

Gender Roles in Taming of the Shrew vs. Today

Taming of the Shrew	Today
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The renaissance time period expected women to play the role of an obedient wife. Bianca fit this role well, while Katherine had to be coerced into it. The idea of “taming” one’s wife in Elizabethan England was a common one. Courtship and marriage was a part of society all people were expected to take part in, and was not the result of love for a person. It was the woman’s role to marry whomever their father chose for them, for the purposes of power and political advancements. Although Katherine strong-willed and independent in the beginning of the play, by the end she had been “tamed”. This is probably because she wanted to act out the part of an obedient wife so that she would be accepted in society and be able to lead a normal life, rather than the life Petruccio provided while trying to “tame” her. The men of the play feel their role is to be dominant and take whichever wife they choose. Such in the case of Petruccio, he works very hard to tame Kate, as it is what husbands are expected to do if their wife does not play her role as an obedient piece of property. He found Katherine’s aggressive traits to be threatening, and in order to secure his own masculinity, put her in her place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gender roles today are defined differently by different people. It just depends whom you ask. In general, of course, gender roles have diminished, and both sexes are expected to be seen as equals. Like in Taming of the Shrew, there is still the mindset, like Bianca’s, to obey and serve their husband. There are also women who, very much like Katherine, are independent and reject to concept of needing a man to live life properly. These would be our feminists. The role of the male is still regarded as the “stronger sex”, and thus must conduct himself accordingly. The hailing expectations of men are that they are strong and powerful, don’t display feminine qualities (crying, whining, depression, etc). While this might seem a bit exaggerated, these are qualities that are considered to make a man a MAN. Women, once they were all able to be equally educated alongside men, were able to break out of their homemaker roles, which still prevail today, regardless. Many if not most women in society today have gotten a college education and have careers equal to or exceeding that of their husband’s. There is still an ongoing struggle in the U.S. for gender equality. While the 1960’s brought upon a huge waves of civil rights for women, the discrimination and role of the “weaker gender” is still present.