

The Male Gaze in
She's the Man and *10 Things I Hate About You*

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Introduction

The name “William Shakespeare” is not unfamiliar to most teenage audiences, although their exposure to the playwright’s oeuvre might have been quite unconventional. Indeed, some highschoolers might not even know that their favourite teenage rom-coms are based – even if somewhat loosely – on one or another play written by Shakespeare. This could be the case with the films *She’s the Man* (2006), based on *Twelfth Night: Or, What You Will*, and *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999), based on Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*, where the plays’ original settings are changed to the high school environment of the 2000’s and 1990’s.

This shift in genre also allows a shift in focus, as it is apparent in these adaptations, where such topics as gender roles and female agency are examined from a fresh angle. However, it is worth examining whether this shift in narrative is supported by the image portrayed through cinematic tools.

In this paper, I would like to analyse the main female characters not only through a narrative perspective, but also by focusing on the male gaze, a term introduced by Laura Mulvey, and to examine whether – despite the positive representations of these women in the adapted stories – the underlying patriarchal conventions still influence the portrayal of these female protagonists.

Teenpic Adaptations and Shakespearean Rhizomatics

Contrary to more traditional adaptations, teenpic adaptations of Shakespeare have a looser connection to the source material. Textual fidelity does not play an important role in these versions, even if the keen viewer might find instances where the films allude to the original plays. Roland Barthes' term, "textual pleasure" (qtd in Green 33), could be used for these instances, what Balizet also describes by "recognition-as-familiar" (123). Both of these terms define moments in which the viewer familiar with the source material can spot details through which the text is referred to, therefore having an extra layer of pleasure in the viewing experience. Such details can be names of people, for instance Kat for Katherina and Patrick for Petruchio in *10 Things*, or Viola and Duke Orsino in *She's the Man*, where the title 'Duke' becomes a first name. Placenames are another way of allusion: Kat Stratford's surname refers to Shakespeare's birthplace, Patrick Verona's refers to the place Petruchio comes from, Illyria is the rival school's name in *She's the Man*, while Cesario becomes the name of a pizza place, instead of the alias of Viola, who in this version pretends to be her own brother, Sebastian. There are also very few direct quotes in the films, but lines like "I burn, I pine, I perish" (*The Taming* 1.1.155) uttered by Cameron in *10 Things* instead of Lucentio, who is struck by Bianca's beauty, add extra viewing pleasure for the audience. Similarly, the line from the letter Malvolio found, "be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em." (*Twelfth* 2.5.144-146), is used in *She's the Man*, but in a different circumstance, when it becomes the encouragement of the football coach, quoted by Duke at the pivotal moment of the final game.

The above-mentioned examples are clever nods to the source material, but some might argue that these are not enough to make an adaptation true to the original Shakespeare plays. But one might ask the question, what is true Shakespeare? Purely the texts that have to be closely read, or did Shakespeare become a cultural phenomenon? Many Shakespearean scholars have attempted to challenge the imperative to rank adaptation purely based on fidelity to a supposed original text. Margaret Jane Kidnie concluded that adaptations appeal not to the Shakespearean texts but to "an ever-changing 'community of users' to define the fluid but discernible range of genuine, faithful or authentic interpretations of Shakespeare's works at any given historical moment" (qtd. in Lanier, "Shakespearean Rhizomatics" 26). Another important idea that challenged how we view Shakespearean adaptations was Terence

Hawkes' position that "Shakespeare doesn't mean: we mean by Shakespeare" (Hawkes 3), shifting the focus from the text to the reader and the audience, but also to the adaptor who after interpreting the "original" also actively (re-)creates the work. Julie Sanders also mentions in her monograph, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, how the works of William Shakespeare act similarly to "the communal, shared, transcultural and transhistorical art forms of myth and fairy tale" (45). These examples suggest that there is something larger at work when it comes to Shakespeare than simply the text, that when we refer to "Shakespeare", it is something cultural and communal, constantly changing and shaped by audiences and users.

One outstanding work that resonates with these ideas in trying to define an alternative approach to what can be considered "Shakespeare" and in challenging the importance of textual fidelity is Douglas Lanier's essay, "Shakespearean Rhizomatics: Adaptation, Ethics, Value". After outlining the academics' insistence on textual fidelity and what some consider "proper" Shakespeare, Lanier presents an analogue from the field of biology to try and "reconceptualize Shakespearean adaptation post-fidelity" (27). The term he introduces is Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (later only referred to as DG) concept of the "rhizome". DG stress "differential 'becoming' rather than Platonic 'being'" and similarly to Aristotle, they emphasise the dynamic nature of existence, with the difference that there is no preordained form one should reach, rather it is a constant process of changing, a "radical nature of ever-differing-from-oneself" (27). This relation includes "the aparallel evolution of two beings that have absolutely nothing to do with each other" (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Lanier "Shakespearean Rhizomatics" 27), they remain distinct, yet they move towards each other. This movement involves "a double process of deterritorialization (a destructuring of each original) and reterritorialization (the drive to create a new stability or order)" (28). A point where "particular meanings or energies temporarily intensify and 'territorialize'" are called "plateaus" which then create the rhizomatic system itself (29). In the case of this model applied for adaptations, the plateaus could symbolize places where different genres meet or unconventional adaptations are born, and therefore, many adaptations previously deemed unworthy of attention could be further examined. According to Lanier, one example of a plateau in the Shakespearean rhizome could be the late twentieth-century teen Shakespeare adaptations, where the teen flick genre and what we know as the Shakespearean play meet, they move towards each other and temporarily create a plateau.

To remain with the biological analogies, one could compare the rhizomatic system to the arboreal structure, where there is a single root and many branches that are determined by

that root. If this model is followed in the field of Shakespearean adaptations, the Shakespearean text could be viewed as the root, while all its adaptations and derivations would be the branches. This would create a hierarchical system where the text would take the dominant position where one could “trace back Shakespeare’s cultural authority” (28), while all the branches would become secondary. In comparison, the rhizomatic model for Shakespearean adaptations could be viewed as an ever-connected system with countless nodes and plateaus, and countless branches, some that lead to new branches, others that die out. In this system, one of the nodes could represent the source text, which would be a significant node, however, it would not take a central or higher position compared to other nodes. In this way, what we call ‘Shakespeare’, could be not just the text, but also an “ever-changing cultural phenomenon” comprising all the adaptations, appropriations and productions of Shakespeare (29). Lanier also highlights that it is necessary to include not only faithful adaptations, but also unfaithful ones, and even the adaptations of those (30). This compelling theoretical model allows the Rhizomatics to see “‘Shakespeare’-as-process and to place the Shakespearean text(s) within that process” (Lanier, “Shakespearean Rhizomatics 36), and instead of regulating the Shakespearean difference, one could examine what these differences from the source material highlights.

Laura Mulvey's Male Gaze

One difference worthy of examination is “how a body of content can move from one medium to another” (Lanier, “Shakespeare and Adaptation” 43), an area that intermedial critics are interested in. Medium specificity has been a central hypothesis for these scholars, which highlights how “each medium has a set of qualities and forms of reception specific to itself, and that those distinctive set of qualities offer well-defined affordances and limitations” (Lanier, “Shakespeare and Adaptation” 44). Therefore, a cinematic adaptation of a work will differ fundamentally from the text or even from a live stage adaptation, because of its characteristics that stem from its visual form.

One visual element that can be examined is the male gaze, a term first introduced by Laura Mulvey in her 1973 paper entitled “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”. The parallel between Roland Barthes’ term “textual pleasure”, and Mulvey’s term “visual pleasure” already highlights the medium specificity a work of art, and how the medium itself can determine the effect on the receiver.

Mulvey uses psychoanalysis to demonstrate her understanding of the way “the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film form” (Mulvey 803). She introduces Freud’s concept of scopophilia, which is associated with “taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze” (Mulvey 806). It is from this scopophilia that the audience can draw pleasure, but it is a “determining male gaze [that] projects its phantasy on the female figure” (808). She highlights how women are traditionally portrayed in films to be looked at, and “their appearance [is] coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*” (809). Not only are the women the ones who are looked at, in a split between active/male and passive/female, it is the man who bears this look (808).

Mulvey also introduces Jacques Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage, the self-identification with the form in the mirror and the formation of the ego. She parallels this idea with a narcissistic element of the scopophilia: the self-recognition in the image can happen not only in the mirror, but also on the screen. According to Mulvey, “the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification” (810), rather becomes a representation of power. There is a split between spectacle and narrative, both providing a sense of pleasure to the spectator. On the one hand, the spectator identifies with the male protagonist, the protagonist becoming an

idealized version of the self. On the other hand, the spectator also becomes the bearer of the erotic look over the icon of the woman, both of these giving a “satisfying sense of omnipotence” (810).

Therefore, in Laura Mulvey’s theory, visual pleasure is two-fold, split between the narrative and the spectacle, coinciding with the active/male role and the passive/female figure. It is the man who is controlling the events in the film, and the woman is there to provide visual pleasure. To quote Budd Boetticher, “[w]hat counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents... [i]n herself the woman has not the slightest importance” (qtd. in Mulvey 809). In this view of the cinema, the narrative aspect falls completely upon the man, and the woman only has the role of spectacle.

However, much has changed since the 1970s and more and more films focus on female perspectives and protagonists. The two films analysed in this paper themselves follow the journey of teenage girls, where the spectator is more likely to identify with them rather than with a male figure. Nonetheless, it can be beneficial to examine the narrative and the visual separately. As Mulvey stated in her 1973 essay, it would be a slow journey to produce an alternative to the mainstream media influenced by patriarchal values, but it is important to “advance our understanding of the status quo of the patriarchal order in which we are caught” (804). Therefore, even if it seems like a few decades later films started to depart more and more from the traditional male perspective, it is crucial to still examine critically whether the portrayal of women is still influenced unconsciously by film forms developed in a patriarchal society. In my analysis, I would like to first concentrate on the narrative aspect of these films, how the characters of the female protagonists that the audience can identify with are developed. However, in a later chapter, I would like to shift my focus on the visual aspect of these films, the spectacle, to highlight how even though the female protagonist’s perspective is centred, the male gaze can still be projected on the female figures.

Narrative Analysis

In the following chapter, I would like to focus on the narrative-level of the two films, *She's the Man* and *10 Things I Hate About You* and how they portray the two female protagonists throughout their journey. What creates the biggest differences in these adaptations compared to their sources – and what ultimately makes them unique –, is caused by the meeting of two genres: they do not only reflect the Shakespearean text, but also establish their places within the contemporary teen films (Green 34). According to Green, Shakespeare's plots fit well the criteria for popular films, making it easier to reimagine, therefore the film industry is attracted to these adaptations (33). So, one significant aspect of these adaptations is how elements of the original plays are translated into the contemporary narrative, another is how new elements of the adaptations that fit the contemporary high school setting change certain aspects of the film. In the case of the discussed adaptations, one certain aspect is the case of gender roles, which became a central theme in both films. Perhaps one reason for this focus shift is the target audience of these films, which is generally pre-adolescent and adolescent girls (Green 33). Therefore, these adaptations not only allude back to the Shakespearean text, but also has the power to influence a very impressionable age-group.

To better understand how these adaptations portray their main female characters, I would like to separate two levels on which these films work. One is the narrative-level, which considers the way the protagonists are portrayed and viewed within their own society, their character development through the films, the expectations and reactions of their peers and the consequences of their action within the story itself. This level might also coincide with the general claims of the films or the initial interpretation of many viewers. Furthermore, the narrative-level of these films could also reflect what Laura Mulvey described as “identification with the image seen”, however, in this context the spectator would identify with the female protagonists, ultimately reflecting a female experience. The other level focuses more on the cinematic tools these adaptations use to portray their female characters – such as the male gaze –, reflecting not on what the films intend to claim, but the actual portrayal of the characters. This level might not be as clear for the average viewer, therefore the effects of the cinematic-level works more in a subconscious way.

On the narrative-level, both main characters are portrayed in contrast with the expectations their society imposed on them, although this dichotomy is explored in different contexts. Kat's character is juxtaposed with the normative behaviour of high school girls in the 1990's, while Viola's struggles stem from a more clearly defined opposition of male-female characteristics. Both of them strives to find their own self within the web of these expectations, an identity that is not formed solely on or against society's standards.

These expectations might come from the idea that there is a certain "essence" of being female, whether it is assigned at birth or shaped by society, one that every woman must achieve. Toril Moi explains in her essay on feminism and femininity that "patriarchal oppression consists of imposing certain social standards of femininity on all biological women", which can result in a belief that "chosen standards for 'femininity' are natural". Therefore, "a woman who refuses to conform can be labelled both unfeminine and unnatural" (123). She follows this with Hélène Cixous' idea of binary oppositions, which describes that the "male/female" pair always suggests an underlying positive/negative evaluation (Moi 124-125), the "female" always connected to the more negative option in such oppositions as strong/weak or rational/emotional. These ideas are also reflected in Laura Mulvey's work, where she describes how in the film industry, the man is usually the active one, the one that controls the narrative, while the woman is always the passive figure, the one to be looked at, the one without power. These ideas suggest that if a woman conforms to society's expectations of "femininity", she voluntarily defines herself as the "lesser" in contrast, but if she deviates from these, she becomes "unnatural". The solution to this inevitable degrading of the female self might be the deconstruction of these binary opposition, or Kristeva's concept of "positionality", where women are viewed "as marginal to the symbolic order and to society" (Moi 127). The concept of deconstruction or positionality might also provide a solution for the identity-search of the main female characters in the discussed adaptations.

As mentioned before, Kat in *10 Things* is defined in a marginalized position to her high school peers and especially to the superficial young girls, who conform to society's expectations imposed on them at that age. The primary interests of most girls at Padua High school – including Kat's sister, Bianca – consists of dating, going to prom, and being popular by achieving the admiration of their fellow schoolmates. In contrast, Kat does not care about the opinion of others and directly goes against the expectations of her society. This is portrayed in a scene, where Bianca begs their father to allow her to go to a party, who denies saying, that if Kat is not going, she is not allowed either. Then Bianca turns to Kat, asking her why she cannot be normal, and when Kat asks her to define "normal", she answers that this

party is “normal”. This scene reinforces the idea that conforming to the high school society’s expectations is what is considered “normal”, thus deviating from it is considered “unnatural”.

However, even if she is viewed as “unnatural” by her peers, Kat’s character is portrayed in a positive light for the audience. According to Balizet, “the audience immediately identifies with her as the sole character of substance in the film” (129). She is portrayed in contrast with the superficiality of the other girls: for instance, her interests include feminist books or underground music, while the conversation of other girls consist of debates whether they like their Skechers or Prada backpack more. But while in this opposition she is portrayed as the superior one for the audience, her character is still viewed as an outsider within her social circles which might be a result of her being a ‘shrew’ or as the school principal defines, a “heinous bitch”. She not only disagrees with high school values, but is aggressive, hostile or at least condescending to anyone conforming to these standards. Friedman compares Kat to a 2nd wave feminist “man-hater” who must be “tamed” into a more open-minded 3rd wave feminist (54-59).

Kat does indeed go through change when she meets Patrick. While at first she is also hostile to his character, she slowly opens up to the possibility of romance. The audience also learns the reason for her shrewish behaviour: a negative sexual experience with the popular boy, who is pursuing Bianca now. Therefore, her character receives depth, her aggressive behaviour is revealed to come from a negative experience, and her motivation seems to be the protection of her little sister from the same fate. Eventually, she allows Patrick into her life and opens up to the idea of dating and going to the prom. In this way, she deconstructs the original dichotomy, as she “embraces the contradiction of maintaining her political opposition to patriarchy while participating in those aspects of the social structure, like normative heterosexuality, that bring her pleasure” (Friedman 54-55). Her self-discovery is successful, she manages to find a way to conform to society’s norms, while also keeping her agency.

In the case of Viola in *She’s the Man*, the self-discovery journey is related to the masculine/feminine opposition. She is also portrayed as ‘unnatural’, a girl who likes to play football, is a bit of a tomboy and rejects society’s – and especially her mother’s – expectations of becoming an acceptable lady. When denied to follow her aspirations of playing football because she is a girl, she decides to overstep the boundaries of her gender and disguises herself as her twin brother, Sebastian. But just as she struggled with being ‘feminine’, she finds it hard to pretend to be a boy. Beside dressing the part and lowering her voice, she tries to imitate the mannerisms of boys and follows stereotypical masculine traits: she “struts”, she pretends to be tough, she talks degradingly about women by sexualizing them (this latter trait

often criticized by her roommate, Duke). Nonetheless, her performance is more or less believable, she passes as a man and is eventually accepted by her peers.

This demonstrates that gender could be regarded as a performance rather than an essence. As Judith Butler defined, “gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts” (519). This idea is further represented when Olivia falls for Viola disguised as Sebastian. According to Meyer, “that initial desire is a product of attraction to a gender performance” and Olivia is attracted to “aspects of Viola [...] that are appealing – regardless of the sex of their bodies” (237).

The idea of gender being a performance rather than an essence allows the deconstruction of the binary opposition of “masculine/feminine”. By the end, Viola accomplishes her goal by participating in the final football match, not by pretending to be somebody else, but by playing as herself. She also scores the winning goal with the assistance of Duke, which also signals the social acceptance of her peers. This way, Viola could keep her tomboyish identity while also embracing her more “feminine” side. She wants to be desired as a woman by Duke and after their union, she happily attends the ball she was so opposed to earlier, but doing it in her own terms. In this way, she also found a way to both conform to standards, while keeping her own agency.

Visual Analysis

On the narrative-level it seems that the depiction of these women were positive, however, on the cinematic-level, many flaws could be identified in these portrayals. The cinematic tools such as the direction of the camera or plot devices might not seem to support the negative representations of women, but could subconsciously influence the viewer.

According to Laura Mulvey's theory, in cinema, the man is simultaneously the one who the spectator can relate to and self-identify with, while he is also the bearer of the look projected on the female figure as a source of visual pleasure. Looking at these two adaptations, however, we could see that the female protagonists are the ones who hold power over the narrative, and the spectator cannot help but self-identify with the female protagonists, as it is their journey through identity formation that the films focus on. It seems that these films have made progress in the portrayal of female characters on a narrative-level, but it in order to reach true change, one must first examine the circumstances to better understand the patriarchal order's lingering influence. In this case, beside the narrative portrayal of these female characters, their visual presentation should be examined too, to reveal whether a progressive change appeared on both levels, or only in a narrative sense.

In Mulvey's discussion of the male gaze, she identifies the female figure as part of the spectacle, but not of the narrative. According to her, "[t]he presence of the woman is an indispensable element of the spectacle in normal narrative film, yet her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation" (Mulvey 809). And while the female protagonists in the two films discussed in this paper contribute significantly to the development of the story line – as they are the main characters after all –, they cannot escape the lingering eye of the spectator. In *She's the Man*, this gaze is established from the very beginning of the film. The opening shots start with a scene on the beach, where the main character, Viola is introduced through a series of stylized shots (Figure 1). She wears a string bikini as she plays football and every few seconds, the frame freezes, the real-life background disappears as it changes to colourful splashes, and only her body is in focus. In some of these frames, only her legs and lower body is visible, but even in other frames, the attention is brought more to her stomach and upper body, than to her face. At this point of the film, the narrative has not even started, but the gaze of the audience is already brought upon the body of the female protagonists.

Kat in *10 Things I Hate About You* cannot escape the male gaze either. As much as she is established as the rebel type against patriarchal society, her body is often shown through the same lens. One example of this happens in a music club (Figure 2). Kat goes to listen to one of her favourite bands, in an environment which seems to be a safe space for her and where she can enjoy herself without keeping up her shrewd behaviour. Patrick seeks her out in the music club and he notices her as she is dancing freely with her friend. While this scene is a simple interaction between two characters, the camera movement can reveal a lot about the way Kat is subconsciously portrayed for the audience. The camera first follows Patrick into the club, establishing the scene to be from Patrick's point-of-view. As the club is gradually shown to the viewer, eventually landing on Kat and her friend, the frame immediately switches back to Patrick, as he too notices Kat dancing. Then the camera lingers once again on Kat's dancing body, before showing Patrick's reaction, which, according to Pittman, "signals his growing interest in a now-sexualized Kat" (147). On the one hand, Kat's body is shown as a spectacle in a moment of erotic contemplation, showing the audience what she could be if she was not such a "shrew". On the other hand, the camera movement signals to the viewer that this scene is viewed from Patrick's perspective, despite Kat being the main protagonist of the film.

Furthermore, Patrick becomes truly interested in Kat only after seeing her in the club. Before that, he only pursued her because his fellow school mates paid him in order to have easier access to Kat's sister, Bianca. In this way, Kat became a commodity in the hands of men, and while Patrick's interest became genuine later on, it only happened when he noticed her dancing at the club. Patrick, the main male character also goes through character development as he realises his mistakes, but Kat forgives him even before he asks for forgiveness. The movie suggests love as the reason, and fortunately, Patrick proves to be worthy of her forgiveness, but in reality this idea of love being enough to overlook the other's flaws could be problematic and could lead to toxic and unhealthy relationships. The way the film is able to convince the young audience of its positive representation and to hide its flaws is illustrated in Pittman's report on her students' reactions and opinion about the film and the representation of the female character, as most of them were unable to identify the problematic aspects of it (144).

Another scene where the male gaze is prevalent in *10 Things I Hate About You*, is the house party scene. This is yet another scene where Kat lets go of her resistance to "normal" high school social rules, and decides to enjoy herself by drinking and dancing. The camera focuses on her dancing body, but it is once again the perspective that highlights how this is

viewed through a male gaze. At first, Kat is only shown as the background to the men talking, then, similarly to the music club scene, the camera follows Patrick into the room where Kat is dancing on the table. She is portrayed from a worm's-eye view, but the image is framed by the shoulders of the men watching her, focusing not only on her body, but once again establishing the men's lingering gaze (Figure 3). When the camera switches to bird's-eye view to show Bianca's perspective, Kat's body is still framed by her male peers, as she is surrounded on all sides by her school mates, who are mostly men, cheering her on (Figure 4). This visual representation can show how Kat's body is constantly viewed from a male perspective.

The way women are portrayed physically and how they are treated by their male peers is also illustrated in *She's the Man*. At first Viola is not accepted by her mates at school, so in order to prove herself as a man, she concocts a plan to earn their appreciation. She pretends to be attracting desirable girls that, according to Meyer, are "all symbols of successful femininity in these films and mainstream North American society" (235). The way these women first appear on the screen also suggests that they are viewed as objectified bodies rather than fully developed characters. In both cases, the first thing the audience can see of the girls is their legs as the camera slowly pans up their body while the erotically suggestive soundtrack can be heard in the background (Figure 5). Mulvey also comments on the conventional close-ups of legs or other body parts in her own examples, noting that "[o]ne part of a fragmented body destroys the Renaissance space, the illusion of depth demanded by the narrative, it gives flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon rather than a verisimilitude to the screen" (809). In this trick played by Viola and her friends, the women become tools, only appreciated as icons. Furthermore, it is not even Viola who devises the plan, but her friend from the hair salon, Paul. Although Paul is potentially portrayed as a gay man, he is still the man that guides Viola through her journey pretending to be a man, and it is his idea to trick the other boys at school. The scene itself is controlled by Paul, as he watches the scene unfold and directs the girls through earpieces. Therefore, this scene is a phantasy, concocted by a man, delivered to men, in circumstances where women are only allowed to be spectacles.

The way conquest over women is viewed as a triumph and is necessary for the appreciation of other males can be an instance of homosociality, defined often by "male bonding". According to Sedgwick, homosociality is "characterized by a triangular structure in which men have bonds with other men and women serve as the conduits through which these bonds are expressed" (Hammarén and Johansson 4). Bird portrays the problematic aspect of this form of bonding: "When it is understood among heterosexual men in homosocial circles

that masculinity means being emotionally detached and competitive and that masculinity involves viewing women as sexual objects, their daily interactions help perpetuate a system that subordinates femininity and nonhegemonic masculinities” (120). The way this scene is performative is clearly visible in Viola’s character. While she interacts with the other girls, Viola, pretending to be Sebastian, constantly turns towards the other boys, acting for them and expecting their reaction. The camera often switches to their reaction as well, as they are first confused, then grow more and more impressed. Viola is aware of men’s typical behaviour, as she assumes this male gaze to successfully impersonate a man: she looks after the leaving girls with the same objectifying look she expects from men (Figure 6). Nonetheless, her planned efforts are not quite enough to reach the awaited result. When the real Sebastian’s ex-girlfriend, Monique, appears at the scene, Viola is afraid that her true identity might be exposed, so she does anything she can to avoid Monique, including humiliating her in front of everyone until she storms away angrily without seeing Viola’s face. It is at this moment that the other boys are truly impressed and they finally let Viola join their social circles. This scene consolidates the idea that men need power over women, and it is not simply success in pursuing a woman, but the destruction and control over her that shows the kind of power other men would appreciate. While this plot element moves forward the narrative and assists the main character in her character development, the underlying ideas about women’s role in society could be harmful to the presumably young target audience.

The way women have to use their bodies to succeed in life is portrayed in two other scenes, one in each film. In an interesting parallel, there is a point where both girls have to prove themselves and their femininity by flashing their breasts to a figure of authority and their surrounding male classmates. Towards the end of *She’s the Man*, Viola’s identity is revealed, but true to its Shakespearean inspiration, it is not without a certain level of confusion. The real Sebastian arrives at the school and is confused with Viola’s portrayal of him. Similarly to the theatre, in this film, there is a need for the willing suspension of disbelief, as the viewers can clearly see the difference between the two actors, but has to believe that all other characters in the film confuse the two as they are supposed to be identical twins. Viola could have kept pretending to be Sebastian, but not without the risk of losing Duke. But in order to be able to confess her true feelings to him, she had to reveal her true identity, as the conventional setting of the film did not allow explicit homosexual content. She chooses Duke over football and reveals herself to be Viola, but at this point she fooled everyone so convincingly that people do not know what to believe anymore. The only way she can truly prove that she is a girl is by flashing her breasts, showing not only Duke, but the

whole football field that she owns the body of a girl (Figure 7). While the image itself is not explicit, the camera cuts to the reaction of others, not only Duke's, but also her fellow teammates, the audience on the bleachers and even her former male coach, an adult authority figure. While in the perspective of the narrative, Viola manages to find a balance between her tomboyish aspirations and her romantic feelings conforming her feminine side, visually she is reduced to the image of her body.

Similarly, in *10 Things I Hate About You*, there is a point where Kat also has to use her body to achieve her goals, which in this case as well is her newly developed romantic aspirations. Winning back her favours, Patrick ends up in detention, and as a recompense, Kat sneaks him out. Despite her various efforts, the only method that works in distracting the teacher for long enough is to flash her breasts to leave enough time for Patrick to escape. This is done once again in front of a male authority figure, but the camera also cuts to the cheering and laughing classmates, most of whom are boys. Interestingly, the teacher tries to look away, and it is Kat who physically guides his look by holding his chin and making him look at her instead (Figure 8). This could show how Kat is aware of her position in the patriarchal structure, but at this point of the film, she is willing to use this position to her own advantage in order to achieve a romantic date with Patrick. Despite Kat showing a partial regaining of control by the conscious use of this male gaze, it does not change her position as the object of erotic contemplation. Furthermore, in the case of both films, the reason for the female protagonist's exposure is to gain a chance with their love interest, which could reinforce the idea that in order to be romantically successful, teenage girls have to sexualise themselves.

By closely examining certain scenes in these two adaptations, focusing on the visual way of representation, it is evident how in many cases, both Viola's and Kat's character is subjected to the male gaze. Even if they are capable of character development and the achieving of their goals, this can only be done within the limitations of their own gender, and this idea is unconsciously reinforced through their visual depiction.

Conclusion

The works of William Shakespeare remain relevant throughout the years, but the form in which it is accessed by the general audience is ever-changing. Scholars argue more and more in favour of opening up the meaning of Shakespearean studies, not only focusing on textual fidelity, but on all works related to Shakespeare. This is why adaptations could be a field worth researching, and particularly interesting in the case of intermedial adaptations or the crossing with other genres. So is the case with the films *She's the Man* (2006) and *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999), two adaptations that are well known as teenpics, but often without the knowledge of their Shakespearean background.

Analysing such films allows the focus to be shifted on what differs in a certain adaptation rather than the fidelity to the source. In the case of these two films, the journey of the female protagonists and their portrayal is a theme worthy of examination, especially through the lens of feminist theory and visual analysis, focusing especially on the male gaze.

On a narrative-level, the main characters show a progress in their journey and their character development. Viola in *She's the Man* struggles with her identity as her aspirations in football do not align with the stereotypically feminine traits expected from her by society. Nevertheless, she manages to find a way in which she can achieve her goals while also conforming to her role as a woman. Similarly, Kat in *10 Things I Hate About You* is portrayed as an outsider because of her rejection of normative high school behaviour. Through opening up to a romantic partner, she finds parts of this social structure that she can enjoy while also remaining herself fundamentally. In both of these cases, the female protagonist is able to deconstruct the dichotomy of their identity and find an identity which both conforms to social standards while they still keep their agency.

However, the visual analysis of these characters can highlight how despite the focus on these female characters on a narrative level, their cinematic portrayal can still be founded unconsciously in patriarchal structures and affect the viewing experience. The use of cinematic tools such as camera movement or framing shows how the male gaze is often still projected on the female protagonists.

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