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Sharif Mohammad Shahidullah ^α & Mahbub Alam ^σ

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I. INTRODUCTION

The history of English literature would be different from now and would remain incomplete if there were no Shakespeare, who is a versatile genius and a universal playwright. Therefore, knowing about Shakespeare is always a matter of attraction. According to Lois Potter, one of the prominent biographers of Shakespeare, the Stratford-upon-Avon was the birth place of Shakespeare and he "was born on Wednesday 26th April 1564 and died on 23rd April 1616" (Potter, 2012). All through his career he composed 39 plays and 154 sonnets. Shakespeare is mostly famous for his groundbreaking tragedies and comedies. His plays and sonnets appeal for their sense of love, romanticism, humanity, gender roles and above all feminism. His plays especially his comedies struggle for establishing the rights of women.

The taming of the Shrew is one of those comedies, through which the playwright upholds the early modern woman's status and the typical scenario of the debate between masculinities and femininities ---the rhetorical influence of the males over the females. The play is set at Padua, a public place in England. The

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male protagonist is Petruchio and the female protagonist is Katharina who represent early modern men and women respectively. Bianca is Katharina's only sister who is silent, mild and who has a sweet tongue and who has a number of wooers for her marriage. Baptista is the father of Katharina and Bianca, who is concerned of dowry rather than the true happiness of his daughters. Katharina has a sharp tongue and a protesting character for which no body likes to marry her. However, she is very sensitive of her own right and conscious of her self-respect. She has a feminist voice who struggles to establish her rights and wants her voice to be heard from the beginning of the play.

During the time span 1553-1603, which is a remarkable part of early modern era, two ladies namely Elizabeth-1 and Mary-1 enjoyed the highest political rank in England. Despite this, however, women were largely ignored, who couldn't represent early modern state sphere and engage themselves in serving "as jurors, lawyers, magistrates, counsellors or as members of parliament" (Richards and Thorne, 2007, p.1). They neither acquired formal education from the universities nor studied "at the inns of court" (p.1). Writing books or debating publicly about theological or constitutional matters was beyond their imagination. However, by the dint of early modern feminist scholars' thorough endeavours, women who were from middle class rank or aristocratic background would write plentifully. Yet their writings were very often limited to ecclesiastical works and plays as well as poems circulated to mainly friends and family members. Tina Krontiris (1992) argues that if women attempted to publicise their philosophy and thought in print media, it would have been a risk of infamies (Krontiris, 1992, pp.17-18).

Rhetoric was a significant field of teaching and training in the early modern period. Inventive and malleable intellectuals were produced by rhetorical teaching. Men those who possessed the deliberative rhetoric art or those who had linguistic capability would become spies or informers, counsellors and civil job holders or state servants, who could manage others with comfort. Arguably, the mid-seventeenth century saw the male debaters of the ecclesiastical groups created by rhetorical training. While women's education in early modern period was regarded predominantly from marginalised points of views like discouraging the flourish of intellectuality, this men's education was empowering and pragmatic (Eskin, 1999, p.102). The

same practical viewpoint that supported rhetorical teaching as the intrinsic requirement for men to be civil servants also justified the prohibition of women from the same teaching for they were not eligible for holding a civil job. The educationist designed the female education not for making them eloquent subjects; rather they focused on the management and shaping of the moral conduct and character of women. They also prepared women for playing their parts as mothers, housewifery and wives. Practically, this implied that women were created only for home where they would be confined and that they would earn household managing talents and education to the extent that that would be enough for discharging their home responsibilities and reading the homiletic and ecclesiastical books that would secure their female identities. Leonardo Bruni (c.1405), was the Italian educationist and humanist who contributed immensely to the polemic of women's education. Although Bruni expressed his desire to begin some particular branches of novel female curriculum which included the reading of the 'great Orators of antiquity', he rejected the possibility of women's rhetorical learning: My chief reason is the obvious one, that I have in view the cultivation most fitting to a woman. To her neither the intricacies of debate nor the oratorical artifices of action and delivery are of the least practical use, if indeed they are not positively unbecoming. Rhetoric in all its forms, – public discussion, forensic argument, logical fence, and the like – lies absolutely outside the province of woman (Bruni, qtd in Woodward 1905, p. 126).

Aristotle (2007) in his book *On Rhetoric: a theory of civic discourse* broaches the nature of rhetoric, its enabling capability and provides an all-inclusive overview of it. However, like the early modern educationists and humanists like Leonardo Bruni (c.1405), who didn't feel the necessity of female rhetorical training, Aristotle also hardly postulated the same for women in his time. After reviewing Aristotle's (2007) treatise of rhetoric, Carol Poster (1998), a recent modern feminist maintains that "feminists should reject the recent elevation of *Rhetoric* to the canon in this field, as it exemplifies a bias against pedagogy that in turn is antiwoman" (Poster, qtd in Freeland 1998, p.11). Therefore, Aristotle is an obvious advocate of male orator.

However, there are many means of persuasion by which an orator coaxes his audience. Aristotle maintains that a successful speaker is permitted ----as it is translated by George A. Kennedy (2007), an Aristotle scholar----- "a certain amount of cleverness in obtaining legitimate ends" (Aristotle, 2007, p.79). So, Aristotle puts "cleverness" as a valid way for an orator, though limitedly, to achieve his goal. There are also rhetorical duel discussed in the book of Aristotle, which is evident in the play, which we will analyse later. However, this

rhetorical duel in the play signifies the masculine superiority over femininity, which raises the question of gender---which is a dominant feature of feminism--- to illustrate which we will move to the current feminist Judith Butler's notion of gender performativity discussed in her seminal book *Gender Trouble* (1999).

Performativity is a broader term which is deeply rooted in gender while "gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences" (Butler, 1999, p.190). So, understanding gender is a prerequisite for understanding the notion of performativity. For Butler gender is a set of acts which are regarded as culturally comprehensible or incomprehensible and without which gender would not exist. Butler then asks that in what logics a "set of acts" might be called gender. She answers that the "set of acts" need a repetitive performance which is at times "a re-enactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established (p.191). Therefore, gender, as Butler argues, is not an inheritance that we are to discover; it is rather a construction or to say more precisely a social construction. This is what Butler calls the concept of performativity (Butler, 1999, pp. 190-193). The ever contradictory, prejudiced and pre-existing binaries (sex/gender, male/female) are distorted by this notion of performativity, which is one of the greatest achievements in the history of feminist study. In addition, the long standing gender identity crisis, one that the male figures signify masculinity and female figures signify femininity is disregarded by this very notion. In other words, Butler urges that men should be able to possess feminine personalities and women should be able to possess masculine personalities. Thus Butler's very theory of performativity and gender identity are highly relevant with the affluent scholarship on early modern notion of masculinity and femininity. This paper applying Butler's seminal de-essentialising theory of gender investigates how rhetorical training and education (given to men only) in early modern England play substantive roles in shaping and perpetuating masculine superiority over feminine inferiority and how the early modern women overcoming their feminine frailties attain feminine masculinity.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Richard Madelaine (2010) investigates Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* focusing predominantly on humour, diction and theme of gender equality as expressed in the play. Kate is given training, argues Madelaine, by her husband Petruchio with a view to taming her---"which involves training her to respond in a way that are perceived as 'feminine'" (p.70). Madelaine concludes stating the influence of Kate's last speech on other women as obviously 'feminine' while "Petruchio's description of the other women as 'Prisoners to her womanly persuasion'

(5.2.121) ironically endorses an essentially 'masculine' way of handling refractory women" (p.78).

Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz et.al (1980) argue that feminists think that in no way are women inferior to men; rather they are equated with men in every matter. Yet, very often the roles played by women have been underestimated, constrained and stereotyped. The ultimate goal of the feminists' struggle is to bring what Judith Butler says "radical freedom" (Butler 1999, p.16) to women and liberate them from masculine oppressiveness: "the struggle for women is to be human in a world which declares them only female" (qtd in Lenz et.al, 1980, p.1).

Tita French Baumlin (1989) states that *The Taming of the Shrew* reflects the most brilliant application of "creative power of language" (Baumlin, 1989, p.237). She argues that Shakespeare's Petruchio embodies the dramatisation of a most successful "sophistic retorecian" who has a "morally admirable stance" in his characterisation (Baumlin, 1989, p.237). Baumlin also urges that Petruchio manipulates Katherina "through outlandish hyperbole, linguistic 'disguises' and outright untruths" not to acquiesce her or to attain any financial goal but to achieve a harmonious married life (p.237). In contrast, Hongyan ZOU (2014) observes Petruchio from a different point of view. She finds a clear financial ground for Petruchio's marriage of Kate. She argues that Petruchio "decides to marry Katherina for an obvious financial purpose" (Zou, 2014, P.118). Therefore, for Zou, it is dowry only for which Petruchio comes forward to wedding Kate.

Judith Halberstam (1998) talks about the nature of "female masculinity" which allows the readers "a glimpse of how masculinity is constructed as masculinity" (Halberstam, 1998, p.1). She mentions in a tragic tone that female masculinities are usually defined as the precluded "scraps of dominant masculinity" by the male masculinity which is likely to appear as "the real thing" (p.1). She argues that female masculinity has not been given proper attention; rather it has been overlooked "both in the culture at large and within academic studies of masculinity" (p.2) in like manner it was done in the early modern rhetorical studies.

According to Megan D. Little (2007) rhetoric for women reflected the presence of feminine voice during Renaissance, which observed a significant changes in reforming the education which included "attitudes toward rhetorical training" (p.83). Some scholars postulate that the Renaissance period paved the way for raising women's voice rather than fostering their silence and provided them with the scope for borrowing from antique sources and building their skill in rhetorical heritage (Donawerth, 1995, p.257). Other scholars like Patricia Bizzel and Herzberg Bruce (1990) argue that it was really unlikely to secure a uniformity in defining the term "rhetoric" since rhetorical performance and training

took a diverge formations during this particular era (p.474).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Gender studies is a popular discourse increasingly becoming influential in the field of feminist study. In this sense it is an interdisciplinary area of study, which influenced the Second Wave of Feminism significantly. While feminist study is concerned with the feminine interest and feminist approach only, gender studies discusses both the femininity and masculinity and the pre-existing gender identity. Judith Butler critically analyses the traits of gender identity in her book *Gender Trouble* (1999) which is a social construction rather than an inheritance and likewise she develops her notion of gender as a set of acts which is performative.

That Butler's argument that gender identity is culturally constructed means that the language which is "phallogocentric" and "pervasively masculinist" accounts women as "a linguistic absence and opacity", "unconstrainable and undesignatable" and above all "unrepresentable" (Butler, 1999, p.13). This linguistic pervasiveness repetitively transpires in our society which is dominated by masculinity and which Butler expresses through her theory of performativity. Butler, therefore, argues that "the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced" (p.34). So, for Butler "gender proves to be performative---that is constituting the identity it is purported to be" (p.34). Hence, we note that gender is invariably a deed or a doing or more exactly "a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (p.45). Thus the naturalised and the normal gender identity--- the traditional and established male/female bianary--- is challenged by Butler. Her purpose is to investigate different social and cultural performances that are regarded peculiar and non-standard by the societal norms and meanwhile "establish links between catagories, acts, desires and identities" (Hadaegh & Heidar, 2018, p.4). Butler further prolongs her views arguing that female sex must not be restricted to body rather they must be given "radical freedom" and universal status as enjoyed by male sex (p.16).

The present theory of Butler (performativity) de-essentialises the notion of gender identity and extends the rooms for masculinity/femininity bianary. Consequently, her theory of performativity highly matches the early modern gender issue and feminist reading of the play discussed in the following study.

Successfulness, powerfulness, competitiveness and vigorousness are naturally and traditionally attributed to men while traits like emotionality, frailty, obedience and submissiveness are stereotypically applied to women. Theorist like Ronald F. Levant (1995) argues that common and typical masculine attributes are "avoidance of femininity; restricted emotions; sex disconnected from intimacy; pursuit of achievement and

status; self-reliance; strength and aggression, and homophobia" (p. 9). Likewise, femininity are mostly deemed as dependable, sensible, passive, empathetic etc. However, it is to be noted that these norms differ from time, context and place, which are affected and structured by a plethora of societal norms.

Once we consider the traits connected with men, we find that masculinity is highly affected by a set of cultural and societal norms. Theorist like John Beynon in his seminal book *Masculinities and Culture* (2002) perceives that it is masculinity which is formed with a number of masculine traits ; "while all men have the male body in common (although even that comes in a variety of sizes, shapes, and appearances), there are numerous forms and expressions of gender, of 'being masculine' and 'being feminine'" (p. 1). In the same book (2002) Beynon contends that many geographical, social and historical aspects definite to each position collapse the unitary masculinity as a single notion. In the different vein, masculinity is to be a "diverse, mobile, even unstable, construction" (Beynon, 2002, p. 2).

Despite the construction of femininity and masculinity around 'fundamentals' or 'essences', these two notions are sets of symbols that have been enacted what Butler (1990) calls "performative acts" (p. xiv) and Kersten (1995) denotes as "situational accomplishments" (p. 160). The Butlerian gender – performance notion undercuts the rule of femininity and masculinity precisely as biological temperaments wherein females and males are spontaneously fixed. Instead, she postulates that gender is only a set of culturally and socially well-defined characteristics and norms that in course of time characterised as masculine and feminine. She also advocates the feminist view of gender arguing that it ought to be ousted, abolished, or made critically vague exactly "because it is always a sign of subordination for women" (Butler 1999, p. xiv). In addition, both men and women are able to enact and showcase the masculinities as both the gender can display the feminine at distinct times in distinct places. Lindisfarne and Cornwall (1994) posits that "there are male and female versions of masculinity and, equally, female and male versions of femininity" (p. 15).

The sixteenth-century philosophers and literary figures were well concerned with Aristotelian views of women. It is quite surprising and shocking for the modern readers as well as for the feminists that the famous book *Politics* (2007) by Aristotle deems women as inferior to men and thereby subject to men, who lack authority. It is affirmed by Aristotle that a husband is to practise political power over his wife. He differentiates women from men urging that women are more compassionate, more impulsive, more deceptive, and more complaining. However, he underscores that happiness of women is equally crucial and significant as to that of men for the happiness of society. While Plato shows his ambivalence concerning the likely

equality between male and female—in terms of virtue and strength women are unequal to men but are equal in terms of occupational and rational capability; hence the perfect Republic allows women to be educated and to work along with men with no distinction—Aristotle ostensibly disagrees with this ethos.

That women are inferior to men is believed by Aristotle, who, for instance, argues in his *Politics* "as regards the sexes, the male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject" (Aristotle, 2007). In her edited seminal book *Feminist Interpretation of Aristotle* (1998) Cynthia Freeland reacts critically for Aristotle's claim of women: "It is hard, after all, to forget such notorious assertions as the claim that a man's virtue is to command, a woman's to obey; that women have fewer teeth than men; or that we contribute nothing but matter to our offspring" (2).

IV. DISCUSSION

Rhetoric, like many early modern disciplines from politics to education to religion, intended to wreak and alter people. It was a broad matter of coercion, control and power and turned the orator into a predominantly masculine character dramatised as a king, sovereign and a civiliser. *Garden of Eloquence* (1593) by Henry Peacham celebrates this very art, which attributes Orphic capability to the orator by whom ancient people were transformed into civilised human beings. Peacham argues that for the orator possessed "prudent art of perswasion," primitive people "were conuerted from that most brutish condition of life, to the loue of humanitie, & polliticke gouernment" (p. iii). In the case of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio, with a view to "taming" Katherine, uses this performatic rhetoric power or Aristotle's (2007) "cleverness" (p.79) by which he transfers her from a shrew into an obedient wife. Of course, Katherine is likely to experience this transformation in the fifth scene of act 4

Then, God be bless'd, it is the blessed 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 so for Katharina . (4.5. 19-23)

wherein she fulfills the wishes of Petruchio by calling the sun the moon. However, Perry Anderson (1974) characterises Petruchio as an "absolutist", who reaches the apex of "absolutism", which is beyond ruling and taming Kate: to ensure his monarchical status over her and her absolute acquiescence to him as his subject. He fantasises and emphasises Kate to speak not of her own but as he determines her to do so, and more importantly, his words will fix the reality of the world as he wishes (Anderson, cited in Rebhorn 1995, p. 302). Petruchio, by determining a man a woman and the sun the moon, implicitly swaggeringly claims "both the

power of Adam, who first gave names to all things and served frequently in the Renaissance as the model for patriarchal rule, and the power of God, the creator and patriarch of all patriarchs" (Rebhorn, 1995). This very claim by Petruchio asserts his ability and power that he is able to build the universe—through his power of words. Kate ensures the supreme power indulged by Petruchio: "What you will have it named, even that it is" (4.5.21). However, the aims of rhetoric in the early modern period are accorded with his project of taming her, which hereby ensures his rhetorical character, which Grumio assigns to him by the punning referral to "rope tricks."

In addition, as a figure of power, the rhetor was celebrated by the later (beginning from 18th century) scholars and authors on the rhetoric, who highly influenced the behaviour and beliefs of those around him with his eloquence. Essays, treatises and handbooks were composed by these writers in different languages: French, Italian, Latin, English, and some other dialects. All of these books foreground Aristotle's (2007) *pathos* of the audience and the movement of their emotions. This movement is the predominant end of the orator who used to move people through their passions. A significant dialogue was produced on this subject by Anto Maria de' Conti (1970), a prolific and influential Italian Professor of rhetoric, in which he accosts the orator as someone who is embedded with the power of seizing the audience's spirits, "so that you could force them, even unwilling, to follow your opinion" (Conti, qtd in Rebhorn 1995, p.299). Juan Luis Vives (1785) has the same perception that *delectare* (delight) is inaccurately used to signify the business of rhetoric (apart from moving and teaching); instead, it ought to be accosted as 'seize', 'detain', or 'occupy' (*detenere*) for audiences are moved or seized (*capiuntur*) by delightful things (p.171). George Puttenham (1869) wrote the seminal book *The Arte of English Poesie*, wherein he stresses the power of poetry identical with rhetoric. In this book, he talks about the 'violence' of coaxing and describes the story of Hegesias, an early modern orator, who, by the power of his eloquence and arguments, persuaded his listeners to commit suicide (p.153). This is a story of what Jaques Amyot (1805) rehearses for a similar aim (p.41). In a nutshell, with a view to commanding the hearers, the orator moves them. Shakespeare's Petruchio, like this Renaissance orator, follows the same trick to court Kate. He swaggers to Baptista, her father, to express his commanding rhetorical expression:

Though little fire grows great with little wind
Yet extreme gusts will blow out fire and all.
So I to her, and so she yields to me (2.1.133-35).

And, as Grumio says that his master is going to perform like a conquering and potent rhetor, frustrating and defeating his opponent in the verbal war:

and she stand him but a little,
he will throw a figure in her face,
and so disfigure her with it,
that she shall have no more eyes to see withal than a cat
(1.2.111-14).

The Bard's Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* (from its beginning) presents himself as domineering, confident, and belligerent as the early modern scholars expected a rhetor to be in their handbooks and discourses of rhetoric. Through this performance Petruchio recalls Butler's (1999) notion of "gender performativity" (p.34), which reflects nothing but masculine superiority which is but a social and cultural construction rather than an inheritance to be discovered. However, both the early modern rhetor and Petruchio possess an identification embedded with politics. Likewise, in spite of changing his techniques in between the first and fourth act, Petruchio's end is likely to remain the same, which implicitly becomes conspicuous in the early words of his soliloquy offered by him after the onset of his journey of "taming" the heroine: "Thus have I politicly begun my reign" (4.2.175). Petruchio here declares himself as a king or a ruler—again in Butlerian sense performing masculinity— and Katherine is viewed as the subject of his kingdom—which is in Butlerian sense showing acquiescence to masculinity reflecting feminine inferiority— which she reassures in the last act wherein she is seen to scold the widow and Bianca and to insist on a husband's superiority. She characterises him as "thy lord, thy king, thy governor,...Thy head, thy sovereign" (5.2.139, 147). This patriarchic perception was a common issue not only during the reign of Elizabeth but also to a greater degree during the tenure of James in the 17th century, and even in this 21st century post modern world where women are still living in a "phallogocentric" society and where women are presented as "a linguistic absence and opacity" (Butler, 1999, p.13). This misogynist spirit ultimately establishes an interlink between the ruling and the taming of a woman.

However, once Petruchio has wedded Kate changes his style of ruling and taming her. He applies the physical force or his masculinity—another traditional male weapon—rather than rhetoric to dominate Kate. While the art of rhetoric allows the rhetor—though metaphorically—to seize, bind and coax his audience, the play permits Petruchio to reject the ineffectiveness of verbal violence and allows him to follow rather, the physical violence or what Lindisfarne and Cornwall (1994) call "male version of masculinity" as the superior means of persuasion (p. 15). In addition to threatening violence of deeds on many grounds, he, in effect, does it practically: hurling wine in the face of the priest at the nuptial ceremony; "rescuing" Kate from "thieves" at the greeting; and beating his servants on several occasions (3.2.238). He literally imprisons her—most notably—with

deprivation of food and sleep. While commentators like Alexander Leggatt (1973) have emphasised that the actions performed by Petruchio to Kate may represent “reverent care” (4.1.191) with a view to changing her, the real reference to “care” her explicitly suggests that he is only acting rather than performing genuinely (pp. 41-62). In fact, all of his activities are merely like flexing his muscles or showing his strength or power, intended to acquire his aims, “peace . . . , and love, and quiet life, / And awful rule, and right supremacy” (5.2.108-9). He desires a peaceful home-kingdom as it is mentioned earlier wherein he will rule with tranquillity, and Kate will approve all of his activities no matter they are good/bad for her. Indeed, Petruchio becomes a tyrant when his coercing of Kate is deemed, of course. However, his tyranny is a naturalised and normative deed in early modern society which is “a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame” (Butler 1999, p.45). Also, his tyrannical activities evoke a sense of raping, which the early modern rhetorical discourse observed so powerfully—though the idea remained at precisely a metaphorical level. However, in Shakespeare’s play, this metaphor unpleasantly turns into a reality through Petruchio’s forcing of Kate’s will and his aggressive manner to her.

With a view to exposing the authoritative existence of gender-inequality authorised and authored by a male community, Shakespeare’s play at the same time reveals the discourse of gender politics wherein rhetoric is observed exclusively as a male province, though it was felt predominantly feminine. Patricia Parker’s (1987) research on rhetoric is relevant to that feeling: because of its generation and creativity, rhetoric is intended to be determined as traditionally feminine (pp.8-35). However, it is noteworthy and significant that though the defenders of rhetoric repeatedly personify their art from the feminine perspective, its critics criticise it and attack it from the same feminine point of view (Pico della Mirandola, 1996). Mirandola relates his criticism of rhetoric with seduction, cosmetics and coquetry (p. 352). Thus in the early modern period, gender-distinction exists: when males practice the discourse of rhetoric as an art of power, it is celebrated, but it is blamed as female when its seductiveness is regarded. This sort of discrimination is not defensible. This inequality of gender is reflected in Carol Poster’s (1998) research of Aristotle’s (2007) treatise of rhetoric, *On Rhetoric: a theory of civic discourse*, in which she observes that Aristotle never encourages women’s rhetorical training as it also done by Leonardo Bruni (c.1405). While early modern works disregarded these imbued conflicts by celebrating the discourses of rhetoric, *Taming of the Shrew* reveals those contradictions by underscoring them straightforwardly. Shakespeare attacks not only the Renaissance gender politics but the rhetorical discourse which constituted his culture.

As Butler (1999) argues that ‘gender identity’ is a cultural construction and women’s identity is defined as ‘undesignatable’ Shakespeare’s Kate also reflects the same ethos of Butlerian notion of gender. In Shakespeare’s play, the troublesome existence of gender differences is revealed through Kate’s performing of “rope tricks” and her successful matching with Petruchio. An equal arbitrary nature on this gender-difference is indicated by Kate’s adjustment with the ostensibly “male” tricks, just as it is shown by the reidentification of Christopher Sly by the Lord—as a peer—only after an alter in situation and dress (Newman, 1986, pp.86-100). In other words, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, men emphasise on gender-differences for such differentiation lucidly works as a safeguard of their interests; it allows men like Petruchio to indulge “awful rule, and right supremacy” (5.2.109), which is an obvious practice of masculinity. Resultantly, men maintain their male-identification or what Beynon (2002) calls ‘masculinity’ (p. 2), allowing themselves to enjoy the power of being a seemingly superior sex, which essentialises their total validity of recognising their male-power by women. This male-power weapon ultimately brings the justification to have the right to rule over women—though in disguise.

In the early modern male dominated society portrayed in this play, maleness is identified by all men with power. Petruchio is one of them—even most notable—in this matter who both acts out his power and asserts it by the violation of expectations and conventions, which reflects Butler’s theory of “performativity” which is an act or deed. Persistently, he describes himself as a hero or warrior imagining his meeting Kate’s ferocious tongue:

Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,
And heaven’s artillery thunder in the skies?
Have I not in a pitched battle heard
Loud ‘larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets clang?
(1.2.199-202).

Also, Petruchio insists him-self apart from this military language—like an explorer who has “come abroad to see the world,” the “maze” wherein the youngsters persist in seeking “fortunes” (1.2.57, 54, 50). The trader- traveller identity of Petruchio is significantly akin to warrior-hero identification. In the early modern time, these two classifications are intended to merge as *Lusiads*, an epic by Camoens, refers. Petruchio, in both cases, is viewed to show his male-power and his heroic capability for endurance, violence, and toughness. This is like what Levant (1995) says that powerfulness and vigorousness are said to be the natural characteristics of men (p. 9). Even Petruchio goes further, saying that it is he, rather than the clock, decides the time, immediately after which Hortensio comments: “Why, so this gallant will command the sun” (4.3.193) –precisely at this moment he compares Petruchio with Joshua, the

biblical hero. It is very likely to interpret Hortensio's remarks: there are many men other than Petruchio who link heroic violence with maleness. However, these violations are seconded by the other men of early modern society, who view Kate as his opponent, a "soldier" (2.1.144). Hortensio applauds Petruchio's success of taming Kate, as she finally consents to speak according to his wish, and brings together both the notion of the warrior-hero and merchant-adventurer: "Petruchio, go thy ways, the field is won" (4.5.23).

In Shakespeare's time, it is a matter of great importance and critical attention that maleness or male-identity is recognised both by other men who foster its foundational ideals, and by women who show their total acquiescence to it and appreciate it as an emblem of male-supremacy. Butler (1999) argues against this 'pervasive masculinity' and women's absolute acquiescence to men (p.13). However, this very philosophy is reflected in this play wherein all the male members view Kate as a figure who must be overpowered; she has to be "put...down" (5.2.35) as other woman is. In addition, every single man deems this defeat a natural phenomenon by which Katherine will obtain kindness: "kindness in women" (4.2.41), Hortensio views as obedience and compliance, not the wilfulness or the independence of judgment. He expresses his grievance that this freedom is found in Bianca, which he disapproves and for which he characterises the lady to be a "proud, disdainful haggard" (4.2.39). The falcon metaphor used for Bianca by Hortensio is strangely similar to what Petruchio has used for Kate. By calling a woman a falcon, the male society in the play, of course, does not offer an impartial appraisal of her animal-like and wild conduct; instead, they are elevating their position and thereby defending the reason for constructing themselves as superior. Defeating a female opponent is a must for bringing a recognition for such a position entirely. Kate's long speech at the end of the play, which we will discuss elaborately later from a feminist point of view, wherein she acknowledges Petruchio's total dominance is the most obvious and surest symbol of victory. She first admits and announces her husband as her legal governor and herself as the loyal subject, and then displays her justification for this hierarchical difference. That the mighty, powerful and heroic phallic "lances" of men are superior to weaker little "straws" (5.2.173) of women is acknowledged by Kate. Thus Kate confirms their social status as defined by her husband and all other males in her society and affirms the identification attributed for women and for men. Both these affirmation and confirmation are what become natural for her. That the play displays gender-distinction constructed by men is repeated by Kate and established by men. This gender-ethos is approved by early modern law and tradition. However, feminists in early modern England and now disapprove this gender differences. Butler as a

recent feminist critic, for example, is highly critical and unlikely to postulate this gender ethos; likewise, she wishes to destroy it since it is "always a sign of subordination for women (Butler, 1999, p. xiv).

In addition, the male society in Shakespeare's piece doesn't pay proper respect or value to womanhood. Baptista, for example, is obsessed with the dowry of his daughters rather than their happy life. He converses with the wooers of Bianca only about the financial issues. He straightforwardly says that he will marry Bianca to those who can offer more money, which will ensure his financial status in Padua. Conversely, Petruchio has an obvious monetary reasons for marrying Katherine, who wishes to be rich by wedding her. He announces rhetorically:

[...] if thou know one Rich enough to be Petruchio's wife,
As wealth is burden of my wooing dance,
Be she as foul as was Florentius' love,
As old as Sibyl, and as curst and shrew
As Socrates' Xanthippe or a worse,
She moves me not, or not removes, at least,
Affection's edge in me, were she as rough
As are the swelling Adriatic seas:
I come to wive it wealthily in Padua;
If wealthy, then happily in Padua. (l. 2. 65-75)

According to Petruchio, woman should neither enjoy any social status nor have any "radical freedom" (Butler, 1999, p.16). They are considered as commodities only to enjoy or to be used for financial exchanges. Petruchio considers Kate, therefore, the women, as his own property: "She is my household stuff, my field, my barn, my horse, my ox, my ass, my anything" (3. 2. 225-226). Likewise, women had no ruling power or any other dignity in Petruchio's society. Louis Mintrose argues:

all forms of public and domestic authority in Elizabethan England were vested in men: in father, husband, masters, teachers, magistrates, lords. It was inevitable that the rule of a woman would generate peculiar tensions within such a patriarchal society (qtd. in Newman, 1996, p.302).

In like manner, women in Shakespeare's time are deemed as things to be possessed or desired without even any authority for choosing their own mates or husbands. However, what follows is a short analysis of the character of Kate whom Shakespeare presents as a thorough feminist utopia and also showcases how Kate acknowledging her husband's superiority maintains her own inner freedom and thus she like other early modern women achieve the "feminine masculinity" (Breger, 2005, p.82), which is the main objective of this paper.

Katherine is a feminist throughout the play—trying to assert herself and making her voice heard. When Petruchio declares to marry her referring to her father's consent, she refutes her father saying:

Call you me daughter? Now, I promise you
 You have show'd a tender fatherly regard,
 To wish me wed to one halflunatic;
 A mad-cap ruffian and a swearing Jack,
 That thinks with oaths to face the matter out.(2. 1. 77-81)

Being a person of independence and freedom, Kate is used to expressing her view and anger overtly when faced with any kind of injustice or anything that goes against her willingness in lieu of receiving mutely. In other words she expresses what Caludia Breger calls "feminine masculinities" (Breger, 2005, p.82). Indeed, she de-essentialises her gender performativity in a Butlerian sense. However, these outlooks of Kate are not in harmony with those of her younger sister Bianca. The silence which Bianca adopts makes her beautiful, acceptable and attractive in the eyes of the early modern male society and eligible for a wonderful marriage. In fact, this very "silence" is the Butlerian notion of "subordination for women", (Butler, 1999, p.xiv), which makes them submissive and acquiescent, and the Aristotelian notion of that "male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject" (Aristotle, 2007). It is very easy to rule the women when they maintain "silence". On the other hand, it is very difficult for men to reign the women when they are expressive, outspoken and protesting and possess a sharp tongue like Kate's. Therefore, "silence" was the best ornament for early modern women like Bianca. Here is Lucentio who says: "But in the other's silence do I see Maid's mild behaviour and sobriety" (l. 1. 71-72). In addition, the silence is the greatest treasure for Bianca in the marriage market, of which Kate is conscious enough:

What, will you not suffer me? Nay, now I see
 She is your treasure, she must have a husband;
 I must dance bear-foot on her wedding-day,
 And for your love to her lead apes in hell.
 Talk not to me; I will go sit and weep,
 Till I can find occasion of revenge.(2. 1. 31-36)

Although she is quite frustrated with her father's callous approach toward her wedding, she is not just a lady of self-pity and she does not merely yelp over her father's discriminating attitude. Her father Baptista is a prejudiced man who shows more affection and love towards his younger daughter Bianca only because she is mild and silent. This unfairness makes Kate mentally agonised and hurts her psychologically. Throughout her verbal violence and shrewishness she tends to take revenge for all the agonies and mental torture made to her by her father and the early modern male society.

An imminent feminist namely Kate Millett mentioned by Bressler (2004) argues in Butlerian tone "one's gender, however, is a social construct, being created by cultural ideals and norms" (qtd in Bressler, 2004, p.183). In the society of the play also are men

and women having discriminatory attitudes, which are constructed by long term tradition and cultural normative. Kate is described as shrew by her society whose shrewishness is showcased chiefly in two ways---she is having a loud harsh voice and a scolding tongue and her mood of making a corporeal attack on whoever insults her. She even "breaks a lute over Hortensio's head and hits Petruchio and Grumio." These are her weapons, which she uses only when people humiliate her (Zou, 2014, p.120). She is judged by the people of her society in the following way:

[...] that she is intolerable curst,
 And shrewd and froward, so beyond all measure,
 That, were my state far worster than it is,
 I would not wed her for a mine of gold. (l. 2. 86-89)
 Her society even addresses her as "Katherine the curst" (1.2.125) and a "wild cat" (1.2.192).

However, the last scene of *The Taming of the Shrew* presumably is the most controversial one for the feminists; yet it offers the best ground for investigating the feminist issue. Different construal of the ending of the play is available, whether Katherine is assumed to be tamed, or Petruchio is supposed to be tamed by the new strategy of Katherine. For me, this is Kate's new strategy which she follows for maintaining her self-respect. According to John C. Bean (1980) "Kate's notorious last speech is delivered ironically and that Kate, in retaining her psychological independence from the 'duped' Petruchio, remains untamed" (p.86). Seemingly, though, she accepts Petruchio's dominance or masculine superiority; indeed, she wears "a mask to keep her inner freedom" (Zou, 2014, p.122) and to destroy the masculine superiority over feminine inferiority. Coppelia Kahn (1989) asserts why Kate alters herself after marriage so drastically:

On the one hand, she wants to achieve her immediate and most pressing needs: a bed, a dinner, some peace and quiet; on the other hand, to retain her inner freedom. She realizes that the power struggle she has entered into on Petruchio's term is absurd. By accepting her husband's rule, she begins to emancipate from that struggle and maintain her inner freedom. (p. 417)

Therefore, Kate through her superficial taming tames Petruchio or the whole early modern male society. Indeed, following this new strategy Kate on behalf of the early modern female society overcomes all feminine feebleness and hence attains their feminine masculinity.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper presents a thorough and exhaustive analysis of gender identity embedded in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. The paper analyses how rhetorical capability shapes and perpetuates masculine superiority over feminine inferiority in early modern English society.

The study using Butlerian notion of performativity and gender identity, which she de-essentialises to explain the gender discrimination, and Aristotelian notion of rhetoric demonstrates that the male society has invariably been dominating the female society from the beginning of the human civilisation. Butler shows us that gender is not something inherited; rather it is a perennial social and cultural construction. Her theory showcases that not only in early modern society but also today's post modern era "masculinity is assigned to men and femininity to women" (Hadaegh & Heidari, 2018, p.12).

Female rhetorical training is a dominant feature highlighted in this study, which Aristotle like other early modern rhetors disapproves. Likewise, the male protagonist Petruchio in Shakespeare's play using his magical rhetorical power woos Kate and transforms the shrewish wife to obedient one. However, feminist critics like John C. Bean are highly unlikely to acknowledge this transformation of Kate. They regard this change as an irony (Bean, 1980), which is superficial, and which Kate performs only to achieve "female masculinity" (Halberstam, 1998, p.1) and overcome all feminine frailties.

To conclude, Shakespeare presents Kate as a feminist ideal from the beginning of the play, who has been able to establish herself as a true feminist character and make her voice heard. In this regard, Shakespeare is a feminist playwright and his play is undoubtedly a feminist canon.

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