

The portrayal of women in the comedy of errors

[Sociology](#), [Feminism](#)



The Portrayal of Women in The Comedy of Errors Through the centuries, women have tried to be equal to men. From their position in the place of work to voting rights, women have struggled to gain equal rights. In Shakespeare's play The Comedy of Errors, women are very present. Shakespeare presents two important women: Adriana and Luciana. They are each portrayed differently. Adriana represents the feminist point of view and Luciana, the anti-feminist. To begin, Adriana is the most present female on stage. She is weakened by her husband's dishonesty, which causes her self-doubt. Adriana has the ideology of a feminist. She is a jealous wife. Although she tries to use her female authority, Antipholus of Ephesus prevents these efforts of independence and confidence. He demands from his slave, Dromio E, a rope to use against Adriana when she locked him out: " Thou drunken slave, I sent thee for a rope, And told thee to what purpose, and what end. " (Shakespeare IV. 1. 96-97) This shows that men have power over women and could treat them as they wish. When Adriana asks " Why should their liberty than ours be more?" (II. I. 10), she is complaining angrily of her husband's absences from home. She says it feels unfair that there is an unbalanced lack of equity between men and woman. She believes that Antipholus is cheating on her, but doesn't know that she is dealing with her husband's twin brother. Also, Adriana's misery over Antipholus' behavior is a product of her view of marriage: "[...] Thyself I call it, being strange to me, That, undividable, incorporate, Am better than thy dear self's better part. Ah, do not tear away thyself from me! [...] As take from me thyself and not me too. [...]" (II. II. 119 -128). Adriana explains that she and her husband are inseparable, unbreakable. She is recalling a time where their love was

strong. Adriana's possessiveness result in her husband's creating lies to cover for his absences. After Adriana locks him out of his home, he takes advantage of his friendship with the Courtesan to pay his wife back, which makes Adriana jealous. Both, Adriana and her marriage, suffer as a result of her jealousy. No matter what, Adriana is still under Antipholus of Ephesus' power. She has the ideology of a feminist. She is someone who believes that women deserve the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities as men. Unlike her sister, Luciana has the ideology of an anti-feminist. She presents the view of a respectful wife. She tells Adriana that she should show patience, that men need more freedom and that they have authority over women: "ADRIANA This servitude makes you to keep unwed. LUCIANA Not this, but troubles of the marriage bed. ADRIANA But, were you wedded, you would bear some sway. LUCIANA Ere I learn love, I'll practise to obey. ADRIANA How if your husband start some otherwhere? LUCIANA Till he come home again, I would forbear. " (II. I. 26-31) Luciana believes that she should learn to obey before learning to love. Adriana thinks that Luciana's point of view is due to the fact that she is not married and therefore, does not have experience in marriage. She thinks that if her sister gets married, she would have power over her husband. Luciana explains that if her husband ever goes and doesn't come back for a long period of time, she would not complain until she had a chance to discuss it. Luciana accepts that a woman's place is inside the home: " The beasts, the fishes, and the wing'd fowls, Are their males' subjects and at their controls. Man, more divine, the master of all these, Lords of the wide world, and wild wat'ry seas, Indued with intellectual sense and souls, Of more preeminence than fish and fowls,

Are masters to their females, and their lords: Then let your will attend on their accords. " (II. I. 18-25) Luciana shows how men should have authority over their wives. Adriana doesn't agree with her sister. She does not think that men should have more freedom than women. This shows that Luciana believes that men are more powerful than women and therefore she has the ideology of an anti-feminist. To conclude, Shakespeare presented two important women with two opposite point of views, the feminist and the anti-feminist. The two sisters have two different perspectives on the relation between men and women: Adriana, who believes that men and women should have equal rights, and Luciana, who, on the other hand, respects the fact that men are more powerful and dominant than women. In the play *The Comedy of Errors*, women have a very important role in the story. They express themselves and say what they think is right for them. This shows how, after all these years, women have gained many rights. Works Cited E. Dolan, Frances. " *The Comedy of Errors*". New York: Penguin Books, 1999. Print.