



‘Strange Habits’

Clothes, Climes, and the Environment in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries

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Apparel for Rain: Keeping Dry, Warm, Clean and Healthy in Early Modern London

Anyone who has visited London will have experienced the importance of a raincoat and waterproof boots, but what did early modern men and women do to keep clean, dry, warm, and healthy in an era when bad weather threatened fabric, body, and soul? This paper will explore what Londoners and visitors to the city wrote about their experiences with city mud, dirt, and rain, and how they tried to overcome environmental challenges while staying fashionable. It will also chart how experimenters and craftspeople like the London gentleman Sir Hugh Plat attempted to create waterproof clothing that would withstand the urban environment while appealing to a city that craved fine fabrics, vivid colours, and sparkling accessories.