

# Shakespeare's Italian Settings and Plays

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## A THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Neither George Gascoigne's *Supposes*, a definite source for *The Taming of the Shrew*, nor *The Taming of A Shrew*, a possible source or version of Shakespeare's play, is set in Padua.<sup>31</sup> *Supposes* is located in Ferrara, near Padua and similarly in the Venetian orbit. *A Shrew's* setting is Athens, associated with Aristotle and Plato, and the seat of ancient learning. With Padua, it is as if Shakespeare combined the suggestions of the two plays' settings, one Italian and the other identified with education, to derive his own locale for *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Litio and Petruchio are servant characters in *Supposes*. The name Petruchio also may have been reinforced as a good Italian name for Shakespeare's character by a person at court, Petruccio Ubaldini. This soldier came to England during the reign of Henry VIII, married an Englishwoman and possibly served Queen Elizabeth as a diplomat. During a long life, he was a visible Italian moving in important English circles.<sup>32</sup> Moryson describes another Petruccio, this one in 'the most Factious Cittie of Pistoia', whose story involves a Bianca:

the sonne of the Chancelor and the sonne of Signor Petruccio, . . . when contending together the sonne of the Chancelor gave a blow on the eare to the other, the Chancelor sent his sonne to Petruccio to crave pardon on his knees, who crueely cutt of his right hand, wher-uppon all the Cittie was divided into a long lasting faction, and because the Chancelors wife was named Bianca that faction took the name Bianchi that is the white, and the other took the name of Neri that is the Black.<sup>33</sup>

Besides the coincidence of names with *The Taming of the Shrew*, what is interesting is the hand-severing detail reminiscent of *Titus Andronicus*, the family feud which recalls *Romeo and Juliet*, and the symbolic colours of the factions, like the red and white roses in the Henry VI plays. All of these works by Shakespeare were written, of course, within five or six years of one another.

Venice and not Padua was the economic centre of the Signory (as portrayed, for example, in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Volpone*), so it is perhaps surprising at first to find that Petruchio comes to 'wive it wealthily in Padua' (I,ii,75). However, with this Paduan setting Shakespeare directs his audience to the important central theme of

*The Taming of the Shrew* – education, the social learned in a purposefully selected university. Brian Morris observes, 'The play makes clear that learning are not those of the school or university is contrasted to its detriment against the practical experience.'<sup>34</sup>

There are a number of supposed and real teachers. Lucentio and Hortensio are engaged to be 'scholars' of two sisters. Disguised as Cambio, Lucentio is presented as a scholar, that hath been long studying at Rheims, cunning in Greek, Latin, and other languages. As a strategy to woo Bianca, he 'teaches' her 'the Art of Disguise'. Disguised as Litio, Hortensio is supposedly a teacher of music and the mathematics' (II,i,56). He has a teacher as a pupil, and enters at one point 'with his head bowed'.

Petruchio 'will be master of what is mine own'. Petruchio's conventional Renaissance fashion views Kate as 'chattels', beneath him in the order of things, and he is indeed, it is his responsibility to tame her. Petruchio has nothing in common with Roger Ascham's spare and austere articulated in *The Scholemaster*. Petruchio hands over his servants roughly (IV,i,148 S.D.), and Grumio's code of conduct. Curtis and the others at the country house (IV,i,148) follow the master's methods. Petruchio modifies his methods by brainwashing.<sup>35</sup> His educational theory is based on underlings, servants, falcons, his wife:

She [will] eat no meat to-day, nor none to-morrow.  
Last night she slept not, nor to-night she will not.  
As with the meat, some undeserved fault  
I'll find about the making of the bed,  
And here I'll fling the pillow, there the bolster,  
This way the coverlet, another way the sheet,  
Ay, and amid this hurly I intend  
That all is done in reverend care of her,  
And in conclusion, she shall watch all night  
And if she chance to nod I'll rail and brag,  
And with the clamor keep her still awake.  
This is a way to kill a wife with kindness.  
And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong.

(IV,i,148)

*The Taming of the Shrew* – education, the social lessons taught and learned in a purposefully selected university city. Ironically, as Brian Morris observes, ‘The play makes clear that the true paths to learning are not those of the school or university. Formal education is contrasted to its detriment against the practical academy of experience.’<sup>34</sup>

There are a number of supposed and real teachers in the play. Lucentio and Hortensio are engaged to be ‘schoolmasters’ for the two sisters. Disguised as Cambio, Lucentio is presented as a ‘young scholar, that hath been long studying at Rheims, [who is] . . . cunning in Greek, Latin, and other languages’ (II,i,79–81). As a strategy to woo Bianca, he ‘teaches’ her ‘the Art to Love’ (IV,ii,8). Disguised as Litio, Hortensio is supposedly a teacher ‘Cunning in music and the mathematics’ (II,i,56). He has a terrible time with Kate as a pupil, and enters at one point ‘with his head broke’ by a lute.

Petruchio ‘will be master of what is mine own’ (III,ii,229), and in conventional Renaissance fashion views Kate as ‘my goods, my chattels’, beneath him in the order of things, and thus subservient. Indeed, it is his *responsibility* to tame her. Petruchio’s pedagogy has nothing in common with Roger Ascham’s spare the rod method as articulated in *The Scholemaster*. Petruchio handles even his own servants roughly (IV,i,148 S.D.), and Grumio’s comic instructions to Curtis and the others at the country house (IV,i) are a parody of the master’s methods. Petruchio modifies Kate’s behaviour by brainwashing.<sup>35</sup> His educational theory is applicable to all underlings, servants, falcons, his wife:

She [will] eat no meat to-day, nor none shall eat;  
 Last night she slept not, nor to-night she shall not;  
 As with the meat, some undeserved fault  
 I’ll find about the making of the bed,  
 And here I’ll fling the pillow, there the bolster,  
 This way the coverlet, another way the sheets.  
 Ay, and amid this hurly I intend  
 That all is done in reverend care of her,  
 And in conclusion, she shall watch all night,  
 And if she chance to nod I’ll rail and brawl,  
 And with the clamor keep her still awake.  
 This is a way to kill a wife with kindness,  
 And thus I’ll curb her mad and headstrong humor.

(IV,i,197–209)

Petruchio also teaches Kate by example – if she will be perverse, he will be more so to demonstrate how miserable perversity is. When Kate strikes Petruchio, he tells her he will ‘cuff’ her back if she strikes him again (II,i,220). He comes late to their wedding and in bizarre apparel, forces his bride to depart with him before the wedding supper, insures her awful trip to his country house and, when there, will not let her have her way in anything. Even reverence for religion falls before Petruchio’s taming plan: at the wedding Petruchio is quoted as swearing loudly, ‘Ay, by gogswouns, . . . / That all amaz’d the priest let fall the book, / And as he stoop’d again to take it up, / This mad-brain’d bridegroom took him such a cuff / That down fell priest and book, and book and priest’ (III,ii,160–4).

Petruchio similarly does not honour conventional social decorum when it serves to make a point with his wife: Kate must kiss him in public on the street (V,i,143–50). By the end, however, Petruchio’s thorough ‘taming-school’ (IV,ii,54) has taught Kate how to entreat (IV,iii,7), and that one is responsible for one’s own moods and actions (IV,i,174).

According to Steeven Guazzo’s *Civile Conversation*, a popular courtesy book (translated in 1581 and 1586), ‘it is a monstrous and naughtye thing, to see a Gyrlle use suche libertye and boldenesse in her Gesture, lookes, and talke, as is proper to men: therefore lette maydes learne in all their behavioure to expresse that modesty, which is so seemely for their estate’.<sup>36</sup> Because Kate learns her lesson well, she can become the teacher for her sister Bianca and the ‘wealthy widow’ near the end of the play. Kate’s graceful lecture on wifely duty forwards the traditional notion that women are subservient to men in God’s perfect scheme of things. The disobedience to their husbands displayed by Bianca and the widow shows that they need the reformed Kate’s instruction.

Besides Kate, there are a number of other learners in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Observing Cambio’s success with Bianca, Hortensio determines that ‘Kindness in women, not their beauteous looks, / Shall win my love’ (IV,ii,41–2). He will marry the ‘wealthy widow’, and enroll in Petruchio’s ‘taming-school’ (IV,ii,50–4) in order to learn how ‘To tame a shrew and charm her chattering tongue’ (IV,ii,58). Hortensio’s encounter with the reformed Kate causes him to exclaim that if his widow ‘be froward, / Then [Petruchio] hast . . . taught Hortensio to be untoward’ (IV,v,78–9). The cure for lovesickness in *Euphues* is the pursuit of learning (‘Love gives place

to labour, labour and thou shalt never love’), and the things around. He has come to Padua to seek ‘happiness’, ‘To suck the sweets of sweet philosophy’, but, however, he has fallen in love and is diverted from his education. Yet father Vincentio, like most fathers) his son and servant ‘spend all his time in study’ (V,i,69–70), learns that Lucentio’s informal education is practical and successful. He approves of his son’s choice. Minola, too, has been duped by his child Bianca’s results. The Pedant is a literal student in Padua,

Petruchio’s learning experience is the most important. Traditionally wealth as well as birth were important and Petruchio comes abroad wishing to add to the fortune of his dead father. Shakespeare is correct in assuming that a large dowry might be the reward for marrying a rich woman. Moryson writes that ‘in the Provinces of Italy [which would include Padua], . . . they were wont to give virgins . . . to him that would give most for them, and were given for the fayrest, rayseed dowrys for the most favored’.<sup>37</sup> Thus Petruchio is concerned at first that the dowry not her person. He has ‘thrust’ himself into the world ‘Happily to wive and thrive’ (I,ii,55–6), and he is not enough to be Petruchio’s wife / (As wealth is buried in the dance) (I,ii,67–8). He is in a hurry too: ‘my haste, / And every day I cannot come to woo’ (II,i,10). The bluster from Petruchio can easily obscure another reason why he has set out from Verona: ‘home [is] / Where I was bred, grows’ (I,ii,58); he has, therefore, ‘come abroad’ (I,ii,58). Beyond his posturing for Kate, Petruchio has rough edges to his character which ask refinement and pride. To Gremio he brags:

Have I not in my time heard lions roar?  
Have I not heard the sea, puff’d up with rage,  
Rage like an angry boar chafed with swine?  
Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,  
And heaven’s artillery thunder in the sky?  
Have I not in a pitched battle heard  
Loud ‘larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets  
And do you tell me of a woman’s tongue,  
Tush, tush, fear boys with bugs.

to labour, labour and thou shalt never love'), but Lucentio turns things around. He has come to Padua to study 'Virtue' and 'happiness', 'To suck the sweets of sweet philosophy' (I,i,18, 19, 28); however, he has fallen in love and is diverted. His more formal education is abandoned. Yet father Vincentio, after fearing (like most fathers) his son and servant 'spend all at the university' (V,i,69-70), learns that Lucentio's informal education has been practical and successful. He approves of his son's wife. Baptista Minola, too, has been duped by his child Bianca but with happy results. The Pedant is a literal student in Padua, and is also duped.

Petruchio's learning experience is the most subtle in the play. Traditionally wealth as well as birth were important for social place, and Petruchio comes abroad wishing to add to the riches left him by his dead father. Shakespeare is correct in assuming that in Italy a large dowry might be the reward for marrying a less desirable woman. Moryson writes that 'in the Provinces of the State of Venice [which would include Padua], . . . they were wont to marry their virgins . . . to him that would give most for them, and by the money given for the fayrest, rayseed dowrys for them that were ill favored'.<sup>37</sup> Thus Petruchio is concerned at first with the shrew's dowry not her person. He has 'thrust' himself 'into this maze, / Happily to wive and thrive' (I,ii,55-6), and he wants 'One rich enough to be Petruchio's wife / (As wealth is burthen of my wooing dance)' (I,ii,67-8). He is in a hurry too: 'my business asketh haste, / And every day I cannot come to woo' (II,i,114-15). But this bluster from Petruchio can easily obscure another explicit reason why he has set out from Verona: 'home [is] / Where small experience grows' (I,ii,58); he has, therefore, 'come abroad to see the world' (I,ii,58). Beyond his posturing for Kate, Petruchio has noticeable rough edges to his character which ask refinement. He is overly proud. To Gremio he brags:

Have I not in my time heard lions roar?  
 Have I not heard the sea, puff'd up with winds,  
 Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat?  
 Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,  
 And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies?  
 Have I not in a pitched battle heard  
 Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets' clang?  
 And do you tell me of a woman's tongue, . . .  
 Tush, tush, fear boys with bugs.

(I,ii,200-10)

He is so quarrelsome with his servant Grumio that his friend Hortensio must ask 'patience' of him (I,ii,45). He seems overly self-confident, as when Baptista Minola asks how his wooing is progressing and he responds: 'It were impossible I should speed amiss' (II,i,283). Clearly much of Petruchio's character in relation to Kate is only an act to change her behaviour. Yet his statement toward the end of the play, 'tis the mind that makes the body rich' (IV,iii,172), suggests some self-realization on Petruchio's part as well as a lesson for Kate. Petruchio has come to Padua 'to wive it wealthily' (I,ii,75), but has learned that 'wealthily' means more than material riches. Petruchio has found real love and a perfect wife in the reformed Kate. The irony is that he receives more than a usual dowry for his efforts. He gets extra money from Gremio and Hortensio for wooing Kate in the first place, receives a supplemental dowry from Baptista Minola for Kate's 'new' and changed self, and still more payoff after winning the wager at the end of the play.

*The Taming of the Shrew* contains many words and phrases associated with pedagogy. There are schoolmasters and tutors and pedants who instruct, teach, give lessons to studious pupils or scholars from books or not. 'O this learning, what a thing it is!' (I,ii,159), exclaims Gremio (gulled by Lucentio's schoolmaster disguise). Lessons are often delivered to characters and audience in proverbial phrases: 'No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en' (I,i,39); 'nothing comes amiss, so money comes withal' (I,ii,81-2); 'where two raging fires meet together, / They do consume the thing that feeds their fury' (II,i,132-3); 'To me she's married, not unto my clothes' (III,ii,117); 'Better once than never, for never too late' (V,i,150); 'Tis a good hearing when children are toward, / But a harsh hearing when women are froward' (V,ii,182-3). John Florio's well-known contemporary manuals for learning the Italian language (*First Fruites* and *Second Frutes*, 1578, 1591) abound with proverbs; indeed, they are one of the dominant features of Florio's writing style. John Eliot's satiric *Orthoepia Gallica* (1593) mocks Florio specifically in this area.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps, therefore, Shakespeare connected Italian pedagogy with proverbial lessons.

Travel is educational, and, since Shakespeare's play is centrally about learning, we might expect to find a number of travellers in it. As noted earlier, 'home' is limiting; it is the place, in Petruchio's words, 'Where small experience grows'. In the Induction, the Lord hears trumpets at his house and speculates that the sound signals the party of 'some noble gentleman . . . / (Travelling some journey)

(Ind. i,75-6). In the play proper, Lucentio, born in Padua, grows up in Florence, now journeys to Padua. His father, who travels from Pisa to Padua to seek him out. Most travellers mentioned significantly, is the Pedant. Originally from Padua, his destinations include Rome and Tripoli (IV,ii,75-80). He gets money by exchange / From Florence' (IV,ii,89-90). Shakespeare writes knowingly here of Florence's reputation as a centre.<sup>39</sup> There are also other realistic touches in the play. Renaissance tourists were always fearful of the unknown law (see V,i,81-2) and abuse of foreign laws were common (see V,i,108). Of course, travellers would tell jokes as well (see IV,v,71-3).

There are a number of accurate items of Italian culture found in the play. Right at the start, Lucentio calls Padua a 'nursery of arts' (I,i,2). Moryson writes that Padua is an instance, 'an excellent place to learne and profit in Musicke'.<sup>40</sup> Hortensio is thus credible as a musician. Venice is correctly identified as the place for fashion: 'I am bound unto Venice / To buy apparel 'gainst . . . [the wedding]' (II,i,314-15). Obviously there is broad satire here. Shakespeare when Petruchio shows up for the wedding in a hat and an old jerkin; a pair of old breeches thrice worn; boots that have been candle-cases, one buckled and one loose' (III,ii,43-6). We recall that Jaques in *As You Like It* has been in Venice, wears 'strange suits' (IV,i,34). Gremio promises for Bianca's hand is a 'Valer' (II,i,354).

According to Petruchio, Kate's initial cursed dowry is a 'policy' (II,i,292); after the marriage the new husband has a so-called reign 'politicly' (IV,i,188). This dowry has connotations, as craftiness was considered to be an Italian character steeped in government. Bits of Italian in the Italian language, too, are attempts to authenticate the Italian flavour of the play (see I,i,25,198; I,ii,24-25). These words and phrases are sometimes imitations or versions of familiar and copybook Italian; he betrays no real knowledge of the Italian language. The word referred to as a 'pantaloon' (I,i,47 S.D.; III,i,31) is the origin of his character type in the *Commedia dell'arte*.

Shakespeare has been accused of getting wrong facts about Italy in *The Taming of the Shrew*. First and

(Ind. i,75–6). In the play proper, Lucentio, born in Pisa and brought up in Florence, now journeys to Padua. His father Vincentio travels from Pisa to Padua to seek him out. Most travelled of all though, significantly, is the Pedant. Originally from Mantua, his destinations include Rome and Tripoli (IV,ii,75–6); he has 'bills for money by exchange / From Florence' (IV,ii,89–90). (Shakespeare writes knowingly here of Florence's reputation as a banking centre.<sup>39</sup>) There are also other realistic touches relating to travel in the play. Renaissance tourists were always fearful of breaking some unknown law (see V,i,81–2) and abuse of foreigners by natives was common (see V,i,108). Of course, travellers were likely butts for jokes as well (see IV,v,71–3).

There are a number of accurate items of Italian local colour to be found in the play. Right at the start, Lucentio describes Padua as 'nursery of arts' (I,i,2). Moryson writes that the University is, for instance, 'an excellent place to learne and practise the Art of Musicke'.<sup>40</sup> Hortensio is thus credible as a music teacher in Padua. Venice is correctly identified as the place for fashion. Petruchio 'will unto Venice / To buy apparel 'gainst . . . [his] wedding-day' (II,i,314–15). Obviously there is broad satire intended by Shakespeare when Petruchio shows up for the wedding 'in a new hat and an old jerkin; a pair of old breeches thriced turn'd; a pair of boots that have been candle-cases, one buckled, another lac'd' (III,ii,43–6). We recall that Jaques in *As You Like It*, who has also been in Venice, wears 'strange suits' (IV,i,34). Among much else Gremio promises for Bianca's hand is a 'Valens of Venice gold' (II,i,354).

According to Petruchio, Kate's initial cursedness is merely 'for policy' (II,i,292); after the marriage the new husband begins his so-called reign 'politically' (IV,i,188). This diction has Italian connotations, as craftiness was considered to be typical of the Italian character steeped in government. Bits and snatches of the Italian language, too, are attempts to authenticate and enrich the Italian flavour of the play (see I,i,25,198; I,ii,24–6,278,280; IV,ii,63). These words and phrases are sometimes imprecisely rendered versions of familiar and copybook Italian; hence, Shakespeare betrays no real knowledge of the Italian language. Gremio is twice referred to as a 'pantaloon' (I,i,47 S.D.; III,i,37), suggesting the origin of his character type in the *Commedia dell'arte*.

Shakespeare has been accused of getting wrong a number of his facts about Italy in *The Taming of the Shrew*. First and foremost, Padua

is not a city in the Lombard region as it is usually defined. Neither is it a seaport, as many have pointed out. Lucentio's 'come ashore' (I,i,42), or Hortensio's question to Petruchio: 'what happy gale / Blows you to Padua here from old Verona?' (I,ii,48-9) might suggest that Shakespeare thought it was. But the friends may be using figurative not literal language, and one need not read the exchange as necessarily referring to a boat trip on water. Petruchio employs another nautical metaphor when speaking of the Kate he has yet to meet: 'I will board her though she chide as loud / As thunder when the clouds in autumn crack' (I,ii,95-6). And he reports that he has 'heard the sea puff'd up with winds' (I,ii,201). Though from inland Verona, clearly Petruchio has had some seafaring experience, perhaps as a soldier (see I,ii,203-6). Another supposed error by Shakespeare is the identification of Tranio's father as 'a sailmaker in Bergamo' (V,i,77-8). A landlocked city, Bergamo, it is argued, would not have sailmakers. On the other hand, J. W. Draper speculates that 'perhaps its present fame for the manufacture of textiles goes back to the sixteenth century, and may explain Shakespeare's reference'.<sup>41</sup> The family 'Bentivolii' (I,i,13) was actually Bolognese not Pisan as in the play.

The playwright may be describing *ossa bucco* when Grumio refers to a 'neat's foot' meal for Kate, and 'fat tripe finely broiled' also sounds like an Italian dish (IV,iii,17,20). However, 'a piece of beef and mustard' (IV,iii,23) is surely English. Petruchio's 'country house', so called by Pope and later editors, is decidedly rustic English in character. The servants are named Curtis, Joseph, Philip, Adam, Rafe, and so on. 'Long-lane' (IV,iii,185) is an English street designation, the 'Pegasus' an English not Genoese-sounding Inn (IV,iv,5). The sleeve of Kate's would-be dress is 'carv'd like an apple-tart' (IV,iii,89), an English sweet. And snatches of various English ballads are sung in the play.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio is at first a kind of special knight come to free the beautiful princess Bianca from the shrewish witch Kate who is keeping the younger sister from her destiny. But unlike the traditional prince in the story, Petruchio gets the witch and not the princess as his reward - he 'Achieve[s] the elder, set[s] the younger free' (I,ii,266). Kate, though, is of course more a sleeping beauty than a witch. Enchanted by her own shrewish posturing, she must kiss Petruchio - 'Kiss me Kate' - and awaken to her 'true self', an obedient and gentle one.

Kate's awakening in the play proper is played against Christopher

Sly's drunken slumbering in the Induction in order to explore about the nature of dramatic illusion as well as to comment about wifely duty. Christopher Sly believes he is living what he takes to be the reality around him supported by the audience believes in the 'truth' of plays like *The Taming of the Shrew* 'a kind of history' (Ind. ii,141), because it will not be met with disbelief and so becomes involved in the present. Italy seems real. Shakespeare's play is replete with dupings, poses, etc., and such 'drama' inevitably asks questions in the thoughtful spectator. The Induction is a variation of the familiar Renaissance English play where the characteristically asks an audience's indulgence. Instead of the usual chorus, however, directing attention to 'the vasty fields of France', Shakespeare comically asks the audience imagining by way of Christopher Sly. The Induction by the 'real' Lord parallels the audience's seduction by the 'real' Lord parallels the audience's seduction by the 'real' Lord (also, possibly, the seduction of the English by Italy). The setting from the Induction (Stratford and Burton) to the proper (Padua and Verona) is very deliberate. The transition from the familiar to the remote, the commonplace to the real to the fictional.

Both audience and Christopher Sly are present in the play as a grand joke that this play about wifely duty is directed at Sly from intimacy with his supposed 'wife', and that he is kept from whatever 'home duty' by watching the play. The Italy - that upside-down world to Shakespeare's audience comes to 'believe' the moon is the sun because Petruchio. Shakespeare's audience as well comes to believe in the play as it gives itself up to the 'counterfeit supposition' of the playwright and the actors. The audience knows that the play is not 'real' but, like Christopher Sly at the beginning, is not to be duped by surroundings, settings, costumes - that is, fiction. More alert than Sly if we stay awake for the moment, we are nonetheless like him as audience. The story is attractive, believable, real for the moment. But it may be illusion. Thus, the biggest lesson in *The Taming of the Shrew* turns out to be for Shakespeare's audience.



Sly's drunken slumbering in the Induction in order to make a point about the nature of dramatic illusion as well as the obvious one about wifely duty. Christopher Sly believes he is a lord because what he takes to be the reality around him supports this notion. An audience believes in the 'truth' of plays like *The Taming of the Shrew*, 'a kind of history' (Ind. ii,141), because it willingly suspends its disbelief and so becomes involved in the presented fiction. Even the Italy seems real. Shakespeare's play is replete with disguises, dupings, poses, etc., and such 'drama' inevitably raises reflexive questions in the thoughtful spectator. The Induction serves as a variation of the familiar Renaissance English play prologue which characteristically asks an audience's indulgence and imagination. Instead of the usual chorus, however, directing an audience to, say, 'the vasty fields of France', Shakespeare comically dramatizes an audience imagining by way of Christopher Sly. The seduction of Sly by the 'real' Lord parallels the audience's seduction by the dramatist (also, possibly, the seduction of the English by Italy). The change in setting from the Induction (Stratford and Burton Heath) to the play proper (Padua and Verona) is very deliberate. The movement is from the familiar to the remote, the commonplace to the foreign, the real to the fictional.

Both audience and Christopher Sly are presented with a play. It is a grand joke that this play about wifely duty is designed to prevent Sly from intimacy with his supposed 'wife', and the audience is also kept from whatever 'home duty' by watching the play. The setting is Italy – that upside-down world to Shakespeare's English. If Kate comes to 'believe' the moon is the sun because Petruchio tells her so, Shakespeare's audience as well comes to believe in the fiction of the play as it gives itself up to the 'counterfeit supposes' (V,i,117) of the playwright and the actors. The audience knows that what is seen is not 'real' but, like Christopher Sly at the beginning, it allows itself to be duped by surroundings, settings, costumes – it is drawn into the fiction. More alert than Sly if we stay awake for the entire play, we are nonetheless like him as audience. The story may be that Italy is attractive, believable, real for the moment. But Italy's appeal also may be illusion. Thus, the biggest lesson in *The Taming of the Shrew* turns out to be for Shakespeare's audience.