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# "Gentlemen with brains" : the use of historical figures in the development of the character of Hortensio in an adaptation of William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.

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“GENTLEMEN WITH BRAINS”: THE USE OF  
HISTORICAL FIGURES IN THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHARACTER OF  
HORTENSIO IN AN ADAPTATION OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE’S *THE TAMING OF  
THE SHREW*

By

Terry Tocantins

B.A, Charter Oak State College, 2016

A Thesis

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and Sciences of the University of Louisville In  
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In Theatre Arts

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A Thesis Approved on

April 8, 2019

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Blair, The Pixies, and my sisters

## ABSTRACT

### “GENTLEMEN WITH BRAINS”: THE USE OF HISTORICAL FIGURES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHARACTER OF HORTENSIO IN AN ADAPTATION OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE’S *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW*

Terry Tocantins

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In 2018, I played Hortensio in a production of *The Taming of the Shrew* that took place among the businessmen in the America of 1963. This thesis centers on the strategies and tactics I employed in the portrayal of Hortensio, a moneyed, middle aged, single man who impersonates a music tutor to seduce the much younger Bianca. In my research I investigated the archetype of the advertising executive of the era. The world views of these men upheld the post-war conception of American exceptionalism, and in their occupations were adept at manipulation free of the fear of consequences. Hortensio is specifically based on advertising pioneer (and nephew of Sigmund Freud) Edward Bernays, whose often morally dubious publicity stunts led to the popularization of smoking among women.

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## INTRODUCTION

In support of my thesis performance at The University of Louisville, I aimed to investigate American corporate culture to develop a character that embodied a traditional clown infused with an archetype from American culture, the advertising executive. In Professor Ariadne Calvano and Professor Janna Segal's adaptation of William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, I played Hortensio, a courtier who disguises himself as a music tutor to woo the teenage Bianca. He is rejected by her and by the end of the play is married to a character named The Widow. Calvano's Padua is inspired by New York's Madison Avenue of 1963. An adaptation changes recognizable elements in both the structure and the content of a source story. This observation inspired me to use a similar approach in developing a character. I based my character on men that thrived on the Madison Avenue of 1963. They were complimentary to the type of man Hortensio is, and who reflected the impulses that drive him.

My first question was, what man in the world of this production corresponded to the mores and ethics of the type of man who had power in 1590s England? The post-war boom in America, coupled with the sunny optimism of John F. Kennedy's New Frontier produced the expansion of mass corporate communication in manufacturing and advertising. The advertising executive influenced more powerful individuals, as illustrated by some of the

dictums of David Ogilvy in his memoir *Confessions of an Advertising Man*: “We sell – or else. We hire gentlemen with brains. Unless your campaign contains a Big Idea, it will pass like a ship in the night” (20-21).

London in the Elizabethan era was going through massive cultural shifts that were reflected in a burgeoning creative and mercantile class. With the defeat of the Spanish Armada, Tudors’ England was newly minted as Europe’s pre-eminent naval power. This victory helped spark an explosion in architecture, music, poetry, and drama. Hortensio is a stand-in for some of the fertile minds in the court of the English Renaissance, wildly successful courtiers whose favors rose and fell with the results of capital or military campaigns. Compare this to the dog-eat-dog world of the advertising executive, where creatives pursued the largesse of corporate benefactors on risky advertising campaigns that sought to influence Americans. Advertising was aimed not just at purchasing habits, but political preferences and cultural behavior as well. Their business, like that of Britain’s expanding empire, allowed for an unprecedented amount of influence to be thrust upon men not previously used to it.

The ad men of the 1960s were highly educated and used advances in psychology to their advantage. I found an example in the complex, conflicted and massively influential public relations pioneer (and nephew of Sigmund Freud) Edward Bernays. The ideas of this man correspond to the tactics of Hortensio. Hortensio aims to seduce Bianca in much the same way Edward Bernays convinced American women that smoking Lucky Strike Cigarettes helped them lose weight and was patriotic. Larry Tye’s *The Father of Spin* details how

Bernays had attracted more women to smoking by publishing articles in publications such as *The Ladies Home Journal* claiming that cigarettes were appetite suppressants. The numbers of women smoking increased. However, these women were doing it in secret. Bernays hatched a plan to change how women viewed smoking by using New York's Easter Parade on Fifth Avenue as the location of a publicity stunt.

Bernays' motivations and tactics were what I used to justify Hortensio's choices. His exchanges with both Baptista and Katherina are naked emotional appeals intended to change or manipulate their impulses to achieve his own goals. His first line in the play is the assertion that Katherina will die an old maid unless she changes her very frame to make herself acceptable:

"Mates," maid? How mean you that? No mates for you  
Unless you were of gentler, milder mold. (1.1.59-60).

Like a good copywriter, Hortensio attempts to convince Baptista that his attitude towards his daughter's sadness is what is causing his imbalance.

Signior Baptista, will you be so strange?  
Sorry am I that our goodwill effects  
Bianca's grief. (1.1.87-89)

His claim includes a reference to his own beneficence, countering his stability to Bianca's instability. He is a pure salesman.

Hortensio's later attempts at seducing Bianca revolve around setting up a stunt that turns musical notation into an advertisement for himself: "Yet read the

gamut of Hortensio” (3.1.70). He presents himself as a brand. There is very little separating Hortensio and the men who built Madison Avenue; both were ruthless in the pursuit of creating events and crafting language to make people behave in their interests.

This thesis is an examines my process of developing and performing Hortensio. My goal was to portray Hortensio as a man caught between an older world of white American exceptionalism and a newer consciousness of second wave feminism and the consequences of mass media’s engineering of consent. I was aiming to adapt the type of men Shakespeare created to a similar type of 1960s man based on common aspects of their backgrounds, class and the impulses that drove their actions. I discovered it was vital to experiment with multiple inspirations. Concentrating on different men as references brought out different aspects that would add dimension to my portrayal. Some well researched figures led to dead ends, others, discovered by accident, contributed to a well-rounded character.

## CHAPTER ONE : HORTENSIO AND THE ENGINEERING OF CONSENT

One of the cornerstones of building a character, according to the influential acting teacher and theorist Stella Adler, is the imaginative use of circumstances. According to Adler, these circumstances can be divided into two parts for the actor to begin exploring. This chapter outlines the specific sources and inspirations I used to construct a portrait of Hortensio in the America of 1963. This construction took the form of identifying behaviors in historical figures that corresponded with the behaviors I recognized in Hortensio. I wanted to find not only historical examples but figures I could personally identify with, whose essences could be adjusted to fit both the text and my director's concept.

The first can be called, for our purposes, the 'macro' circumstances. It is the answer to the initial question, 'where is the play?' It may be answered with the play's culture, or perhaps its literal location. The second, more 'micro' set of circumstances is the temporal action of the play; like a historical event or a rite of passage. In Adler's technique, the actor uses both their deductive and inductive reasoning to build a character from their initial encounters with the script, as "The action is found within the place (Rolle 97)." The term she uses is that an actor 'reads out', investigating what can be explicitly gleaned from the text (97). These may be details that show a character's class, faith, or rank within the world of the play. One tiny detail about location may yield mountains of insight when the actor begins to research that location's traditions: food, clothing, shelter, transportation,

communication, even sanitation practices can paint an inspired and imaginative picture.

Considering and applying these aspects to a character provides the frame of behavior and belief in the character. In an adaptation, I look for behaviors from both periods that complement each other. When the specific period of 1960s America is imposed upon the presented text, I tried to highlight the connections between the two worlds. What do I know of 20<sup>th</sup> century public places? Or upper-class men, who can make risky decisions without fear of consequence? The actor investigates the setting of both Shakespeare's text and the applied setting of 1960s America and constructs a third circumstance, made by merging impressions from both sources. It's important the actor doesn't preconceive; they must instead activate the fiction to add a more realistic dimension.

During my summer hiatus in 2018, I investigated what profession in 1963 made sense for Hortensio. From *The Taming of the Shrew's* list of characters (the *dramatis personae*), I learned that Baptista was a "Rich citizen of Padua" and that Hortensio was "A gentleman of Padua" (78). Hortensio must be a person whose influence on Baptista was more than just informal. The father of two teenage girls trusts him enough to impart to him:

Schoolmasters will I keep within my house  
Fit to instruct her youth. If you, Hortensio,  
Or Signor Gremio you, know any such,  
Prefer them hither, for to cunning men  
I will be very kind (1.1.95-98).

Hortensio takes this promise of reward for cunning as a cue. Once alone with his rival suitor, Gremio, "a rich old citizen of Padua" (78), Hortensio immediately

hatches a scheme that will heighten the chances that one of them may win Bianca's love by engineering the betrothal of Katherina:

Hortensio: That we may yet again have access to our mistress and be happy rivals in Bianca's love- to labour and effect one thing specially.

Gremio: What's that, I pray?

Hortensio: Marry, sir, to get a husband for her sister. (1.1.113-116)

By 'reading out' the text I could deduce that Hortensio had: money, access to power, and extensive connections. He is also presenting a solution to Gremio, where one party profits from manipulating the behavior of another.

I began to research the lives of influential men and non-manufacturing professions in the mid-twentieth century with this guiding question; what sort of job demanded guile, foresight, and the ability to travel within the corridors of power? I reasoned that Hortensio's behavior implied that he could be involved in one of these professions that thrived in the twentieth-century: marketing, public relations, or advertising. The figure I focused on, Edward Bernays, influenced all three.

### **The Engineer of Consent**

In 2002, BBC Two released a four-part, 240-minute documentary on modern democracies' entrance into the age of consumerism and how the theories of Austrian neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, were used by corporations to influence people's behavior. Adam Curtis' *The Century of Self* concentrates on Freud, child psychology pioneer (and daughter of Freud) Anna Freud, one of Freud's main rivals, Wilhelm Reich, and a non-

scientist, a nephew of Freud named Edward Bernays. Bernays immigrated to the United States when he was a child and graduated from New York City's highly regarded DeWitt Clinton High School and Cornell University just before the outbreak of World War I.

In turn of the century Vienna, Freud's theories were treated with scorn by the mainstream. Austria was still under the control of the Habsburg led Austro-Hungarian Empire. The idea that analyzing our free associations and dreams would unearth the primeval sexual and violent impulses we shield in our day to day lives ran counter to Judeo-Christian traditions. Sexual and violent impulses were viewed through a moral lens. The young Bernays, in exchange for a box of Havana cigars, received a copy of his uncle's *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. It greatly influenced his world view. Bernays embarked on a career on Broadway as a press agent for opera star Enrico Caruso and Sergei Diaghilev's Ballet Russe. When the United States entered WWI, Bernays was hired to promote President Wilson's aims to bring democracy and the free market to the centuries-old monarchies of Europe. (Curtis)

Bernays and Hortensio were both accustomed to the company of the ruling class. A man who could presume to advise a President or to speak candidly to a man like Baptista would have to be of resilient mettle. Larry Tye's biography of Bernays, *The Father of Spin*, was an excellent resource for details that described just that.

He was not one to be lightly crossed... or to play the patsy. It's apparent in his memoirs, in the many interviews he granted, and in his relationships at the office and at home that if you punched him, you'd best be prepared for a counterpunch or a barrage of blows. Question his motives or



effectiveness, and he'd marshal all his tactical and creative resources to prove you wrong, doing so effectively enough to make you wonder whether you were wrong and to make you think twice about questioning him in the future. (Tye 21)

Bernays' tenacity brought him to the Paris Peace Conference, where President Wilson's stated aim of making the world safe for Democracy met with popular acclaim. This optimistic vision triggered the emotions of people who had endured four years of horror. Outside of the confines of American soil and a contentious Congress, Bernays saw the President enjoy the attention of the masses:

I decided that if you could use propaganda for war, you could certainly use it for peace... Propaganda got to be a bad word because of the Germans using it. So what I did is try to find some other words, so we found the words 'Council on Public Relations'. (Curtis)

I noticed moments in the script where Hortensio was playing to people's irrational emotions to get them to do things. In hatching the scheme to find a husband for Katherina, Hortensio makes an appeal to Gremio:

Since this bar in law makes us friends, it shall be so far forth be friendly maintained till by helping Baptista's eldest daughter to a husband we set his youngest free for a husband- and then have to't afresh. Sweet Bianca! Happy man be his dole. He that runs fastest gets the ring. (1.1. 129-133)

The argument is full of false promises to Gremio. The passage is also full of sexual and youthful imagery: running towards the conquest of a virgin ("set his youngest free for a husband"), two men fighting over a woman (have to't), and the associations one makes with getting a ring. Hortensio doesn't concentrate on the logic of marrying off Katherina but on Gremio's unconscious desires.

Bernays made it a point in his writing to address manipulating another's deepest impulses for one's own gain. In his groundbreaking essay, *The*

*Engineering of Consent* Bernays writes:

The techniques can be subverted; demagogues can utilize the techniques for anti-democratic purposes with as much success as can those who employ them for socially desirable ends. (Bernays 115)

Upon his return from the war, Bernays set out to apply his ideas about the engineering of consent to the business world, and by extension, to the American public. He was approached by The American Tobacco Company (makers of Lucky Strike cigarettes), who wanted to increase sales among women. It was not socially acceptable for American women to be seen smoking in public. Reversing this mindset could create an inroad to a critical market. Bernays and his associates surmised that cigarettes, as a symbol of male sexual dominance, could be redefined:

The emancipation of women has suppressed many of their feminine desires. More women now do the same work as men do. Many women bear no children; those that do bear have fewer children. Feminine traits are masked. Cigarettes, which are equated with men, become torches of freedom. (Tye 28)

. They concluded that if they could communicate that smoking was an act of independence, then women would take up the habit:

Every year New York held an Easter Day parade to which thousands came. Bernays decided to stage an event there. He persuaded a group of rich debutantes to hide cigarettes under their clothes. Then they should join the parade, and at a given signal from him, they were to light up the cigarettes dramatically. Bernays then informed the press that he had heard that a group of suffragettes was preparing to protest by lighting up what they called Torches of Freedom. (Curtis)

Bernays presented the pride of Fifth Avenue Society, the debutante, simultaneously committing an act that is taboo and presenting an image of progressive patriotism. If a contemporary were to confront the issue of women smoking in public, they would not be able to avoid the implication that they were also saying that women were not as free as men. It is irrationality at its core; freedom or liberty as distinct concepts have little to do with the visual representation of a statue. However, the women were made to look as if they felt free.

When Hortensio implants the idea of Katherina to Petruchio he presents her first as a rich wife and secondarily as a shrew. This is good public relations. Petruchio has made it explicit that he associates happiness with wealth: *Happily to wive and thrive as best I may* (1.3.53), and *I come to wive it wealthily in Padua, if wealthily, then happily in Padua* (1.3.72-73). It is a clear cue to Hortensio that his friend is willing to link his desires to a specific action; Hortensio implants imagery that it can persuade someone that their desires overshadow the potential consequences. He asks his old friend:

Petruchio, shall I come roundly to thee  
And wish thee to a shrewd ill-favoured wife?  
Thou'dst thank me but little for my council-  
And yet I'll promise thee, she shall be rich,  
And very rich. (1.3. 56-60)

Hortensio reveals some of the fundamental elements of friendship itself in his rhetorical question. Is it worth betraying the trust between friends for the over this shrew? The answer is obvious. However, it is a rhetorical question. What he can “promise” is that she has money. He even reiterates the image like an oft-

appearing logo or recurring commercial jingle. Petruchio has already said that a rich wife equals happiness, Hortensio is merely packaging it like patriotic cigarettes.

Hortensio even acknowledges, using hyperbole, that this pairing is acting against Petruchio's best interest. He chooses his words wisely, by seeming to concentrate on the woman's faults, the passage prompts Petruchio to reiterate his real desire.

Her only fault-and that is faults enough-  
Is that she is intolerable curst,  
And shrewd and froward so beyond all measure  
That, were my state far worsen than it is,  
I would not we her for a mine of gold!

Pet.: Hortensio, peace. Thou know'st not gold's effect. (1.3. 84-89)

This exchange shows that Petruchio has already made up his mind. Bernays tactics rely on the observation that our choices are made not by appealing to our best interests but in triggering barely concealed impulses. Hortensio has managed Petruchio's consent.

### **Anatomy of an Action**

As a strategy, the choice to base Hortensio's mindset on the tactics of Edward Bernays and those like him gave me a useful framework from which to approach the character. However, what of the more specific traits and challenges he is to encounter in Act II and beyond? Hortensio will find that this proposition that works so quickly and efficiently on Petruchio and Gremio will backfire when applied to the young but wise Bianca. Actors often use terms like "objective" and "motivation"; often the terms are only understood or explored from the surface.

To win Bianca's love is a new objective for a contemporary text, but it hardly compels one to action from a cellular or subconscious level.

The research I was doing over the summer was intended to activate my imagination. The story of Bernays and how his background and training informed his career was fascinating. It provided me with a strong spine for playing Hortensio. I use the term 'spine' as it was a part, albeit a crucial part of what Stella Adler called The Anatomy of an Action. Also called, by Adler, The Overall Action. It's the strategy that a character engages in either consciously or subconsciously. Each individual action is a smaller component of this strategy, they stack up as the story grows, forming a spine.

If our production of *The Taming of the Shrew* were a modern-day play or film, I could claim Hortensio's overall action is to win Bianca's love. That is a simple direction one can give an actor. Adler, however, points out that material like Shakespeare's is so epic and grandiloquent that building a character demands understanding more than just everyday actions to build a spine (Rotte 120).

Look to life to find the heart of the action at work in the world. Look to yourself to find what you have done when doing that action. Look into your imagination. Or go directly to the play to understand the nature of the action. You must shop- in your own history, your imagination, the world, and the play- until you find the nature of the action (Rotte 120).

The world of marketing communications is enormous. It incorporates marketing, advertising, public relations and the various hybrids of those three disciplines. Edward Bernays was an incredibly influential figure who provided me with a philosophy and approach that I could apply directly to Hortensio's

dialogue. He was not, however, the same man my imagination saw in the American Northeast of 1963, the year he retired. I saw Hortensio not as a retiree, but closer to middle age.

I branched out to find other figures in advertising that resembled those I knew since childhood. These were hard drinking and hard-working men my father worked with on Madison Avenue throughout the 1960s. The type of men I worked for in the 1990s. I aimed to imbue my do-able actions with individuality, authenticity, and expertise to add more specific anatomy to Hortensio's spine. The figure I found I identified with most and who articulated this world the clearest was the author of *Confessions of an Advertising Man* and self-professed "Father of Advertising," David Ogilvy.

David Ogilvy came of age in England during the Great Depression. Not surprisingly, he left college to work. Where most would struggle to scrape by if their job was selling cooking stoves door to door during an economic catastrophe, Ogilvy was so successful at it he was tasked to write the company's sales manual. His reputation led him to the world of advertising and the London firm Mather and Crowther, which in time became the world-renowned Ogilvy and Mather. The Second World War found him working in military intelligence creating propaganda to undermine the reputations of targeted Nazi industrialists. After the war, he briefly worked as a chef and a farmer in Pennsylvania before returning to the agencies in New York, already the center of the advertising industry. To bring us to the time and space of our production. (Ogilvy 16).

In 1963 he released a book about the industry and the people working in it called *Confessions of an Advertising Man*. I used this book to individualize the anatomy of my action. An actor is often surprised where they find the most in-depth, do-able action. The research an actor does is not helpful in and of itself. However, it may trigger their imagination or uncover an impulse lodged in one's memories. Alternatively, it may not.

Hortensio has numerous asides throughout the action. They are often tinged with resentment and an exaggerated sense of competition aimed at Cambio. These are moments where he reveals his true feelings to the audience, briefly dropping his mask. Peter Hyland's *The Performance of Disguise* examines how a disguise may act as a cue for the audience to literally see two different sides of a character: "Disguise had to be entirely opaque to characters on the stage and entirely transparent to the audience" (79). Speaking directly to the audience while dropping the charade gives the audience a sense of revelation; that they are in on a secret.

Olgivy's book offered insight into the less appetizing behavior of advertising executives and I applied this research to the character. Olgivy reveals how the traits of envy and competitiveness both create and threaten the success of the advertising executive. These traits differed from what I had learned from Bernays. The latter gave me a frame from which I could build Hortensio, in short, he manipulates others by skillfully triggering their unconscious desires. I could apply from Olgilvy the internal emotional impulses to compelled those actions.

A special problem with the employees of an advertising agency is that each one watches the other one very carefully: to see if one gets a carpet before the other, to see if one has an assistant before the other, or to see if one makes an extra nickel before the other. (Ogilvy 40)

Hortensio manipulates, I was starting to know why and for what. He is the type of man who profits by covetousness. He doesn't seem to suffer great envy about someone else's goodwill. He wants objects that are someone else's. Perhaps it is one of the sadder aspects of Hortensio that he doesn't even acknowledge Bianca's personhood, "For in Baptista's keep my treasure is. He hath the jewel of my life in hold (1.2.112-113)." Calling her a *treasure* and a *jewel* is employing an Elizabethan version of objectification. She is an object of monetary worth.

Hortensio changes his physical shape and identity. He conceives and enters an elaborate ruse to be alone with a teenager. Hortensio was revealing himself to be a man driven by the kind of primal motivations he stirred up in others to get love, but more specifically, the love of youth. He is endowed with the skills to trigger the primal urges of others, but, as he is to learn from Bianca, not to alter their higher ideals.

Hortensio's Overall Action is not to have sex with Bianca. At the start of the play, it may look like it to the audience, as lust is a common trope in comedy. But this is revealed, after Bianca rejects Hortensio, to be just a tactic towards a larger goal. Adler often capitalizes the overall action and tries to express it in a phrase that can embody the epic, as opposed to the pedestrian, as in: To Find



*Redemption in a Woman*. Hortensio's tactics and skill sets are manipulation, appealing to other's primal and base desires and the capacity to make risky and creative choices. These traits, conversely, have been the impediments to finding that love. This new, confusing and empowering truth does not get revealed to him, or the reader and audience, until he appeals to Bianca. She has a set of values and traditions that act as a compass: "Old fashions please me best." (3.1.77) Hortensio has no such roots; therefore, the quest for *Redemption in a Woman* will never bear fruit. He does not accept it immediately. The rest of his journey is how he negotiates these traits to find this redemption.

Stella Adler further specifies the Anatomy of the Action by compelling the actor to differentiate and explore the Inner, Verbal and Physical Actions. The research I was doing on Bernays and Olgivy was a valuable start in this part of the process. It was clear that the research on Bernays provided a general framework that put into perspective Hortensio's choices. The more I learned about Olgilvy, the more insight I had on the motivations that drove men like him. My analysis of Hortensio includes the period he spends as Litio, Bianca's music tutor and suitor. It is important enough that I have dedicated a whole chapter to it, "*Good American Speech*" as a *Form of Disguise*. The three appearances of Litio are crucial to the subsequent character development of Hortensio and informs the spine of his overall action; *To Find Redemption in a Woman*. If we are to think of his journey in the terminology of Stella Adler; the anatomy of his action may feature a huge diversion, but the diversion changes Hortensio. This change in his anatomy affects his text, the company he keeps and the decisions he

makes in ways that may seem to confound when seen in comparison to the first half of the play.

## CHAPTER TWO: "GOOD AMERICAN SPEECH" AS A FORM OF DISGUISE

In the spirit of adaptation, I concentrated on finding American figures from the early 1960s that would complement the actions I observed in Hortensio through the text. This is the frame of the character. Just as important is what is inside the frame, the impulses that drive man. After researching which archetypes seemed appropriate for a Hortensio transplanted into 1960s Manhattan, I faced uncertain outcomes once rehearsal began. I was unsure of how Hortensio was to disguise himself.

Like we have seen in many traditional comedies, Hortensio assumes a different identity and tries to woo a woman while incognito. We in the production knew the assumed identity was to be inspired by a musical celebrity of the early sixties. At the beginning of the process, I knew there would be a challenge in narrowing down which era-specific pop icon he was to be representing. Each day, over the summer before rehearsals, I would research one song from the American Top 40. I would look up a song, for example Sam's Cooke 1963 hit, *Cupid*. I would then download the guitar chords and lyrics and practice it. The next day could be Lesly Gore's *It's My Party*. The songs gave me a good feel of the time and how the sentiments of romance and desire were packaged. An ancillary benefit was that it was an excellent focusing exercise I could use in tandem with my process of breaking down and memorizing the text (see Chapter

Four). The time was coming, though when I would have to dispense with what Dr. Calvano and I thought was going to be Hortensio's disguise and create a new one from scratch.

Dr. Calvano and I talked the previous spring about how we saw Lito, the persona Hortensio assumes to woo Bianca. We felt we were still loyal to the text if we researched and experimented with different jazz/pop crooners that would have been popular in 1963. Lito's role in the world of the play is as an instructor who is "well seen in music" (1.2.127). For his first impression on the stage there was a wide array of talent for us to choose from. The following is from my journal of the process, "I was experimenting with the text using the voices of many figures from the pop world, for example, Roy Orbison, Bob Dylan or John Lennon. While they sound funny, it appears as if they were impersonations as opposed to acts of incognito. In a play, if a character fails at impersonating someone it is merely embarrassing; but if they fail at going incognito, it may be their personality itself on the line." (Tocantins)

My instincts were telling me that there was a lack of authenticity trying to ape a celebrity. The audience would have to believe that everybody onstage was hoodwinked, and that was explicitly not part of the story. Lito is not supposed to be very good at his part. In Peter Hyland's *The Performance of Disguise*, we begin to see some of the insights this theatrical trick sometimes stealthily brings to comedy:

Within a role, costume change almost always reflects an inward change. A different dress may show that a character has abandoned good for evil or evil for good; that he has grown up or grown old... On the stage, the change was invariably simple... some small, symbolic modification. I want

to suggest that disguise-changes were carried out the same way. (Hyland 81)

Hyland's essay highlights how some of the theatrical tropes we have taken for granted for centuries contain rich traditions and meaning. The modern-day ubiquity of masks or makeup in the modern age distracts us from their cultural impact. Throughout human history masks, makeup and disguise represented powerful psychic forces and have been rife with meaning. Like Bernays' use of words and images to unconsciously prompt consumers' behavior, how we alter ourselves may help us to influence another's behavior. What I discovered and explored playing Litio was that that disguise was not only a visual medium. Hyland's "inward change" described as "simple" may be audible as well as visual.

Hortensio, with his plan set, exits in 1.2 and is seen again amongst Petruchio, Gremio, and Lucentio (as Cambio) in 2.2. In the scene, he enters incognito, but Shakespeare provides him with no dialogue. This kind of entrance, to me, is a hint that the appearance itself has got to have a comic impact. It is, using vaudeville vernacular, a sight gag. It also, in a moment, gives the audience all the information they need for the next section of the play. This first impression is crucial to whether the audience identifies with a fool or laughs in ridicule at a clown. Each rehearsal I would try out the persona of a different era-specific crooner. In the scene, Petruchio is presenting this tutor to Baptista, itemizing his skills and accomplishments, and then the teacher is shuffled off to Katherina's quarters where she beats him with his instrument.

In my entrance I would try centering my energy in my pelvis, activating sexually aggressive masculine energy. Instead of Hortensio's coiled and restrained executive's equipoise, I was more fluid, even collapsed. I allowed myself commonly identified Italian-American gestures that spiraled out distally away from my body. I observed in my journal, "As a disguised and a foolish character, Litio thinks he is acting attractively, like a prestige performer. He has convinced himself this behavior has a positive effect; he is not in actuality a more attractive, creative person. He must seem transparent to the audience."

(Tocantins)

I am six foot and four inches tall and very slim. The effect of a physically distinguishable actor entering in a disguise has an impact without the actor having to telegraph it to an audience. Secondly, an actor's body behaving entirely differently from the last time you saw him can be confusing; the audience may be wondering if he was double cast, as was often the tradition in Shakespeare. I could tell before speaking a line that behavioral elements based on Louis Prima, Frank Sinatra or Bobby Darin were distracting and confusing before they even had lines.

I was presenting a character I knew would not be terrorized by a young woman, however shrewish. There was also the consideration that the humor in this scene does not come from a heightened characterization, but that the act of giving a music lesson injures him. Often, Litio enters wearing a broken lute over his head, but I found there was a more significant impact in directing the expression of this joke through a bloody handkerchief. I was able to be more

expressive with it than with a broken instrument prop. Also, it saved the properties department some expenses.

I was overlooking an essential aspect of the play; what works for Hortensio in the first half of the story is appealing to what other men want. When he tries to appeal to women, he fails miserably. There is a distinct tonal change in Bianca's chamber when Cambio calls him a "preposterous ass" (3.1.9).

It occurred to me that imbuing Lilio with qualities (sexuality, vitality) that Cambio also expresses was redundant. It is a funny expression an actor can make only once, and there was more than one joke to the scene. However, if his interpretation is what he, Baptista, Gremio and Petruccio believe are attractive qualities, then the text starts to show its satirical power. The following is a journal entry where the offstage goofing I do to get my scene partners activated before entering yielded an image of what I was looking for, "I was playing with the bloody handkerchief prop offstage tonight and, trying to crack up my scene partners, and did an intentionally bad impersonation of Olivier as Othello. I read an article in *The Independent* recently how Laurence Olivier was convinced his take on Othello was highly realistic: "He endured two and a half hours in make-up; Anthony Holden's biography describes how his body was stained black from head to toe, then polished; his lips were thickened, his eyes whitened." (Walsh) It struck me as sad, dangerous and funny, to be so culturally thick and uninformed of your state. I think what makes Hortensio an ass is merely being out of date around culturally attuned kids falling in love" (Tocantins).

I decided to take a turn at Litio from a different point of view. I was afraid it would run counter to all the research I had done over the summer, but in fact this research helped bolster and inform what ended up being Hortensio's disguise. I didn't want to deliver Litio as Olivier, but I was inspired by the image of a man entirely sure of himself while being altogether inappropriate. The model, or rather a voice, in my head, as I entered this rehearsal was Vincent Price.

If Hortensio represents the influence of twentieth-century advertising and marketing, then how does his alter ego, Litio, fit into the historical circumstances of this adaptation? In the text, Hortensio speaks of donning a disguise to see the otherwise inaccessible Bianca. In preparation, I was distracted by the evidence provided by the line: "a schoolmaster well seen in music."

(1.2.128) By concentrating my presentation and research on the musicianship, I was creating a character that did not bring an audience to laughter but instead made them concerned for Bianca's safety. I already knew that Hortensio was a wealthy, middle-aged advertising executive, the question now became; how did this setting of the production affect Hortensio's idea of disguise, if not as a musician?

Peter Hyland explores in the *Performance of Disguise* the role of disguise in early modern English drama:

I should prefer to define disguise as the substitution, overlaying or metamorphosis of dramatic identity, whereby one character sustains two roles. This may involve masquerade deliberate or involuntary, mistaken or concealed identity, madness or possession. (Hyland77)

It is evident by his dialogue that Hortensio's masquerade is

'deliberate' and 'concealed.' Hortensio is possessed by the idea of Bianca when



he declares about Baptista's seclusion of her: "He hath the jewel of my life in hold." (1.2. 113-14) My presentation of a slick, sexually suggestive New Yorker appeared overly aggressive. I was becoming more interested in concentrating on the term *schoolmaster*.

I entered the scene as if I were a preposterous schoolmaster. There was an immediate difference in my partners' response. There was no longer a dynamic tension in the air. There was finally a comedic tension; as if there was an allowance to laugh at the extraordinary pretense of a music tutor who put on airs and assumed an exaggerated status. Rather than the confidence, expertise and sexual energy of a crooner, Lito could be less adept, attractive or confident than he may portray himself to be. What type of person from the early 1960s could we see as absurd or out of date?

The explosion of mass media at the dawn of the twentieth century meant that the various dialects of American English were more exposed to one another. Like many other expansions in American history, it was an opportunity for commerce. Telephones introduced new habits in culture, the device changed how we greeted one another or comported ourselves in conversation. Americans then heard more voices and local mores from radio broadcasts. Third, sound in film introduced Americans to even more variety in tone and accent. These technologies also supported a school of thought that the individual American voice itself could be altered to suit the individual themselves.

In *Standard Speech: The Ongoing Debate*, Dudley Knight, former head of voice and speech at the University of California, Irvine assesses how tectonic

shifts in culture helped reveal regional biases hitherto unconscious in the American psyche. Knight charts the divide, starting in the 1920s, between linguists and speech teachers over the descriptive or prescriptive approaches to speech (158). Linguists concerned themselves with the objective study of the overall patterns of accents and dialects. Speech teachers, however, began to apply an idea of “World English” (160) to train actors and to offer ‘accent reduction’ to newly arrived Americans and people who grew up with regional dialects.

World English was the brainchild of William Tilly, an Australian transplanted to, and later emigrating from, central Europe after World War I. He settled in New York, and there he found a home at Columbia University’s extension school. He was both a founding member of the International Phonetic Association and a rigorous reformer, dedicated to the teaching of English as a spoken language with pronunciation standards. His classes attracted not only performers but teachers in the New York City public school system. New York was home to immigrants with dozens of different native tongues; these teachers of forensics and rhetoric, as well as English and speech, were trying to establish a unified standard of pronunciation. (Knight) Tilly’s ‘rules’ were taught to countless new Americans desperately trying to fit into a new culture. The rules were taught using the phonetic alphabet as a key.

Because his particular area of interest was the proper pronunciation of English, he was a firm advocate of so-called “narrow” phonetic transcription, which essentially means a more detailed and precise form usually defined by numerous diacritic symbols. Anthropologists and most linguists rejected narrow transcription, preferring the “broad” or more general form because their needs did not require such specificity, and

because they considered narrow transcription overly laden with detail. In writings critical of Tilly's approach, the word "fussy" appears more than once. (Knight 158)

Where this style of speech did not claim any specific geological traits or terrain either in America or Great Britain, it sounds like the approach most Americans would call, colloquially, Boston Brahmin. The 1920s proved a fruitful period for elocution coaches, *The Billboard* (Later *Billboard Magazine*) featured columns about speech schools and Broadway practitioners of World English. Advertisements sold records that gave one tips on how to improve their accent for fun and, more importantly, profit. The business of changing your voice had gained a firm foothold. As Knight explains:

World English, then, was a creation of speech teachers, and boldly labeled as a class-based accent: the speech of persons variously described as "educated," "cultivated," or "cultured"; the speech of persons who moved in rarified social or intellectual circles and of those who might aspire to do so. (Knight 160)

Knight asserts that this accent bias led speech pathologists to apply their work that seemed similarly manipulative to the approach of advertising executives:

People who teach clients to modify accent patterns are working in the service of an oppressively biased and hegemonic campaign by a power elite in America—all of whom speak an ill-defined "General American,"—to stigmatize the accents of Southerners, Hispanics, African-Americans, and Asians by enforcing an arbitrary standard of pronunciation. (Knight 6)

As one generation passed to the next, Edith Skinner took up the mantle of prescriptive English pronunciation in America. Skinner, and voice practitioners like her, had an enormous impact on the American voice. Tilly's practice narrowly transcribed phonetics and made the association that dignified English sound like a certain part of American- and people of a certain genetic background. As years

went by and these standards asserted themselves in acting conservatories, on soundstages, and in radio studios, the terminology shifted. Skinner used the term Good American Speech. Her mission was just as passionate as Tilly's and her influence, after three-quarters of a century, is still felt today. It has since become part of America's very character:

Davis, Roosevelt, and Haley were not affecting pretentious British accents, on the contrary, this "r-less" accent was typical of American Northeast cities at the time, and because the Northeast has traditionally been the cultural center of America, theirs was considered the standard American English. Genuine Northeasterners like Davis, Roosevelt and Haley spoke this way naturally, and those performers who did not were often taught to in elocution lessons. (32)

It is a chicken and egg proposition, did a ginned-up bias lead Americans to use their voices as an aspirational tool, or did the appearance of World English help spread a preference based on the sound of one's voice?

In rehearsal, I began experimenting with a dialect based on Good American Speech. If disguise is, as Hyland says, at times a transformation; it is appropriate that Hortensio would transform from one type of manipulator to another. If Hortensio believes he can get what he wants by appealing to people's subconscious desires through words, then Litio can operate under the assumption that sound itself can affect others' behavior. If I am to understand Hyland furthermore that disguise in theatre can be put on and taken off at will, and that part of the enjoyment of disguise is its obviousness to the audience, what better mask than a voice?

As for himself, Hortensio is direct to a fault. When we first encounter him, he is directly insulting Katherina:

Mates, Maid? How mean you that? No mates for you  
Unless you were of gentler milder mould. (1.1.59-60)  
There is a clear indication that not only is Hortensio attired differently in

Act 2.1, but how he addresses Baptista and the assembled changes drastically when asked why he looks pale: "For fear, I promise you, if I look pale." (2.1.139)

Here was an opportunity to explore the application of Good American Speech, with an ear toward what I was investigating about how Shakespeare can guide the actor towards an interpretation.

The "M" sound is described in the International Phonetic Alphabet (henceforth referred to as IPA) as the bilabial nasal represented as /m/. As the English language is an amalgamation of various vocabularies, there is less rhyming available in it when compared to a Romance language like Italian. Alliteration is often a substitute, and there is no lack of it in Shakespeare. The bilabial nasal has a few useful qualities for the actor. It is a continuant, that is, /m/ phoneme can be extended for as long as there is breath behind it. It is phonated; it is only possible to construct /m/ if the vocal folds are also engaged and the sound is produced. Therefore, the actor has the choice of applying volume, pitch and timbre. The phoneme /m/ sounds like moaning and growling; it is being produced with a lowered velum (a 'nasal' sound) and can be made with the influence of the esophagus (a 'guttural' sound). These traits point to Hortensio's first line: it's rooted in gravity, direct and aggressive.

Both *For* and *Fear* start with examples of the voiceless labiodental fricative (known as /f/). This consonantal sound is unvoiced, its volume can be slightly increased by increasing the pressure of air flowing through the lower lip and

upper teeth (by adding phonation it would sound like /v/). It is also a continuant, and as such, it has a quality unlike many other phonemes. If the actor engages and disengages the pressure that creates the oral turbulence, there is a wavering sound. Frequently /f/ can be associated with shivering, or not coincidentally, fear. These alliterative examples provide both insights into the characters and useful tips in vocal strategy. Hortensio says what he wants people to hear, while Litio tries to influence people's emotions directly. Much of the comedy of Hortensio is rooted in how successful he is in the first act with one strategy, and how disastrous the results are with his other approach in the next three acts.

Before Litio speaks, his entrance acts as a presentation of self. It is of utmost importance to Hortensio that he appears convincing as a music tutor. I decided that the least amount of effort toward the disguise would yield the most comedic impact, so the only costume piece I added to the attire I was wearing (khakis and a period-appropriate pullover) was a pair of eyeglasses. Hortensio is operating under the assumption that this ensemble, plus his posture, must surely communicate a "schoolmaster, well seen in music." (1.2.127-128) When Baptista orders Litio that "You shall go see your pupils presently," (3.1 103) Hortensio (as Litio) may exit, smug with the confidence that he will no doubt find success at teaching Katherine, the first step towards being alone with his beloved Bianca.

Hortensio's first line, re-entering as Litio, is an expression of terror at both her aggressiveness and the level of failure he has met with so early in his foolproof plan," For fear, I promise you, if I look pale!" (2.1.139) The structure of

my adaptation was still the tactics and strategies of Bernays, and the essence of Olgilvy. Now I was adding a façade to the structure, that of Vincent Price.

This moment marks the first time the audience hears the most detailed part of his disguise, his voice. I had researched the radio and film performers of the era that I thought Hortensio might have been impressed by, actors associated with Tilly's World English or Skinner's Good American Speech. The first example I tried in rehearsal was an Englishman, James Mason. In the time-period of our adaptation he had recently starred in Stanley Kubrick's *Lolita* (1962). In it he played a man obsessed with a teenage girl. Orson Welles, a mid-westerner, was gifted with a booming baritone that could also communicate prosody in a hushed whisper. His resume was prodigious, often performing in multiple live radio shows on the same evening. Neither of these voices communicated a man whose confidence was masking a desperation.

It was only when I entered an iteration of the scene with no image or inspiration that I found both. Frequently, productions of *The Taming of the Shrew* use a prop stringed instrument as a sight gag, placing the frame of a broken guitar over the actor's head. Our production did not have that kind of a budget. In rehearsals, there was an agreement that if I put my attention on the head wound itself, using a bloody handkerchief for a prop, we could still tell this bit of the story without a broken instrument. As I entered I had an image of Katherina, just a room away, threatening to kill me. It resonated with me. This was a way to play fear; put the object of terror just out of sight. It struck me that it was a device Edgar Allan Poe used in *The Telltale Heart* and other stories, which

I knew from old Vincent Price movies. Immediately I realized the mixture of menace, erudition, and camp had been right in front of me the entire time.

The previous semester I had taken a class in the history of audio broadcasting with Professor Carole Stewart. One of the programs we studied was a 1950 episode of the radio show *Suspense* called *Three Skeleton Key*. In it, Price plays a man living in a lighthouse overrun by thousands of vermin. Vincent Price's climactic line is a description of the impending horror in this audio thriller, "An endless line, of enormous rats!" (Toudouze)

In his delivery, Price intones the first phonemes in his lower register, they resonate in his chest cavity. There is also aspiration, lending the first three words a sense of awe. The horrific revelation, as well as the humor, is expressed in the second half of the line. Price's pitch spikes to the top of his register, his velum lowers to open the head resonance many register as nasality. He stresses the final word as if it were a discovery, which to the audience, it is.

As I explored Price, his story and profile fit into the themes of what interested me about Lito's masculinity and presentation. Price was well known, not only as an actor in various mediums, but also as an art collector and a gourmet. Born to wealthy St. Louis parents in 1911, according to his daughter Victoria Price's *Vincent Price: A Daughter's Biography*, he bought his first piece of art (a Rembrandt etching) on margin at the age of 12. (Price) He stumbled in the theatre after studying art at Yale and in London. He appeared with Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre and with Helen Hayes on Broadway, where he started working regularly in radio. His profile rose in Hollywood. His six-foot four frame



and distinctive vocal quality led to a variety of roles often in period dramas or as a sophisticate. Otto Preminger's *Laura* raised his profile to A list movies, but it was the in the land of B movies where he became a legend. Price starred in a series of thrillers based on the works of Edgar Allan Poe: *House of Usher*, *The Pit and the Pendulum* and *The Raven*, all made between 1960-63. Price's performances in these films cemented his imprint in our cultural consciousness. His bravura performances walk the line between effete menace and rococo showmanship.

There was much more for me to explore and experiment with by performing Litio through the lens of a 1960s era Vincent Price. The act of idealizing Bianca mediated what was so predatory about Litio in earlier rehearsals. He was still scary and dangerous, but rather than threatening a woman's safety, he became a self-obsessed presence that got in the way of something important, young love.

The three characters enter bickering as if Litio has already been interrupting their fun, "But wrangling pedant, this is the patroness of heavenly harmony." (3.1.5)

Litio is defining Bianca through his gaze, forcing her not just into a role but into a personage that isn't even human. If he has not blown things out of proportion enough, when Cambio calls him a "preposterous ass" (3.1.9) Litio takes it as more than just the ribbing that men, sparring over the affections of a woman, engage in, "Sirrah! I will not bear these braves of thine!" (3.1.15)

He is, in fact, a preposterous ass. Here Latio returns to alliteration with the /b/ sound, known as a voiced bilabial stop. Once I knew the voice of Latio followed the inspiration of Vincent Price, it drastically changed how I was to approach the use of phonetics. Historically, Tilly and Skinner used the International Phonetic Alphabet to codify how to pronounce words within their approaches of World English or Good American Speech. I was more interested in applying phonetics to accents and dialects, to use it to refer to how an actor imagines they could sound. My ear told me that an urbane man about town expressing his offense would make sure he expressed /b/'s with a breathiness. I can make note of this using a diacritic, an additional coding one applies to a symbol in the IPA, in this case /<sup>h</sup>/ . Additionally, the verb *bare* seemed to be the operative word in the line; it possessed the most literary and poetic associations. Before the /b/ sound I added the symbol /<sup>h</sup>/ . That denotes that the word is delivered high in the actor's register. In this dialect, the extended vowel sound of the /e/ sounds even more extended as it is non-rhotic. There is no /r/ sound at the end of the word, just a subtle transition to the mid-central "uh" vowel represented as by the symbol /ə/. The image before the /b/ this time is /<sup>h</sup>/ , which directs the actor that this word, compared to the last stressed word, has a falling quality. Linked by the unstressed "these" I was able to apply a sense of Vincent Price without mimicking the performer; I was using his vocal qualities to concentrate my performance. So, "Bare these braves" (3.1.15) became

tb<sup>h</sup>eə ði:z \b<sup>h</sup>reɪvz (3.1.15)

Litio has only just begun guaranteeing that Bianca will choose Cambio. The text allows Litio and Cambio to be directly abusive, hurling terms like “pedant” and “ass” at each other with ease. Pretense is expressed with honey as well as vinegar, Litio’s exchanges with Bianca are as disingenuous as his words with Cambio are cold. He is as different from Cambio as possible. When they are first alone, Cambio immediately reveals that he is Lucentio, “disguised thus to get your love.” (3.1.32-33) Litio as Hortensio reveals in this scene that he is a man who does not know who he is, what his boundaries are, or how to negotiate his emotions. His treatment of Bianca, while obsessive, is also obsequious; surely not the behavior of a mature man. Alternatively, he creates a rivalry with Cambio that is one sided. His internal life is in upheaval; his guitar is out of tune. He even turns directly to the audience to litigate his woes. At one point, in the exchange of three lines, he goes from fawning sycophant to seething enemy, to a desperate man breaking the fourth wall. He even drops his Litio persona and becomes Hortensio again, for a moment:

Hortensio: Madam, ‘tis now in tune.

*(He plays again)*

Lucentio: All but the bass.

Hortensio: The bass is right; ‘tis the bass knave that jars.

*(Aside)*How fiery and forward our pedant is! (3.1.42-45)

The scene has established Litio’s assumed voice as a construct with rules of its own. The action of the scene was occurring upstage. This was very useful to me as Litio could lose his temper at Cambio, “‘tis the bass knave that jars” (3.1.44) and storm off like a petulant child. This transition allowed me the

space and time to disengage from my guitar, cross downstage and to remove my eyeglasses. These simple movements, quotidian when alone, together construct an unmasking. It is now we learn how deeply jealous Hortensio is. Revealing his suspicions to the audience that he suspects the two are falling in love; his only resolution is to double-down on his attempts to subvert Cambio, "I'll watch you better yet." (3.1.47) With that, the eyeglasses are back on and he is Litio again, no wiser for his momentary self-examination.

The scene ends with another chance to reveal what is under the mask, both verbally and visually. Bianca is charitable in her honesty to Litio; after he composes his version of the musical scale for her, she rebuffs him. It is both a message to Hortensio and Litio, "Call you this 'gamut'? Tut, I like it not! / Old fashions please me best. I am not so nice/To change true rules for odd inventions." (3.1.76-78)

Hortensio's entire scheme relies on manipulation and the expectation that people will not look too closely at the goods sold to them. His expression as Litio is of a man flush with confidence on the surface but full of fear and resentment. Bianca has met the "true rules" (3.1.78) in the man who was candid immediately.

As the young lovers leave him alone onstage, Litio confides in the audience again. He has not yet learned anything as he removes his glasses and places down his guitar: "If once I find thee ranging /Hortensio will be quit with thee by changing." (3.1.88-89) Hortensio's values are confronted, and from a woman no less. He is shaken. It is as if he has believed his disguise, and its failure is not part of any plan. Here a disguise reveals aspects of the character

previously hidden, that the mask unmask an unknown identity. He storms offstage, both Hortensio and Litio; but his lesson will be learned soon enough.

The last time we encounter Litio is when Trania (our production's Tranio) has set up a situation where Litio may observe Bianca canoodling with Cambio. It succeeds in drawing out his resentment towards Bianca: "As one unworthy all the former favours /That I have fondly flattered her withal." (4.2.31-32) It is telling that Hortensio is so obtuse that he needs another person to point out the obvious, that Bianca is simply not interested in him. He shows his disconnection from reality in a more specific moment. Trania makes a point of referring to him as Litio twice in the first fifteen lines of the scene. Suddenly, Hortensio confronts his identity, "Mistake no more- I am not Litio, /Nor a musician as I seem to be, /But one that scorn to live in this disguise (4.2.16-18)

In rehearsals I found that this was the moment to quickly decide to reveal myself to be Hortensio;

Within a role, costume change almost always reflects an inward change. A different dress may show that a character has abandoned good for evil or evil for good, that he has grown up or grown old. (Hyland 81)  
The costume shorthand cued an idiolect revelation as well. Hortensio can accept that Bianca's eye has settled on Cambio, the idea that his disguise is a pathetic failure is foreign to him. He does not yet have self-knowledge; just resentment. "Such a one as leaves a gentleman/And makes a god of such a cullion. /Know, sir, that I am called Hortensio. (4.2.19-21)

On the word *Hortensio*, it was clear that he was abandoning Litio. The joke is in the blitheness in which the text drops this ruse that has occupied Hortensio's energies for the better part of four acts. I whipped off my eyeglasses

as if that magically switched Hortensio's fabricated voice back to his day to day voice, and with it, his identity. It is at this point that Hortensio changes his strategy:

"I will be married to a wealthy widow." (4.2.37) However, the quickness with which he abandons his secret identity, the woman he claims to have loved, and Padua itself show that Hortensio may have changed his mind, but he himself has not yet changed. Hortensio storms out again, vowing that he will seek kindness and not beauty; and this brings us back to the rest of Hortensio's story.

### CHAPTER THREE: THE RETURN OF HORTENSIO

In the last acts of *The Taming of the Shrew* Hortensio takes off his disguise. This presents a challenge to the actor. The problem I was facing was that the tone of Hortensio for the rest of the play is inconsistent with the previous four acts. In this chapter I aim to specify where in the text I found his motives are not as explicit, and how I justified the inconsistencies. Hortensio appears in scenes where he seems out of context, and some of his text is cryptic. It is as if he is in a different play, or perhaps a different character. Hortensio's behavior is dependably selfish in the first three acts. It is as if he has rejected the frame of using manipulation to control other people through their unconscious impulses. Will this effect his inner compulsions, his resentment and envy? 4.2 Trania deflates Litio's exhausting confidence by hoodwinking him into seeing the young lovers, Bianca and Cambio shamelessly court. Without hesitation, he drops his assumed identity and makes an about face in his life, "I will be married to a wealthy widow/Ere three days pass." (4.2.37-38)

He states his plan specifically and even ritualizes the promise. In rehearsals, the actress portraying Trania and I explored the vow Hortensio makes, "Here is my hand, and here I firmly vow/Never to woo her more." (4.2.28-29) Hortensio's vow is full of intention without a strategy. I improvised presenting her my hand in the form of a "pinky swear;" it is a child's version of a pledge; one

makes a fist and extends the smallest finger. Your partner grasps it and shakes it with their pinky, and thus you are foresworn. It struck me as a gesture with the energy of a definite decision without the wisdom that usually goes into one. Hortensio then gathers up us glasses/disguise and triumphantly strides off toward his mysterious new life, a pinky stretched to the skies to light the way. The exit leaves the audience with a good resolution of this fool's journey, but his mission is not over yet.

H.J. Oliver, in his 1984 introduction to the Oxford edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*, wrote extensively on how the text published in the 1623 *First Folio* of Shakespeare's collected plays may have been a version of the story still in revision. In the vernacular of the time, *foul papers* were the term for a draft of a play. Oliver's assertion, based on extensive examples of both printing inconsistencies and confusing dialogue, is that the *First Folio's* editors went to print with the version they had; a manuscript as opposed to a transcript.

In short, the First Folio text of *The Taming of the Shrew* was almost certainly printed from Shakespeare's manuscript, but that manuscript shows a change of mind; and that change proves to be relevant to, and important for, any attempt to establish the relationship between the Folio and the Quarto texts of the play. (Oliver 13)

Oliver points out that another play, *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, Called The Taming of a Shrew*, was performed around the same time. Was it written before *The Shrew*? Was it a different playwright? Was Shakespeare among one of several young playwrights of *A Shrew*, and *The Shrew* was his more mature reboot? Oliver has no sure answers, but *A Shrew's* existence reinforces that the



production history of *The Taming of the Shrew* is complex. There were several iterations, and sometimes important records are lost or not considered important until hundreds of years later. Previously, *The Taming of a Shrew* was presented by The Earl of Pembroke's Men, performed in 1594. Perhaps the two plays are born of a third, now lost source.

Throughout *The Taming of a Shrew*, Hortensio stays in his role of Petruchio's old friend and remains by his side for much of the play. He does not woo Bianca. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Oliver asserts that Shakespeare introduces the Litio storyline for Hortensio and reassigns some of his lines, during his time in disguise, to other characters. There are numerous inconsistencies in the text that support the assertion that the Folio text may not be the final draft:

The evidence relates almost entirely to Hortensio- and, to anticipate, suggests a theory that Hortensio did not, in the first intention, woo Bianca in the disguise of Litio, and that the lines originally given to, or meant for, him had either to be omitted or to be transferred to Tranio when Hortensio, as a result of his wooing disguise, became, as it were, unavailable for other duties. (Oliver 10)

These inconsistencies influence other characters as well. During the wedding scene (3.1), when Hortensio has just left the stage as Litio, Tranio (Trania in our production) is present and has text assigned to his character that assumes a knowledge of Petruchio an old friend would have, and Trania is barely an acquaintance of his, "See not your bride in these unreverent robes;/Go to my chamber, put on clothes of mine." (3.2.102-103) It is the talk of men that know each other. Also, how could Trania, a servant who is also new in town, have a chamber with extra clothes? In 4.2 Hortensio makes his pledge and three-day

quest for the Widow explicit. A few lines later Trania claims, instead, he is going to Petruchio's "taming-school." (4.2.54) Hortensio appears in the next scene at Petruchio's home, witnessing the final stages of the "taming." There is no indication of the considerable character shift from one scene earlier when he realizes, "Kindness in women, not their beauteous looks/ Shall win my love." (4.2.41-42)

I couldn't ignore the feeling that these subsequent appearances of Hortensio lightened the impact of his return in the final scene. His motives and tactics seemed so clear up until his vow to wed The Widow, and these subsequent scenes lacked the unmistakable drive I came to expect from him in the story. Bianca's rejection drives him from Padua towards an uncertain future. Why is he arriving at Petruchio's house for dinner in the next scene and then walking back to Baptista's house for the wedding of the woman who rejected him? He never mentions any personal misgivings or how he is justifying his actions.

I trusted my questions would find answers in rehearsal. If I were to depend on the text of the fourth and fifth acts as a basis for the anatomy of my action, I would end up confused and uninspired. However, if I were to trust the process I had committed to, 'reading in' on the text to extrapolate the character traits of Hortensio and values of Litio; then an answer would present itself. It is sometimes frustrating to not have a resolution of character preconceived. If we are honest, however, Shakespeare contains so much sophistication and complexity that often the resolutions that seem preconceived are traps, and the

decisions that seem impossibly muddy are, in fact, gifts to the actor. It is wisest to take a deep breath and call the place where the text stops being easy to parse an inflection point.

Did the answer lie in adapting the character's structure again? Stella Adler's technique rests on the actor's willingness to trust in their imagination and the strength of their action. I know Hortensio wants *To Find Redemption in a Woman*. It is a positive and spirited expression of what he does through Act IV. It is there that the through-line presents some challenges. A text may not be as air tight as *As You Like It*, but the job of the actor is still to present their character fully. The last quarter of *The Taming of the Shrew* may not share the same 'major key' tone for Hortensio. Indeed, it is a strange journey, but my action was still do-able and the spine still there. Trusting in the strength of your action sometimes means you need to cut your action down into simpler chores. The text does not always make it easy for you. If you know your greater theme and the anatomy of your action; you can use your cast, space, and even serendipity to tell the story.

Hortensio storms offstage as heartbroken but driven Litio. Seventy-five lines later he appears in 4.3, dressed as Hortensio again; at Petruchio's house. Katherina has been begging for food from the servants, and then from her husband, as he walks in, cheerfully. His greeting to his former nemesis, Katherina, is friendly: "Mistress, what cheer?" (4.3.36) In rehearsals, it felt right to accept that Hortensio has decided to make amends to her. If it is the kindness that will now win his love, he has a part in generating that kindness. It felt

awkward, like he was 'trying on' different aspects of the known passage from the first chapter of *The Book of Corinthians*:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a)

I was attracted to the impulse that Hortensio was searching his memory for anything he could remember that could help him figure out what values there were besides profit and manipulation. I took the impulse and ran with it, looking up the verse on my phone and running through the scene as if I was trying to live by some foreign feeling new code. It struck me that Hortensio would have no previous knowledge of thinking outside of himself. Why not use this well-known blueprint and act as if I was bluffing my way through it? This is not to say that he (or I) feel any personal zeal about the source in question. It can be seen, by him, as a short and pithy description of the "brand" of love. In the context of our production, it is a cultural bedrock in the worlds of Shakespeare and a 1963 advertising executive. It turned out to be a convenient tool in the anatomy of Hortensio's action. It allowed me to approach some deep lines with a do-able action. The following is a rehearsal journal entry from the week I encountered this change in interpretation: "Tonight, I played an 'as if' and found a path to justify why Hortensio is in the scenes later in the play, and how he may navigate them. If he tries to adhere to some 'odds and ends stolen out of holy writ,' not like Richard III, but like an enthusiastic amateur, we now have a story of a pilgrim making his own, imperfect progress. I know this Cor. passage of The Bible, as I

was an altar boy for years. Hortensio may have just ripped the page out of some Hotel drawer Gideons' edition, and I think that's the point. He has some half-remembered notion that principles are concepts some people live by, and these people seem to get what they want. Why not try that instead of manipulating other's desires for wealth and sex? The key is; he is not that good at it. He still is, of course, Hortensio." (Tocantins)

At Petruchio's house Hortensio witnesses Katherina being denied food, and he confronts his old friend, "Signor Petruchio, fie, you are to blame." (4.3.48) The food in question is thrust in his hands, and Petruchio orders, "Eat it up all, Hortensio, if thou lov'st me." (4.3.50) I followed Petruchio's order in rehearsal and began to eat. The joke was obvious, the hungry Katherina watches Hortensio being forced to eat her food. This was not going to be possible, and the logic began to sink in. It was not in the budget to cook an entire meal to indulge a joke about eating food in front of a starving woman. Dr. Calvano directed me to stand motionless just out of reach of Katherina with the plate of food in my hand, like a waiter frozen in time. As a staging practicality, Petruchio's behavior modification was continuing downstage with Katherina and a brow-beaten Tailor. I played a do-able action, Protect Katherina. To do so, I had to break down my action into do-able activities: to bear witness; to let my silence speak for me; to gather intelligence. All of this was possible through Dr. Calvano's stillness direction, Hortensio is struggling with his possible choices. The urge to protect, challenged with validating another man sets him in a state of apprehension, balanced between the two impulses. To the audience he may seem to be complicit in

Katherina's abuse, and that may very well be true. However, to play the character, the actor would do well to avoid judging their persona. Hortensio is then left alone with the audience at the end of the scene when Petruchio storms off to Baptista's house, followed by Katherina and the staff. He shares an aside, "Why so this gallant will command the sun." (4.3.190) If "Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in truth" (1 Cor. 13: 7a), then here is Hortensio's confession of both his and Petruchio's lifelong mindsets. Yes, he is complicit; he is also realizing, slowly, the consequences of self-interested behavior.

Hortensio does not become a born-again reformer, however he is showing evidence of thinking about other's well-being. He and Guilia follow Katherina as Petruchio force-marches the group, in the blazing sun, back to Padua proper. Petruchio insists it is not the visible sun but the moon that is hot, and Katherina fights the assertion. Hortensio, unusually, mitigates the quarrel by saying to Katherina, "Say as he says, or we shall never go." (4.5.11) When Petruchio presses the issue further, and as Katherina relents, Hortensio steps in again, this time to Petruchio, "Petruchio, go thy ways, the field is won." (4.5.23) If love "always perseveres" (1 Cor. 13:8a) Hortensio is trying that human value out for size. He is succeeding, this experiment of having values and living by them is showing results. Petruchio's gas-lighting behavior does not fully abate, and as the crew exit the stage for the next leg of their journey, Hortensio does not join them, opting to, "Have to my widow, and if she be forward/Then thou hast taught Hortensio to be untoward." (4.5.78-79) I chose to stress the sense of the unexpected in the adjective *untoward*. Hortensio is saying he will follow his

friend's lead and treat her as inappropriately as Petruchio treats Katherina. However, he has not been showing evidence of his earlier, pushy self. His overall action is still *To Find Redemption in a Woman*, but his tactic has become riskier. In seeking "Kindness in women" (4.2.41) it would be genuinely unexpected for him to show kindness to The Widow. Hortensio is aping the behavior of someone doing the right thing, but does he feel it?

As Hortensio and his wife enter the final scene, I saw a clue from the text itself. The Widow's name is still The Widow. Their marriage is still in the state of defining itself. Hortensio arrives in the final scene (Act V, sc. ii) with The Widow for a banquet celebrating the marriage of Bianca and Lucentio. Hortensio, too, is in the space of redefinition and is experimenting with how one acts in public throughout the scene. The scene took place in 1963: just before the assassination of a President, the flowering of movements dedicated to civil rights, feminism and the expansion of a frustrating and ultimately unwinnable war. Hortensio, too, seems to be living on a pivot point between these two worlds. Rather than pushing an agenda for his own pleasure, he is trying to react honestly to things changing all around him.

He is quick to defend his wife. When The Widow quarrels with Petruchio about what she means when she tells Petruchio, "He that is giddy thinks the world turns round." (5.2.20) When challenged by Katherina and Petruchio, she replies, "Thus I conceive by him." (5.2.22) When Petruchio makes a conception pun and directs it to Hortensio, he responds in another one of his now cryptic pronouncements, "My widow says, thus she conceives her tale." (5.2.24) The

response contains multiple sexual puns, but I didn't think Hortensio responded from that impulse anymore; or, at least, he would avoid it if he could. My choice was that Hortensio would try to quell the skirmish by appealing to a higher ideal- I stressed the word *thus* and pointed to my head. This deflected the conversation from the womb or the pun on the word *tale*. Hortensio is giving his wife more credit; she has a mind, and she tells her own story. No, he is not a wild eyed revolutionary, but that is not Hortensio's job in this story. His story in this scene is not to let Petruchio make yet another rite of passage smaller than what it is. However, this is a comedy, and Hortensio is not very good at his job.

Hortensio and Lucentio make a wager with Petruchio about whose wife will come to them right away, to test their obedience. In rehearsals I thought it would be useful to have some money to play with; it would be an activity that would reflect men's behavior while wagering. It was a clear enough impulse, I produced and threw some dollars on the stage. Petruchio and Lucentio complied and contributed more money. As an experienced gambler, Hortensio picks up 'the bank' to keep it secure. Here is Hortensio going back to the habits he knew before, chasing easy money at the expense of others. He asks Biondello why The Widow has not come when he has entreated her, who responds, "She says you have some goodly jest in hand. She will not come. She bids you come to her." (5.2.91-92) I looked at the actress playing The Widow as she caught me red-handed, and I dropped the bank. The bet ends up being a display of how quickly a husband can go to his wife. In his own, fallible way, Hortensio is genuinely interested in the kindness of a woman.



Stella Adler's theory of The Anatomy of an Action was of great use to me. I relish the opportunity to match American History and pop culture to the development of a character. It is a sure way to activate my imagination, and it fueled me with imagery that made realistic some unrealistic scenarios. It provided me with a strong structure in the figure of Edward Bernays, someone who was explicit in his strategies and tactics. I learned that structure with that resiliency could withhold changes to the story that come from both adaptation and production history.

## CHAPTER FOUR: HOW I REMEMBERED WHAT I REMEMBER: FUSING TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS FOR MEMORIZING TEXT

This last chapter highlights how I used the challenging exercises of theatre director Tadashi Suzuki, the practices of Shakespearian coach Cicely Berry, a new font designed for people with memory problems, and my own faculty's specific exercises to help me, a recovering alcoholic dealing with memory loss, to memorize 1850 words. In February of 2014, I was declared a ward of the State of California and entered a supervised detox and rehabilitation unit, CRI-Help, in Los Angeles for six weeks. I had been actively alcoholic and addicted to pharmaceuticals for over a decade. I was in my early forties. In rehab, I noticed a series of symptomatic behavior that was unexpected. I went through periods of hypervigilance, had difficulty concentrating and was experiencing memory loss. There is an irony in being an actor in the early days of AA; there is some memorization involved. It dawned on me why people in meetings say The Serenity Prayer as a group; some people can't remember its 25 words. I was among them.

There is an acronym for what I was, and to an extent am, still experiencing. PAW stands for Post-Acute Withdrawal, a series of effects from long term drug and alcohol abuse. It is helpful to think of detox and acute

withdrawal as a first phase of physical recovery and PAW as the second. The first stage is easy to track and trace, the second has many more variables. My symptoms differed from those of my rehab cohort, some of whom suffered from paranoid ideation or sleep paralysis. Dan Mager, MSW observes in *Psychology Today*: “Post-acute withdrawal varies in intensity and duration from one person to another; again, usually in correlation with the intensity and duration of one’s substance use. Its manifestations can fluctuate in severity, coming and going in wave-like recurrences, and include impairments in energy, concentration, attention span, memory, sleep, appetite, and mood—most commonly anxiety, irritability, anger, and depression.” (Mager)

A day to day term for this diagnosis is ‘wet brain.’ I had noticed in the first few years of sobriety that my facility for retaining text was severely compromised. This was even more clear as I progressed through graduate school, where memorizing lines is a continuing process. There is not a lot of useful information available about memory retention, it falls well below depression and paranoid ideation as symptoms to be immediately addressed. Medical science is still trying to understand what happens to the brain after sobriety. For example, a leading center for treatment, The Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at UCLA, can only offer this advice: “PAWS can be challenging to deal with, especially after going through detox and then working to resist relapse. The unpredictable fluctuations of symptoms can be stressful, but a combination of drugs and therapy can help make those symptoms more manageable.” (Semel)

I pursued techniques that would assist me in retaining text, with this as my first observation; sitting in a chair and repeating words does not work. It used to; I had toured quickly rehearsed productions of *Richard III*, *Macbeth* and *The Taming of the Shrew* in my twenties by using exactly this tried and true technique; only it was no longer true for me.

I applied and was accepted to The SITI (Saratoga International Theatre Institute) Company's 25th Anniversary Summer Intensive at the end of my first year at The University of Louisville. This was an opportunity to train with the founding members of the influential theatre group in their physically and mentally challenging blend of techniques: Suzuki and Viewpoints. Viewpoints is the applied investigation of the effects of space, time, emotion, movement and story on the stage. This investigation can be expressed creatively through performance or directorially through the composition of performance. Founding member of SITI, and co-author of *The Viewpoints Book*, Anne Bogart, was exposed to the viewpoints by post-modern dance pioneer Mary Overlie in the 1970s, at the time an instructor at NYU. The technique has been used by the SITI Company, among countless other theatre artists, to construct vital and resonant stage moments. The work has had a transformative effect on training in the United States, countering the influence of the early theories of Stanislavski system. As an actor who was trained in Adler technique, I can easily be distracted from the processing of learning the text by the complexities of the story and character. Viewpoints offer a refreshing counter perspective.

Another misconception about Stanislavski's theories of acting supposes that all onstage action is motivated exclusively by psychological intention. Therefore, we are often faced with actors who need to know: "What is my objective?" or "What do I want?" before they are willing to make a move. Often this resistance is followed by the statement: "My character would never do that."

Viewpoints and composition suggest fresh ways of making choices onstage and generating action based on awareness of time and space in addition to or instead of psychology. (Bogart/Landau 17)

The SITI company is also diligent. For a month, on the campus of Skidmore College, I would spend three hours per day, six days a week, in groups of twelve, training in viewpoints with the people who codified it. Another three hours a day was devoted to composition exercises using the viewpoints to create ten-minute sequences, inspired by world classical texts, in site-specific environments. The technique develops an actor's sense of intuition; by focusing on the viewpoints, an actor slowly develops an unconscious competence in reacting spontaneously to their surroundings. As an actor with a background in both contact and comedic improvisation, the effect was more internal. I began to appreciate how much my energy and focus increased when I directed myself to be still; to channel my impulses in relationship to the ensemble around me. As a result, I was becoming a more articulate performer by distilling and condensing my impulses. Part of this effect has to do with my size, part with aesthetics, but primarily because it runs counter to my hyperkinetic nature. It was a question of taste in movement before waste of movement.

Viewpoint was only part of our day. Three more hours of my day was spent in the exhausting early stages of Suzuki training. Tadashi Suzuki, as a theorist and a director, is as influential to the last fifty years of world theatre as

Bertolt Brecht, Peter Brook or Robert Wilson. His techniques are among the most popular training structures in the western world. He co-founded SITl, and though his physical presence is not as felt as Anne Bogart's, his training techniques are vital to the process. Suzuki exercises concentrate on the lower body. In one of his books, *Culture is the Body*, Suzuki points out how few training techniques in the west focused on the power of the lower body. There were methods that were used in Noh and Kabuki traditions, ballet and opera, but most methodologies used in the training of actors concentrated on the upper body. These were the results of decades of exercises and applications that dealt with the gestures and breathing approaches associated with realism to present a 'slice of life':

There are other theories that see the actor as nothing more than a medium for explaining or transmitting to the audience the content of a preexisting written or communally shared oral narrative. Here, actors exist solely for the sake of passing on the ideas or philosophy of the author/community as expressed in the narrative, and how accurately this information is transferred becomes the criteria for properly judging a performance. I am critical of this definition, and while I don't deny that there are people trained to function in this way, I don't believe this is the essence of the actor's work. (Suzuki 5)

The exercises had a profound effect on how I related to text. The immediate effect was on my sense of equilibrium. The forms are designed to challenge your equilibrium, and as a result, any subsequent rehearsal you do after the exercise has a clearer sense of equipoise, a bit like a baseball player swinging two bats before facing a pitcher. In one form, a leg is lifted (knees bent) to waist level, as the arms are in a fixed posture at your side. At the direction of your instructor's bamboo stick, the lifted leg stomps on the ground, slides a half step forward and the other leg is lifted to waist high position, and the form is

repeated. The exercise goes on as long as it goes on, in a nod to viewpoints, part of the idea is to cultivate a relationship to the timing of the gestures, the others around you, the space you are covering, and finally, the text. One of the main passages we worked with was a twenty-line section of dialogue from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The following is the portion of the passage we repeated while practicing the forms:

LADY MACBETH: Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,  
And 'tis not done. The attempt and not the deed  
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;  
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled  
My father as he slept, I had done't.

*(Enter MACBETH)*

My husband!

MACBETH: I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

LADY MACBETH: I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.

Did not you speak?

MACBETH: When?

LADY MACBETH: Now.

MACBETH: As I descended?

LADY MACBETH: Ay.

MACBETH: Hark!

Who lies i' the second chamber?

LADY MACBETH: Donalbain.

MACBETH: This is a sorry sight.

*(Looking on his hands)*

LADY MACBETH: A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight. (2.2.9-21)

As the first week of training wore on, I noticed that our sense of the text had deepened without any conscious attention being paid to it. There were iterations where we spoke all the text in unison, times we were assigned lines, even times we said them individually, depending on where the bamboo pole was pointed. The constant was the form being repeated. The forms are designed to challenge your energy production, breath calibration and your center of gravity control. A key to the sentiment behind the work is to embrace that expertise is an impossibility. One is truly embracing the spirit of the work when they intentionally prod at the limits of what they can do in discomfort. It is in those moments when, say, fatigue has threatened to upset your balance that concentration on energy production and breath calibration will keep you from losing your form. Here the actor experiences how the pushing of these limits reveals what sensibilities are atrophied in you. I noticed the ensemble's growing mastery and confidence with the text, training like this strengthens sensitivities. What I found in myself was that the interdependency of concentrations and the physical tasks did more for my textual retention than sitting in a chair, frustrated.

For the next year, back in graduate school, I would use energy production, breath calibration, and center of gravity control forms from Suzuki when I had to commit text to memory quickly. It did not cease to be a challenge to memorize lines, it still is. The effect of the exercises was that I could integrate my breathing with what I was saying, while at the same time committing my body to the words themselves. There may or may not be improvement in my memory as my sobriety continues, I cannot depend on it. But I was starting to be able to



capitalize on new approaches. Suzuki makes this point in his second book;

*Culture is the Body.*

Training exists, then, not only to develop these capacities independently, but also to deepen their interrelation. The more we are able to fluidly expand the process of producing energy, taking in oxygen and controlling our center of gravity, the more variety of movement becomes available to us... the art of acting is founded on disciplines that deepen an awareness of these three crucial, interrelated, "invisible" phenomena. (Suzuki 60)

The summer of 2018 allotted me the time and space to experiment with how I was going to retain the text. Using Suzuki 'stomp' exercises were valuable, so I set up a space in my apartment. I then printed out the text of only Hortensio's lines. I would tape them to the wall of my work room, once a day, at a rate of ten lines per day. I noticed over the previous year there were diminishing returns when I would attempt to memorize too much text for too long. If I dedicated an hour and a half with one break, I could be reasonably confident of making progress with ten lines of iambic pentameter.

After a week I was making some real progress. Soon after that, I was becoming more and more distracted during my sessions. I am of the mind that when an actor is distracted, or tired it may be because they are no longer challenged. Was it a matter of balance, breath or energy? I furthered my experimentation by incorporating jazz albums from the early 1960s. I got the idea from the SITI Company. Sometimes, while practicing Suzuki forms with our entire group (over 60 people) the room would go from silence to cacophony as one of the teachers would start playing Run-D.M.C.'s *Walk this Way*. My body would adapt to the insistent tempo. This is not ideal; the balance between breath, energy, and balance is not passive. After one faltered a couple of times

experiencing the hip-hop blast, you learned to direct your breath into your form and to inhibit the impulse to keep the beat. As I was learning these lines that had their own insistent beat, I wanted to introduce an intentionally challenging element. I chose jazz from the hard bop era. For example, Cannonball Adderly affected my body. He and his brother Nate were highly influenced by their collaboration with improvisers like Miles Davis; their approach to in the early 1960s employed radical tempo shifts and a playful sense of mood. Tempo affects heart rate, which influences your balance, energy and consequently, your breath. *The Cannonball Adderley Sextet, Lugano 1963* is an album I have on vinyl. The rhythms of jazz counterpoint nicely with the 'heartbeat' of iambic pentameter. Much of the spirit of what inspires Suzuki's exercises is to continuously push against your own comfort. When learning text, this is especially effective, it makes you employ your senses to deliver, rather than merely recite, text. The duration of the album sides meant I could combine the Suzuki forms and the connection with the text (ten lines per day) within a consistent time frame, packed with time shifts within it.

When I wasn't running lines standing on one leg, I was writing out my lines in a composition book. I can chart the stresses in the poetry and take note how they can change when Shakespeare wants you to emphasize something. Cicely Berry writes a great deal in *The Actor and the Text* about being aware of the energy of words; working with them manually is a slow, methodical way for me to have to focus on the text. Receiving the words, as just a reader, with the eye

alone, you can miss crucial pairings, internal rhymes, puns and more. It also helps unleash the energy in the text itself:

Our eyes take in a grammatical set of words- a sense clump- and we make a judgement on them from a cultural and sense point of view, so that our initial response to the is a 'read' one and not an intuitive one... words are so often much rougher and more anarchic than we allow them to be. (Berry, 22-23)

Berry sees the text, and the words, as a continuum. If an actor can sense the energy from word to word, then from idea to idea, from phrase to phrase, and so on, it is a great start to being able to remember them, "When we get the sense of one thought leading to another, the speeches become cumulative- i.e., they are not a series of statements which are end-stopped, they always build." (83)

Handling the words manually by highlighting nouns, verbs and adjectives in different colors, reveal hitherto unseen patterns and character traits, as does detective work. One technique I learned at University of Louisville was the value of respecting the differences between Shakespeare's Early Modern English and our own Modern English. I charted, on an Excel sheet, each word Hortensio spoke. Next, I researched in a lexicon the context of the word in that era, or in that play. This reveals a definition but is this enough of a definition that an actor can activate? I would seek out what was the primary meaning of the word in the script, what the word denotes. Then I would, using the clues I could glean from the text, identify the connotation of the word. As simply as possible, I would try to identify what idea or feeling it invokes. This was often a key step in recognizing the energy within a single word that leads it to the next one, and subsequently was a help to my memory.

As rehearsals began, I employed a secret weapon. I had learned earlier in the year that typographers and psychologists had joined forces in designing a font for people who have trouble retaining what they read. *Sans Forgetica* came out of a study at RMIT in Melbourne and is meant to help people with ADHD by employing a concept called “desirable difficulty.” The idea is not dissimilar to what helped me initially learn my lines, some people learn more efficiently when there is some sort of task associated with it, or puzzle to solve. According to *The Washington Post*, Researchers found that students who read a passage from an unfamiliar or difficult font had up to 14% more retention compared to students who read the same text on a familiar font:

In designing Sans Forgetica, Banham said he had to override his instincts, ingrained from 25 years of studying typography. Clarity, the ease of processing and familiarity are usually guiding principles in the field. The back-slanting in Sans Forgetica would be foreign to most readers, as back-slanting in type is typically only used by cartographers to indicate rivers. The openings in the letters make the brain pause to identify the shapes. (Telford)

RMIT’s website offers the font for free by download. The brain can become accustomed to *Sans Forgetica* as easily as it can get used to anything else. I used it sparingly to increase its effectiveness. The concept of “disfluency” is a potent one that becomes less potent the more fluent you become. I printed out Hortensio’s text in October of 2018 and used it as the object I focused on as I ran my lines before rehearsals. Thus, “Mates,” maid? how mean you that? No mates for you, /Unless you were of gentler, milder mould. (1.1.59-60) Becomes-  
**Mates, maid! how mean you that? no mates for you,  
Unless you were of gentler, milder mould. (1.1, 59-60)**

The act of running my lines with the above font, doing my Suzuki forms and being prodded by the changing tempos of bop forced me to use healthy tools to produce my text, rather than 'reaching for them.' Disfluency prompted my brain to be use techniques I was familiar with: the denotative and connotative meanings of each word of text, what verbs I had chosen to stress, or how this image had an if/then relationship with the next image. I knew that directing myself to focus on my breath, energy and balance's relationship to each other would retain my attention. Textual exercises don't exist in some sort of acting class world of theory, it was the good fortune of having post-acute withdrawal that taught me how an actor's body literally thirsts for them.

## CONCLUSION

When I look back over the eight-month pre-production through production period for *The Taming of the Shrew*, I found the most value in the research I did during the summer of 2018. Some of the books I read did not have a direct influence on the development of Hortensio, but I found inspiration in them from the in-depth descriptions of the general culture in Elizabethan England. E.M.W. Tillyard's *The Elizabethan World Picture* illustrated where power dwelt and how it was apportioned. To gain purchase with figures of power, you would have to provide them something of worth. Or, like Hortensio, convince them to do things in your interests. Another book that covered the period and gave me general inspiration was Stephen Greenblatt's 2018 release, *Tyrant*. These commentaries on how we can see the current political chaos in the world's democracies through the poetry of Shakespeare's characters opened my imagination. Greenblatt makes the connection between the populist rebel Jack Cade in *Henry VI, Part II* and the election of Donald Trump. That inspired me to explore which American businessman would correspond with Hortensio. Edward Bernays was not the first colorful character from the advertising world I encountered, but his techniques of manipulation were so eloquently described in his own writing that he was obvious choice. There are other best-selling

memoirists of the advertising industry, but for every Jerry Della Femina, you can draw a direct line to David Ogilvy's *Confessions of an Advertising Man*. These primary and secondary sources uncovered Hortensio's value system.

The cultural research I did once the fall of 2018 began uncovered what Hortensio's specific behaviors would be like. Studying the habits and rituals of 1960s America, what people ate, wore, where they lived, what they drove, and with whom they drove. I saw that the world of advertising executives was where someone with Hortensio's values would feel at home. I was fortunate to have some great partnerships in that research, not only with my graduate classmates, but with my director, Dr. Calvano, who also served as my movement professor. Knowing the values and standing that Hortensio enjoyed in 1963 America was useful. However, it was rewarding, and sometimes exhausting, to fuse them with the behaviors, traits, and fashions of that era.

My good fortune continued through rehearsal and performance. When I found myself at a loss for a characterization for Litio, I struggled with some anxiety. However, I trusted the process and my ensemble. It was only because I had such a solid connection with them that I knew that my attempts at being a crooner were not bearing fruit. Also, I had done enough general research on the period that I never felt truly lost. In retrospect, I feel thankful I spent so much of my time in graduate school researching phonetics, dialects, and accents. I could sense that Litio needed to be a snooty aesthete, I just didn't know which one yet. With the training I have gotten in Knight Thompson Speechwork, I was able to identify the voice and build a working idiolect that was not based on mimicry.

Finally, none of this work would mean anything if I didn't know my lines. Again, having lead time before the production was a blessing. I am not sure if my technique of using Suzuki forms to focus the body on breath calibration, balance and energy production will have value to anyone else, but it has value to me. This brings up values and behavior again. Suzuki's work embraces centuries old techniques born out of values like discipline and training. I have a disease that, unchecked, dictates my behavior, no amount of discipline or training can help me if I am not conscious daily of obsessive, ego-centric or grandiose habits. Having some memory issues in this part of my recovery has helped me find new behaviors and habits that no longer serve me. If I learn ten lines a day (with the help of new advances like *sans forgetica*), that is an expression of a set of values, I, like Hortensio, am still learning.



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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Terry Tocantins

University of Louisville MFA Candidate in Performance, 2019

### Education:

- 2016-2019 University of Louisville  
M.F.A., Performance  
African American Theatre Program, Graduate Certificate
- 2019 Knight Thompson Speechworks Teacher Certification Program  
2019 KTS: Experiencing Accents Intensive  
2018 KTS: Phonetics Intensive  
2017 KTS: Experiencing Speech Intensive
- 2018 The Delphi Center for Teaching and Learning  
Completed training and testing for online teaching certification.
- 2017 25th Annual SITI Company Summer Theatre Workshop  
Studied Suzuki Technique, Viewpoints and Composition with members of  
SITI Company.
- 2015-2016 Charter Oak State College, BA, Theatre Arts
- 1994-1995 Chicago City Limits Improvisational Theatre  
Concentrations: Long-form Improvisation, Corporate Workshops,  
Sketch Comedy.
- 1989-1992 Stella Adler Conservatory of Acting  
Concentrations: Shakespeare, Ibsen, Shaw, Wilde, O'Neil, Williams
- 1989-1993 NYU, Tisch School of the Arts, Drama  
Concentrations: Improvisation, Grotowski, Performance Theory,  
Playwriting, Theatre History, Dramaturgy

### University Teaching:

- 2016-2019 University of Louisville  
Graduate Teaching Assistant, Theatre Arts Department, 3 years

### Courses Taught:

- THEA 207: Enjoyment of Theatre (4 sections)  
THEA 324: Acting for Non-Majors (2 sections)  
THEA 324: Acting as Communication (2 sections)

2019 University of Louisville  
Adjunct Instructor (term)

Courses Taught:

THEA 207H: Enjoyment of Theatre Honors (1 section)

Academic Service:

2017-19 Graduate Network of Arts and Science (Representative Body for  
University of Louisville's Graduate School of Arts and Science)  
Representative: 2017-18  
Secretary: 2018-2019

Academic Conferences:

2019 SETC Knoxville: Introducing Knight Thompson Speechwork  
2018 Comparative Drama Conference- Rollins College, Orlando, FL:  
The Master and Margarita, Misha & Zhanna Goldentul (staged reading)

Dramaturgy for The Theatre:

2019 The Green Book  
Bunbury Theatre, Louisville, KY  
2017 Miss Ida B. Wells,  
University of Louisville/African American Theatre Program (Nominated for  
KCACTF dramaturgy award)  
2013 China: The Whole Enchilada  
Sacred Fools Mainstage  
2012 Bill and Joan, a Love Story  
Sacred Fools Mainstage  
2003 Ricard III  
Theatre of NOTE

Directing for the Theatre:

2019 A Raisin in the Sun, University of Louisville (Assistant Director)  
2013 Suffragette! Sacred Fools Theatre  
2006 365 Plays, 365 Days, Theatre of Note  
2005 Cinco Minutos, Theatre of Note  
2004 Letters to Marissa Scarafoni, IOWest, HBO Workspace

Dialect Coaching:

2019 A Raisin in the Sun, University of Louisville

Production for Film and Television:

2008-2013 Operation Repo (Co-Producer)  
Cast and Produced 69 episodes of scripted reality show on TruTV.  
2002-2007 Various Reality Pilots (Producer)  
Co-produced and cast sizzle reels and pilots for Intrigue Entertainment.  
2001 A Galaxy Far, Far Away (Producer/Co-Writer)  
Opening night selection, Slamdance 2000.

Theatrical release, Cinemaquild 2001.  
1998-2000 Dharma and Greg (Personal Assistant)  
Assisted Co-Executive Producers Bill Prady and Regina Stewart.

Writing for The Theatre:

2019 Suffragette!  
Santa Monica Playhouse  
2005-15 Serial Killers at Sacred Fools  
Co-wrote/hosted 300 episodes of the episodic short play competition.  
2013 Suffragette! (with Alex Zola)  
Newby Development Workshop at Sacred Fools Theatre  
2012 The Magic Bullet Theory (with Alex Zola)  
Sacred Fools Mainstage  
The Matrix Theatre  
2009 The Fancy Hitchhike  
Sacred Fools' Summercamp One Act Festival  
2007 The Trust Fund Rebels  
Theatre of NOTE.  
2005 It's Generic!  
Hudson Theatre, Los Angeles, CA  
2003 Unrest  
Hudson Theatre, Los Angeles, CA