlike Romeo and Juliet, who tried to escape the ideological claws of their official culture, Katherine wanted access into Petruccio’s game—a game she learns to play and participates in “with wit and detachment,” one in which she appears to be “more like a partner...rather than an object used in it” (Novy 272). According to F. Jameson’s

“hypercrowd,” a “collective practice” that corresponds to a “total space” wherein “individuals move and congregate” (40), individuals must relinquish their individuality in order to win a place in this hypercrowd. By submitting to the game, Katherine becomes a pragmatic visitor (a parasite) to Padua’s ideological grand narrative of patriarchy (the host), one that desires possession of her as a subject but rejects her admission as an individual, in which she consumes opportunities so as to contingently compose her own postmodern “virtual narratives” (F. Jameson 42). On their way back to her father’s house, Katherine proves herself to be the ultimate tactful consumer not only of opportunities, but also of words or of “a language determined by the external world as she sees it” (Novy 271). As an ironist-in-making who realizes “that anything can be made to look good or bad by being redescribed” (Rorty 73), she finds it easy to re-define that external world and perhaps join in creating a new world in which she can persist in her “characteristic ‘masculine’ linguistic exuberance while masquerading as an obedient wife” (Newman, “Renaissance Family Politics” 96). In another attempt to test her compliance, Petruccio claims that the moon is shining, not the sun, a re-description supported by Katherine’s new tactic of resistance whereby she “begins to ‘see’ the world...through Petruchio’s eyes” (Detmer 288) and “learn[s] to speak in a way that ensures that she will be understood” (Hutcheon 325):

**PETRUCCIO** I say it is the moon.

**KATHERINE** I know it is the moon.

**PETRUCCIO** Nay then you lie, it is the blessèd sun.

**KATHERINE** The God be blessed, it is the blessèd sun,  
But sun it is not when you say it is not,  
And the moon changes even as your mind.  
What you will have it named, even that it is,  
And so it shall be still for Katherine. (4.6.16–23)

While her response might signify that she has surrendered her *self* as hostage, subjected and tamed, and that the war is over—or as announced by Hortensio: “The field is won” (4.6.24)—

Katherine proves that she “does not lose her love for wordplay and language games” but instead “learns to harness this enthusiasm, and by utilizing the principles of *imitatio* and *inventio* she becomes a very effective rhetorician” (Hutcheon 326). Katherine does not only imitate the language of her oppressor, but also improves upon it. This accentuates her self-consciousness about the power of discourse, her playfulness and irony, and her techniques of linguistic masquerade: “be it moon or sun or what you please, / [a]nd if you please to call it a rush-candle / [h]enceforth I vow it shall be so for me” (4.6.13–15)—postmodern concepts that validate Derrida’s well-known statement, “[t]here is nothing outside of the text” (*Of Grammatology* 158), which reinforces the notion of the eradication of a center (of one transcendental signified) and its replacement with a surplus of signifiers. In a poststructuralist sense, one that has been anticipated by Shakespeare’s pragmatism, ultimate knowledge is no longer present at the center of the universe waiting for us to discover it, but has taken the form of a construct that is formulated (and thereafter re-formulated) by means of a profusion of significations present at our utter disposal. Implying Petruccio is mad (“the moon changes even as your mind”), introducing the idea that the sun is a “rush-candle,” and calling an old man they encounter a “[y]oung budding virgin” (4.6.38) before claiming her eyes “have been bedazzled with the sun” she had just asserted was the moon (4.6.47) are, therefore, all signs of Katherine’s pragmatic power to contingently re-construct or whittle down any Truth into an over-abundance of scattered signifiers using her rhetorical prowess.

Katherine’s final speech marks the zenith of her self-development through which she exhibits her mastery of rhetoric and shows herself as an autonomous, postmodern ironist. Now that Katherine has, in the eyes of her official patriarchal culture, learned to “show more sign of her obedience” and to display “[h]er new-built virtue and obedience” (5.2.121–122), she finds the act of delivering a speech in public (one in which she will certainly be heard) achievable, as

long as she uses “their traditional language—not a language subject to scientific verification but one which serves as a common code reinforcing its society’s beliefs about its members’ spheres” (Novy 276). Katherine seizes that opportunity whereby she gets to play her prescribed social role using the blocks of letters and words of knowledge that are always already present—the raw elements found in her society’s final vocabulary—with the intention of creating (or cooking) personalized contingencies or mini truths to thwart the system. Instead of speaking her earlier language of revolt and anger, she uses language eloquently to dwell on the language of patriarchy, “recover[ing] the place of her exploitation by language, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it” (Miller 38). Alert to the game of truths and to the pragmatic idea about words not reflecting reality since they are efficient only in specific contexts, Katherine uses her society’s holistic masculine logic to secure a place in its hypercrowd. She, at first, makes explicit that for women “[t]hy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, / [t]hy head, thy sovereign” and rationalizes the political and ideological role of the wife, who is compelled to offer “[s]uch duty as the subject owes the prince” and is stigmatized as “a foul contending rebel / [a]nd graceless traitor” when “she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour, / [a]nd not obedient to his honest will” (5.2.150–151, 159–163). After overtly displaying the elements of hierarchy in her definition of marriage, Katherine activates her covert, parasitic voice in an attempt to generate potentially productive disruptions that may re-define the patriarchal binary system and possibly result in the formation of a new one, where no meta-language but only pragmatic vocabularies subsist, a system characteristic of Rorty’s “liberal society” (44). She offers women subtler advice regarding their behavior toward their husbands while rhetorically questioning that behavior with respect to their natural physical attributes:

I am ashamed that women are so simple,  
To offer war where they should kneel for peace,  
Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway

When they are bound to serve, love, and obey.  
Why are our bodies soft, and weak, and smooth,  
Unapt to toil and trouble in the world,  
But that our soft conditions and our hearts  
Should well agree with our external parts? (5.2.165–172)

Katherine's irony becomes noticeable in the second half of this excerpt, where the "discipline of [her] rhetoric" describes the "'turns' or tropes" of which the final vocabulary she is using "can be both the site and the object" of manipulations—these are "related to the ways of changing (seducing, persuading, making use of) the will of another (the audience)" (de Certeau xx). The line "I am ashamed that women are so simple" is that on which Katherine centers the manipulation of her audience's will. Is she ashamed that women, such as Bianca and Hortensio's wife, are foolish because they disobey their sovereign husbands? Or is it because they fail to develop tactics of resistance the way she does?

Whereas Shakespeare does not provide his audience with an obvious interpretation of Katherine's intentions, her pragmatic, meta-stable attitude implies "she is advising women how to rule absolutely, while feigning obedience" (Bloom, "An Essay" 161)—an advice representative of her own "subservience as pretense" (Newman, "Renaissance Family Politics" 97). Her ability (in accordance with the analyses that have been made in this chapter) to comprehend the postmodern concept that "most of reality is indifferent to our descriptions of it, and that the human self is created by the use of a vocabulary rather than being adequately or inadequately expressed in a vocabulary" (Rorty 7) rationalizes the indifference she demonstrates toward her society's contingent description of her *self*. The manner in which she uses the words "strength" and "weakness" interchangeably (5.2.178) while preaching about the significance of "true obedience" (5.2.157) renders her own submissiveness "less sincere than it purports to be" (Bloom, "An Essay" 163). Unlike other linguistically powerful Shakespearean heroines, such as Portia, who "must don male attire in order to speak" against "patriarchal

structures and evaluations of women in which their silence is most highly prized” (Newman, “Renaissance Family Politics” 99), Katherine teaches the art of her own will by using a more subtle tactic of resistance: by creating shifting metaphors that allow her to ostensibly cling to Elizabethan patriarchal ideology while, simultaneously, displaying its contradictions and italicizing its constructed nature. According to Mario DiGangi, *The Taming of the Shrew* exposes “the gaps and inconsistencies in gender ideologies that open space for resistance to that power” (92); it uncovers innumerable pre-determined trajectories that are rendered, by ironists and tactful consumers, unreadable to the invisible eyes of power. Throughout the play, as Katherine skillfully ascends the trajectory of the self from subjecthood, to individuality, to irony, she demonstrates postmodern ways of weaving her personalized tactics and rhetorical skills into the texturology of the dominant order. By learning to “manipulate the tensions within [her] own [modern] epoch in order to produce the beginnings of the next [postmodern] epoch” (Rorty 50), she proficiently becomes a Barthean producer, a Lévi-Straussian bricoleur, a Rortian ironist whose strength lays in her personalized procedures of consumption, which she employs in order to thwart the dominant cultural economy, elude discipline, and adapt it to her own interests and needs.

## Conclusion

Subjecthood—the state or condition of being a subject, of being submissive to an established authority—is one main aspect that the Shakespearean characters I have chosen to examine in this thesis have in common. It is a restrictive attribute that Shylock, Romeo, Juliet, and Katherine willingly choose to accept and treat as an advantage, a stimulus that triggers their psychological maturity and revolutionary responses, by which each character naturally challenges the strictures of his or her official culture in the attempt to transgress the parameters that define it and consequently attain individuality, a pre-requisite to achieving irony. The always-already subjects—a Jew, a son of Montague, a daughter of Capulet, and a maiden-in-waiting—refuse to adopt their societies' final vocabularies that had stamped them long before they were born. These capitalized “Truths,” in this case Religion, Family, Patriarchy, and Gender, as referred to by Rorty and other poststructuralist theorists, have been observed and illustrated by Shakespeare as ideological strategies that maintain their hold on subjects through binary oppositions.

As I have shown in this thesis, Shakespeare envisaged not only the ideological but also the *contingent* effect of power on the self. Via his defiant characters, Shakespeare exposes these binary oppositions and deconstructs them, defies the injustices and prejudices of his time and redresses them. In order to provide a comprehensive discussion of the contingent movement and maturation (or attempt thereof) of each character's selfhood from subjecthood to individuality to irony, I have principally used the postmodern theoretical approaches of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Louis Althusser, and Richard Rorty, and have linked the three eras of pre-modernity, modernity, and postmodernity around the idea of the self to manifest



Shakespeare's prescience and accentuate his proto-postmodern tendencies as relevant to contemporary theory.

As I have explored in Chapter 1, the self in the pre-modern era struggled against monarchical hegemony which, according to Foucault, was exercised visibly on the subject's body by disciplinary methods such as public torture and executions. This, in turn, reflected a strictly hierarchical and overt Subject-subject power relation, one that was initially sustained by the sovereign's discernible power of life and death, later attributed to a more abstract and omnipresent Absolute Knowledge or Truth, namely Religion in the case of Shylock, the subjected Jew, whose religious and racial persecution comes as a result of medieval prejudice. As a reaction to the earlier expulsion of Jews from England, Shakespeare, in *The Merchant of Venice*, portrays the medieval age as a brutal period that instigated an oppressive social order and a discriminatory mechanism of subjecthood. A Jew in an early modern Christian community, which has been shaped by its pre-modern stereotypical beliefs that characterize Jews as monstrous, Shylock is provided with the potentiality to disentangle himself from the modern discursive grid of power relations and, consequently, to achieve individuality. In an attempt to successfully move up the trajectory of the self, Shylock voices out his agitation and request for justice, showing strength and intelligence in the language he speaks. He, however, only reaches the edge that parts subjecthood and individuality due to his overwhelming desire to take revenge: Shylock's insistence on his one pound of flesh and his pledge to intensify his society's final vocabularies—those that have kept him and his people in subjection for so long—justify his failure to move upwards instead of downwards toward subjecthood.

The self during the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment was initially believed to have taken on a more autonomous role, that of individuality, as it experienced the economic, political, literary, and social changes that were in effect at that time. As I have shown in

Chapter 2, the modern discovery of the individual, or what came to be known as the “Renaissance Man,” occurred as a result of dissatisfaction or the inability to comply with the propagated dominant order that adopts a single capitalized Truth. Romeo and Juliet both possess that sense of individualism, which they decide to put into practice in order to express their disapproval of being subjected within the established confines of the patriarchal Montague-Capulet community that they persistently attempt to escape. Observant of the covert disciplinary power of ideological discourses—or ISAs in Althusserian terminology—that have worked to capture emerging individuals, Shakespeare endows his eponymous characters with an attitude of modernity and the ability to self-fashion themselves, and thus provides them with a space in which subversive thoughts may be explored, the dominant order challenged, limits and boundaries contested, and individuality achieved. Interpellated as immature adolescent subjects, Romeo and Juliet struggle against the grip of ideology that confines them within the controlling institution of the Montague-Capulet feud as it tenaciously attempts to moor them to the bottom of the trajectory every time they try to ascend it. Prefiguring postmodern and poststructuralist theories, Shakespeare, via both lovers, meditates on interpellative names and on the fatal consequence that would indubitably come as a result of protesting against and renouncing them. Romeo and Juliet, in contrast to Shylock, refuse to surrender their individuality no matter what the outcome, and so choose to perish as subjects at the cost of their own individual, although virtual, freedom.

With the growth of a capitalist economy, the opacity of ultimate power continued to increase until it gradually dissipated into the constructed everyday practices of and social relations among subjects, only to become invisibly contingent. As I have illustrated in Chapter 3 with Sly and Bianca, these discursive practices, or what Bourdieu terms *habitus*, a new covert form of domination, affected human beings’ ability to transform their self and, thus, their

capacity to practice true freedom and individuality. However, postmodern critical theorists such as Derrida, F. Jameson, and Rorty have criticized and deconstructed this modern theory to reveal the contingent nature of incorporated ideologies, one that allows certain individuals, namely Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*, to pragmatically use her society's final vocabularies as tools to de-center her identity and sense of self and emerge as a postmodern ironist. In my third chapter, Katherine is initially portrayed as a subject positioned on the weaker side of the binary opposition that places her, a woman, at a disadvantage in a modern, patriarchal world. My claim in this thesis is that Shakespeare defies this superficial understanding of established Truths that determines the nature of selfhood, long before the postmodern and post-structural theoretical framework came into existence. Shakespeare exemplifies this by equipping Katherine with the necessary postmodern attitude for her to deconstruct and, in effect, to destabilize the hierarchy that marginalizes her. Katherine's capability to shrewdly express her individuality before she begins to use language so as to manipulate and potentially re-define the orthodox system in which she lives accelerates her progression toward the third and last level on the trajectory of the self, that of an ironist, which she realizes both tactfully and pragmatically.

I believe that this thesis has added to previous studies the postmodern concepts of resistance and evasion, which I claim had been prefigured by Shakespeare. These methods lay the foundations of the trajectory assembled here, which meticulously traces the *self* development of each character, prospectively from subject to individual to ironist. I hope this contribution paves the way to further, related avenues of investigations, but this time centered on Shakespeare's contemporaries, notably Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd, George Chapman, Ben Jonson, John Marston, and John Fletcher, in order to see the ways in which they may have adopted this trajectory towards the emancipation of the self.



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