

Misogyny in taming of the shrew



Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* is often criticized for its seemingly misogynistic themes: namely, the idea of breaking a woman's spirit and making her subservient to her husband. This is apparent through the "taming" of the play's lead female character, Katherine Minola. Katherine, better known as Kate, is hard-headed, stubborn, and prone to speaking her mind. In the patriarchal society of Shakespeare's day, which valued weak and submissive women, her behavior does not go over well with her male counterparts. Thus, throughout the play, her groom, Petruccio, uses starvation, humiliation, and sleep deprivation to "break" her and turn her into what was then viewed as a proper bride — the total antithesis of the character to which the audience is first introduced. That destruction of a strong and powerful woman into one suited for the *Stepford Wives* is controversial: should the play be viewed in a tongue-in-cheek manner, one criticizing the society in which it takes place, or should it be taken literally and blasted as a work of anti-woman propaganda? Though it seems unusual for Shakespeare's work, *The Taming of the Shrew* is ultimately riddled with misogyny and suggests the necessity of a subservient bride and the stifling of a woman's voice. Kate's sharp tongue becomes apparent in the play's first scenes. After Horatio criticizes her, claiming that she will not find a mate unless she becomes kinder and gentler, Kate quickly delivers a scathing retort: