

Chapter 1 : Sexuality of William Shakespeare - Wikipedia

Shakespeare's depiction of the major stages of love, Griffin discovers, was and is a conduct-book, offering solutions for such problems as parental disapproval and inconstancy in courtship, and in marriage, those of disillusionment, infidelity, friend vs. spouse, and domination vs. mutuality.

Social and political power was entirely in the hands of the men in Elizabethan England and particularly, well-born men. Also, using the Elizabethan theatre convention of women disguising themselves as men, Shakespeare is able to present some women in a way that allows them to be taken seriously. At the end of the plays where he does that, however, the women always revert to their female role and the conclusion is marriage and declarations of their subservience to men and their reversion to the conventional female role. Perhaps even Shakespeare failed to imagine the model of equality that is so familiar to us and which we take for granted. Nevertheless, all the men in those cultures are surrounded by women, some ineffectual but many very strong. Every male has either a grandmother or a mother, a sister, or a daughter who he knows to be strong, even though she may be wearing clothes that signify her submissive condition, such as head and face covers, whole body coverings etc. One of the most interesting things in Shakespeare is his presentation of strong women. Here is a list of ten of his strongest women. Cordelia in King Lear The vain and foolish Lear decides to retire as king and give all his lands and money to his three daughters, their portions based on their declarations of how much they love him. The two older daughters, Goneril and Regan, go overboard in their hypocritical statements. Cordelia says she loves him according to her duty as a daughter and the bond between a parent and child. Enraged, he banishes her and tells her two suitors, both princes, that whoever wants her can have her but without the dowry they had been expecting. She has stood up to her father, showing great courage. Later, when the other two have cruelly rejected Lear and he lies, defeated and imprisoned in a dungeon, she is with him, also imprisoned – she comforts him and raises him up. She has helped him to learn what the bond between a father and daughter is. She has shown great strength throughout, and when her sisters have her hanged. Lear dies of a broken heart. Nevertheless, he has been able to exercise power over her from beyond the grave by stipulating in his will that those wealthy and powerful men who come to woo her from around the world will have to undergo a test and choose from three caskets, one of which contains the permission to marry Portia. When a judge is required by the Duke of Venice to try the case Shylock has brought against Antonio, who is reluctant to yield the pound of flesh he has agreed to give Shylock if he is unable to pay a loan in time. Portia comes disguised as a famous young judge and shows extraordinary qualities in delivering her judgment. Her power lies in her wisdom, recognised by all those who do not know that she is a woman. In a real sense she exercises power over everyone present. She certainly exercises power over her husband, Macbeth, in the first half of the play, as she encourages him to murder Duncan. She uses her sexuality, she taunts him and mocks his lack of courage. She appeals to his sense of obligation towards her. She comes in more strongly as he wavers and finally he goes ahead with it. She seems like a strong woman but psychologically, she is not strong enough to deal with her guilt. Their marriage falls apart and they become estranged. She suffers terrible nightmares and finally commits suicide. Beatrice is a feisty, independent woman, seen by all those around her as such. She is highly intelligent and would be regarded as a feminist in our time. There is no question of her being told who to marry, as she will always do as she pleases, but in any case, she has contempt for men. Shakespeare has invented the most incredible wordplay between these two characters, who are both anti-marriage. But they are tricked by their friends into falling in love. Beatrice draws Benedick into a plot to get revenge on Claudio, who has betrayed her cousin, Hero, who was about to marry him. The play ends with the couple confirmed in their love and their decision to marry. Beatrice reverts to the traditional female role but in her case there is a decided edge to it. He is in the middle of that process just as she is falling in love with the teenaged Romeo. Without telling her father the reason, she refuses to marry the Count of Paris. This is spectacularly brave for the time and her father, Capulet, simply cannot understand it. He swears at her, threatens her and even strikes her. She does not give way, and desperate for a way out without giving up her love for Romeo, she seeks the advice of Friar Lawrence. His solution is to take a drug

that will make her appear dead. She will be placed in a tomb and Romeo will come and take her away. She is terrified of waking in a tomb stuffed with corpses but takes the drug. He has ideas about who he wants to marry her to but she has fallen in love with a black man and he is opposed to their marriage, which has already taken place in secret by that time. The Duke asks her to give an account of herself and in a remarkable speech she convinces him. In that speech she comes across as a modern woman – an independent woman who has been a good daughter but is now ready to ally herself with her husband. It required enormous strength to say things like that in a room full of powerful men at that time. She is disguised as a man throughout, until the end, and is able to organise everyone to fit in with her needs and desires. Her aim is to turn the man she wants to marry into someone who can match her qualities and be as strong as she is. As a man she has the freedom to move around without a chaperone. Her ability to adapt herself to her circumstances in spite of her female upbringing where she has been protected by men and all decisions about her have been made by men, is an indication of her strength. It is not only that adaptation that suggests strength but the ability to manipulate her circumstances for her own desired outcome, which is to marry the Duke. She becomes involved in the power games that are going on around her and takes her enemies on. In Richard III she acts like a prophet, cursing the nobles for their responsibility for the downfall of the House of Lancaster. All of her prophecies about them come true: Her father begs the Duke, Theseus, to use the full weight of the law to make her comply and she is told that if she does not marry Demetrius her punishment will be death. Like other strong female characters in Shakespeare, Hermia stands up to her father, and even the most powerful man in their world. She does this with logical argument and remains calm while doing it. She then courageously runs away with her lover. Her strength lies in her calm assertiveness and her determination to control her own destiny rather than hand it to the men around her. Please take a moment to review this content!

Chapter 2 : Shakespeare's Treatment of Love and Marriage

One cannot therefore talk about Shakespeare's powerful women in the social or political sense, but there are a number very powerful women in Shakespeare, in the personal sense.

The synopsis below may give away important plot points. This play will later be renamed *Romeo and Juliet* and be reworked into a tragedy but with some comical undertones with a few characters, like the Nurse. Unbeknownst to Shakespeare and the rest of the theater company, Kent is young noblewoman Viola de Lesseps. Inspired by Viola, Shakespeare begins writing feverishly. His work in progress also benefits from the off-hand advice of playwright and friendly rival Christopher Marlowe Rupert Everett. Yet Shakespeare and de Lesseps know that their romance is doomed. Shakespeare is married, albeit long separated from his wife, and Viola is a noblewoman whose parents would never permit her to marry a commoner such as Shakespeare. At court, Shakespeare manages to goad Wessex into betting the grand sum of fifty pounds that a play cannot capture the nature of true love. If *Romeo and Juliet* is a success, Shakespeare as playwright will win the money. The true purpose of the meeting is revealed when Wessex announces his intent to marry Viola. The Lord of Revels, an official of the Queen, learns that there is a woman in the theater company at the Rose playhouse. He orders the theater closed for this violation of morality and the law. Left without a stage or lead actor, it seems that *Romeo and Juliet* must close before it even opened. Shakespeare is offered one last chance by the owner of a competing theater, the Curtain, who offers his own theater to Shakespeare. Shakespeare will take the role of Romeo himself, with a boy actor playing Juliet. Viola learns that the play will be performed on the very day of her wedding. In one final twist, mere moments before the play begins, the boy playing Juliet starts experiencing the voice change of puberty. Their passionate portrayal of two lovers inspires the entire audience. The Lord invokes the name of the Queen to arrest all there for indecency. Although she recognizes Viola in her guise as Thomas Kent, the Queen does not unmask Viola, instead declaring that the role of Juliet is being performed by the boy Thomas Kent. However, even a Queen is powerless to break an official marriage of the Church. She also states that *Romeo and Juliet* has accurately portrayed true love and Wessex is forced to pay Shakespeare the fifty pounds. This is enough to allow Shakespeare become a shareholder in a new theater. The Queen then commissions Shakespeare to write something "a little more cheerful next time. She must accompany Wessex to a colonial settlement in Virginia. Shakespeare immortalizes her by making the main character of his new play, *Twelfth Night*, a strong young woman named Viola who also disguises herself as a boy.

Chapter 3 : Shakespeare's™ Top 10 Most Powerful Female Characters - No Sweat Shakespeare

If you could take on the role of one woman from Shakespeare's plays, who would it be? Perhaps the passionate Juliet appeals, a hormone-addled adolescent whom love transforms into a full-blooded.

And yet, oddly enough, this film is pretty feminist. The rights and roles of women have come a very, very long way since the s, and yet this film shows us the major societal problems that occur when women are denied agency. Not only did she prove to England, and the world, that a woman could rule and be a highly capable leader on her own without a husband, she brought England into a Golden Age. Elizabeth I is thus used in this film as a symbol of the kinds of heights women can achieve if they are only given the opportunity. The things we have been fighting for will be considered a given. Progress is only a future away. Shakespeare kisses Viola as Thomas Kent 1. Women were not allowed to be actors: But it was the law that only men can appear on stage as actors in plays; it was seen as lewd and obscene for women to act. This is one of those aspects of Elizabethan society that seem positively absurd by modern standards. Could you imagine our movie industry today if every female character was played by crossdressing men and prepubescent boys? And yet, some vestiges of this type of law still remain – women are still seen as the gatekeepers of morality. It is still a fact that some things are seen as okay for men to do, but obscene and disgusting for women to emulate. As the beautiful daughter of a social climbing merchant, Viola DeLesseps is seen by her father as a mere asset, not his child. He does not even ask her if she desires to be married, nor does he tell her that he has decided her future for her behind her back. He is even contemptuous of her when speaking to her future husband, and blatantly bribes the Earl of Wessex to marry her: But if you are the man to ride her, there are rubies in the saddlebag. Lord Wessex is not a nice guy. He later starts ordering Viola around, throwing screaming fits if she dares to be late. Viola is thus pushing the limits of freedom that are available to her in defiance of the arranged marriage. Women are not allowed to make their own choices of marriage. Viola can never marry Shakespeare. As the daughter of a rich merchant, she would never be allowed to marry so far beneath her station. Her father has bought the Earl of Wessex so his grandchildren will be nobility – she is not even given the choice as to whether she may have children or not. She also knows that were she to defy Wessex, Queen Elizabeth would know the cause, and execute Shakespeare for it, as Elizabeth has given her official consent to the marriage. Women are expected to be submissive and humble. He is in effect asking Viola to defy everything that she feels inside just so Lord Wessex can increase his personal fortune. Women are seen as possessions. The only thing that he shows pleasure in is when he believes that Shakespeare who he thinks is Christopher Marlowe has died. But the women in this story know better. Consent is seen as optional. There is a very strong contrast between Lord Wessex and William Shakespeare in how they approach Viola as a lover. When she slaps him, he reminds her that she cannot defy her father nor her Queen. In contrast, when Shakespeare and Viola prepare to make love for the first time, he interrupts her to make sure that she truly does consent to sex with him: Virginity is seen as a prize to be won. When Viola is presented to Queen Elizabeth, she detects that something is different about her, and correctly surmises that she has fallen in love and lost her virginity since the last time she saw her. She tells Lord Wessex: But you are a lordly fool. It takes a woman to know it. This above all makes Wessex murderously jealous. And yet, Viola too sees her lost virginity as something that was precious: Elizabeth I was watching the play in disguise. So something is out of joint. Come here, Master Kent. Let me look at you. And your error, Mr. Tilney, is easily forgiven. Yes, by God, I do know about that. She, more than anyone else in that era, knows what it is like to be someone who has all the power in the world, and yet none of it at the same time. She later reflects on the powers she does not have: Lost your wife so soon? How is this to end? Those whom God has joined in marriage, not even I can put asunder. Lord Wessex, as I foretold, has lost his wife in the playhouse. Go make your farewells, and send her out. Gender is but a performance. One of the more interesting subtextual elements of this film is how it chooses to approach gender. Most obviously, Viola convincingly played two male parts at the same time – that of her pseudonym, Thomas Kent, and as Romeo Montague. She would never have been discovered if she had not made love with Shakespeare in a place where they could be spied on. She binds her breasts when playing Thomas, which is a common practice

used by transgender men. The laws requiring that only men can be actors cause another layer of representation of gender – older men must play older women, and prepubescent boys play young women. They do not show shame or discomfort at being made to crossdress – it is a just part to play, just like all gender is an instinctive societal role that is played. Viola is a female character who masquerades as a man, but is played by a young man masquerading as a woman. A man plays a woman playing a man. This film deserves to be loved again. It is one of the few comedies to win Best Picture, and though it is bittersweet, it is a film that fills me with joy every time I watch it. Loving Shakespeare comes with the territory. Myrna has a particular interest in the animation medium, having written extensively on American, Canadian and Japanese animation.

Chapter 4 : Bed tricks and broken women: Shakespeare's guide to love | Stage | The Guardian

Criminal love, of any kind, holds a quite subordinate place in his art; and, on the other hand, if ideal figures are to be found there, it is among his devoted, passionate, but arch and joyous women. It is thus possible to lay down a Shakesperean norm or ideal type of love-relations.

The Shakesperean world is impressed, as a whole, with an unmistakable joy in healthy living. This tells habitually as a pervading spirit, a contagious temper, not as a creed put forward, or an example set up. It is as clear in the presentment of Falstaff or Iago, as of Horatio or Imogen. And nowhere is it clearer than in his handling of the relations between men and women. Criminal love, of any kind, holds a quite subordinate place in his art; and, on the other hand, if ideal figures are to be found there, it is among his devoted, passionate, but arch and joyous women. It is thus possible to lay down a Shakesperean norm or ideal type of love-relations. It is most distinct in the mature Comedies, where he is shaping his image of life with serene freedom; but also in the Tragedies, where a Portia or a Desdemona innocently perishes in the web of death. In the earlier Comedies it is approached through various stages of erratic or imperfect forms. The present study will follow the plan thus indicated. The third traces the gradual approach to the norm in the early Comedies. The fourth and fifth sections, finally, discuss the treatment, in Comedy and Tragedy, of Love-types other than the norm. The Shakesperean norm of love, thus understood, may be described somewhat as follows. Love is a passion, kindling heart, brain, and senses alike in natural and happy proportions; ardent but not sensual, tender but not sentimental, pure but not ascetic, moral but not puritanic, joyous but not frivolous, mirthful and witty but not cynical. His lovers look forward to marriage as a matter of course, and they neither anticipate its rights nor turn their affections elsewhere. They commonly love at first sight and once for all. Love-relations which do not contemplate marriage occur rarely and in subordination to other dramatic purposes. Tragedy like that of Gretchen does not attract him. The course of love rarely runs smooth; but rival suitors proposed by parents are quietly resisted or merrily abused, never, even by the gentlest, accepted. Crude young girls like Hermia, delicate-minded women like Desdemona and Imogen, the rapturous Juliet and the homely Anne Page, the discreet Silvia and the naive Miranda, are all at one on this point. And they all carry the day. And with this security of possession his loving women combine a capacity for mirth and jest not usual in the dramatic representation of passion. Rosalind is more intimately Shakesperean than Juliet. Married life, as Shakespeare habitually represents it, is the counterpart, mutatis mutandis, of his representation of unmarried lovers. His husbands and wives have less of youthful abandon; they rarely speak of love, and still more rarely with lyric ardour, or coruscations of poetic wit. But they are no less true. The immense field of dramatic motives based upon infringements of marriage, so fertile in the hands of his successors, and in most other schools of drama, did not attract Shakespeare, and he touched it only occasionally and for particular purposes. II The norm of love lent itself both to comic and to tragic situation, but only within somewhat narrow limits. The richness, depth and constancy of the passion precluded a whole world of comic effects. It precluded the comedy of the coquette and the prude, of the affected gallant and the cynical rouse, of the calf-lover and the doting husband; the comedy of the fantastic tricks played by love under the obsession of pride, self-interest, meticulous scruple, or superstition. The normal love, not being itself ridiculous, could thus yield material for the comic spirit only through some fact or situation external to it. It may be brought before us only in ludicrous parody. Or again, the source of fun lies in the wit and humour of the lovers themselves. Some of them, like Rosalind and Beatrice, virtually create and sustain the wit-fraught atmosphere of the play single-handed. But Shakespeare habitually heightens this source of fun by some piquancy of situation almost always one arising from delusion, particularly through confusion of identity. It is a mark of the easy-going habits of his art in comedy that he never threw aside this rather elementary device, though subjecting it, no doubt, to successive refinements which become palpable enough when we pass from the Two Gentlemen to Cymbeline. But his genius made perennially delightful even the crude forms of confusion which create grotesque infatuations like those of Titania, Malvolio, Phoebe, Olivia. And Portia crowns her home-coming to her husband and her splendid service to his friend with the madcap jest of the rings. Again, the normal love offered in itself equally

little promise of tragedy. Tragic these healthy lovers of themselves will never become; they have to be led into the realm of pity and fear, as into that of laughter and mirth, by the incitement or the onthrust of alien forces. The blindness of Claudio, of Othello, of Posthumus, of Leontes, is provoked by circumstances of very various cogency, but in each case it wrecks a love relation in which we are allowed to see no flaw. The situation of innocent, slandered, heart-stricken womanhood clearly appealed strongly to him, and against his wont he repeated it again and again. Hermione and Hero, Desdemona and Imogen, are to his graver art what Rosalind and Beatrice and Portia are to his comedy. But while the tragic issue is directly provoked by the alien intervention, it is clear that almost all its tragic quality springs, not from the operations of Iachimo or Iago, but from the wonderful presentment of the love they wreck. The poet of the Sonnets is implicit in the poet of Othello. And the dramas themselves abound in lyric outbursts, often hardly called for by the situation, in which his ideal of wedded love is uttered with the poignant insight of one who was probably far from having achieved or observed it himself. Or of Imogen, blind to all but the path of light and air that divides her from Milford Haven: I see before me, man; nor here, nor here, Nor what ensues, but have a fog in them, That I cannot look through. Even Adriana, in the Comedy of Errors, expresses the unity of married love with an intensity which we expect neither from this bustling bourgeoisie nor in this early play: For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall A drop of water in the breaking gulf And take unmingled thence that drop again Without addition or diminishing, As take from me thyself and not me too; II, ii. But there, where I have garnered up my heart, Where either I must live, or bear no life, The fountain from the which my current runs, Or else dries up: The husband in these cases, it is true, neither forgives nor condones, and Shakespeare unlike Heywood gives no hint that he would have dissented from the traditional ethics on which Othello and Posthumus and Leontes acted, had their wives in fact been guilty. Desdemona, Imogen, Hermione, alike beautifully fulfil the ideal of love presented in the great sonnet: Love is not love Which alters when it alteration finds, Or bends with the remover to remove. In one drama only did he represent ideal love brought to a tragic doom without a hint of inner severance. The wedded unity of Romeo and Juliet is absolute from their first meeting to their last embrace; it encounters only the blind onset of outer and irrelevant events; nothing touches their rapturous faith in one another. Yet it is only in this sense immature. If Shakespeare had not yet fathomed the depths of human misery, he understood completely the exaltation of passion, and Romeo and Juliet, though it gives few glimpses beyond the horizons of his early world, remains the consummate flower of his poetry of ideal love. His conception of love If was still, at the opening of his career, relatively slight and superficial; his mastery of technique was equally incomplete. The early plays accordingly abound with scenes and situations where from either cause or both the dramatic treatment of love is not yet in the full sense Shakesperean. It will suffice in this sketch to specify two types of each. The young Shakespeare, as is well known, showed a marked leaning to two apparently incongruous kinds of dramatic device paradox and symmetry. In the riotous consciousness of power he loved to take up the challenge of outrageous situations, to set himself dramaturgical problems, which he solves by compelling us to admit that the impossible might have happened in the way he shows. A girl of humble birth, in love with a young noble who scorns her, to set herself, notwithstanding, to win him, and to succeed. Richard and Petruchio and Helen carry into the problems of love-making the enterprising audacity of the young Shakespeare in the problems of art. But the audacity of the young Shakespeare showed itself in another way. It was nearer akin to the boyish humour of mimicry. If he found a pair of indistinguishable twins producing amusing confusion in a Roman play, he capped them with a second pair, to produce confusion worse confounded in the English Comedy of Errors. And so with love. All four have forsworn the sight of women; all four fall in love, not promiscuously but in order of rank, with the French princess and her ladies, whose numbers, by good fortune, precisely go round. But love itself is not, as yet, drawn with any power. Equally immature is the representation of fickle love in the Two Gentlemen. His threat to outrage Sylvia V, iv. The inconstancy of the Athenian lovers attests only the potency of the faery juice. A second mark of unripeness in the conception of love as extravagant magnanimity. This, like other kinds of unnatural virtue, was a part of the heritage from mediaeval romance, fortified with Roman legend. The antique exaltation of friendship concurred with the Germanic absoluteness of faithful devotion, and for the mediaeval mind the most convincing way of attesting this was by the surrender of a mistress. The story, quoted in Sir T.

But the humanity and veracity of the mature Shakespeare rejected these extravagances as the cognate genius of the mature Chaucer had done before him. On the London stage it profited by the special piquancy attaching to the roles of girls in masculine disguise when the actors were boys, and its blend of audacious adventure and devoted self-sacrifice gave the Elizabethan auditor precisely the kind of composite thrill he loved. For some forms of sex-confusion Shakespeare throughout his career retained an unmistakable liking. But the finer instincts of his ripening art gradually restricted its scope. Viola, in the original story *Bandello*, II, 36 follows a faithless lover; in *Twelfth Night*, wrecked on the Illyrian coast, she disguises herself merely for safety, takes service with the Duke as a complete stranger, and only subsequently falls in love with him. In his latest plays he shows disrelish even for the delightful fun evolved from sex-confusion in *Twelfth Night* and *As you like it*. The adventures of Imogen in disguise are purely pathetic. Pisanio indeed proposes, and Imogen agrees, to follow her husband to Italy in disguise; but this opening is significantly not followed up. But in the *Two Gentlemen*, the entire motive without curtailment or qualification is presented in the adventures of Julia. Abandoned by Proteus, she follows him in disguise, takes service as his page, and is employed as go-between in his new courtship of Silvia. To the young Shakespeare the situation was still wholly congenial, and he availed himself of its opportunities of pathos without reserve, though with incomplete power. The case of another devoted pursuer of an unwilling man is more complicated, and calls for closer examination. Yet internal evidence leaves no doubt that this play, though originally written, and therefore planned, in the early nineties, was revised by Shakespeare at a date not far remote from that of *Hamlet*. In the original story *Decamerone*, III, 9 the flavour of paradox was even more pronounced. Like the other tales of the Third Day, it describes one who *alcuna cosa molto da lui desiderata con industria acquistasse*. Helena, as the heroine and predominant figure of the play, had to be of the sisterhood of Portia and Rosalind and Beatrice and Viola. But if the plot forbade this? And clearly, the most hazardous incident of all the substitution of Helen for Diana could not be eliminated without breaking up the plot altogether. Why then take up the old play at all? Plainly there must have been in the fundamental theme something which Shakespeare was unwilling to lose as well as something that he would have wished away. Could she be visibly endowed with this grace of clear sight and will, yet at the same time be rather drawn on by circumstances to the final conquest of Bertram than herself the active agent in it? Somewhat thus must the problem have presented itself to Shakespeare.

Chapter 5 : An Analysis of Shakespeare's Women - Page 2

A young Shakespeare, out of ideas and short of cash, meets his ideal woman and is inspired to write one of his most famous plays.

The major tragedies to be analysed are: Hamlet, Macbeth, and King Lear. Since their first appearance, women roles were always played by men on stage, usually by young boys. Shakespeare created women who lived and breathed on the stage and the page. They represented great values and virtues such as wit, ambition, and love. Therefore, this essay will provide some ideas about: Secondly, we will examine the images of how these women are presented. Women were to be seen, and not heard. Hence, it was common that women were compelled into marriage, in order to receive power, legacy, dowry, and land in exchange. Single women were the property of their fathers or husbands. Even though Queen Elizabeth herself was unmarried, the roles of women in society were extremely restricted. In Elizabethan time, women were considered as the weaker sex and dangerous. Besides, women were supposedly to represent virtues such as obedience, chastity, silence, and piety. All these virtues, naturally, have their meaning in relationship to men. The role allotment in Elizabethan society was strictly regulated; men were the breadwinners, and women had to be obedient. Nevertheless, within this deprived, steady, and established scope, the representations of women have been depicted in diverse ways in Shakespearean dramas, in which he represents a quite controversial female figure of the Renaissance period. Shakespeare did write of characters that were strong and were wit. Women were different from female ideals in the time that he wrote. According to Virginia Woolf, Shakespeare is the writer who made his writings transparent and free of any personal vices for delineating the women characters in his tragedies. Shakespeare wrote his plays in an Elizabethan society which had a lot of prejudices against women, for instance, inferiority in social and power positions, or submissiveness. Some others, however, do not follow those conventions as it could be illustrated in this section. Women as intelligent, Machiavellian, and independent as Gertrude will also be portrayed. He cares nothing for this "mortal coil" and the vices to which man has become slave. Gertrude is shallow, and thinks only about her body and external pleasures. Like a child she longs to be delighted. She is subjected by the majority of men in the play such as King Claudius, and even her own father, Polonius, to spy Hamlet. They use their supreme power as king and patriarchal power as father to manipulate weak Ophelia for their own interests against Hamlet. That revenge and harmful environment will end up with a clear consequence: In those both conversations, the implications are clear: So, firstly, Laertes fears that Hamlet could maintain sexual intercourses with Ophelia and then, abandoning and leaving her in dishonour: Then if he says he loves you, It fits your wisdom so far to believe it As he in his particular act and place May give his saying deed; which is no further Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal. Unquestioningly obeying their remonstrance against pursuing a relationship with Hamlet, she rejects his advances which of course she believes to be genuine and thus when he pretends to be mad she believes it to be her fault. When Hamlet asks her: HAMLET Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: I did love you once. By saying she is beautiful and not honest or vice versa, Hamlet is trying to convey to Ophelia that she has been corrupted, that she is not honest, virtue. Therefore, it is impossible to have both virtues. I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Thus, as a conclusion, he sees her as an innocent character but corrupted by people. As a result she becomes mad. As it has been analyzed before, it can be said that Ophelia is manipulated by male sex: Polonius, Laertes, and Hamlet. However, during the play, these three characters disappear leaving Ophelia alone. Polonius dies accidentally, Laertes leaves the kingdom, and Hamlet refuses to marry and abandons her. Character as Ophelia, who is totally dependents on others and submissive and that represses all her physical and emotional desires, does not bear that situation and becomes mad and commits suicide as a consequence. In spite of being

somehow in the shadows, she rules the kingdom at the same level as King Claudius. She wants to preserve the crown. Hamlet seems to be the only character who notices that, and accuses her of being insensible, of being a stone with a harsh language: Moreover, her sexuality is also very present in the play; Hamlet makes references to her lascivious personality, comparing her to a person with an animal instinct, not human: There is a rejection because of the loss of confidence due to the events Gertrude is involved in: All those actions will alter the perception Hamlet has about love and confidence. However, at the end of the play, the role of Gertrude changes. And, although her love for Claudius is wrong by moral standards, she is now his queen, and remains loyal to him. According to some scholars, she resembles monstrous women, such as Medusa, Medea, and in some occasion according to some critics she bears a likeness of Queen Mary, also known as Bloody Mary. These aims will be accomplished through scrutinizing the text itself and through various works of theorist and critics. The weird sisters and their prophecies The weird sisters are the first characters that Shakespeare introduces. In thunder, lightning, or in rain? As stated by Coriat, the three witches are myths, but like all myths they must be interpreted not literally, but as symbols, as instigators of fixed idea ambition which they plant in the mind of Macbeth. He was concerned with the study of witchcraft. In his book Demonology, states that witches are disgusting old women with taste for malice. When Banquo encounters them with Macbeth, both were disturbed to see that they are ugly and hag. Act I, scene III. From the moment in which the witches announce to Macbeth the three prophecies, Macbeth becomes entirely reliant on the words of the Weird Sisters. Act I, scene viii. If Macbeth would have not sent the letter to his wife, the plan had not been accomplished. The letter that Macbeth sent to his wife, explores the greatest level of choice that she has. This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, though mightiest not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell. Thereby, she accepts a more masculine identity into her life, in order to convince her husband, and to fulfil her desire of being queen. She renounces to womanly love for the spirit murder. From this perspective, both the witches and Lady Macbeth use the metaphoric language to call upon spiritual powers. For instance, the following passage illustrates that she is utterly evil and without sense of morality. I had most need of blessing, and "Amen" Stuck in my throat. Act II, scene II Consequently, as Lady Macbeth fosters Macbeth to comply with the deed of murdering Duncan, and claiming that his success as a man lies in his rejection of human kindness, a characteristic only attributed to women. Thou wouldst be great; Art not without ambition, but without The illness should attend it. Act I, scene V. Lady Macbeth continues to reject her feminine qualities throughout the first act of the play. Her image of obstinate motherhood is a perfect example: The passage gives evidence of the fact that she rejects motherhood and any likeness of nurturing qualities. To be womanly, is to be gently, fearful, pitying, and soft. However, Shakespeare has crossed the boundaries of depicting Lady Macbeth, attributing her role of masculinity that Macbeth lacks. Her first tactic is to challenge his manhood. Thus, to obtain power her purpose relies on ridiculing him with suggestions of effeminacy and cowardice. Give me the daggers. In Born of Woman: In other words, Macbeth is essentially a struggle between a world of influential maternal and female power, as well as Coriolanus with his mother. Her obsession and ambition to be queen are the motives of her deterioration. Hers is the mock fortitude of a mind deluded by ambition, she shames her husband with a superhuman audacity fancy which she cannot support, but sinks in the season of remorse and died in suicidal agony. It is this imaginary wish fulfilment to be the queen which later causes the hysterical dissociation. She becomes dominated by fixed ideas that later will cause her sleepwalking, or according to some scholars somnambulism. The idea of gaining sovereignty and power were set in her mind in an uncontrollable impulse. After the deed is done and Duncan is murdered, there arises the first mental dissociation and suicide. This can be reflected in the following passage: So, it will make us mad. The most striking scene, where Shakespeare excelled at depicting the mental state of Lady Macbeth, is the sleepwalking, namely, a case of hysterical somnambulism.

Chapter 6 : Imagining Shakespeare's Wife | Folger Shakespeare Library

These women are often pure and chaste at the beginning of the play, and tragically die once their innocence is lost. In stark contrast to his presentation of bawdy women, Shakespeare's treatment of young innocent women is fairly brutal.

Themes Different Types of Romantic Love Modern readers associate the sonnet form with romantic love and with good reason: These sonnets were addressed to stylized, lionized women and dedicated to wealthy noblemen, who supported poets with money and other gifts, usually in return for lofty praise in print. In contrast to tradition, Shakespeare addressed most of his sonnets to an unnamed young man, possibly Wriothesly. Addressing sonnets to a young man was unique in Elizabethan England. Furthermore, Shakespeare used his sonnets to explore different types of love between the young man and the speaker, the young man and the dark lady, and the dark lady and the speaker. In his sequence, the speaker expresses passionate concern for the young man, praises his beauty, and articulates what we would now call homosexual desire. Several sonnets also probe the nature of love, comparing the idealized love found in poems with the messy, complicated love found in real life. Sonnets “”, addressed to the so-called dark lady, express a more overtly erotic and physical love than the sonnets addressed to the young man. But many sonnets warn readers about the dangers of lust and love. According to some poems, lust causes us to mistake sexual desire for true love, and love itself causes us to lose our powers of perception. In his sonnets, however, Shakespeare portrays making love not as a romantic expression of sentiment but as a base physical need with the potential for horrible consequences. Several sonnets equate being in love with being in a pitiful state: As the young man and the dark lady begin an affair, the speaker imagines himself caught in a love triangle, mourning the loss of his friendship with the man and love with the woman, and he laments having fallen in love with the woman in the first place. In Sonnet , the speaker personifies love, calls him a simpleton, and criticizes him for removing his powers of perception. It was love that caused the speaker to make mistakes and poor judgments. Elsewhere the speaker calls love a disease as a way of demonstrating the physical pain of emotional wounds. Throughout his sonnets, Shakespeare clearly implies that love hurts. Yet despite the emotional and physical pain, like the speaker, we continue falling in love. Shakespeare shows that falling in love is an inescapable aspect of the human condition—indeed, expressing love is part of what makes us human. Traditionally, sonnets transform women into the most glorious creatures to walk the earth, whereas patrons become the noblest and bravest men the world has ever known. Shakespeare makes fun of the convention by contrasting an idealized woman with a real woman. The speaker explains that his lover, the dark lady, has wires for hair, bad breath, dull cleavage, a heavy step, and pale lips. He concludes by saying that he loves her all the more precisely because he loves her and not some idealized, false version. Real love, the sonnet implies, begins when we accept our lovers for what they are as well as what they are not. Other sonnets explain that because anyone can use artful means to make himself or herself more attractive, no one is really beautiful anymore. Thus, since anyone can become beautiful, calling someone beautiful is no longer much of a compliment. The Responsibilities of Being Beautiful Shakespeare portrays beauty as conveying a great responsibility in the sonnets addressed to the young man, Sonnets 1 “” Here the speaker urges the young man to make his beauty immortal by having children, a theme that appears repeatedly throughout the poems: Later sonnets demonstrate the speaker, angry at being cuckolded, lashing out at the young man and accusing him of using his beauty to hide immoral acts.

Chapter 7 : Shakespeare's evolving attitudes towards women - BBC News

Women and Shakespeare in the early 20th century. Shakespearean theatre's habit of exploring gender's multiple possibilities, and indeed women's central involvement in this exploration, is not a recent phenomenon.

Production[edit] The original idea for Shakespeare in Love was suggested to screenwriter Marc Norman in the late s by his son Zachary. Day-Lewis was uninterested, and when Roberts failed to persuade him, she withdrew from the film, six weeks before shooting was due to begin. The scene with Shakespeare and Viola in the punt was re-shot, to make it more emotional, and some lines were re-recorded to clarify the reasons why Viola had to marry Wessex. The ending was re-shot several times, until Stoppard eventually came up with the idea of Viola suggesting to Shakespeare that their parting could inspire his next play. Will and Viola play out the famous balcony and bedroom scenes; like Juliet, Viola has a witty nurse, and is separated from Will by a gulf of duty although not the family enmity of the play: In addition, the two lovers are equally "star-crossed" â€” they are not ultimately destined to be together since Viola is of rich and socially ambitious merchant stock and is promised to marry Lord Wessex , while Shakespeare himself is poor and already married. There is also a Rosaline, with whom Will is in love at the beginning of the film. There are references to earlier cinematic versions of Shakespeare, such as the balcony scene pastiching the Zeffirelli Romeo and Juliet. Macbeth , and the " play within a play ". The daughter of his enemy! His name is Mercutio. Burbage promises the payment the next day, so Marlowe refuses to part with the pages and departs for Deptford, where he is killed. It has been suggested that it is a memorial reconstruction by the actors who performed the work. Simon , which also features Shakespeare falling in love and finding inspiration for his later plays. She claimed that the plotline was stolen from her novel The Quality of Mercy , in which Shakespeare romances a Jewish woman who dresses as a man, and attempts to solve a murder. Miramax Films spokesman Andrew Stengel derided the claim, filed in the US District Court six days before the Academy Awards , as "absurd", and argued that the timing "suggests a publicity stunt". Queen Elizabeth I never entered a public theatre, as she does in the film. Between Romeo and Juliet and Twelfth Night, Shakespeare wrote ten other plays over a period of six years. Then the movie stirs in a sweet love story, juicy court intrigue, backstage politics and some lovely moments from Romeo and Juliet Is this a movie or an anthology? I was carried along by the wit, the energy and a surprising sweetness. However, after watching Shakespeare in Love, he reportedly became attracted to the title of the character played by Colin Firth, and asked Queen Elizabeth II to be given the title of Earl of Wessex instead.

Chapter 8 : Shakespeare in Love () - Rotten Tomatoes

Love in Shakespeare is a recurrent theme. The treatment of love in Shakespeare's plays and sonnets is remarkable for the time: the Bard mixes courtly love, unrequited love, compassionate love and sexual love with skill and heart.

Episode The family. The second best bed. In this episode, we talk to Katherine West Scheil, a professor of English at the University of Minnesota, about the many, many versions of Anne Hathaway. Scheil is interviewed by Barbara Bogaev. Published September 18, Garland Scott is the associate producer. Ben Lauer is the web producer. Who was Anne Hathaway? The Afterlife of Anne Hathaway, Katherine Scheil, a professor of English at the University of Minnesota, looks at how Anne Hathaway has been represented by historians, biographers, and novelists over the centuries, all the ways her image has been reinterpreted and reshaped, and why. If we want him to be a moral authority, if we want him to be a libertine, if we want him to be gay, any of those choices will reflect on the woman who shared his home, bore their children, cared for them while he was in Stratford and when he was in London, and who appears, however summarily, in his will. Professor Scheil came in recently to talk about how, over the centuries, trends in cultural archaeology, bibliography, biography, and even tourism have led us to one, and then another, impression of the woman who shared her life with the most extraordinary playwright in the English language. Well, there are a handful of facts that we know about Anne. So, the Hathaway family were long-standing residents of Shottery since the early 16th century. We know that the Hathaways and the Shakespeare family were friends well into the 18th century. Of course, we know that Anne and William were married in November of We know that they had three children together, the daughter Susanna and then two twins, Hamnet and Judith. Oh yes, we will! And do we know for sure that she was older? Well, if the epitaph on her grave is correct I mean, older than William? And it is pretty wild that people throughout history, and. Well, I suppose it was coming across some of the really different portrayals of Anne, in both fiction and in biography, and then wondering, "What do we know about her, and then how have these facts been elaborated, suppressed, and kind of knit together? We read a biography and a novel, written the same year, I think. And my students were really surprised at how speculative the biography was, and how close the use of fiction in the novel was to the use of fiction in biography. Almost as if they were the same. And, of course, there is this category of "fictional biography. And this goes back to what, , right? And Rowe only wrote two lines, right? I have those two lines. Shall I read them? His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighborhood of Stratford. And, you know, even that skeletal brief sketch that Rowe gives you of Anne, he uses the phrase, "Shakespeare thought fit to marry. And just to understand Nicholas Rowe for a moment, who was his source and how reliable was the information provided? Already the plot thickens. And what can we surmise or what do you read into this very early imagining of Anne and Shakespeare and his marriage with her? And what was it responding to in the culture at that time, in ? Well, I think the sense of the need to give a life for an author, the sense that he had a family, he had a wife. So the 18th-century editor Alexander Pope circulated that story as well, later in the 18th century. And why did people think of Shakespeare as this rake? And one of the suggestions about that is his sexuality. And this comes from this Restoration playwright, William Davenant? Right, so William Davenant has a stake in attaching his own story to this idea of the libertine Shakespeare. Did he just make up the story and start, you know, telling people this, because this is a good way to become a hot playwright? And it goes all the way up to Shakespeare in Love, you know, the film. Okay, so let me see if I get this right. Nicholas Rowe, the first Shakespeare biographer, he struck a certain tone with Anne Hathaway, that Shakespeare married young to a woman from the area who had some means. So how did the Anne Hathaway narrative develop from there? So the David Garrick piece is really interesting. So we knew that he knew the cottage existed. He knew that the Hathaway family was still there. So one of the earliest sketches of those graves in Holy Trinity Church is by George Vertue, from There was also a bed there, which is still in the Hathaway cottage, which the Hathaway family refused to sell to the Irelands, presumably because it was still in use. And what is a courting chair? Is that the story that they tell? They very much, at least William Ireland, very much wanted to create a more positive Anne. So, Shakespeare famously

left his wife his "second best bed" in his will. Was the "second best bed" a term of endearment, you know, was that a bed that they shared together? Was it an insult? Was it completely something else? I think the consensus is that there were other wills that included second best beds, not as an insult. So this is the other problem with that line in the will. Who added it in? When was it added in? Somebody, think of something we can put in," you know, and then someone says, "How about the second best bed? But, of course, there are other options, too. I mean, the will was copied, so it certainly could have been the person copying the will that lost his place. But I think the temptation is to find a story behind this line, because then you can animate Shakespeare, you can give him an opinion about something. Well, people have taken this short line from the will and just run with it. And one of them is the great Shakespeare editor and scholar, Edmond Malone. Yeah, so Edmond Malone really relies on the will kind of as the cornerstone for his interpretation of Shakespeare as an unhappily married man. I think his phrase is, Shakespeare dismissed his wife "with an old bed. So I think the point is that you have these two positive and negative Annes existing at the same time. And a shift happens. Shakespeare is not the libertine any more. In the 19th century, there was very much a desire to have a moral Shakespeare, you know, Shakespeare who could be a moral authority about love and about life. So, the idea of Shakespeare the family man becomes important, and Anne, of course, is perfect for that. So then the story you can tell is that Anne is the perfect domestic helpmeet. Through Anne, you can see a different side of Shakespeare. Laugh She makes Anne look good by painting her as the ultimate loyal, supportive wife, because she helps Shakespeare be a serial killer and not get caught. Well, also this period in the 19th century, this is where there are fictions speculating about, perhaps Anne is the inspiration for Portia and Rosalind or Juliet? Nevertheless, in the 19th century, that becomes a very popular mode of imagining Anne. Well, definitely the cottage kind of cemented at least a positive view of Anne as this woman who was tending the home fires and being courted by Will Shakespeare, and, you know, a very glowing picture. And also in the 20th century, there were Anne Hathaway reproduction cottages in the US. So all of this is still reflecting some of the older, 19th century ideas? She came from the heart of England, in this beautiful place, and that that was some kind of inspiration for the plays. There are also, you write, a lot of American Shakespeare clubs and literary societies that are named for Anne in the late 19th century. Yes, you know, a lot of interest in Anne amongst American women. Well, moving into the early 20th century, there seems to be a bit of revisionist history going on. Well, I mean, as you might guess, you know, there are some certainly very negative Annes in this time period. Laugh Completely not based in any kind of factual information, but, you know, clearly, a lot of animosity behind that depiction. And I find it surprising that the book is called *The Women of Shakespeare*, and, you know, with growing interest in women to read about Shakespeare, you wonder how many women picked up this book, you know, read through, and came away pretty shocked. Well, this continued into the later 20th century and then the 21st century. And these two men seem to take their lead from an early 20th-century interpretation of Anne Hathaway, as you say, as the harridan. So if I can just give a few phrases to capture that. Right, and also wrote a biography six years later than his novel, which is equally negative about Anne. So in the novel, Anne forces Shakespeare into what Burgess calls "bed-slavery," until finally, and then this is a passage from Burgess, "hatred rose in him like black vomit, seeing that she had turned him into a manner of a whoremaster. So in the biography, Shakespeare felt what Burgess calls "disgust" at Anne and had to escape her "nagging him about his lack of ambition" and "with bitter resignation," Shakespeare "was led to the slaughter, or the marriage bed. I think you sum up his Anne as the "groaning old crone. Or where is he getting, what story does he tell of her and what is he drawing from to flush it out in *Will in the World*?

Chapter 9 : William Shakespeare Women Quotes | William Shakespeare Quotes about Women

The sexuality of William Shakespeare has been the subject of recurring debate. It is known from public records that he married Anne Hathaway and that they had three children; scholars have analysed their relationship through these documents, and particularly through the bequests to her in Shakespeare's will.

Compliance, self-sacrifice for a male, dependence, nurturance, and emotionalism are the expected norms. Yet independence, self-control and, frequently, defiance characterize these women. In Othello and Romeo and Juliet, women, exercising their independence, defy their fathers as well as the mores of their society. They are drawn with neither anger nor condescension. In personality they vary. Some are warm, delightful, friendly; others cold, aloof, and scornful. Some speak with confidence; others with diffidence. They range in age from the youthful, joyous Juliet to the wizened, bitter Margaret. But most have a vitality; they grow and develop during the course of a drama. Their actions spring from a realistic confrontation with life as they learn the meaning of self sovereignty for a woman in a patriarchal society. Simplification or evasion results. Some of the women are castigated as shrews; others are removed from the human sphere and their resemblances to deities or goddesses are emphasized; still others are considered as merely personifications of ideas. Editors, too, rely on stereotypes, but they also react to the intellectual and moral climate of their era. Lever, writing in our twentieth century, wonders what all the fuss is about in Measure for Measure. Shaped by the cultural mores of their particular society, they too conform to its biases. Promptbooksâ€™ records of plays as performedâ€™ recapture those performances. They also permit comparison of the acted play with the original. Lines are cut, roles excised, scenes transposed, and stage directions interjected. The cumulative effect of these changes is usually an altered portrait of the woman character Shakespeare had intended. In later times, large stage sets were devised. Striving for grandeur, the designers created costly scenery that took time to move. The uninterrupted performance of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage gave way to productions with long intermissions. But the cost of moving scenery also inspired producers to try to consolidate scenes occurring in one place. Antony and Cleopatra provides an excellent example. The scenes shift back and forth in kaleidoscope fashion between Rome and Egypt. People listened to the language, looked at the costumes, and imagined. Later audiences, however, demanded verisimilitude. They wanted to see Rome and Egypt. To shift from Egypt to Rome then back to Egypt and again to move for a brief interlude in Rome before returning once more to Egypt required massive shifts of scenery. How much simpler it was to consolidate these many short scenes into a few long ones. Stage business also affects responses to a character. Lacy, an old actor with the company, advised Terry to attempt to prevent Benedick from being of assistance: Beatrice is not going to let her man lay a finger on another woman. Terry triumphed on that occasion. But not all actresses are in that commanding a position. The word of the director usually prevails. The potential exists to recapture the quality of his dramas on the stage. A recent production of Richard III testified to this. Instead, a audience applauded when Richard, through guile, won for his wife a woman whose life that audience knew would be tortured and tragic. The misogynistic tone of the production indicates that technical knowledge has little to do with substance. And the one woman character with courage enough to challenge him openly, Margaret, never appeared. Absent too was the choral lament of the wailing widowsâ€™ powerless queens. The sweetest power a woman can possess is that over herself. But this power is incomplete. As de Beauvoir later notes, a woman loses this freedom when she discovers her own sexuality. She then realizes that to fulfill herself sexually, she must think of herself as "Other," or secondary, and of man as primary, for she lives in a patriarchal society. Marriage dramatizes this power of one human being over another. John Stuart Mill, the Victorian philosopher, notes that the reason the majority of men refuse to relinquish this power is that they are still too much afraid of living with an equal. He reasons for a sexual equality that will free both men and women to enjoy the full value of life. Shakespeare focuses on this inequity. Men and women confront the same experience from opposite perspectives. By creating confident, attractive, independent women whom we like, he questions the wisdom of a power structure that insists they relinquish personal freedom. Some of his dramas question accepted patterns of behavior. Some stress the value of mutual respect between a man and a woman.

Occasionally, a drama documents the tragedy of a woman who loses her way and her sense of self when she seeks to conform. To hear his voice, however, one must recognize the individuality and three-dimensional quality of his women characters. Like the men, the women too respond to a variety of forces in their environment and are troubled by the world they see. But that world differs from the one perceived by men. Not only was Elizabeth I a remarkable woman and a person of power, but she remained unmarried, thus preserving that power. Her reign began before Shakespeare was born and extended well into his playwrighting years. Williams, the historian, describes the impact of her presence as monarch for forty-six years: From the moment of her accession until the time of her death Elizabeth I was a phenomenon—it is not too strong a word—in European history. She was at once a crowned monarch and an unmarried woman. To such an unconventional conjunction some of the stiffest problems of the reign must be attributed. They have not been any clearer to historians. With great skill, Elizabeth evaded marriage and avoided that possible loss of power. She refused to share her life or her throne with any man. Surely the dramatist drew on this example. They reveal the conflict women know as they move from that early awareness of themselves as "essential" to that later eroding of self-confidence when they discover that they are merely "Other. An Interdisciplinary Journal, Vol. Suppose that feminist critics of all these writers are interested in the relationships of characters and imagery and other literary elements to sex roles and expectations, and refuse to take conventional stereotypes for male and female behavior for granted as normative. Are there any experiences specific to the Shakespeare critic? In addition to demythologizing masculine and feminine stereotypes, the feminist Shakespeare critic must also deal with two other stereotypes that are polar opposites: Shakespeare as the uncritical adherent of the most conservative views of his time, and Shakespeare as the universal genius who totally transcends all historical and psychological limitations. If feminist Shakespeare criticism is to continue its growth towards more significant insights, I believe we must demythologize these stereotypes as well. On the other hand, feminist critics who see Shakespeare as only the celebrant of conservative orthodoxy about male dominance may still reduce his complexity. We can find a range of attitudes in Shakespeare partly because a range of attitudes really exists in his work. In different ways, both were calling attention to important aspects of a play that many critics still take as simply a cautionary tale for the uppity woman. Kate is not a conventional subservient passive woman, and both of them, in their interpretations of the play, made clear that they liked her unconventional spirit, much preferred her to her more traditionally feminine sister Bianca, and felt that the way Shakespeare wrote the play encouraged this preference. Neither one saw Kate as defeated by the ending: Love is hard to demonstrate in the farcical text, and if Kate is manipulating Petruchio by belittling herself at the end, I could no longer see such a *modus vivendi* as happy. Eventually I tried to justify the last scene by describing it as a game. My dissertation chapter was basically an attempt to understand the play in its own terms—not to point out any of the problems with the patriarchal elements in those terms—and in that sense I was using patriarchal language very much as Kate was, and remaining within the mythology of Shakespeare as transcending all limitations. Whenever I saw or taught the play, however, my discomfort with it came alive again. It was hard to admit that elements in the play lent themselves to interpretations suggesting that Kate was forced into submission. But eventually, having read more in feminism and Elizabethan social history, having lived more, and having been prodded by arguments with colleagues and friends, I wrote a paper that tried to confront this problem. The *Shrew* uses imagery of play and games, I concluded, partly to make us feel that the institutions of patriarchy can be as freely entered into and as enjoyable as play. This ambiguity seemed to me to reflect and respond to the tension in Elizabethan attitudes toward marriage between patriarchy and companionship. Whether the situation of Elizabethan women was better or worse than that of their predecessors, historians may argue, but such tension clearly existed in practice and in ideology. For example, the popular preacher Henry Smith fills his *Preparative to Marriage*, published in , with images suggestive of marriage as equal partnership. Husband and wife are like a pair of oars, a pair of gloves, and even David and Jonathan. Yet he also declares that "the ornament of a woman is silence; and therefore the Law was given to the man rather than to the woman, to shewe that he shoulde be the teacher, and shee the hearer. As I still do, but not as much as when my Shakespeare mythology was stronger. In most Shakespearean comedies the women control the games, and most of them are easy to see as models of strong, intelligent, resourceful

women attractively portrayed. Portia, Beatrice, Rosalind, and Viola all escape the trials that Kate undergoes, and none of them give long speeches on their duty to their husbands. Surely any playwright who can create four heroines like these is affirming female activity. He even allows them to criticize the limits that their society places on them as women—both by their words and by their competence in the masculine disguise that removes some of these limits. But the masculine disguise sometimes breaks down. Furthermore, even the strongest, most resourceful of the heroines end their comedies with ritual gestures of submission, as Clara Claiborne Park has shown [in *American Scholar* 42, Spring].