

## **SUBVERSION OF FEMININITY IN TAMING OF THE SHREW AND THE TEMPEST BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

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### ***Abstract***

William Shakespeare was a cultural icon. His literary works were not just for one period but even today these are relevant. This uniqueness made him universal. The plays *Taming of the Shrew* and *The Tempest* are notable as Shakespeare challenges the notion of femininity by subverting the established stereotypes associated with women during the Elizabethan era. This subversion is of great importance as feminism as a movement did not emerge during this era. Thus, Shakespeare's ability to portray women embedding complexity to their characters bears testimony to his talents and uniqueness. Shakespeare does not portray all his women characters in the same way. Some female characters are associated with male attributes and vice versa. Hence, in a way, he challenges gender stereotypes and identity. Yet whether Shakespeare does this intentionally is a question because scholars differ in opinions in terms of Shakespeare's stance in the woman question. But Shakespeare's portrayal of his female characters in both these plays deconstructs the notion of sex and gender, endorsing the ideas propounded by Simon De Beauvoir which nullifies the traditional belief of the existence of "woman's essence".

***Keywords:*** *Shakespeare, gender, stereotypes, woman's essence, Elizabethan era.*