

The 'Progressive' View of the Family Dynamic

WEEK 3

During the **sixteenth century traditional order** was **challenged** by developments in science, religion, politics and economics – time of seismic change from **feudalism** to **capitalism**.

Batty, *Christian Man's Closet*, p. 78^v.

“There is almost no dutie performed unto Magistrates & Elders, nor any reverence or regard unto Parents.”

Time ripe for **emancipation of the individual**, free choice and opportunity.

Puritans gave **children veto** over parents' choice in marriage – **Renaissance humanists** wrote of reason, free will & individual responsibility.

Hierarchical obedience undercut by **Protestant** emphasis on **conscience** and **individual responsibility**.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

The extracts below give some idea of the conflicting motives and agencies that would be in play within a prosperous middle-class family. Mistress Page can clearly think and act independently of her husband while their daughter, Anne Page, exercises her own independent choice – and that choice is ultimately respected by both her parents.

The Pages are a well-to-do middle class family and although we are never told the source of their money it is probable that we are meant to think of them as having been successful in business or commerce.

Each of Anne Page's parents is anxious to marry their daughter to a different man: her mother favours Dr Caius whereas her father favours Master Slender. Each parent arranges separately for the favoured suitor to elope with Anne and marry her but Anne loves Fenton and they circumvent her parents' schemes and are secretly married.

Anne is known to have inherited “seven hundred pound of Moneyes, and Gold, and Siluer” [1.1] from her grandfather and “her father is to make her a petter (i.e. better) penny...”.

JUSTICE SHALLOW

..... Will you, upon good dowry, marry her?

SLENDER

I will do a greater thing than that, upon your request, cousin, in any reason.

SHALLOW

Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet coz: what I do is to pleasure you, coz. Can you love the maid?

SLENDER

I will marry her, sir, at your request: but if there be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are married and have more occasion to know one another; I hope, upon familiarity will grow more contempt: but if you say, 'Marry her', I will marry her; that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.

Page says of Fenton: "The gentleman is of no having:¹ he kept company with the wild prince² and Poins; he is of too high a region;³ he knows too much. No, he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of my substance: if he take her, let him take her simply;⁴ the wealth I have waits on my consent, and my consent goes not that way." [Act 3 Scene 2]

FENTON

I see I cannot get thy father's love;
Therefore no more turn me to him, sweet Nan.

ANNE PAGE

Alas, how then?

FENTON

Why, thou must be thyself.
He doth object I am too great of birth —,
And that, my state being gall'd with my expense,
I seek to heal it only by his wealth:
Besides these, other bars he lays before me,
My riots past, my wild societies;
And tells me 'tis a thing impossible
I should love thee but as a property.

ANNE PAGE

May be he tells you true.

FENTON

¹ i.e. he has no money.

² Prince Hal.

³ i.e. he is from too high a social rank for the daughter of the middle classes.

⁴ without a dowry.

No, heaven so speed me in my time to come!
 Albeit I will confess thy father's wealth
 Was the first motive that I woo'd thee, Anne:
 Yet, wooing thee, I found thee of more value
 Than stamps in gold or sums in sealed bags;
 And 'tis the very riches of thyself
 That now I aim at

[Act 3 Scene 4]

 MISTRESS PAGE

I'll to the doctor:⁵ he hath my good will,
 And none but he, to marry with Nan Page.
 That Slender, though well landed, is an idiot;
 And he my husband best of all affects.
 The doctor is well money'd, and his friends
 Potent at court: he, none but he, shall have her,
 Though twenty thousand worthier come to crave her

[Act 4 Scene 4]

After each parent's subterfuge has been frustrated and then revealed:

FENTON

You do amaze her: hear the truth of it.
 You would have married her most shamefully,
 Where there was no proportion held in love.
 The truth is, she and I, long since contracted,
 Are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us.
 The offence is holy that she hath committed;
 And this deceit loses the name of craft,
 Of disobedience, or unduteous title,
 Since therein she doth evitate⁶ and shun
 A thousand irreligious cursed hours,
 Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.

FORD

Stand not amazed; here is no remedy:
 In love the heavens themselves do guide the state;
 Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate

[Act 5 Scene 5]

PAGE Well, what remedy? Fenton, heaven give thee joy!
 What cannot be eschew'd must be embraced...

MISTRESS PAGE. Well, I will muse no further. Master Fenton,
 Heaven give you many, many merry days!

⁵ i.e. Dr Caius.

⁶ avoid

Good husband, let us every one go home,
And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire.

Shakespeare not alone in dramatising this **generational conflict** within family unit – **traditional parents** in opposition to **progressive children**.

William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, pp. 467-68.

Gouge **ambivalent**: children should **obey parents** over **marriage** but **think for themselves** in matters of **religion**:

“If a father command his childe to goe to Masse, to forswear himselfe, to marry an Idolater, to steale, to lie, or to commit any other sinne forbidden by God, the childe ought not to obey: those things cannot be done *in the Lord*.

Againe if parents forbid their children the doing of any necessary duty commanded of God, the childe ought to doe it notwithstanding the parents inhibition.”

On the wife’s submission to the husband:

Thomas Gataker, *Marriage Duties*, (1620), p. 30.

“*God is rather to be obeyed then man*: his will is rather to be regarded then mans will.”

New woman: greater freedom, mobility – **humanists** emphasised importance of **learning** for women as well as men – **a duty** under God.

Castiglione’s *The Courtier*, Erasmus’s *Education of a Christian Prince*, Roger Ascham’s *The Scholemaster* – young people encouraged to improve their minds with **classical learning** and **practical knowledge**.⁷

Lodowik Lloyd, *The Choyce of Jewels* (LONDON: Thomas Purfoot, 1607), pp. 37-38.

Dama... in expounding her fathers darke and obscure questions, might worthily claime to be *Pythagoras* daughter. *Caelius* [**Note:** *Caelius*.] writes of some women...which came in apparell like men, to heare *Plato* reade Philosophy in schooles... Were not the Fathers happy to bring vp such daughters, and were not their husbands more happy to marry such wiues?

... I wanted more time, than matter to write of such Iewels as our mothers, our wiues, our sisters, our kinswomen; and finally, of such Iewels as the world would be no world, without women the Mothers of the world.

⁷ **Roger Ascham** (c.1515 – 1530) was an English scholar and didactic writer, famous for his prose style, his promotion of the vernacular, and his theories of education. He served in the administrations of Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I, having earlier acted as Elizabeth's tutor in Greek and Latin between 1548 and 1550.

The Winter's Tale

Leontes, king of Sicilia, has convinced himself that his wife, Hermione, is having a sexual affair with Polixenes, his close boyhood friend and king of Bohemia – and that the child which Hermione is carrying is Polixenes'.

Paulina is an intelligent, loyal and strong-willed lady-in-waiting to Hermione who defends her mistress's honour. Antigonus is Paulina's husband.

Act 2 Scene 3

Leontes. What noise there, ho?

Paulina. No noise, my lord; but needful conference
About some gossips for your highness.

Leontes. How!
Away with that audacious lady! Antigonus,
I charged thee that she should not come about me:
I knew she would.

Antigonus. I told her so, my lord,
On your displeasure's peril and on mine,
She should not visit you.

Leontes. What, canst not rule her?

Paulina. From all dishonesty he can: in this,
Unless he take the course that you have done,
Commit me for committing honour, trust it,
He shall not rule me.

Antigonus. La you now, you hear:
When she will take the rein I let her run;
But she'll not stumble.

Paulina. Good my liege, I come;
And, I beseech you, hear me, who profess
Myself your loyal servant, your physician,
Your most obedient counsellor, yet that dare
Less appear so in comforting your evils,
Than such as most seem yours: I say, I come
From your good queen...

Travellers fascinated by Elizabethan women:

Thomas Platter's journal (1599) reprinted in Peter Razell, ed., *The Journals of Two Travellers in Elizabethan England: Thomas Platter and Horatio Busino* (London: Caliban Books, 1995), p. 46.

“The women-folk of England . . . have far more liberty than in other lands, and know just how to make good use of it, for they often stroll out or drive by coach in very

gorgeous clothes, and the men must put up with such ways, and may not punish them for it, indeed the good wives often beat their men.”

- In C16 [Emanuel Van Meteran](#) [1535-1612] the Dutch ambassador observed that Englishwomen were not shut up or kept so strictly as in Spain and some other countries. On the contrary, they had free management of their households and could go and could go out to market to buy what they liked best to eat. They are well dressed and fond of taking it easy; they sit decked out in fine clothes, in order to see and be seen by the passers-by.
- [Thomas Platter of Basle](#) who visited London in 1599 said "Now the women-folk of England, who have mostly blue-grey eyes and are fair and pretty, have far more liberty than in other lands, and know just how to make good use of it, for they often stroll out or drive by coach in very gorgeous clothes, and the men must put up with such ways".
[*Travels in England 1599*]

[Shakespeare described Mistress Page](#), a respectable, merry and good wife of Windsor thus, “never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does, do what she will, say what she will, take all, pay all, . . . all is as she list”. [*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 2.2]

Increasing female assertiveness - many Elizabethan women also **wore men’s clothes**:

[Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses*](#), p. 37^v.⁸

The Women also there haue dublets & Ierkins as men haue héer, buttoned vp the brest, and made with wings, welts and pinions on the shoulder points, as mans apparel is, for all the world, & though this be a kinde of attire appropriate onely to man, yet they blush not to wear it, and if they could as wel chaunge their sex, & put on the kinde of man, as they can weare apparel assigned onely to man, I think they would as verely become men indéed as now they degenerat from godly sober women, in wearing this wanton lewd kinde of attire, proper onely to man.

- When **women adopt male clothing** in Shakespeare’s plays it is always a **plot device** but it also reflects a **persistent theme** in contemporary writings and social commentary;
- Moreover, the adoption of men’s clothing is accompanied by a certain amount of **mockery of men’s behaviour** in a further display of **female assertiveness**:

⁸ Stubbes was a strident and vociferous Puritan who disapproved of such liberties.

As You Like It

In As You Like It the tyrannical Duke Frederick has usurped his brother, Duke Senior, who has exiled himself with a group of loyal courtiers to the Forest of Arden. Initially Duke Frederick has allowed Rosalind, Duke Senior's daughter, to remain at the court as a companion for his own daughter, Celia, but recently she, too, has been told:

“If you outstay the time, upon mine honour,
And in the greatness of my word, you die.”

Act 1 Scene 3

Rosalind. Why, whither shall we go?

Celia. To seek my uncle in the Forest of Arden.

Rosalind. Alas, what danger will it be to us,
Maids as we are, to travel forth so far!
Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold.

Celia. I'll put myself in poor and mean attire,
And with a kind of umber smirch my face;
The like do you; so shall we pass along,
And never stir assailants.

Rosalind. Were it not better,
Because that I am more than common tall,
That I did suit me all points like a man?
A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh,
A boar spear in my hand; and - in my heart
Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will-
We'll have a swashing and a martial outside,
As many other mannish cowards have
That do outface it with their semblances....⁹

The Merchant of Venice

Act 3 Scene 4

Portia, a rich heiress of Belmont, has been 'won' as the bride of Bassanio (a Venetian) when her suitor successfully solved a riddle set by her deceased father. Bassanio's expedition to woo Portia had been funded by his friend, Antonio, who has borrowed money on terms that now endanger his life if a court should find him to be liable.

⁹ See on the 'Dysfunctional Families' web page:

<https://www.shakespeare4alltime.com/shakespeares-dysfunctional-families.html> : Jean E. Howard, 'Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Winter, 1988), pp. 418-440.

Portia has determined to travel to Venice in disguise as a male lawyer – assisted by her servant, Nerissa, in order to defend Bassanio’s dearest friend.

Portia. Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
That you yet know not of: we'll see our husbands
Before they think of us.

Nerissa. Shall they see us?

Portia. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplished
With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
I could not do withal; then I'll repent,
And wish for all that, that I had not killed them;
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
That men shall swear I have discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.

Nerissa. Why, shall we turn to men?

Portia. Fie, what a question's that,
If thou wert near a lewd interpreter!
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day.

[Exeunt]

*Portia assumes and adopts a **male role** but in *All's Well That Ends Well* **Helena**, the orphaned daughter of a doctor, retains her female identity and **practises her skill as a physician**, when she cures the sick French king of an apparently fatal illness.*

The Traditionalists complained:

Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*:

Among the “abberations of wiues”: - Chapter heading ‘List of contents’.

‘A conceit that wiues are their husbands equals’;

‘Vnreuerend behauiour towards her husband, manifested by lightnesse, fullnesse, scornfulnes, and vanitie in her attire’;

‘A stout standing on her owne will’;

‘A peremptorie vndertaking to doe things as she list without and against her husbands consent’;

‘Disdaine at reproofe; giuing word for word; and waxing worse for being reproofed’;

Some were capable of a more enlightened view: wife not chattel or subject but **loving partner:**

Cornelius Agrippa, *The commendation of matrimony* (London, 1540), sig. C2^v-C3.

So take thy wyfe, commytted and gyuen to the for euer by the hand of god, for thy continuall felowshyp, not to seruice and bondage. Whome thou oughteste to rule with thy wisdom, with all fauour and reuerence. And let not her be subiect vnto the, but let her be with the in all trust and counsaile, & let her be in thy house, not as a drudge, but as maistresse of the house, in thy householde not as a mayden, but a mother, & a brynger vp of those children that thou shalt begette of her, whiche shall be lordes of thy goodes, and represent thy name, to such as shal come after the.

For **Puritans** marriage an **honourable** and natural society of man and woman, of which **children** were the **proper result** but **not the prime cause**. Married love a blessing and a duty; **sexuality not sinful** (Catholic view) but a **natural attraction between two souls** – an integral part of God’s plan, **sustaining** man and woman **in times of trial:**

Henry Smith, *A preparatiue to mariage* (London: Thomas Orwin for Thomas Man, 1591), pp. 33-34.

God saith, *I will make man a helpe meet for him....* This meetnesse GOD sheweth againe in the 22. verse, where *Moses* saieth, that of [**Note:** Gen. 2. 22.] the ribbe which was taken out of man God built the woman: signifying, that as one parte of the building dooth meete and fit with another; so the wife should meete and fit with the husband, that as they are called couples, so they may be called paires, that is, like as a paire of gloues, or a paire of hose are like; so man and wife should be like, because they are a paire of friends. If thou be learned, chuse one that loueth knowledge: if thou bee Martiall, chuse one that loueth prowesse: if thou must liue by thy labour, chuse one that loueth husbandrie: for vnlesse her minde stande with thy vocation, thou shalt neither inioye thy wife, nor thy calling.

Protestant reformers attacked **forced marriage**, child marriage and marriage for money. **Men** advised to look beyond **property and dowry** to the love that was part of God’s purpose in marriage:

Cornelius Agrippa, *The Commendation of Matrimony* [translated into englysshe by Dauid Clapam (1540)], sig. C2-C2^v.

“Thou therefore, who soo euer thou arte, that wyll take a wyfe, let loue be the cause, not substance of goodes, chose a wyfe, not a garment, let thy wyfe be maryed vnto the, not her dowrye.... Al couetousnesse, desyre of honour, enuy, and feare, sette a parte, with ... reasonable and chast loue, so take thy wyfe, commytted and gyuen to the for euer by the hand of God.”

Puritans attributed love’s **mysterious irrationality** not to madness but to **God’s grace; predestination** – notion of marriages **‘made in heaven’**:

Gataker, *A Good Wife Gods Gift* (London: John Haviland, 1624), pp.11-12.

A Father may finde out a fit wife, and thinks such a one a meet match for his Sonne: and her parents may also be of the same minde ... and yet it may be, when they have done all they can, they cannot fasten their affections. As Faith, so Love cannot be constrained ... There are secret lincks of affection, that no reason can be rendered of.... Even a naturall mans dimme eye may easily see & discern a more speciall providence of God oft carrying things in these cases.

Romeo and Juliet

Act 1 Scene 2

Paris is a young nobleman, kinsman to Escalus the prince of Verona. He has come to Capulet’s household to seek permission to court Capulet’s daughter, Juliet.

Paris’s opening words allude to the fact that a recent public brawl involving most members of the Capulet and Montague families has resulted in both heads of household being threatened with death by Prince Escalus should there be any recurrence.

Paris. Of honourable reckoning are you both;
And pity 'tis you lived at odds so long.
But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?

Capulet. But saying o'er what I have said before:
My child is yet a stranger in the world;
She hath not seen the change of fourteen years,
Let two more summers wither in their pride,
Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

Paris. Younger than she are happy mothers made.

Capulet. And too soon marr'd are those so early made.
The earth hath swallow'd all my hopes but she,
She is the hopeful lady of my earth:
But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart,
My will to her consent is but a part;
An she agree, within her scope of choice
Lies my consent and fair according voice.
This night I hold an old accustom'd feast,
Whereto I have invited many a guest,

Such as I love; and you, among the store,
 One more, most welcome, makes my number more.
 At my poor house look to behold this night
 Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light:
 Such comfort as do lusty young men feel
 When well-apparell'd April on the heel
 Of limping winter treads, even such delight
 Among fresh female buds shall you this night
 Inherit at my house; hear all, all see,
 And like her most whose merit most shall be:
 Which on more view, of many mine being one
 May stand in number, though in reckoning none ...

Act 1 Scene 3

In the following scene Juliet is addressed by both her parents on the subject of marriage. [The interjections of Juliet's Nurse have been omitted here]:

Lady Capulet. Tell me, daughter Juliet,
 How stands your disposition to be married?

Juliet. It is an honour that I dream not of.

....

Lady Capulet. Well, think of marriage now; younger than you,
 Here in Verona, ladies of esteem,
 Are made already mothers: by my count,
 I was your mother much upon these years
 That you are now a maid. Thus then in brief:
 The valiant Paris seeks you for his love....
 Verona's summer hath not such a flower.
 What say you? can you love the gentleman?
 This night you shall behold him at our feast;
 Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
 And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;
 Examine every married lineament,
 And see how one another lends content
 And what obscured in this fair volume lies
 Find written in the margent of his eyes.
 This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
 To beautify him, only lacks a cover:
 The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride
 For fair without the fair within to hide:
 That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,
 That in gold clasps locks in the golden story;
 So shall you share all that he doth possess,
 By having him, making yourself no less.

Speak briefly, can you like of Paris' love?

[Juliet](#). I'll look to like, if looking liking move:
But no more deep will I endart mine eye
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

However, this 'progressive' attitude towards a daughter's choice of marriage partner proves to be superficial.

Juliet has married Romeo in secret and mourns for his banishment from Verona for killing her cousin, Tybalt, in a street fight – a fight arising from the incident at the Capulet masked banquet which Romeo had gate-crashed. When now Juliet resists all attempts to persuade her to marry Paris her father becomes tyrannical:

Act 3 Scene 5

[Enter CAPULET and Nurse]

[Capulet](#). When the sun sets, the air doth drizzle dew;
But for the sunset of my brother's son
It rains downright.
How now! a conduit, girl? what, still in tears?
Evermore showering? In one little body
Thou counterfeit'st a bark, a sea, a wind;
For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,
Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is,
Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs;
Who, raging with thy tears, and they with them,
Without a sudden calm, will overset
Thy tempest-tossed body. How now, wife!
Have you deliver'd to her our decree?

[Lady Capulet](#). Ay, sir; but she will none, she gives you thanks.
I would the fool were married to her grave!

[Capulet](#). Soft! take me with you, take me with you, wife.
How! will she none? doth she not give us thanks?
Is she not proud? doth she not count her blest,
Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought
So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom?

[Juliet](#). Not proud, you have; but thankful, that you have:
Proud can I never be of what I hate;
But thankful even for hate, that is meant love.

[Capulet](#). How now, how now, chop-logic! What is this?
'Proud,' and 'I thank you,' and 'I thank you not;'
And yet 'not proud,' mistress minion, you,
Thank me no thankings, nor, proud me no prouds,
But fettle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next,
To go with Paris to Saint Peter's Church,

Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.
 Out, you green-sickness carrion! out, you baggage!
 You tallow-face!

Lady Capulet. Fie, fie! what, are you mad?

Juliet. Good father, I beseech you on my knees,
 Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

Capulet. Hang thee, young baggage! disobedient wretch!
 I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday,
 Or never after look me in the face:
 Speak not, reply not, do not answer me;
 My fingers itch. Wife, we scarce thought us blest
 That God had lent us but this only child;
 But now I see this one is one too much,
 And that we have a curse in having her:
 Out on her, hilding!

Nurse. God in heaven bless her!
 You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so.

Capulet. And why, my lady wisdom? hold your tongue,
 Good prudence; smatter with your gossips, go.

Nurse. I speak no treason.

Capulet. O, God ye god-den.

Nurse. May not one speak?

Capulet. Peace, you mumbling fool!
 Utter your gravity o'er a gossip's bowl;
 For here we need it not.

Lady Capulet. You are too hot.

Capulet. God's bread! it makes me mad:
 Day, night, hour, tide, time, work, play,
 Alone, in company, still my care hath been
 To have her match'd: and having now provided
 A gentleman of noble parentage,
 Of fair demesnes, youthful, and nobly train'd,
 Stuff'd, as they say, with honourable parts,
 Proportion'd as one's thought would wish a man;
 And then to have a wretched puling fool,
 A whining mammet, in her fortune's tender,
 To answer 'I'll not wed; I cannot love,
 I am too young; I pray you, pardon me.'
 But, as you will not wed, I'll pardon you:
 Graze where you will you shall not house with me:
 Look to't, think on't, I do not use to jest.

Thursday is near; lay hand on heart, advise:
 An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend;
 And you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in
 the streets,
 For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,
 Nor what is mine shall never do thee good:
 Trust to't, bethink you; I'll not be forsworn.

[Exit]

The Taming of the Shrew

Petrucio has come to the house of Baptista Minola, a wealthy gentleman of Padua to ask for permission to court his elder daughter, Katherine, who is the formidable 'shrew' of the title:

Petruchio. Signior Baptista, my business asketh haste,
 And every day I cannot come to woo.
 You knew my father well, and in him me,
 Left solely heir to all his lands and goods,
 Which I have bettered rather than decreas'd.
 Then tell me, if I get your daughter's love,
 What dowry shall I have with her to wife?

Baptista Minola. After my death, the one half of my lands
 And, in possession, twenty thousand crowns.

Petruchio. And for that dowry, I'll assure her of
 Her widowhood, be it that she survive me,
 In all my lands and leases whatsoever.
 Let specialities be therefore drawn between us,
 That covenants may be kept on either hand.

Baptista Minola. ***Ay, when the special thing is well obtain'd,
 That is, her love; for that is all in all.***

Petruchio. Why, that is nothing; for I tell you, father,
 I am as peremptory as she proud-minded;
 And where two raging fires meet together,
 They do consume the thing that feeds their fury.
 Though little fire grows great with little wind,
 Yet extreme gusts will blow out fire and all.
 So I to her, and so she yields to me;
 For I am rough, and woo not like a babe.

Baptista Minola. Well mayst thou woo, and happy be thy speed
 But be thou arm'd for some unhappy words....

Marriage for **Puritans** a **personal contract** or covenant; instead of wife being husband's obedient subject she was now his **willing partner**. Woman must be **free to choose** and **adult enough** to be his partner.

Family structure changing: families smaller and more caring – diaries and letters reveal genuine affection with parents regarding children less as property but as their 'comfort' and 'delight'.

Family bonds becoming more personal – greater flexibility between husband and wife – often included economic partnership as they worked together in trades or home industries.

Even in **aristocratic families** young men and women often thrown together away from parental supervision and in a situation of considerable freedom as they performed their duties as courtiers, ladies and gentlemen in waiting, tutors and governesses. In *The Taming of the Shrew* Bianca, the younger daughter, flirts outrageously when left to study with her Music and Latin tutors.

Prospero-Miranda as the Ideal Father-Daughter Relationship

The Tempest

Prospero is in some ways the ultimate patriarch, protecting and guiding his child, engineering her future by means human and supernatural. But he embodies that figure in its most benevolent form. He accepts that the time has come for Miranda to pass from childhood into womanhood;

in Shakespeare's day the main rite of passage was marriage. The match that he arranges for Miranda is the one that she would — and does—choose for herself, and the union brings concord between nations and reunion between brothers. Miranda, with the confidence and resilience of the loved child, expresses no qualms about setting forth for the "brave new world." Her father approves, her husband-to-be is all she could wish, she is looking forward only to happiness. Prospero has not burdened her with his cares. His parting wishes to Ariel could as fittingly be addressed to her: "to the elements / Be free, and fare thou well!" (V.i.317–18). It is Prospero's willing sacrifice of his own well-being for the sake of his daughter's that gives the play its wistful, nostalgic tone. The "music of the island" is hauntingly sweet and sad. *The Tempest* is a fable of fatherly wish-fulfillment and ideal nurture.

[Sharon Hamilton, *Shakespeare's Daughters*, (Nth. Carolina: McFarland, 2003), pp. 33-34]

Act 1 Scene 2

Prospero has conjured a storm which disperses all of his former enemies about the island. Ferdinand, the son (and heir) of the King of Naples is separate from the other courtiers.

[Enter PROSPERO and MIRANDA]

Miranda. If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them....

O, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel,
Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her,
Dash'd all to pieces....

Prospero. Be collected:
No more amazement: tell your piteous heart
There's no harm done.

Miranda. O, woe the day!

Prospero. No harm.
I have done nothing but in care of thee,
Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter, who
Art ignorant of what thou art, nought knowing
Of whence I am, nor that I am more better
Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell,
And thy no greater father.

Miranda. More to know
Did never meddle with my thoughts.

Prospero. 'Tis time
I should inform thee farther...

Prospero informs his daughter of their history: He was formerly Duke of Milan and being given to the study of the magical arts was usurped by his brother, Antonio, with the help of the King of Naples (Alonso). Prospero and Miranda – at that time a child – were exiled to this island inhabited only by Caliban, a savage native of the island, and a spirit, Ariel, whom Prospero freed from imprisonment and now serves Prospero.

Under the control of the spirit, Ariel, Alonso's son, Ferdinand, has been washed ashore separately from the other members of the court. He believes that his father and the other passengers are drowned.

Prospero. The fringed curtains of thine eye advance
And say what thou seest yond.

Miranda. What is't? a spirit?
Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir,
It carries a brave form. But 'tis a spirit.

Prospero. No, wench; it eats and sleeps and hath such senses
As we have, such. This gallant which thou seest
Was in the wreck; and, but he's something stain'd
With grief that's beauty's canker, thou mightst call him

A goodly person: he hath lost his fellows
And strays about to find 'em.

[Miranda](#). I might call him
A thing divine, for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble.

[Prospero](#). [Aside] It goes on, I see,
As my soul prompts it. Spirit, fine spirit! I'll free thee
Within two days for this.

[Ferdinand sees Miranda and Prospero]

[Ferdinand](#). Most sure, the goddess
On whom these airs attend! Vouchsafe my prayer
May know if you remain upon this island;
And that you will some good instruction give
How I may bear me here: my prime request,
Which I do last pronounce, is, O you wonder!¹⁰
If you be maid or no?

[Miranda](#). No wonder, sir;
But certainly a maid.

[Ferdinand](#). My language! heavens!
I am the best of them that speak this speech,
Were I but where 'tis spoken.

[Prospero](#). How? the best?
What wert thou, if the King of Naples heard thee?

[Ferdinand](#). A single thing, as I am now, that wonders
To hear thee speak of Naples. He does hear me;
And that he does I weep: myself am Naples,
Who with mine eyes, never since at ebb, beheld
The king my father wreck'd.

[Miranda](#). Alack, for mercy!

[Ferdinand](#). Yes, faith, and all his lords; the Duke of Milan¹¹
And his brave son being twain.¹²

[Prospero](#). [Aside].... At the first sight
They have changed eyes. Delicate Ariel,
I'll set thee free for this.
[To FERDINAND]

¹⁰ The name 'Miranda' derives from the Latin verb *mirror*, 'to wonder'; 'be astonished at'.

¹¹ This is Antonio, Prospero's brother, Antonio, who usurped Prospero's role as Duke and who exiled Prospero and Miranda.

¹² The Duke's (Antonio's) son is not mentioned again in the play.

A word, good sir;
I fear you have done yourself some wrong: a word.

[Miranda](#). Why speaks my father so ungently? This
Is the third man that e'er I saw, the first
That e'er I sigh'd for: pity move my father
To be inclined my way!

[Ferdinand](#). O, if a virgin,
And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you
The queen of Naples.

[Prospero](#). Soft, sir! one word more.

[Aside]

They are both in either's powers; but this swift business
I must uneasy make, lest too light winning
Make the prize light.

[To FERDINAND]

One word more; I charge thee
That thou attend me: thou dost here usurp
The name thou owest not; and hast put thyself
Upon this island as a spy, to win it
From me, the lord on't.

[Ferdinand](#). No, as I am a man.

[Miranda](#). There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple:
If the ill spirit have so fair a house,
Good things will strive to dwell with't.

[Prospero](#). Follow me.
Speak not you for him; he's a traitor. Come...

Follow.

[Ferdinand](#). No;
I will resist such entertainment till
Mine enemy has more power.

[Draws, and is charmed from moving]

[Miranda](#). O dear father,
Make not too rash a trial of him, for
He's gentle and not fearful.

[Prospero](#). What? I say,
My foot my tutor? Put thy sword up, traitor;
Who makest a show but darest not strike, thy conscience
Is so possess'd with guilt: come from thy ward,
For I can here disarm thee with this stick
And make thy weapon drop.

Miranda. Beseech you, father.

Prospero. Hence! hang not on my garments.

Miranda. Sir, have pity;
I'll be his surety.

Prospero. Silence! one word more
Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee.
An advocate for an imposter! hush!
Thou think'st there is no more such shapes as he,
Having seen but him and Caliban: foolish wench!
To the most of men this is a Caliban
And they to him are angels.

Miranda. My affections
Are then most humble; I have no ambition
To see a goodlier man.

Prospero. [*To Ferdinand*] Come on; obey:...
Thy nerves are in their infancy again
And have no vigour in them.

Ferdinand. So they are...
... Might I but through my prison once a day
Behold this maid: all corners else o' the earth
Let liberty make use of; space enough
Have I in such a prison.

Prospero. [*Aside*] It works.
[*To FERDINAND*]
Come on....

.....

[*Exeunt*]

Act 3 Scene 1

[*Enter FERDINAND, bearing a log*]

Ferdinand. There be some sports are painful, and their labour
Delight in them sets off: some kinds of baseness
Are nobly undergone and most poor matters
Point to rich ends. This my mean task
Would be as heavy to me as odious, but
The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead
And makes my labours pleasures:

.....

[*Enter MIRANDA – and PROSPERO at a distance, unseen*]

Miranda. Alas, now, pray you,
Work not so hard: ...

... My father
Is hard at study; pray now, rest yourself;
He's safe for these three hours.

Ferdinand. O most dear mistress,
The sun will set before I shall discharge
What I must strive to do.

Miranda. If you'll sit down,
I'll bear your logs the while: pray, give me that;
I'll carry it to the pile.

Ferdinand. No, precious creature;
I had rather crack my sinews, break my back,
Than you should such dishonour undergo,
While I sit lazy by.

Miranda. It would become me
As well as it does you: and I should do it
With much more ease; for my good will is to it,
And yours it is against.

Prospero. Poor worm, thou art infected!
This visitation shows it.

Miranda. You look wearily.

Ferdinand. No, noble mistress;'tis fresh morning with me
When you are by at night. I do beseech you—
Chiefly that I might set it in my prayers—
What is your name?

Miranda. Miranda.—O my father,
I have broke your hest to say so!

Ferdinand. Admired Miranda!
Indeed the top of admiration! worth
What's dearest to the world! Full many a lady
I have eyed with best regard...

Ferdinand confesses that he has “eyed” many women and admired several for different qualities but he has hitherto found that each had some defect that overcame their other virtues.

.... O you,
So perfect and so peerless, are created
Of every creature's best!

Miranda. I do not know
One of my sex; no woman's face remember,

Save, from my glass, mine own; nor have I seen
 More that I may call men than you, good friend,
 And my dear father: how features are abroad,
 I am skillless of; but, by my modesty,
 The jewel in my dower, I would not wish
 Any companion in the world but you,
 Nor can imagination form a shape,
 Besides yourself, to like of. But I prattle
 Something too wildly and my father's precepts
 I therein do forget.

[Ferdinand](#). I am in my condition
 A prince, Miranda; I do think, a king;
 I would, not so!—and would no more endure
 This wooden slavery than to suffer
 The flesh-fly blow my mouth. Hear my soul speak:
 The very instant that I saw you, did
 My heart fly to your service; there resides,
 To make me slave to it; and for your sake
 Am I this patient log—man.

[Miranda](#). Do you love me?

[Ferdinand](#). O heaven, O earth, bear witness to this sound
 And crown what I profess with kind event
 If I speak true! if hollowly, invert
 What best is boded me to mischief! I
 Beyond all limit of what else i' the world
 Do love, prize, honour you.

[Miranda](#). I am a fool
 To weep at what I am glad of.

[Prospero](#). Fair encounter
 Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace
 On that which breeds between 'em!

[Ferdinand](#). Wherefore weep you?

[Miranda](#). At mine unworthiness that dare not offer
 What I desire to give, and much less take
 What I shall die to want. But this is trifling;
 And all the more it seeks to hide itself,
 The bigger bulk it shows. Hence, bashful cunning!
 And prompt me, plain and holy innocence!
 I am your wife, it you will marry me;
 If not, I'll die your maid: to be your fellow
 You may deny me; but I'll be your servant,
 Whether you will or no.

[Ferdinand](#). My mistress, dearest;
And I thus humble ever.

[Miranda](#). My husband, then?

[Ferdinand](#). Ay, with a heart as willing
As bondage e'er of freedom: here's my hand.

[Miranda](#). And mine, with my heart in't; and now farewell
Till half an hour hence.

[Ferdinand](#). A thousand thousand!

[Exeunt FERDINAND and MIRANDA severally]

[Prospero](#). So glad of this as they I cannot be,
Who are surprised withal; but my rejoicing
At nothing can be more....

[Exit]

Act 3 Scene 3/4/Act 4 Scene 1.¹³

[Enter PROSPERO, FERDINAND, and MIRANDA]

[Prospero](#). If I have too austere punish'd you,
Your compensation makes amends, for I
Have given you here a third of mine own life,
Or that for which I live; who once again
I tender to thy hand: all thy vexations
Were but my trials of thy love and thou
Hast strangely stood the test here, afore Heaven,
I ratify this my rich gift....

[Ferdinand](#). I do believe it
Against an oracle.

[Prospero](#). Then, as my gift and thine own acquisition
Worthily purchased take my daughter: but
If thou dost break her virgin-knot before
All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy rite be minister'd,
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
To make this contract grow: but barren hate,
Sour-eyed disdain and discord shall bestrew
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly
That you shall hate it both: therefore take heed,
As Hymen's lamps shall light you.

[Ferdinand](#). As I hope
For quiet days, fair issue and long life,

¹³ Editions vary considerably in the allocation of acts and scenes.

With such love as 'tis now, the murkiest den,
 The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion.
 Our worser genius can, shall never melt
 Mine honour into lust, to take away
 The edge of that day's celebration....

[Prospero](#). Fairly spoke.
 Sit then and talk with her; she is thine own.
 What, Ariel! my industrious servant, Ariel!

[Enter ARIEL]

Prospero conjures – as “Some vanity of mine art” – a marriage masque of three goddesses: Ceres (goddess of the earth and harvest), Juno (goddess of marriage) and Iris (the gods’ messenger identified with the rainbow).

All are associated with the harvest, reflecting man's harmony with nature; Juno, reflecting the importance of marriage vows; and the rainbow, reflecting the harmony of nature. Venus and Cupid – associated with carnality and sensuality – are omitted.

Prospero had originally intended to avenge himself on the “men of sin” who had conspired to rob him of his dukedom but when they have been reduced to “sorrow and dismay” he is moved to mercy by the compassion that Ariel feels for their predicament:

Act 5 Scene 1

[Prospero](#). Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
 Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
 One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
 Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?
 Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,
 Yet with my nobler reason 'gaitist my fury
 Do I take part: the rarer action is
 In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent,
 The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
 Not a frown further. Go release them, Ariel....

... But this rough magic
 I here abjure, and, when I have required
 Some heavenly music, which even now I do,
 To work mine end upon their senses that
 This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
 Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
 And deeper than did ever plummet sound
 I'll drown my book....

... The court party have been confronted with their past sins and those capable of redemption have acknowledged their guilt. Prospero reveals his identity as “the wrongèd Duke of Milan” upon which Alonso immediately performs the act of

reparation which is a sign of true repentance. The tribute that he had formerly received from Prospero's brother, Antonio, placed Milan within his power.

However, Alonso believes that his son, Ferdinand, is drowned and learning that Prospero has also 'lost' his daughter in the recent storm:

Alonso. A daughter?

O heavens, that they were living both in Naples,
The king and queen there! that they were, I wish
Myself were mudded in that oozy bed
Where my son lies....

[Here Prospero discovers Ferdinand and Miranda playing at chess.]

.....

Alonso now realises that his son, Ferdinand was not drowned.

Alonso. Now all the blessings
Of a glad father compass thee about!
Arise, and say how thou camest here.

Miranda. O, wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,
That has such people in't!

Prospero. 'Tis new to thee.

Alonso. What is this maid with whom thou wast at play?
Your eld'st acquaintance cannot be three hours:
Is she the goddess that hath sever'd us,
And brought us thus together?

Ferdinand. Sir, she is mortal;
But by immortal Providence she's mine:
I chose her when I could not ask my father
For his advice, nor thought I had one. She
Is daughter to this famous Duke of Milan ...
..... of whom I have
Received a second life; and second father
This lady makes him to me.

Alonso. I am hers:
But, O, how oddly will it sound that I
Must ask my child forgiveness!

.....

Prospero. ... and in the morn
I'll bring you to your ship and so to Naples,
Where I have hope to see the nuptial
Of these our dear-beloved solemnized;

And thence retire me to my Milan, where
Every third thought shall be my grave.