
Gender Roles

Elizabethan Era

- The oppressed becomes the oppressor: considered “illegitimate” and would lose her privileges to her brother Edward
- Known as the “Virgin Queen” she followed current social standards
- Sought to keep the power to herself
- Despite her supporters and members of Parliament being men, she held power in making her own choices



Women in the Theater Industry

In an essay titled “Shakespeare’s Sister” by Virginia Woolf, Woolf discusses the possibility of Judith Shakespeare

- “Like him, she had a taste for the theatre. She stood at the stage door; she wanted to act, she said. Men laughed in her face.” (Woolf)
- Women were not allowed to act nor write plays
- Men took part as women characters



Physical Appearance and the Male Gaze

- In *Much Ado About Nothing* there is a comparison of appearance in Beatrice and Hero
- As Beatrice and Benedick are persuaded to love one another:
- Benedick is persuaded Beatrice is different from other women
- While Beatrice is persuaded to believe she has to be like other women



Social Expectations for Elizabethan Women

- ❑ Elizabethan women were considered the weaker sex and were subordinate to men;
- ❑ Marriage was the most viable “profession” for Elizabethan women;
- ❑ They faced severe limitations in all aspects of life, but they had more freedom than before.



Educations for Elizabethan Women

- ❑ Women were not allowed to enter universities;
- ❑ Upper Class:
 - ❑ Allowed the privilege of an education;
 - ❑ Invariably taught by tutors at home;
 - ❑ Limited subjects: foreign languages, art, manners and etiquettes, home management;
- ❑ Lower Class:
 - ❑ Their only education, if any, would be about how to become skilled in housewife duties.



Women in Shakespeare's Plays

- ❑ Almost all women are only interested in finding husbands;
- ❑ Hermia is expected to spend her life in a convent if she doesn't get married;
- ❑ There are strong female characters:

LEONATO: I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

BEATRICE: Not till God make men of some other metal than earth.



Womans Role in the Family

- ❑ The Elizabethan family life for women was dominated by the men in the family.
- ❑ The men were expected to support the family from a whole variety of occupations.
- ❑ Disobedience towards thier husbands was seen as a crime against their religion.
- ❑ Elizabethan women were expected to marry to increase the wealth and position of the family and then to produce children - preferably male heirs.
- ❑ Large families were the norm as the mortality rate for children and babies was so high. Many Elizabethan woman made arrangement for the care of their children in case they themselves died during childbirth.

“Thesus: To you, your father should be as a god (...)” (Shakespeare 9).

Father and Daughter Relationships in Shakespeare

- ❑ A daughter always had to answer to her father, even into adulthood if she was still single.
- ❑ Marriages were arranged to suit the family--**We see this with Egeus setting up Hermia to marry Demetrius--**.
- ❑ It was hoped that through marrying their daughters off, the man and his family would acquire more land, titles and an increase in social status.
- ❑ Unlike women, boys were educated to take over for their fathers. Also a man's sons inherited his lands and titles.

“Thesus: Either to die the death or to abjure forever the society of men. (...) or you can endure the livery of a nun” (Shakespeare 11)



Money

- No real comparison
- £ = pound
- S = shilling
- d = penny

Fine Sovereign	360 pence	30s	£110s
Pound	240 pence	20s	£1
Ryal	180 pence	15s	
Half pound	120 pennines	10s	
Angle	120 pennies	10s	
Half angel	60 pennies	5s	
Crown	60 pennies	5s	
Quarter angle	30 pennies	2s 6d	
Half crown	30 pennies	2s 6d	

Penny	1 penny	1d	shilling	12 pennies	1s	
threefarthing	$\frac{3}{4}$ penny		sixpence	6 pennies	6d	
Half penny	$\frac{1}{2}$ penny		groat	4 pennies	4d	
Farthing	$\frac{1}{4}$ penny		Half groat	2 pennies	2d	

Jobs

Women:

- Maids
- Servants
- Nuns
- Tailors
- Embroiders
- Stay at home wives
- Prostitution



Men:

- Everything else



Income

- Maids: 5s-10s per quarter, $\frac{1}{2}$ d-1 $\frac{1}{3}$ d
- Tailors: Around 8d a day of work for established
- Prostitution: 10s per customer in bawdy houses
- Shepard: 6d per week pulse board
- Field worker: 2d-3d per day
- Stableboy: 10s per quarter



Living Costs

- Lodging in an inn: 2d per week
- Modest farm with an ancient least £4 - £5 per year
- Loaf of bread 2d
- Quail ½ d
- A chicken 1d
- Best beef 3d per pound
- Sugar 1s per pound
- Cinnamon 10s6p



Conection

- Borachio “They will scarcely believe this without trial. Offer them instances, which shall bear mp less likelihood han to see me at her chamber window, hear me call Margaret ‘Hero,’ hear Margaret term me ‘Claudio,’ and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding... (act 2 sc. 2 40-45)”
- Margaret “I like the tire within excellently if the hair were a thought browner; and your gown’s a most rare fashion, i’ faith. I saw the duchess of Milan’s gown that they praise so. (act 3 sc. 4 13-16)