We identify with Shakespeare because he understands us. That the human mind is often distraught, that it often whizzes into folly is what he reminds us of. And such folly is what you spot in Nick Bottom, in the love a beautiful woman showers on an ass. Sit back and think of the many times when women of seductive appeal have fallen for men who did not deserve them; and you realise, in your burgeoning youth or your graying middle age, that love is but another name for preoccupations asinine. But is it really? Haven't some of us been drawn to women who would have nothing to do with us, indeed would not touch us with a barge pole because of their charms and their hubris? And yet haven't we tamed those women? Observe the wild Kate you once pursued, animal-like. She is now smitten with you. And such are the varied manifestations of human behaviour that Shakespeare brings forth. Men and women are fickle. Then again, there are those who refuse to yield to fate, until that dark moment comes when blood stains the murderous hand and not all the perfumes of Arabia can wash it off. In Lady Macbeth, it is apocalyptic beauty you stumble into. How many children did she have? You ask, but will not stay for an answer.

And so tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day, even as the winds sketch arid wastelands all over your face, Lear-like. There are the impetuous decisions you make, followed by a renewal of wisdom that comes rather late in the day. Your cry --- 'Why should a rat, a horse, a dog have life and thou no breath at all?' --- may rock the gates of the heavens, but Cordelia will not return. Neither will Desdemona.

Shakespeare teaches. And he touches. He draws attention to our frailties, to the warts that embitter our souls. Do you not feel bits of Shylock in you as the winds buffet you all along the turbid sea? 'If you prick us, do we not bleed? / If you tickle us, do we not laugh? / And if you poison us, do we not die?'

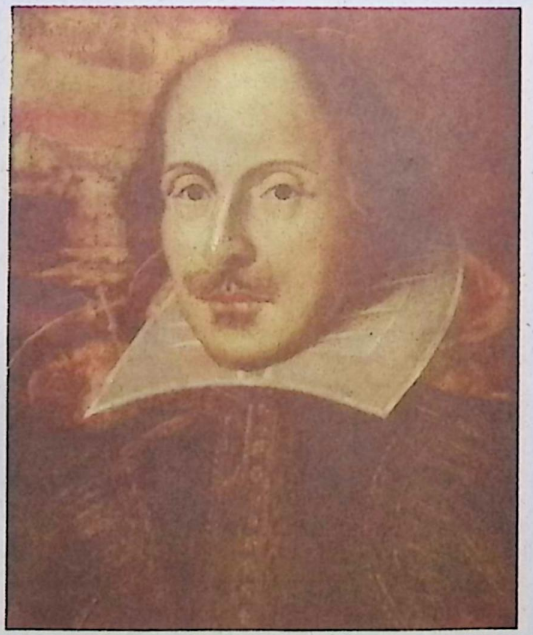
Your Ketketi, she you love in starlight ardour, waits for you at the edge of twilight. Age cannot wither her. Nor custom stale her infinite variety.

Did Shakespeare hate women?

Dr. Binoy Barman

"THE Taming of the Shrew" is a frustrating reading from the feminist point of view. In the play, William Shakespeare explicitly demonstrated his despise for womenfolk, subordinating them to their male counterpart. He held that a woman is good so long as she is obedient to man. Otherwise, she is a shrew. In the play, as it appears, Shakespeare's only mission has been to establish the supremacy of men over women. So there is no reason for any reader, male or female, having a sense of gender equity, to enjoy it. Shakespeare may easily be accused of gender bias, engendered by misogyny and feudalism, whereby a man is a lord and women are servile to him. In his misogynic feudalism, a woman must be dutiful to her husband but not the other way round.

Why did Shakespeare create the character of Katherina Minola, who is short-tempered, foul-tongued and loud-voiced? She is not to be tamed by any male frown. She is so haughty. But ultimately she had to shun all her temper and be obliged to her dominating husband Petruchio. What technique did Shakespeare apply to tame a wild girl? It is sheer cruelty -- coercion. Petruchio kept her newly married wife without food for an elongated time and dangling in the temptation of good attire, while behaving crazily. It is akin to domestic violence. Just out of fear or for love of life, she gave in to his rage. It is not a decent way to make a woman domicile, whatsoever.



She, who is blamed as 'Katherina the Shrew' in the beginning of the play, is praised as 'Katherina the Most Obedient' in the end.

With this transformation, Shakespeare planted a powerful slap on the cheek of women's freedom. A woman soul was not tamed but enslaved in fact.